

# PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY



Speaker: Hon. Francis (Buck) Watts

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## Standing Committee on Education and Economic Development

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**DATE OF HEARING:** 28 FEBRUARY 2018

**MEETING STATUS:** PUBLIC

**LOCATION:** LEGISLATIVE CHAMBER, HON. GEORGE COLES BUILDING, CHARLOTTETOWN

**SUBJECT:** ELECTION OF CHAIR; BRIEFING ON EFFORTS TO ENCOURAGE REPATRIATION OF ISLANDERS

**COMMITTEE:**

Alan McIsaac, MLA Vernon River-Stratford [Chair]  
Hannah Bell, MLA Charlottetown-Parkdale  
Hon. Paula Biggar, Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy  
Kathleen Casey, MLA Charlottetown-Lewis Point (replaces Hon. Robert Henderson)  
Matthew MacKay, MLA Kensington-Malpeque  
Hon. Robert Mitchell, Minister of Health and Wellness  
Hon. Pat Murphy, Minister of Rural and Regional Development  
Bradley Trivers, MLA Rustico-Emerald (replaces Steven Myers)

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Hon. Robert Henderson, Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries  
Steven Myers, MLA Georgetown-St. Peters

**MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:**

None

**GUESTS:**

Department of Workforce and Advanced Learning (Brad Colwill, Hon. Sonny Gallant, Susan MacKenzie)

**STAFF:**

Ryan Reddin, Clerk Assistant (Research and Committees)

Edited by Hansard



The Committee met at 1:30 p.m.

**Clerk Assistant:** Good afternoon, everyone.

I'll open the meeting as there currently is not a Chair for this committee. Just before we move onto the nomination and election of Chair, I just want to point out we have two substitute members today; Kathleen Casey here in place of Robert Henderson, and Brad Trivers here in place of Steven Myers.

So with that, I'll ask for nominations for committee Chair.

**Mr. Murphy:** I nominate Alan McIsaac.

**Clerk Assistant:** All right.

Pat Murphy nominates Alan McIsaac. Any other nominations?

All those in favour of Alan McIsaac taking on the role of Chair of the committee, signify by saying 'aye'.

**Some Hon. Members:** Aye!

**Clerk Assistant:** All opposed?

Hearing none, the motion carried. Mr. McIsaac, please take the Chair.

**Chair (McIsaac):** Okay, thanks for your confidence. I hope we deserve it here.

The next item on the agenda is the adoption of the agenda.

Can we have a motion for that?

**Ms. Casey:** So moved.

**Chair:** Kathleen.

Good, well we're really pleased today to have a briefing here from the hon. Sonny Gallant, Minister of Workforce and Advanced Learning, and some people from his department on the topic of repatriating Islanders. I'm going to turn it over to the minister to introduce his people and give us a little rundown on what you're doing.

We will have questions later, but I take it you have a presentation for today.

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

My name is Sonny Gallant and I'm the Minister of Workforce and Advanced Learning. I have with me my deputy, Brad Colwill, and Susan MacKenzie, executive director of population development and strategy initiatives.

I'd also like to congratulate you on your new position. I'm sure you'll do a fine job as Chair of this committee.

With your indulgence, I'd like to say a few words of introduction and then we'll turn it over to Mr. Colwill and Ms. MacKenzie for any presentation and questions, if you have any questions during.

It's certainly a great opportunity to be here today and I encourage everyone to ask questions as we go through the presentation.

My department believes that population growth is key to sustain economic growth and job creation and prosperity across our whole Island here on PEI. We are working to continue growth in our economy and ensure that our growth remains above the national average, and continue progress on prosperity for all Islanders. Over the past 30 months, we have made real progress in delivering significant results. Our economy is stronger than it's ever been and it's growing faster than anywhere else in the region, and overall, the Canadian economy.

Communities are growing and diversifying into new areas of activity. More Islanders are working and if I could mention we have over 2,000 more people employed this year over last year and most of these are full-time jobs. Wages have increased. Our population is growing. We reached 152,000 in July of 2017 and we've had the fastest growth in Canada. For the first time since 1968, our medium age has declined. We're getting younger on this mighty Island.

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

**Mr. Gallant:** We are well on track to meet our goal for a population goal of 160,000 by 2022.

To continue this progress, my department is focusing on key areas related to population

growth in our province. We are one year into our five-year population action plan, which we will discuss today. We are working to keep up the pace on reaching, as I had indicated our population of 160,000 by 2022 and we are working with employers to attract workers to key sectors.

We have made efforts in working with partners to develop opportunities for young people to stay and prosper here in our province, such as expanding the Team Seafood concept, and other key sectors such as Team Construction and Team Trucking, working with employers and experts lead the improvements of settlement services for newcomers with the objective of building further retention success in our province.

To do all this, we need to ensure we are developing opportunities in our workforce, business expansion community, development and social supports. It's important that there is alignment among many departments in our government to support this growth, including economic development and tourism; rural and regional development; education, early learning and culture; and family and human services. It is also important that many of these solutions come from the communities and employers themselves so that we can empower everyone to grow successfully.

We will go over some of these plans taking a look at historical context, current trends, and statistics over our population action plan and statistics specific to the recruitment of Canadians and former Islanders back to Prince Edward Island.

With that, I would like to ask my Deputy Colwill to take us through the slides and as I had indicated earlier, any questions, feel welcome to ask.

Thank you, Chair.

**Chair:** Can I interject first for a second?

Do you folks want to ask questions through the presentation?

**Ms. Bell:** (Indistinct)

**Chair:** Rather than at the end? We do want to make sure we get through the presentation, so if you have a question in the

meantime, bring it through the Chair. We'll recognize you here.

Mr. Colwill.

**Ms. Biggar:** I do, actually, Mr. Chair.

**Chair:** Yes.

**Ms. Biggar:** The minister had mentioned Team Construction and I know that the construction association is using WorkPEI to find talent and just around that thought, has that seen growth in the population and workforce because of that? But, I'm just wondering, with Team Seafood and – I guess I'd like to – you know, it would be nice to find out kind of what the purpose of Team Seafood is and Team Construction in a larger sense, whether that fits in here, but the uptake on that and –

**Mr. Gallant:** Thank you for your question.

We do have – we're supporting the Team Construction and Team Seafood and team trucking as I'd indicated. Team Construction had an announcement here last week to get people into the trades. They have a shortage right now of about 100. They will have a bigger shortage come the construction season; but we continue to work with the industry, our department, to come up with innovative ways to get people into the trades and try to keep people here on PEI and it's starting to pay off.

Now as far as the statistics, it's just something that's been new, so we don't have solid statistics of how many people. Now unless one of my colleagues knows of any –

**Ms. Biggar:** With the Team Seafood and the –

**Mr. Gallant:** – (Indistinct) we don't have any (Indistinct) –

**Chair:** Just excuse me for a sec.

**Ms. Biggar:** Oh – sorry, Chair.

**Chair:** I think what is going to happen here is we could end up not getting any (Indistinct) –

**Ms. Biggar:** I think it will, I think it will.

**Chair:** – what we're going to do is ask Mr. Colwill to do his presentation. As it comes to –

**Ms. Biggar:** I think (Indistinct)

**Chair:** – Team Seafood or whatever, I'll recognize you for a question at that time.

**Ms. Biggar:** And he might have that in there.

**Chair:** Okay, thank you.

**Brad Colwill:** Thank you –

**Chair:** The floor is yours.

**Brad Colwill:** – for the opportunity to present. My name is Brad Colwill. I'm the acting deputy minister of Workforce and Advanced Learning.

The Team Seafood concept is touched on here, so we can dive into it more, and it certainly is a program that, as our minister mentions, we're quite proud of.

Minister Gallant talked about the overview of our presentation today, but just to give a bit of a background – and this is going pretty far back, to 1880 – and to give some historical context, the notion of outmigration is something that has been a prominent story on the Island over time, and as part of some of our research initiatives in our department we try to empower graduate and researching students at UPEI.

This was an article that one found while doing research on youth for our Island in 1880, which talks about the exodus. Their actual method of tracking at that point was counting the people who are leaving on the steamers heading for the Americas and the Boston states. That trend has continued onward between the 1890s and the 1930s. Despite one of the highest birth rates in the country, the population of the province actually fell during that timeframe; and even as recently as the 1996 census, where there was 47,500 people born in PEI living outside of PEI, and only 24,600 who were Islanders at that point who were born outside.

So that notion has been something that's been around for some time. We, as a

department, truly feel that while there still will be some that will leave, the idea of coming back is certainly becoming much more well received across the board.

Touching on where we're at today: as the minister mentioned, we crossed the 150,000 threshold for our population in 2017. One way we look at is this chart here, which talks about the components of growth. We see we start off with the birth and death, and while there's 75 additional births than there are deaths, the population projections as they were stated, without any intervention, would have seen the deaths increase to a point where they exceed the births.

We also have immigration as a way for our population to grow, and of course the focus of the day, which is more on the interprovincial, in-and-out migration. During 2017, we had an outmigration of approximately 450, which was a significant improvement over years prior.

To dive into that a little deeper, we took the last three years of interprovincial migration and took a look at it by age segment. A few trends stick out in particular here. Certainly the 20-24, which is an age group that when we speak with in focus groups and other areas, some express a desire to see the world, with the full intention of returning at some point, and others are just exploring the world and they'll figure out everything that happens afterward.

The 20-24 and 25-29 have been age segments which we've targeted more of our programming toward. That's something you'll see later under our SkillsPEI statistics. We feel that that targeted effort over the last three years has helped to see that decrease in the out-migration of those age groups for these two periods.

The other interesting trend that sticks out particularly here is 30-34, which traditionally has been an age group where we have seen the last three years a positive in-migration of people who are coming from other provinces who are choosing to move to PEI. As someone who is in that age demographic, anecdotally, I know the pull when one is starting a family and other factors like that really tend to come full force then.

We have lots of data, and we certainly love data in our department. I could talk about that for your full meeting today, but just talk on one more slide. If we take a look at the last five years, we can see where the path is by province of which provinces have had more Islanders move toward and which provinces have seen an out-migration from their province to PEI: 2016-2017, we see eight of the 12 provinces where there's a positive in-migration to PEI and we see in several of those provinces where it's trending positively. Where there had been an out-migration historically, we're now seeing more Islanders coming from these provinces.

Another important piece, too, to help set the table for our conversation, is the labour market, which is one of the primary reasons why the population has become a keen area of interest in our department, Workforce and Advanced Learning. In the past year, the annual labour force survey is presented in front of everyone here for 2017, and in that we saw record highs in employment while keep maintaining the high participation rate and a growing workforce.

As our labour market is growing, we also have two things that are recurring. One is this trend of the labour market at this level and its expected growth as we go forward. We also have a workforce that, without intervention, would have quite a few of its members who would be aging out and reaching the retirement age. So the need to supply this workforce is certainly something we feel is paramount for our department.

And with that creates opportunity for individuals who are living in other provinces, other countries, and for those that are residing here that maybe traditionally would have sought out other opportunities in other provinces. Where I mentioned there's a significant opportunity with the workforce replacement needs as well as the growth that's expected, further offering the same notion to business succession, there's quite a few business owners out there who will be reaching the retirement age and will be looking for someone to succeed them.

In addition to that, we're presented with quite a few opportunities for anyone to come to PEI to help with developing our communities, both inside and outside the

Charlottetown area, with home ownership opportunities as individuals maybe moving towards different types of living situations; and lastly, to help our social supports, not just our own departments here, but provide an opportunity for those who may wish to provide support to their family if they have an aging parent or something like that, to know that there's employment opportunities they can come back to, and be able to provide that emotional support.

To help address that was the development of the population action plan. This is something that crosses the boundaries of many different departments and many different external agencies as well. While our focus today – we were invited – was to talk about repatriation, we feel it's worthy of noting some of the additional initiatives that are happening in terms of our retention and our rural population action plan as well, recognizing that these four initiatives are really intertwined.

This is a plan we launched in 2017, so we're getting on the one-year anniversary of this launch here in the spring, and what we had planned to do is talk about some of the initiatives we've done so far.

**Chair:** Matt MacKay.

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

Thanks for coming in. A question while we're on it, I'm just curious: What would the cost have been to develop this plan?

**Brad Colwill:** The cost to – most of the cost was develop staff time internally to create and compile it. Are you talking more the publishing costs?

**Mr. MacKay:** Well, no.

That was the first one and I guess also, what would the province spend annually on repatriation with the trips away, I guess and so forth? I guess I'm trying to understand in my head – we obviously know this is key to a successful PEI. How are we going to get to that point? What are the steps that are taking place and what are the cost factors that, as a taxpayer, would be looking to get there?

**Brad Colwill:** There would be many departments who are seeking out different

recruitment channels so I'm afraid I don't have that number in front of me, but something we could certainly try to bring (Indistinct)

**Mr. MacKay:** There would be a number combined probably amongst all departments, is there? There would be a line number somewhere?

**Brad Colwill:** There certainly would be multiple departments who would be working toward this for sure, yes, and with that would be some accumulation of those costs.

**Mr. MacKay:** Last question and I guess I'm just curious: Is there a number – is there a way we can find out what the number is combined with all departments? Is it something that's costing \$100,000 a year? Is it costing \$2 million a year? Is it costing \$5 million a year between all departments to reach their end goal?

**Brad Colwill:** I think that's something we'd have to come back just knowing we can't speak much to outside our department.

**Mr. MacKay:** Okay, thank you.

**Chair:** Minister Biggar.

**Ms. Biggar:** Actually, mine is around workforce and I'm not sure if my questions are off topic, but –

**Chair:** Are you getting to that area later on in workforce?

**Brad Colwill:** Workforce would be embedded throughout the plans, so it's fair to take it –

**Ms. Biggar:** Okay.

**Chair:** You can take it that question?

**Brad Colwill:** Absolutely (Indistinct)

**Ms. Biggar:** I know you do a lot of sponsorship around women in trades and I'm just wondering what the links are to those employers that need the trades people specifically, and our federal – and I'm just going to put this out there because I want to have it on the agenda, and I'm sure, I know talking with you in the past, but with the new federal government budget and the

focus on more women in the workforce, so I'd be interested on where you see that going and what kind of focus you'll be or have been – I know you've been focusing on more women in the workforce and the impact that it does have on our economy, but I would be specifically interested on your women in trades and what kind of linkages have been able to happen – if you've got any data on that.

**Brad Colwill:** That data would be part of this presentation, but I can certainly speak to some of the initiatives. The Trade HERizons program, for example, has been valuable and just fabulous.

Some of the impacts that those programs have to change peoples' lives are amazing. To speak to the budget, it's something we were studying this morning, too, after its announcement and the full rollout is something we're not quite sure of, but we see that having a positive affect continuing.

**Ms. Biggar:** Thank you.

**Chair:** We'll go to Brad Trivers.

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

Go back a couple of slides. You had some numbers that talked about the number of people. Yeah, this slide right here. Do you have this broken down by location of the employer? So for example, is it located in Summerside? Charlottetown? Cornwall? Stratford? I'm trying to get an idea of, you know, the rural versus urban and there's lots of people who would argue that there isn't a real rural/urban split on PEI, but I'm just curious of those.

For example, 73,000 people that are employed, are they employed in the urban areas? And of the people who are not employed, are they unemployed – are they unemployed in rural areas or urban areas?

**Susan MacKenzie:** Susan MacKenzie.

I'm going to answer your question. Thank you for your question.

In my division we do have the labour market research unit and we're working with the regional economic advisory councils right now and we've broken it down into each

region. Each of those boxes; we have the population by community. We have the labour force and the employment, and the vacancy rates by those areas. So, we do have that.

**Chair:** Brad Trivers.

**Mr. Trivers:** Is that available online if I go search for it?

**Susan MacKenzie:** Most of it is online and so if you go to WorkPEI under the statistics section, you'll see a lot of the data there online. But, any other data we can provide to you as well.

**Mr. Trivers:** One last question, Chair.

I was just wondering, in general, with your efforts across the areas – recruitment as well as repatriation – there are many private services and firms that are in that area. Do you feel that sometimes you're competing with them and providing competition in that space that maybe the government is sort of allowing them not to be as successful as they could be with, like, a WorkPEI program?

**Brad Colwill:** We don't feel we're competing with that. Rather, we see WorkPEI being a tool that can be used just to help to demonstrate some of the opportunities that are available and those private businesses can use that tool and leverage that as well.

**Chair:** Do you have one more? We'll have to go –

**Mr. Trivers:** Do you ever get feedback from the private industry that they feel like that you're competing with them and maybe taking business away from them?

**Brad Colwill:** Some have expressed a concern with that. It's something we generally don't feel is inhibiting the ability of these firms to operate, though.

**Chair:** Thanks, Brad.

Matt MacKay.

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

Just one quick question going back to the minister in his opening remarks, just before

we go too far. You said about the wages have increased. What's the average income in Prince Edward Island right now? Do you have that?

**Mr. Gallant:** I don't have that with me, no, hon. member. We can get it for you though.

**Mr. MacKay:** Okay, thank you.

**Chair:** Okay, we'll ask Mr. Colwill to continue the presentation.

**Ms. Bell:** Chair?

**Chair:** Yes, Hannah Bell.

**Ms. Bell:** It's \$834 a week.

**Mr. MacKay:** \$834 a week?

**Chair:** The minister is going to bring that back to confirm, however.

**Ms. Bell:** Absolutely.

**Chair:** Okay, good. Great.

Mr. Colwill.

**Brad Colwill:** Thank you.

I did mention that the population action plan itself – and we actually have copies of this too, if anyone would like to have one with them – is something that we don't view as entirely a workforce and advanced learning initiative and we give full credit to all the partners who help in the delivery and creation of this, which includes other departments and agencies which exist across government.

Susan and the minister mentioned our regional economic advisory councils and we view and appreciate all the knowledge and expertise that's provided through them, providing the regional lens to it as well.

Our youth future council has been very engaged in this. We have a working group within that designed for retention and repatriation, and it's certainly a topic that they're quite keen on as well. UPEI, Holland College and Collège de l'Île are post-secondary partners who help in the delivery of education as well as acting as some of our greatest resources to bring in future

Islanders, and to help them attach to our society to want to stay.

As well, municipalities and communities, working with them and our NGOs, which is the association of newcomers, **(Indistinct)** and our employment assistant service providers.

**Chair:** Question from Minister Murphy.

**Mr. Murphy:** A couple of weekends ago there they had the neighbour to neighbour event up in Hernewood school up in my area. I'm just wondering, is that the sort of thing that you see that should happen in communities right across the province, hosting things like that sort of thing?

**Chair:** Ms. MacKenzie.

**Susan MacKenzie:** Thank you.

Yes, absolutely and we're working with many municipalities right now. We had a session in November where we had over 70 people in Summerside. Many of them were municipalities and they were bringing together ideas of how they could move forward, and that was one of the ideas that came out of the November session. We had a follow-up session in January with municipalities and each one of them are going forward to take a little bit different spin on how they're going to have welcoming communities.

It's initiatives like this. We will have another initiative in March, March 21<sup>st</sup>, where we're bringing an expert in to help each of the municipalities develop strategic plans and action plans themselves, and what they're going to do for their individual communities.

**Mr. Murphy:** I see Souris gives a welcome basket and that sort of thing. I'm actually meeting up with a bus tour in Alberton tomorrow, Cora Lee Dunbar.

**Susan MacKenzie:** Right on, yes.

**Mr. Murphy:** And bring some greetings from the province to some immigrants that maybe we can get some of them to settle up in that part of the province.

**Susan MacKenzie:** We're doing a reverse one with, I think it's four towns in Kings County area; Georgetown, Montague, Souris are all coming in to Charlottetown to the Connectors Program to meet with a number of immigrants there that may want to relocate to rural parts of PEI. So there are lots of initiatives like that going on with the municipalities, so they're keen.

**Mr. Murphy:** The new intermediaries; when are there offices going to be fully and operational in the rural parts of the province?

**Susan MacKenzie:** I believe some of them are already operational. I don't know the final date when all of them are going to be operational. I was speaking, for example, with the mayor of Souris and the administrator of Souris and they're working with an intermediary there to come up with a concept around expanding the Francophone population in that area; if that intermediary could look for ideas where they could bring Francophone newcomers to the area.

**Mr. Murphy:** Thanks.

**Chair:** Matthew MacKay.

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

Just a question: Has there been any discussion of bringing the trades back into the high school system like was done years ago?

**Brad Colwill:** Well, I could certainly differ credit to our education department of how it becomes more intertwined. But there is more of a focus on career education within the school systems, which would also include the trades. With that, there's certainly an increase and the awareness and we actually have a staff that we used to share with our department of education who was dedicated, specifically, to supporting the promotion of trades.

While the delivery of the – what would be the post-secondary programs aren't there – the awareness is there. Also, we've invested in programs which allow the high school students who are unsure of where they want to go, to be able to try the campuses at Holland College and see particular trades and if they suit their wishes.

**Mr. MacKay:** One thing I've noticed and I'll just use my district for example, that there's a lot of young kids that may not like going through school and want to take a trade up and so forth, but they don't have the marks to do it once they get out to take this secondary college or university but the interest is there. A lot of the schools – I shouldn't say all of them – but some of the schools offer one-hour programs where they might build a cottage or they might build a barn or there's a welding shop and so forth, but if we got such a shortage of trades people right now, is this not something we probably should be looking at a younger age to try and get these kids a head start, I guess, before they get out of high school?

**Brad Colwill:** The idea of attracting youth into the trades is something we are very keen on and that's actually one of the teams mentioned earlier, Team Construction is geared towards that as well to provide that opportunity. In terms of the delivery, it's something that certainly I'd be interested to continue in a conversation on. But we do provide, at least, that exposure and that promotion within to help them move toward that path.

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

**Chair:** Minister Biggar.

**Ms. Biggar:** Just expanding a little bit on that topic with transitions through school. Given that you do have the stats that indicate we're going to have a shortage of workers in very specific areas, what kind of interaction or interconnection there going forward do you see that you could make within, whether it's a job fair in the high schools, or working with different guidance in the area, to get the message out to those students that are there now, that in four years time when then they're done and looking at their post-secondary – or three years time – and what decisions they're making for post-secondary, how can we tie those together? Or, is that something that you're working on or taking under consideration?

**Brad Colwill:** For sure, it's an area we're very keen on and fine tuning our labour market information to help inform that is one of our priorities as well. For example, the career explorations course that's offered in the K-12 system; we have the benefit of

being able to help inform some of that curriculum where that knowledge could be aperted upon them. And then over and above that, we would continue to support any direct targeted recruitment we can do.

**Ms. Biggar:** Thanks.

**Chair:** Continue with the presentation.

**Brad Colwill:** To touch briefly on the first of the four Rs and recognizing that this, we were brought in for a repatriation briefing; we really feel it's important to talk about the initiatives we're doing to help retain Islanders as well.

At the post-secondary level, we have the fortune of working closely with our institutions and helping, both financially and academically, for our students, through new bursaries and programs like George Coles and Career Connect. Academically, we recently invested more with ACOA on experiential learning and have invested in increased strategic infrastructure at the institutions to provide a learning environment that's enhanced.

Further, for those students who are coming from another country, we've increased our efforts to help them and their students gain more connection with the local business community and make those connections through our liaison officer to help them attach to the workforce and choose to stay on PEI subsequently.

After graduation, we've more than doubled our investment in the Graduate Mentorship Program, which has provided significant benefit for those in that 20-24 age group who are looking to attach the workforce and subsequently stay here on PEI, as well as providing sharing more exposure on the opportunities that exist here.

**Chair:** Mr. MacKay, you have a question on this section?

**Mr. MacKay:** Yes, on the Graduate Mentorship Program.

It is a great program; I've seen a lot of good success come out of that program. But I always wondered how many students a year take advantage of that program? How many

stay with that position after? What's the success rate out of it, 80%?

**Chair:** Mr. Colwill.

**Brad Colwill:** I'm glad there's a (Indistinct) in the room here on this. The success rate has been high. It would be about 80%. One of the more significant tools we use to make sure that employers are not just using this as a one-time hire and then going to another one, is that if they don't keep that employee on then we don't let them access the program again. The intent is to attach them to long-term employment.

**Mr. MacKay:** What is the final number we reach? It's probably different, but on average how many students take advantage of that program every year?

**Brad Colwill:** We're still working on, of course, our current fiscal year. But the last year, I believe, we had approximately 200 and – it was just shy of 300.

**Mr. MacKay:** Okay, perfect. Thank you.

**Chair:** Minister Murphy.

**Mr. Murphy:** (Indistinct) programs to help international students stay here in the province – is that hard? Is it a lengthy process for immigration Canada now to process international students if they are interested in becoming a Canadian citizen working here in the province?

**Chair:** Ms. MacKenzie.

**Susan MacKenzie:** Thank you.

There's definitely a pathway for students now. The federal government has eased that pathway. They can stay and work for up to 24 months post-graduation and many of them do. The liaison officer is taking them to various – right now he has approximately 60 fourth-year students registered with the program. They're doing several networking sessions through all four of the Chambers and getting exposure to employers to try to keep them.

**Mr. Murphy:** Thanks.

**Chair:** Minister Mitchell.

**Mr. Mitchell:** To kind of carry on with the same line of questioning – I recently heard that Andrew's senior home care have hired one of the international nursing students. As far as other employers in the medical field – I know you do Chamber – but is there a specific health-related employers that you encourage or work with maybe for others also to take advantage of fairly high-skilled talent and could stay here too, as international nursing students specific?

**Susan MacKenzie:** Excellent point. We do work with the recruiters in the health department on a regular basis. There's a joint committee, an interdepartmental committee. We expose the recruiter to those individuals and he will let them know who's on the list, where the potential is to identify individuals who want to stay.

**Mr. Mitchell:** So there is overlapping, that's good. That's basically what I was wondering.

**Chair:** Kathleen Casey and then (Indistinct)

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

This may come up in your presentation and if it does, let me know and I'll hold the question until the rest of the presentation.

But when we talk about repatriation and interprovincial migration, I'm wondering, what does your department do to recognize credentials from other provinces? I'm thinking of trying to attract young lawyers to come back, doctors, accountants. What's the interprovincial credential recognition?

**Chair:** Ms. MacKenzie.

**Susan MacKenzie:** We have an employee within our division that works on foreign credential recognition as well as the chapter 7 of the labour mobility and we work extensively with all regulatory bodies. They have the responsibility of recognizing the credential. We have an annual – and in some cases, semi-annual events – with the regulatory bodies to indicate any changes in the regulatory requirements and to help them bolster how they do the evaluation of the credentials. It works quite well, actually.

**Ms. Casey:** What is the length between your department – and I'm staying on the

credential recognition – what’s the length between your department and say Health PEI, Department of Health and Wellness when it comes to recruiting doctors? What’s your length between them and how do you help with credential recognition or do you help with credential recognition for doctors?

**Susan MacKenzie:** We work with the medical society in that area on a regular basis if they’re identifying the credentials. We also work with every single regulatory body tied to the health system. As recently as six weeks ago there were a couple of very key new projects that we were working on to improve their websites, improve their skill set and how they assess the credentials. That’s an ongoing piece. We get funding from Employment Services Canada to assist in that regard.

**Ms. Casey:** Minister, you had mentioned at the very beginning about our population growth and that we’re leading the region in population growth and our population is now 152,021, which is totally impressive to me. Because we’re leading the region in population growth, we also are seeing a talented immigrant community coming with special skill sets that we need here in the province. I’m wondering, does your action plan have a mechanism to link these talented talented immigrants with employers?

**Mr. Gallant:** Thank you for the question.

We deal with the Association of Newcomers and different organizations that deal with these newcomers and that is something that’s being worked on, about keeping these talented people here.

**Ms. Casey:** Thanks, thank you, Mr. Chair.

**Chair:** Hannah Bell.

**Ms. Bell:** Thank you, Chair.

I’ll repeat the same thing – this may come up later in the presentation which in this case, please tell me and I’ll post it.

In terms of the scope of these pieces, for young people in particular, who don’t fit into post-secondary international student EI eligible export-ready business and there are – that’s a large number particular (Indistinct) agriculture sector who often don’t fit those

boxes, do you have something in the plan to sort of think about sort of ways to support and address the needs of those populations. Any other aspect of that as marginalized populations you may have more difficulty in accessing, particularly for instance, people with disabilities or people with language challenges or those who are coming from a position of perhaps Indigenous populations for example?

**Chair:** Mr. Colwill.

**Brad Colwill:** Thank you.

I’ll start with that and Susan may be able to help supplement as well. In terms of the EI eligibility, we are in the process of renewing actually, our Labour Market Development Agreement. With that, there’s an expectation that the criteria to qualify what would be (Indistinct) eligible for that will become much more easy. We feel optimistic that that’s going to help more people fit within that realm as well.

In terms of the marginalized groups, that’s a great question. It is an area where we have created several programs to help, hopefully, intervene at an earlier age to have more time in the workforce such as, there’s the SEAM and STAR programs, we developed, which have been immensely positive. Further initiatives like Propel with the women’s networking and other ones where we’ve been able to provide some of those skills to get to the level where some of the – what you may see is our traditional programs helping. I believe there is a question on the culture as well and the Culture Action Plan is another piece where we certainly plugged into.

**Ms. Bell:** That’s good for now.

Thank you very much.

**Chair:** Okay, great.

Minister Biggar.

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

It’s a bit of a follow up to Kathleen’s question. Specifically, and I know you work closely with the PEI Newcomers Association, but through your recruitment department or immigration side of it, when

you identify someone wanting to immigrate, do you identify their skill level or their qualifications that they may have and match it – to be able to match it to an area that we have a shortage of – it is that specific?

**Susan MacKenzie:** That finite?

**Ms. Biggar:** Yes.

**Susan MacKenzie:** That's an excellent question, actually. We do, we work on a regular basis with the office of immigration and identify skill shortages through our sector councils, all the associations. We meet on a regular basis with employers who are asking for labour, where can you help. If we can't identify the labour in Prince Edward Island, we often do a search on WorkPEI to see if we have that skill available. If not, then we will talk to the office of immigration and say: Can you find us more engineers that have X or whatever, and they will identify that labour and nominate them.

**Ms. Biggar:** Great.

**Chair:** Matthew MacKay.

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

What are we hearing from Islanders away about moving home? When you're trying to get them back to Prince Edward Island what are they saying?

**Susan MacKenzie:** That's another really timely question, actually. We're in the process of releasing a survey. The survey will go out for former Islanders. We're doing it through – it actually will be released this week. I'm probably circumventing a press release.

The survey will go out through UPEI Alumni, which is in excess of about 15,000 members and Holland College Alumni, around 15, 16,000. We have actually in excess of 11,000 followers on our WorkPEI website. We find when we get things out through the WorkPEI website that moms and dads pass it on to their children who they're interested in moving back so we get a lot of response. We've got some very targeted questions on: What would bring you back? If you want to come home, what would bring you home?

**Mr. MacKay:** Just, I guess, I was curious on the average income here on PEI and I've just done a little research here, but it seems to be that's what we hear about. People say: we love PEI, we want to stay but we just can't afford to stay.

Just after doing two minutes worth of homework, basically, I found out where the lowest income in the county and where the highest tax rate in the country, how are we going to get around selling that to get people back here? Like is there a plan in effect?

**Susan MacKenzie:** I talked to a lot of people in the last 10 months about whether they want to come home, whether they're not. What they're really interested in coming home for is what Prince Edward Island has now become. They're hearing that from family members, from friends and from others, the fact that the quality of life here is so great. Even individuals who move here from outside the province, they're here because they like what Prince Edward Island has to offer.

We had an extensive consultation session with the IT sector in the past year. The sectors – the right size that you can almost get everybody in a room and we had them in a large room – and they're bringing people from all over the world who love what Prince Edward Island has to offer.

**Mr. MacKay:** That's the approach.

**Susan MacKenzie:** I think that's how we should sell Prince Edward Island.

**Mr. MacKay:** Final question.

Is there an age group that you find moving back to Prince Edward Island right now? Is there –

**Susan MacKenzie:** It's in the 30 - 34, as Brad indicated on that website. It's when they want to have their children and families, as Brad referenced. That's when they want to come home. The younger group is going away to university, going away to travel and experience the world; our job is to bring them back.

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

**Chair:** Minister Biggar.

**Ms. Biggar:** This (Indistinct) your survey, that pending survey that's out there, we do a lot with tourism on identifying where people are coming from when they do something online, but is there a way – and maybe it is done – when someone is making an inquiry to come or book reservations, whatever, they may be a former Islander just coming home for a visit or whatever. Are we making that kind of a linkage with tourism somehow to say: Are you a former Islander? Do you have family on PEI, type of thing?

**Susan MacKenzie:** We're in that dialogue as we speak. We have had probably at least three or four meetings to date with department of tourism in how they're reaching out to folks, the database they are using, how we can link the two databases because our WorkPEI database now has an option for repatriation so you can check the box and we'll know who's repatriated. We're working with tourism about their database because it's fairly rich as well and how can we marry the two.

**Ms. Biggar:** Okay, great.

**Chair:** I'll ask you to continue.

Brad Colwill.

**Brad Colwill:** Great discussion.

I believe I missed a couple of items on here. You talked about the Team Seafood and the Team Construction and that's certainly a way that we're helping to identify those sectors that have needs, both now and in the future, in attracting youth toward a career they have in showing them that there are career options here and it is something worth endeavouring toward.

The only other point I'll mention here is – and I mentioned them earlier – but in terms of retention, we do have the future council whose opinion we value tremendously. I've had them weigh in and help us inform policy, not just in our department, but across the board where they've weighed in on future policy decisions of different departments.

The increased efforts to retain are important in meeting our workforce and other population needs, but we know we need to go above and beyond that. That's where

recruitment comes in and what we feel is probably the best potential channel for recruitment would be those expats who are living in other provinces, what would be referred to as repatriation. Many of our recruitment initiatives would really tie into that. With the recruitment, I don't want to repeat too much, as Susan mentioned the importance of targeting the needs of our economy and having more of our recruitment initiatives line up with that. I referenced the post-secondary institutions and the valuable work they do in bringing people to PEI and then connect to our community and be able to stay.

It was recently announced in the Atlantic Growth Strategy the expansion of the Study and Stay Program, which will supplement existing programs we have to show international students that PEI is a great spot to get your education and stay, subsequently; increased emphasis on working and attracting the Francophone community; working with our municipalities on various welcome to the community initiatives as was referenced here and showcasing the entrepreneurship options that are available, such as the Startup Zone and other areas that can be of benefit.

Specifically, to repatriation as was mentioned before, we do hear from various groups in our many conversations of what it would take to get someone to move to PEI. The intention of the survey is certainly to fine tune that information and let it be known the benefits of coming back and the opportunities that are available as well.

Further to –

**Chair:** I have a question from Minister Murphy.

**Mr. Murphy:** I could have waited but it's –

**Brad Colwill:** That's all right.

**Mr. Murphy:** I guess it's the back slide on succession planning. I'm just wondering is there much done with that in that regard with the primary industries like fishing and farming? Like, farmers that want to sell and get out and they don't have any provincial buyers in the province? Fishermen, now I notice in my area there's a lot of older

fishermen in their 50s, or late 50s and at some point they're going to want to retire.

**Mr. Mitchell:** Young guys.

**Brad Colwill:** For sure and I know the department of ag and fisheries has the Future Farmer, Future Fisher Program which provides a great channel to be able to pursue that endeavour and as there becomes more awareness of the opportunities that are available.

**Mr. Murphy:** Would that be something though that a migrant would be able to tap into? An immigrant, I mean, could an immigrant buy a fishing gear? They'd have to work, I guess, on a boat for a certain period of time before they would be –

**Brad Colwill:** I can't speak to it precisely, but I believe there are some residency requirements prior to purchasing a license. But I'll have to bring that back.

**Mr. Murphy:** Thanks.

**Brad Colwill:** That's a good question, thank you.

Just to continue with this, to develop the database of Islanders who are living in other provinces who are interested in returning, is something that's been collected through WorkPEI through the repatriation expat option that's available there. From that, we then get the opportunity to not only see what areas of interest are out there for potential people who want to come to PEI, but also we want the opportunities that are here available as well.

**Chair:** Hannah Bell.

**Ms. Bell:** Thank you, Chair.

A couple of things that may be (Indistinct) already, but I'll share them anyway. One of the things is I'd be just interested whether you've considered and probably particularly the repatriation initiatives is ensuring that you consider the impact of NGOs in the working population of PEI represents six and a half thousand employees, it's the third largest sector on the province. It's also a population which is aging, in terms of, particularly where the expertise it. So, in terms of opportunity for enticing and

relocating community-based work is one that often will bring people who want to work in the community that they love doing work that they love. Often organizations that are in that NGO community are national in scope – or have national connections. So the opportunity to sort of include that in the circle of influence is one, both in terms of who to speak to, but also who may come back with those incentives.

I'd really strongly recommend if that's not on your radar that you think about that piece.

Then just my last one, that other one is again, coming with my own personal bias on this, but one of the largest economic development voice organizations is actually the business women's association that has over 1,500 members now. So, if that's not on your radar in terms of talking to you from chambers of commerce, it should be. Again, it's a province-wide organization so it'd be great to sort of see those included in your scope if they're not there already.

Thank you so much.

**Brad Colwill:** I'll touch on that and then Susan (Indistinct)

Absolutely, those are very important groups or sectors and are certainly in within our focus. Another benefit, the NGO sector is – on PEI is a smaller province, smaller organization. So one can achieve a leadership role within the NGOs in a much earlier stage in a career than a (Indistinct) province (Indistinct)

**Chair:** Susan, you have something to add?

**Ms. Bell:** Thank you, Chair.

**Susan MacKenzie:** No, that's good.

**Chair:** Thanks a lot.

We're going to go to Matthew MacKay for a question.

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

Just while we're talking on the initiative; tomorrow night the Premier is hosting an Island social in Toronto for the population

action plan. How many of these types of events do you plan on doing annually?

**Brad Colwill:** Well this one would be one of the first.

**Mr. MacKay:** It will be one of the first?

**Brad Colwill:** Yeah, and it's certainly one where, to take advantage of the opportunity where he's there to work on business and be able to sell PEI in the way that's proposed is something that, if we see the success we continue.

**Mr. MacKay:** What local industry and community groups participate in these events? Are there any groups from Prince Edward Island there as well?

**Susan MacKenzie:** Those types of events or other missions where we go to recruit?

**Mr. MacKay:** No, these type of events.

**Susan MacKenzie:** We do have employers who travel when we go to (Indistinct) who are specifically looking to recruit, if that's what you're getting at. Trucking companies and –

**Mr. MacKay:** Would there be any of them groups tomorrow night in Toronto?

**Brad Colwill:** I don't – we'll have to get back to you. I don't think – it's not the same delivery as one of the recruitment missions or affairs that Susan is referring to.

**Susan MacKenzie:** It's not necessarily the market that they're going for. They're interested in young individuals who want to come back to Prince Edward Island. That's the market that we're aiming for for the event tomorrow night.

**Mr. MacKay:** I noticed in the press release yesterday, I think there was 200 invitations went out and there was 100 confirmed.

**Susan MacKenzie:** Are you getting your information from *The Guardian*?

**Mr. MacKay:** I got the news article. I'm just curious how the invitations go out, like who gets the invites or how do you get on that list and so forth. How do you determine who goes to the event?

**Unidentified Voice:** (Indistinct)

**Mr. MacKay:** No, I realize that, but there could be 2,000 living there, why is there only 200?

**Susan MacKenzie:** Those were the 200 that we identified through significant outreach, in terms of who's out there, who would be interested in coming, who wanted to put their name forward and sourced it from several individuals who knew of other individuals, similar to how things work on Prince Edward Island. Like, are you aware of who's in Toronto? The invitation went out. You could share it around to other people if you got the invitation and identified other people that were there.

**Mr. MacKay:** Go ahead

**Brad Colwill:** I was just going to say if I could add to that, that we talked about the expat database and that information that we're trying to accumulate in the future, we'd be able to leverage that as we continue to build that list.

**Chair:** Matthew MacKay.

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

Final question here; basically a lot of it would be word of mouth from out there. They're talking to different Islanders trying to get them there as well. If there was somebody there now that wants to go to an event like that that hasn't been reached out, are they allowed to go or could they go? I know it's probably too late now just with the timing. Like how could you get more people to that event if there's more Islanders out there, is my point?

**Susan MacKenzie:** If there are more Islanders that are interested in going I'm not sure there's any restriction on people that go. The only restriction I would suggest would be the space that they currently booked, that would be the only restriction. It's not restricted to any specific Islander.

**Mr. MacKay:** No, okay.

Thank you, Chair.

**Chair:** Brad Trivers.

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

I'm just curious about this expat database and how you populate the data and then how the data is accessible. I think it'd be not only for people looking to apply on-Island on the repatriation side, but also potentially people – Island businesses trying to expand off-Island. They want to know: Okay, are there a bunch of expats in any given city, say in Regina, that I wanted to tap into. When you populate the data maybe you can comment, do you just take a list of all the graduating high school students, what universities they're going to and then check off whether they're coming back to the Island? I'm thinking there could be a huge opportunity there, but at the same time you probably have to respect privacy rights to a certain extent.

**Brad Colwill:** That's fair. Certainly to start, it's a self-selection thing, those that are interested in signing up for it would be. Your point about for businesses that are expanding outside is interesting and I'd be interested to chat about that further as well. But the population of it would be based on those that are keen to be contacted.

**Mr. Trivers:** I mean, what format is it in? Is it something that's in the back end of the WorkPEI database or is it a self spread sheet, or an access database. Have you considered giving some sort of open data access to the information? Two questions I guess.

**Chair:** Ms. MacKenzie.

**Susan MacKenzie:** Thank you for the question.

We're very very cognizant of privacy and we have to live by all the federal regulations and acts around privacy. To Brad's point, the individual has to check the box, then they go into a separate section within WorkPEI in the database. It's searchable by employers who register with us. If they're looking for Joe Carpenter, or an engineer or a program or whatever and they find them in that database, and employers that I speak to who use WorkPEI, they feel that they have much greater success in bringing those individuals back home if they're former Islanders. But they're searching the database for anybody who is on there.

You can do a search by skill set and find individuals. It's almost like the hidden job market that they can find somebody easily through WorkPEI and invite them for an interview to come and work on Prince Edward Island.

**Mr. Trivers:** Maybe I missed this, but how many people are in the expat database right now?

**Susan MacKenzie:** It just started in January, that option. And as of yesterday we had 35 individuals who fell into the expat. That'll just continue to grow because it's brand new.

**Chair:** Can I just ask a question now: How far are we through your presentation? We're up at about 35 questions and an hour into the afternoon.

**Brad Colwill:** I still have quite a few slides but I think I can speed some of them up because I believe a lot have been covered by some of the questions.

**Chair:** Just checking on that so we're all aware.

Continue on.

**Brad Colwill:** Certainly, Mr. Chair, if you need any (Indistinct)

**Chair:** No, I'm just making aware of the committee; we take lots of questions and that's terrific.

**Brad Colwill:** Absolutely, I agree. I love the questions; it's been a great conversation thus far.

The last part of our Population Action Plan is on the Rural Population Action Plan, which it ensures there's sufficient and (Indistinct) distribution of anyone on the Island to all of our regions. As was mentioned, our Regional Economic Advisory Councils, we work hand in hand with them. Susan's division has presented to many of their meetings across the Island. The focus of our immigration business succession attracting entrepreneurs to the areas where there are gaps identified and continuing to work with those community partners to deliver regional access of settlement services.

We mentioned about the liaison work that's happening with international students and letting the students know of the employment opportunities that exist outside of the Charlottetown area.

We also wanted to share some of our own data that we've seen, specifically with the SkillsPEI Program, where our programs have been effective in helping clients who are now on PEI that were coming from another province. As could be seen on the slide here, we have 2,000 clients over the last four years we have assisted that have identified their last place of employment as being another province. As you can see, Alberta, Ontario, Nova Scotia, provinces where, if you recall that slide from earlier, where we saw the disbursement by province, there had been more of an outflow toward where we're seeing through some of our programs are helping for those that want to return.

I made reference to this slide earlier so I probably should have had (Indistinct) my apologies. When we talked about the interprovincial migration by age group, this slide speaks to how we've targeted the SkillsPEI programming by age group as well. We see increases in 20-24, 25-29; significant increases over the past four or five years – four years, sorry – which we feel is one of the reasons we saw that improvement in the outmigration of these age groups as well.

**Chair:** I have a question here from Minister Biggar.

**Ms. Biggar:** The SkillsPEI, kind of tying in with our education level, I think there was a recent report that came out that we now have more people than ever graduating from high school, but we still do have that segment that are still struggling and maybe have left the education system, but tying that in with SkillsPEI and your GED programs, or what other programs that people may not be aware of.

**Brad Colwill:** For sure.

**Ms. Biggar:** To get them the skills, I should say, to take other programs for employment.

**Brad Colwill:** Absolutely.

I should speak to the context of this slide here. This would be those programs that are the direct employment programs. Over and above that, we would have our adult education program, for example, that provides the support to get a, perhaps, a GED credential or to get the credits that a student may not have received in high school that is necessary to facilitate that next step towards post-secondary education or attachment to one of these programs.

In addition, some of the programs we mentioned earlier, we recognize that our suite of clients – that not everyone is even necessarily at the point of the GED training or adult ed, so we've done targeted initiatives to help them move along the (Indistinct) and get to that level.

**Ms. Biggar:** Great, thank you.

**Chair:** Brad Trivers.

**Mr. Trivers:** Thanks, Chair.

You talked a lot about how we're trying to attract people to Prince Edward Island to fulfill the needs of employers that are located on Prince Edward Island. I think there's a huge opportunity for people to live on Prince Edward Island and work for employers that are not located on the Island, especially in various areas like – I know accountants that work remotely or software developers, but even people who – there's an engineering group, I believe, over in Stratford that does that sort of work.

I was wondering what sort of initiatives you have in place that target those sort of self-employed individuals especially that are living on PEI and want to even maybe repatriate and move back to PEI, but continue to work for somebody that's off-Island. Are there any things in particular?

**Brad Colwill:** The self-employ program itself, through SkillsPEI, is probably one of the best examples for those who are pursuing the entrepreneur contractor level which provides a stipend for living while they're establishing that business.

We've seen significant uptake on that program recently as well over the past few years which would be contributing, much like the Graduate Mentorship Program, to

some of the growth in those under-40 age categories there.

In addition to that, economic development and tourism would also have a suite of programs that are available for (Indistinct)

**Chair:** Brad Trivers.

**Mr. Trivers:** Is the self-employ program tied to EI eligibility? And, you mentioned there's been uptake, like how many people would be participating in that one?

**Brad Colwill:** The first question, yes. It would be part of the SkillsPEI package and delivered through our labour market development funding. I know our numbers have more than doubled. I don't think I have them here, but I do have –

**Susan MacKenzie:** (Indistinct) the province –

**Brad Colwill:** – the next slide which could speak to those who actually were specifically from another province. Of that group, I talked about that were formerly living out-of-province and have come to PEI and used the SkillsPEI program. We do have 55 of them within that four-year cycle, and we actually have the breakdown on the screen as well of their last province of residence, and I can bring back the total numbers.

**Mr. Trivers:** So N equals 55, meaning that's the number of people represented in that chart?

**Brad Colwill:** That's correct, yes.

**Mr. Trivers:** It looks like it was 55 people.

**Brad Colwill:** 55 people, yes, from other provinces.

**Mr. Trivers:** Just other provinces?

**Brad Colwill:** Yeah, just other provinces; my apologies. I wasn't clear.

**Chair:** Matt MacKay.

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

Just a question on – and I might have misheard it – I just want to use an example.

If there's somebody moving from Ontario to here, looking for work and a company wants to hire them, is that where SkillsPEI kicks in and pays a wage subsidy for the gentleman or whoever?

**Brad Colwill:** Yes, and much like, it could be someone who has resided on the Island their whole life as well and that same support could be available for them.

**Mr. MacKay:** The reason I bring this issue up because I've got a gentleman in my district that he didn't know anything about this; he loved PEI, they vacationed here. He came here and wanted to move here, so he did. He went and applied for a job and basically said: We'll hire you if we can get you onto SkillsPEI grant. So he took it, but the way he looked at it – he said: I should be qualified enough to get the job. The taxpayer shouldn't be funding me moving here to go to work. He made a valid point.

Is that being advertised? He looked at it in a different way. He wanted to be hired because of his skills, not because of funding to a company that probably could have afforded him anyway. Do you see that a lot?

**Brad Colwill:** That's an interesting point, and you're right. It's not the intent of the program – is not to subsidize an employment that would happen naturally. Rather, it's to help those who need that assistance to get the workforce attachment, is generally what it has been targeted toward.

It's not something that we hear often, but I'd be interested to hear more about this situation afterwards.

**Mr. MacKay:** It's not something that the province is advertising to a company that says: if you hire somebody from away, we will get you a SkillsPEI grant?

**Brad Colwill:** The SkillsPEI grants exist for really all potential employment opportunities, and our promotion of it is to provide those to employment opportunities for when a situation where a company perhaps couldn't be in a situation where they could or maybe they're – for example, the Graduate Mentorship Program, we hear quite often that maybe the company is not as keen to hire someone in the younger

demographic because they don't quite have that skill set.

The intent of that program is we'll help you with the employment for that first year to ensure that person gets that skill set and then remove that, so it's more – that's our ideal when we're putting on these programs.

**Mr. MacKay:** Thank you.

**Chair:** Hannah Bell.

**Ms. Bell:** You had mentioned earlier – thank you, Chair.

You had mentioned earlier that there were retention rates through the Graduate Mentorship Program of up to 80% in terms of people –

**Brad Colwill:** Yes, I don't have the –

**Susan MacKenzie:** It's 300.

**Brad Colwill:** 300 is the exact number.

**Ms. Bell:** Okay.

So, when you're talking about a self employ program, you're talking about the people who are in the self employ program who have started a business. What is the success rate of those businesses post-program? Because the point of that is starting businesses that employ people – that mean that they actually are successful here and can stay here.

If it's they're going in the program and we're only measuring that, then I would prefer to know about what happens after the program. Given the success rates of small businesses are challenging enough, are we seeing the same kind of numbers there or do we have any data on that?

**Brad Colwill:** We do have increased data on that. We've actually just increased our own measuring and accountability with – we're doing surveys six months out after the completion and I believe we're just completing our last round of that so I would be more than happy to bring that back to show what it is and what that potential employment is subsequently.

I know by having the conversation, we certainly have the impression that the number of businesses that are remaining in operation is one that, by using this program to help them along the way, it's increasing their likelihood of remaining in business subsequently.

**Ms. Bell:** Chair, yeah I would appreciate that information only because anecdotally, I haven't heard that (Indistinct) so it would be great to get that piece. I guess to follow-along to that, Chair, would be what additional interventions may be required to support the people participating in the SkillsPEI program.

We've had, through the department, a number of conversations in the past about how that program could be supported further and it would be interesting to look at what that (Indistinct) but also what's the experience the participants and what could have helped them more. The Startup Zone is a great example of a program which is offering very significant interventions and the outcomes are quite noticeable.

If we could have that follow up, I would greatly appreciate it.

Thank you, Chair.

**Chair:** Minister Biggar.

**Ms. Biggar:** Just a bit of a follow up around the workforce scan that you had done by region or by whomever. In that scan – and this follows a bit on Brad's question – have you, under the self-employed person who may be a professional working out of PEI, off-Island – have you been able to identify that type of a self-employed person or entrepreneur as part of your scan. They're contributing to PEI by living here, they're getting their salary as a result of being self-employed as a professional here, but they may be providing their service off-Island, but they may be – I'd just be interested.

**Susan MacKenzie:** That's an excellent question, in that we're always wondering that ourselves. Anecdotally, we do hear of cases, but because our source data is either Stats Can or the ESDC data, it's much more difficult based on the national occupational codes you can only see that that's the profession they're in, you can't tell if they're

in export. But we do talk extensively with Innovation PEI who know who are in the export business. I've been keeping a little bit of a list because I want to interview some of these people and do some focus groups with some individuals about what brings them here, what keeps them here, but I want to eventually get to how can we get that detailed data of who's coming here and whose exporting because I think there is a lot of it going on; we just can't tap it down in detail.

**Ms. Biggar:** Just a little bit of antidotal, I guess. I do know a couple of employees that work for a company that's not on PEI, but they're able to be based here in PEI. I think it's an interesting concept that we could take advantage of, or we should be able to hopefully how somehow track at some point.

**Susan MacKenzie:** Exactly, and it was really encouraging again to see in the federal budget this morning about more investment into the Internet which really helps with this. I know the province is really working at, improving the Internet as well. I think that's going to really help –

**Ms. Biggar:** Create an opportunity.

**Susan MacKenzie:** Right on.

**Chair:** Brad Trivers.

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

I wanted to follow up again on Paula's questions and it's something I've talked about in the Legislature before. I think those sorts of people, if you can repatriate them here, they can be self-employed or an employee of a company somewhere else. Really what they're doing is exporting their product or service and they're helping with that trade-in balance that we have.

I mean one of the things that I was trying to do was identify exactly what Paula was talking about there. Those numbers will see, if we gave some sort of tax credit, whether it was through filing your taxes or through a grant, how much it would actually end up costing the province to do that with the benefit.

I wanted to bring that up as an idea of giving people an incentive to live on PEI and possibly even giving companies an incentive to have those professional-type of employees living on PEI. And do it in the form of some sort of tax relief, as opposed to a grant up front, where you're picking and choosing winners.

Anyhow, I guess my question is: Is that something you're actively talking about and something that you're considering?

**Brad Colwill:** I mean we're certainly exploring all options and I agree with the conversation that this is a tremendous area of opportunity. We'll take a look of how that type of program could exist and provide that purpose.

**Mr. Trivers:** One final comment on that. Of course, I'm not sure if SkillsPEI would be the proper area for that just because it's really important, I think, to not tie it to EI eligibility. A lot of these people I think that would love to move back to PEI are again, fully employed, and they're just looking for that little extra incentive to come here. They want to move back to PEI but –

**Chair:** Minister Biggar.

**Ms. Biggar:** (Indistinct) work here, but their employee may not be here.

**Mr. Trivers:** Exactly as Paula said, the minister (Indistinct) – as Minister Biggar said, they want to live here, they want to work here, but they don't want to give up that lucrative relationship they have with their clients that are off-Island.

**Chair:** Great discussion. I think we've advanced one slide that time.

Mr. Colwill, I'll ask you to continue with your presentation.

**Brad Colwill:** Glad to, absolutely. That's interesting, those that would be a continuation of their current employment just in a different location.

I'll touch briefly on – and I think we touched on this already – WorkPEI being a channel where expats can identify where we can then provide that information of what opportunities exist and also learn as we

continue to endeavour to too, what information those expats (Indistinct) return are looking for.

Just to close, in 2016, our projections were laid out for the next 40 years and they're presented on this slide here. You can see the green, red and blue section. The green would be the projected age demographic group that's age 65 and over, those under 14 would be blue and the 15-64 which would be considered the working population would be in red. You'll also see a line going across, which if you look at the access on the right that reflects a percentage. That would be what we call the dependency ratio, where those in the age of 15-64, it's reflected how much of a expectation would be on that age group to provide the tax base for supporting those in the 65 and over and zero to 14, which traditionally aren't providing as much of a tax base of what that would take. That's not necessarily to say everyone over 65 isn't part of the workforce, but just for simplification that this is how this one is presented.

Two pieces present themselves in the 2016. One is that our total population is projected to be just north of 150,000 and that dependency ratio exceeds approximately 75% for decades soon after. One year later we've seen a positive turn where demographics are projecting to be – that dependency ratio which is so critical hovered more around the 65% in those decades where it was concerning. You'll see the total population projected to be 200,000 and that's mainly from the growth in our working age population, the 15-64.

To keep that momentum going, of course we need to continue down the path of our retention and recruitment, and the key part of improvement is that of repatriation.

One final slide before we open up the floor to questions. Going forward, our plan would be to continue these current initiatives that are underway to fine tune our workforce and growth requirements to – as the great ideas were brought forward today from the committee – to ensure that there is the awareness of the areas of those that are pursuing a career on PEI could dedicate their training and attention toward. Continuing to work with other departments and delivery of the action plan, as well as

our regional councils, youth council, and anyone else who can help us along the way.

**Chair:** Question from Kathleen.

**Ms. Casey:** Thank you for your presentation; it's very informative as usual.

My next question; tis the season where students are going to be looking for summer employment. I've asked this question and I've been trying to get this changed. I'm looking just for an update because I've had this conversation with previous ministers of workforce and advanced learning and I just want to see where this is going.

I often have students chat about summer employment. There are different applications for a student to have employment and they all have different deadlines and all these students have to apply through all of these different applications.

For instance, they have to fill out the post-secondary application and if they don't get a job in post-secondary, they didn't know they had to fill out the jobs for youth so say they missed a deadline and then now they have to fill out the jobs for youth application, and then they have to fill out the health futures application.

I'm wondering, please tell me this can happen because it doesn't – is there a consolidated form for students to apply where they can check a box that says: This is my post-secondary application, this is also my jobs for youth application and this is also my health futures. So when people are looking for health futures, it seems that people are looking for health future students, you can pull that file somehow and all those health futures' applications will fall into another file so that the students who miss a deadline don't have to be filling out three and four applications.

How do we streamline it so it makes it easier for a student to find a job on Prince Edward Island?

**Brad Colwill:** It's a great idea.

**Ms. Casey:** It's been going on for 10 years, so I'm hoping that it'll – hopefully it'll take.

**Chair:** Mr. Colwill.

**Brad Colwill:** Yes, you're right. It's a great idea and it makes full sense. We are in an application process for this year, so it's (Indistinct) but it's something we should look into for next year.

**Ms. Casey:** Thank you.

I've been – that question – no fault of yours, but I've been asking the question for probably 10 years now.

**Mr. MacKay:** Previous ministers (Indistinct)

**Ms. Casey:** The previous ministers – but anyway.

I think it's a great idea, but it's got to be easy to do.

**Ms. Biggar:** It may be an IT thing (Indistinct)

**Brad Colwill:** It could very well be, yeah.

**Ms. Casey:** I'm going to leave it in your capable hands.

Thank you.

**Chair:** Minister Gallant will solve that.

Next on the list is myself. I'm going to ask a question with regards to foreign workers on the farms and fish plants and such as that. I know in my riding we have a lot of Mexicans come to work on the farms there. I know in the fish plants we have Filipinos come there, and the dairy farms I know they find that people from India are actually the best ones to work on the dairy farm.

I'm just wondering what kind of feedback you're getting from the employers with regards to sourcing workers. I know some of them get frustrated by times. Some of the workers want to stay here too. Can you just explain that whole situation as to – and really, as what you're hearing from the farmers and the fish processors, that sort of thing about the program?

**Brad Colwill:** No. To even reference back to a slide we had earlier, as our continuing growth in the labour force, there then

becomes the challenges of supplying it, right? That's why we've seen that increase in the need for temporary foreign workers in some situations.

Just to clarify, are you more curious of the need to get them or the challenges of retaining them afterward, or a bit of both?

**Chair:** Both, getting them and then I had a question on – deal with that one first and then I'll come back with the second one, Brad.

**Brad Colwill:** In terms of attracting them, there has to be the effort put forth to try to get the local worker first and then upon proving that, as you know, they can proceed with the temporary foreign worker channel.

Most employers that I know that use the temporary foreign worker as a source of labour have been generally pleased with the work ethic that's come from those who are coming here and there has been an increase in those that have been converted to permanent residency. I don't have that number in front of me, but the office of immigration and economic development and tourism probably can help to provide more of the detail on that but certainly.

**Chair:** One other little question on that; I know I was saying there was a gentleman who had a family issue at home that he wanted to fly home for. The employer looked at buying him a ticket and I think he could have gotten him a ticket for about \$600, but that employee apparently had to go through the agency and it drove the ticket price up to around \$1,200 because (Indistinct) to go home. That was the information, is there anything to that that you know?

**Brad Colwill:** No, that (Indistinct)

**Mr. Gallant:** Never heard of that.

**Susan MacKenzie:** That's new to me too.

Most of the feedback, to your question about employers because I talk to a lot of employers, they're very pleased with them. I haven't heard that example about the agency driving up the cost, but I'll look into it for sure.

**Chair:** Apparently when they went to send the worker who wanted to go home, they had to go through the agency. Anyway, everything I hear from the workers is absolutely fantastic.

The other question was I know someone who was trying to get the – or the employee wanted to become a resident and I think he had three at the time. Two of them, the process went through very quickly. The other one just mind boggling to get that processed.

**Brad Colwill:** It was the same season, too, was it?

**Chair:** They wanted to become permanent residents here and work on the farm (Indistinct)

**Brad Colwill:** Oh, okay.

**Chair:** When it went through the process twice; the first time and the third time was no problem at all. The second person was a headache. I don't have the particulars on it, but I would like to see that streamlined for sure.

**Ms. Bell:** Chair?

**Chair:** I have a question here from Brad Trivers, first.

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

Follow-up on the same vein as Kathleen Casey; one complaint that I get a lot from employers is they would like to start recruiting students now, especially university students, March-April. I know you've heard this before. Minister, I've talked to you about it before. I've talked to other ministers here in the room, and if you could somehow figure out the budgeting so that you can approve the jobs in the March-April timeframe so that employers can hire the students; we'll get better students into those jobs because the good students – (Indistinct) saying the good students, but a lot of the best students get jobs early and everyone will be happier.

I'll just put in that plug again here. I'm sure other members have heard the same complaint.

**Chair:** Hannah Bell.

**Ms. Bell:** Thank you very much for the presentation. It's really great to hear so much progress in such a diverse set of plans.

A couple of quick things; I'd really be interested in getting a timeline from you and the scope of the easing of the requirements for the eligibility for the labour management development agreement guidelines. The other thing, minister, is there have been a couple of really great innovative programs that have been supported as pilots.

One of them was the mentorship program for theatre, which though it does come under culture, it was funded through (Indistinct) department and also the HIVE program, which was also funded through the project. I would really encourage your department to, not only support those initiatives and expand those initiatives, but in the same way that you have with Team Seafood, which was taken initially as a pilot and then really seen as something that was hugely valuable and expanded out because it is one that is done in partnership with private, with federal and provincial; demonstrates the great need, fills that gap – so win/win for everybody.

The theatre mentorship was another great example of that and HIVE was the same, so I would really, strongly encourage your department to look to those in that same kind of context. They may not be in the same kind of sectors, but they have just as much impact in the scale and when you've got, especially in this case, NGO partners or private partners who are really willing to carry the load of delivery and development, it's a fantastic opportunity.

So, just to sort of not let that slip off the radar is my little plug for the day.

Thank you so much.

Thanks, Chair.

**Chair:** Brad Trivers.

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

My questions are along the line of, again, how you're going to measure the effectiveness of your action plans. Again, key performance indicators to measure

progress, really, on the various efforts including the different areas of recruit, retain, and repatriate and then of course specifically rural population. But, maybe you can comment on that, how you're going to measure the progress.

**Susan MacKenzie:** The measurements are in the front of the plan, right on the first page. So, we've been tracking those.

**Mr. Trivers:** Just to clarify then, you're talking about the population dashboard here on the first page?

**Susan MacKenzie:** That's right.

**Mr. Trivers:** So these are the goals one through nine?

**Susan MacKenzie:** Yeah, so we have measures tied to all those goals that we're tracking and we'll eventually have a dashboard on WorkPEI with these measures. We're just in the process of working that out now.

**Mr. Trivers:** Just to clarify, everybody will be able to follow along –

**Susan MacKenzie:** Absolutely.

**Mr. Trivers:** – online and just see how you're progressing towards your targets?

**Susan MacKenzie:** Right on.

**Mr. Trivers:** Great, that sounds excellent.

Along the same lines, you don't specify – I don't believe, unless I missed it – specific timelines for the different goals. You said this is 2017 to 2022, so are you saying all those goals should be complete by 2022? Or are there various dates within that timeframe where you expect to hit the different goals?

**Brad Colwill:** Ultimately, 2022 at the latest is our goal, but we would strive to meet them prior to that.

**Chair:** Brad Trivers.

Good, okay, that's the end of our questions. That's absolutely awesome. I want to thank Susan MacKenzie and Brad Colwill for a great presentation and minister, as well. I

think we had close to 60 questions which shows the interest in the topic.

I was wondering minister, do you want to have a couple of comments to close before we (Indistinct) and part of the meeting.

**Mr. Gallant:** I would, thank you very much Chair.

Certainly appreciated all the comments and the ideas and the questions; our presentation went – it was a good long presentation which was great.

I just want to correct one point and I should have known and I knew it was in the 800-range but I didn't want to guess at it. Our weekly wage is \$848, which has increased. We are a small Island which we can do some great things here as we all know. All this that we discussed today with population and bringing people back, we can all play a role here in this room and all Islanders. As I indicated earlier, there's numerous departments that work together on this and we'll continue to do that and I want to thank everyone for their questions and comments and we look forward to going forward.

Thank you.

**Chair:** Super, thank you very much for coming in and taking your staff with you. That's terrific.

We'll give them a moment to depart and then we're going to continue on with the rest of the agenda just with some discussion on the work plan and priorities on that.

[Recess]

**Chair:** We had an awesome discussion. We're now going to go to setting (Indistinct) work plan.

Kathleen Casey.

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

I did notice that we received a letter from the president of the Stars for Life Foundation, Carolyn Batemen and she has made a request to come in. We all know the important work that the Stars for Life Foundation does and I don't think there is anybody who would discuss agree that this

wouldn't be a priority for us to also hear from their organization. I would suggest that we invite them to come in as one of our first priorities. She's offered to come in and talk about the organization.

**Chair:** Do I take that as a motion?

**Ms. Casey:** It is a motion, Mr. Chair.

**Chair:** All those in favour of having the Stars For Life be the next presentation, signify by saying 'aye'.

**Some Hon. Members:** Aye!

**Chair:** Contrary minded, 'nay'.

Great. We did have a bit of a – as Kathleen has said – some items on the agenda under the previous Chair and earlier meetings, is there anything else on that agenda, set priorities, that we want to put on the list, or any new items, we can entertain that at the present time.

Hannah Bell.

**Ms. Bell:** (Indistinct) facilitate (Indistinct) and it's been identified from the previous work plan carried forward.

**Clerk Assistant:** (Indistinct) Mr. Chair, I might explain something (Indistinct)

**Chair:** Go right ahead.

**Clerk Assistant:** Sure. Just number (5) on your agenda there, federal government tax specialist; back in the fall the committee had made several decisions about the proposed federal tax changes for private corporations. One of the things that – well few of the things where they wanted to hear from a local tax specialist on that topic and the committee did from Terry Solomon of MRSB.

The other decision was, the committee wanted to attempt to have a federal government tax specialist come in and explain the proposed changes. You do have a letter in your memorandum from minister Morneau, the Minister of Finance. He essentially explains the tax changes and kind of some of the subsequent changes to the changes that they decided to do, but he didn't address whether the tax specialist

would come and meet with the committee. I'm just looking for committee direction, if you want me to – or if you want the Chair to write a further letter to ask for that or set it aside, or what not?

**Chair:** Thanks, Ryan.

We will deal with that if that's the priorities that we're looking for right now.

Kathleen.

**Ms. Casey:** Sure, I think that when you've got the federal minister of finance explaining what they've done, whatever the federal tax specialist, he's probably going to explain exactly what's there. I think what we were looking for is obtained in that letter. I would say that our question has been answered.

**Chair:** Do we want to go to a motion on that or do we have a question at this time?

Matt MacKay.

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

I'm guessing – I don't know the timeline – we've probably sent a letter in, what was it, four months ago now?

**Clerk Assistant:** It was in the fall, early October, estimate.

**Mr. MacKay:** We haven't received an answer which pretty well tells us they've got no interest of coming to our committee. I would like to send a final letter and basically just acknowledging that – to verify, they have no interest of coming to this committee before we –

**Chair:** Any further discussion on the topic – Paula.

**Ms. Biggar:** I think, if my memory serves me correct – I know it was a great concern among a number of business people and certainly committee members at the time.

Am I not correct, that some of those tax amendments were amended, if you will, to address some of those concerns from the business community? I'm wondering if the same topic is relevant now, six months later or whatever; I'm just putting that question

out there. I believe some of the things that were of great concern were addressed at the federal level, subsequent to quite a lot of extensive communications with business people across Canada, not just PEI.

**Chair:** Further discussion on it: Brad Trivers.

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

Further to the points that have been made, it was awhile ago when the letter was sent, and although the minister did explain, I think it's important to have an interactive discussion with the tax specialist, as well as with the changes that have been made. I think it's important that business owners on Prince Edward Island – and as representatives of those people – we were able to really flush out exactly where it finally ended up. I mean it's definitely a concern of my constituents (Indistinct). I would suggest that we probably do, as Matthew MacKay said, maybe extend a final letter and include some of that as well. An interactive discussion, figure out exactly what was finally decided on and make sure that everybody on Prince Edward Island understands where things are at.

**Chair:** Further discussion; Minister Mitchell.

**Mr. Mitchell:** If I might add a suggestion, maybe that could happen before that occurred or needed to occur, would be a check-in, you begin with the chamber of commerce who are very vocal on – at one point there. Like water is gone under the bridge on this particular topic, no question about it, in discussions in revamps and changes. If you could do a check in to say: We understand you had a lot of concerns; Do you feel that it's been addressed? Do you feel that moving forward your concerns are a lot less? Before we need to bring somebody in – if everybody now is happy – I think there's been a change in view points on it, I believe from people I've talked to. If we could get some for agreement of that from the chamber of commerce or business, or whomever we could reach out to, just to avoid unnecessary measures.

**Chair:** Further discussion; Kathleen.

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

The letter that was received from minister Morneau on January 8<sup>th</sup>, 2018, I think all of the concerns that we were hearing like income sprinkling, passive investment, support for small business and entrepreneurs, is very clearly laid out by the minister. If we are going to send a further invitation to a tax specialist, I would rather it be a positive invite instead of a negative invite; to say, if we want to have a tax specialist come in. But the letter from minister Morneau clearly outlines the federal government's position.

Just on a side note knowing the Member of Parliament for Charlottetown and all of the input he had through his office on this issue, and the great consultation he had with the business community, there were lots of calls prior to the changes being made and now there are none. So, it's silence; there's dead silence on this issue. I'm assuming that – and I maybe assuming a lot – but from the input before and after the changes, there is none.

Thank you.

**Chair:** Matt MacKay.

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

Just further to Robert Mitchell's recommendation letter to the Chamber. I'm fine with that and as well, if we could just put a letter out to the provincial accountant to come in, just to clarify with him that he's happy with the changes and we'll leave it status quo.

**Chair:** Minister Biggar.

**Ms. Biggar:** Just, basically around that, let's reach out to those that had the most concern here, if they feel that we need to continue to push this. If we are sending a letter as a follow-up to say you know, put it on a positive note that: Thank you for your explanation, however, we would like to have a –

**Ms. Biggar:** – to those that had the most concern here, to feel if, if they feel that we need to continue to push this. And if we are sending a letter as a follow-up to say, put it on a positive note, that: Thank you for your explanation, however, we would like to have a conversation with you or whatever.

But I think first we should talk to our own local chamber of commerce who represent business and, like Matt said, our provincial tax, whether it's commissioner – I know that's Beth – or whomever, was in to see you before, because I wasn't on that committee then; but I think at this time, defer the federal one and go back to our people that were originally concerned and see if they do –

**Chair:** Do we want – is there anymore discussion on what you brought up? Do you want to move to a motion just to clarify where we're going forward on this?

**Mr. Mitchell:** Do you want me to make a motion?

**Ms. Biggar:** Yeah, sure.

**Chair:** Sure. Minister Mitchell.

**Mr. Mitchell:** The motion would read to approach the chambers of commerce, all chamber of commerce representatives across Prince Edward Island, to ask if federal tax changes that they would have been suggesting to be looked at have indeed been looked at and meet their needs as the business community of Prince Edward Island. I don't know how that sounds, but –

**Chair:** Okay, have you captured that?

**Clerk Assistant:** I think so.

**Chair:** Good.

Matt MacKay.

**Mr. MacKay:** I would just like to add our presenters here who we saw coming into that, because he had –

**Chair:** Sure, sure, that'll be (Indistinct). Agree to add that on?

**Some hon. Members:** Sure. Yeah.

**Chair:** Okay. All those in favour of that motion signify by saying 'aye'.

**Some hon. Members:** Aye.

**Chair:** Contrary minded, 'nay'.

Motion's carried

In order of priority, do we want that as our second priority? Any agreement on that?

**Clerk Assistant:** If it's a letter, we can send it straightaway.

**Chair:** No, I know, but to get it done right away?

**Some hon. Members:** Yeah.

**Chair:** Good.

Okay, other topics from the presented work plan previously or new topics?

Anyone else?

Brad Trivers?

**Mr. Trivers:** I just wanted to clarify that. I'm looking at the handout, the work plan summary, and there were three labeled as top priorities: efforts to repatriate Islanders, which we heard from today; head lice protocols in public schools; and then the third one was district advisory and Learning Partners Advisory Council.

So I just wanted to clarify: are those two that are left still the top priorities and then going to have the Stars for Life come in and then go to the federal tax changes? Is that what (Indistinct) –

**Chair:** My understanding from –

**Ms. Biggar:** No.

**Chair:** – today is that we have a new number one. We're trying to establish a new priority list here.

**Mr. Trivers:** So number one is now the Stars for Life (Indistinct)

**Chair:** Number one is now the Stars for Life. Do you want to move the second one? We're going to handle the tax thing through a letter, so what's your next preference? What are we looking for?

**Mr. Trivers:** Well, I would like to – and I realize I'm a sub on this committee – but I've been interested to hear what the district advisory and learning partners advisory councils have to say, and so I'd like to see that stay up there as a –

**Chair:** A second priority?

**Mr. Trivers:** A second priority, yeah.

**Chair:** Next priority?

**Ms. Biggar:** Economic advisory council is in?

**Mr. Trivers:** The district advisory and –

**Ms. Biggar:** Oh, okay.

**Mr. Trivers:** – learning partners advisory councils.

**Chair:** Education, yeah. I think that's a good (Indistinct)

Okay, are you making that as a motion?

**An Hon. Member:** Can he make a motion?

**Mr. Trivers:** I would –

**Ms. Biggar:** Yes, he can.

**Mr. Trivers:** I'm a sub, yeah, so –

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

**Chair:** Yeah, he's a legal member today.

**Mr. Trivers:** I'm not sure if between head lice and district advisory, what was decided on before, if either one was higher than the other, but –

**Ms. Biggar:** (Indistinct)

**Mr. Trivers:** – I'll put – if anyone had further discussion, I'd like input on that.

**Chair:** Ryan?

**Clerk Assistant:** I'll just advise the committee those two subjects were going to be addressed in October when the minister and a couple of staff members were here, to do four subjects in education; but as some of you may recall, we ran out of time, so those two subjects were held over and they're essentially the same level of priority to be –

**An Hon. Member:** So you don't need a motion?

**Clerk Assistant:** – to be finished out.

Also, I'll point out they've communicated. The minister's office has communicated that they're available to come in on March 14<sup>th</sup> in the afternoon to address those, if that's what the committee wants to do.

**Ms. Bell:** I'm sorry, Chair. Basically you (Indistinct) –

**Chair:** Hannah Bell.

**Ms. Bell:** Thank you, Chair.

They could do both in that briefing on March 14<sup>th</sup>?

**Clerk Assistant:** Yes.

**Chair:** My understanding is, though, through the motion made today, Stars for Life is first, I understand this motion would be second, and we're trying to fit them in depending on whether the people can appear. Right?

Yes, Brad Trivers.

**Mr. Trivers:** Sorry, Chair. I didn't realize, I thought we were still discussing the Stars for Life. I didn't know –

**Chair:** No, we already had a motion on that one.

**Mr. Trivers:** – (Indistinct) that was an actual motion that we had (Indistinct) –

**Chair:** We had a motion on it and approved it to have that number one priority.

**Mr. Trivers:** Okay.

**Chair:** Okay?

Minister Biggar.

**Ms. Biggar:** I would just fine – and that's fine – make a note I'm out of country on March 14<sup>th</sup>.

**Chair:** Well, we're just dealing with the priority (Indistinct) –

**Ms. Biggar:** Just if you're – yes.

**Chair:** When the timeframe for those come forward, we'll deal with that. We do have a motion on the floor.

Matt MacKay.

**Mr. MacKay:** Just on the priority, I was the one that took the head lice issue up, because it was a concern in quite a bit of schools at the time. We haven't met since October, which, in the meantime – it was next on the agenda – I have made some process on that, so it's not essential that has to be dealt with now, but at some point I would like to go back to that more for a long-term solution, but it doesn't need to happen.

**Chair:** Well, my understanding is from Mr. Trivers' motion that is in that motion. It will be second on the priority for the meeting today. Scheduling then, of course, falls into place to take care of that.

**Mr. MacKay:** Okay.

**Chair:** Brad Trivers.

**Mr. Trivers:** I didn't actually formally make a motion yet.

**Chair:** I asked you for a motion. I thought you understood it was a motion.

**Mr. Trivers:** No.

**An Hon. Member:** He did.

**Mr. Trivers:** No, I didn't make a motion. Okay, I (Indistinct) –

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

**Mr. Trivers:** What I wanted to find out was if anyone had input on the head lice and the district advisory learning partners before I made a motion, and I am prepared to make a motion at this point, though.

**Chair:** Go ahead.

**Mr. Trivers:** I would like to move that we have the district advisory and learning partners advisory council witnesses in on March 14<sup>th</sup> as the clerk has indicated is possible, and they can talk about that; and if they're already here and it's the same people, then they can talk about head lice protocols. I'd say they should do it at that time.

**Chair:** The motion is to try to make our list of priorities. The clerk will schedule. We'll

try to have it for the next date; but right now we're coming up with a list of priorities, so that would be second priority if your motion – is that what your motion was, what you want your motion to be?

**Mr. Trivers:** I would like the district advisory and learning partners advisory councils to be second priority.

**Chair:** Great. Okay. Anymore discussion on that?

All those in favour signify by saying 'aye'.

**Some hon. Members:** Aye!

**Chair:** Contrary minded 'nay'.

Carried.

Anything else that we want to put on our agenda?

**Ms. Biggar:** Can't we just put the rest on the agenda next time to deal with?

**Chair:** Is that all right with you?

**Ms. Biggar:** Since we'll –

**Chair:** You making that a motion that we continue on?

**Ms. Biggar:** I will move that the other list of priorities –

**Chair:** Stay intact.

**Ms. Biggar:** – stay on the list to be dealt with at our next meeting.

**Chair:** I'll take that as a motion.

Discussion?

Matt.

**Mr. MacKay:** Just more on timeframes.

**Chair:** Right.

**Mr. MacKay:** This committee hasn't met since October. Hopefully we can get back on track and start meeting more on a regular basis because there is quite a bit of issues there.

**Chair:** We'll try to do that.

Thank you very much, folks.

**Mr. MacKay:** Thank you.

The Committee adjourned

**Chair:** Any other discussion on the motion?

All those in favour signify by saying 'aye'.

**Some hon. Members:** Aye!

**Chair:** Contrary minded, 'nay'.

Any new or additional business?

**Ms. Bell:** Chair?

**Chair:** Hannah Bell.

**Ms. Bell:** The only thing to add to the growing and extensive list is to request that we discuss the review of pay scale for early childhood educators further from a request from that group; and it does actually connect somewhat even to the Stars for Life piece in terms of the pay for certified early childhood education workers, so we may even hear about it earlier than that, but I'd like to add that to our list of things to be dealt with at our next planning meeting.

**Chair:** Any discussion on that?

All those in favour signify by saying 'aye'.

**Some hon. Members:** Aye!

**Chair:** Contrary minded, 'nay'.

Carried.

Any other topics or any –

**Ms. Casey:** Motion for adjournment?

**Chair:** As for scheduling, following on the comments by Matt MacKay, we will try to get the committee up and running, especially since it hasn't met since last October; but I'll ask the clerk to work that in, come through the Chair, we'll set those dates and carry on.

So, anything else?

I'll accept the motion for adjournment.

**Ms. Casey:** So moved.

**Chair:** Moved by Kathleen Casey.