

# PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY



Speaker: Hon. Francis (Buck) Watts

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The Legislature sat at 2:00 p.m.

### Speaker's Ruling

**Speaker:** Hon. members, I am prepared to rule on the matter of the *prima facie* case of privilege as raised by the hon. Leader of the Opposition on April 7<sup>th</sup>, 2017.

In his remarks, the hon. Leader of the Opposition asserted that the Premier offered information to the House on April 6<sup>th</sup>, 2017, concerning the decision to provide policing services at a public meeting of the public schools board on April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2017, which differed from particulars as given to the media by the government.

As hon. members are aware, once the claim of a breach of privilege has been made, it is the duty of the Speaker to decide if a *prima facie* case can be established. And in doing so, the Speaker must be satisfied that two conditions have been met:

1. That the matter has been raised at the earliest opportunity.
2. That the matter is of such a character or that privilege appears to be sufficiently involved to justify giving it priority over all other business before the house.

The rules of the Legislative Assembly of Prince Edward Island are clear, and I refer, hon. members, to rule 45(3) which states: The Speaker shall not accept such a motion unless he or she is satisfied that there is a *prima facie* case that a breach of privilege has been committed and that the matter is being raised at the earliest opportunity. The Speaker's decision is not subject to appeal.

Hon. members, I am satisfied that the matter was raised at the first opportunity. The second responsibility of the Speaker is to determine if the matter is of such a character or that privilege is sufficiently involved as to justify it being given priority over all other business of the house.

You will recall that in my ruling of December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2016, I indicated that a matter of privilege is both serious and rare. *The House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, Second Edition, page 141 states: Great importance is attached to matters involving privilege. A member wishing to raise a

question of privilege in the house must first convince the Speaker that his or her concern is *prima facie* – that means on the first impression or first glance, a question of privilege. The function of the Speaker is limited to deciding whether the matter is of such a character as to entitle the member who has raised the question to move a motion which will have priority over orders of the day.

And bringing the matter forward, the hon. Leader of the Opposition stated that the responses given by the Premier, with the regard to questions concerning RCMP presence at the Public Schools Branch meeting differed from details provided to the media by this government. He did not give specifics or offer any additional detail to substantiate his claim. He did not indicate which of his privileges, or of this House, had been offended. Without this information, his claim lacks foundation and fails to meet the requirements for a *prima facie* case of breach of privilege. The hon. Leader of the Opposition has not convinced me that privilege is sufficiently involved or that the matter is of such a serious nature that all other business before this House must be set aside.

For that reason, hon. members, and pursuant to rule 45(3) of the *Rules of the Legislative Assembly of Prince Edward Island*, I cannot allow the motion proposed by the hon. Leader of the Opposition to proceed.

Thank you.

### Matters of Privilege and Recognition of Guests

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

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

Welcome all of our colleagues back to the second week of this sitting and those in the gallery, those watching from home. On this beautiful spring day, the harbours and bays are opening up, the land is getting a good signal about the season that's changing. I'm sure it'll lift the spirits of those in the house as well.

I want to welcome Lorne Yeo, who follows the seasons carefully, Colleen Barrett,

Brandon Holmes and as I said everyone watching from home – notably from my own district.

I'd like to extend good wishes and the support of the house to the 165 Island dairy farmers who are meeting today in Summerside as a part of the annual general meeting of Amalgamated Dairies Limited. It's a great contribution that they make to our province and country and, indeed, they have the highest – this province has the highest per capita milk production in Canada, a wide variety of products and a further expansion announced today.

The month of April marks an important anniversary, and indeed, a centennial for our province. As noted in the newspapers on the weekend with April 7<sup>th</sup>, being the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the last crossing of the cape ice boat service, with a further centennial to come later this month, for the first sailing of a ferry, the *SS Prince Edward*. I'm sure that will be marked. I want to acknowledge the efforts of Danny Howatt and Tom Sherry and Valerie Curtis for bringing this centennial to the forefront and to our attention.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

Welcome everybody to the gallery today. First, I want to give a really big thanks out to the staff, present and past, of DVA for the work they have done over the last while in regards to Vimy Ridge and that battle, and activities actually rounding up yesterday.

On Sunday night I had the pleasure of attending the Canada Remembers Chorus, which preformed at the Daniel J. MacDonald building behind us. They put on four sets in regards to music sang to the last 150 years. It was a good tribute. The hon. member was there and also the member over there and the member (Indistinct) was there, too. If I get into names there, I'll get into trouble.

It was a great chorus and it was well received by the public. They did a fabulous job performing that night. It was quite memorable.

I'd also like to give a shout-out to – yesterday was the first day opening of the new South Shore Pharmacy, which is actually shared by the hon. member's and my riding. Congratulations to Paul and Lisa Gallant for this new building that they put up. I actually toured it when they were building it and it's really very friendly to the area. It's in a great location on the highway and should provide a great service to continue.

Also, I'd like to say, in closing, a huge congratulations to the Charlottetown city police department for the work that they did in the last 48 hours on the announcement on the largest cocaine seizure in the province. Three persons are now being charged and will be bringing them before the court. A big shout-out to the Charlottetown police department and all law enforcement agencies across the Island for the work they do in keeping our streets safe in the province.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

I too, would like to welcome everybody back, and echo the sentiments of the hon. Leader of the Opposition about the concert on Sunday night. It was truly a lovely event.

I'd also like to recognize a fine constituent of District 17, the goose whisperer, Lorne Yeo. Nice to see you, Lorne.

Also, since nobody has mentioned it to date, the fact that we have a world champion here on Prince Edward Island now, Brett Gallant, who is a member of Team Gushue, who just, on Sunday, won the World Curling Championship. Congratulations to you.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

I'm pleased to rise today to further congratulate my constituent, Brett Gallant. The first Islander to win a Brier championship, and also, he is now the 2017 Ford World Curling Champion. He is the first Islander to win a world curling championship with Team Gushue.

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

**Ms. Casey:** I'd also like to send out my condolences to Jamie Hill and Rosemary Compton and their families on the death of their father, and much respected horseman and entrepreneur, Doug Hill. I know, just until recently, Doug, at the age of 91, was out jogging his horses in the early mornings.

I'd like to also say hello to all those watching from Charlottetown-Lewis Point today, especially those at Charlotte Court, Hunt Court and 501 Queen Street. I always appreciate their wisdom and their advice.

Thank you.

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

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

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

I too, would like to compliment the choir, the DVA choir for Sunday night, and Darragh Morgan, their conductor. It was a wonderful display of singing and tribute.

I'd also like to congratulate Ray Murphy on the opening of his new pharmacy and medical centre. The grand opening's tonight at 6:30 p.m. on Queen Street.

I know it's a wonderful evening, it's nice out there, but I don't want anybody to forget the Rotary Radio Bingo is on tonight at 7:00 p.m. on CFCY 95.1. To all those, that are working hard, the Rotarians down there tonight, they're going to be indoors. However, I want to thank all those that support this wonderful community initiative that raises much valued funds for our communities.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

It's good to rise and start the week. I want to welcome Colleen Barrett, who's a neighbour of mine that lived in Mermaid. We lived both in Mermaid, now she's a member of my district; she lives in Uigg. It's great to see her in the House. Rev. Bill Anderson, too, it's great to see him here. He supports us in many ways we do not even know about, folks. It's great to have him here.

On the weekend, I was happy to go to the WI spring fling with a couple of members, quite a few members from the House, too. That was a great fundraiser for the women's institute. And also, the Vimy Ridge ceremony which I thought was very well done.

As we know, the weather's getting better as everyone can tell. I mentioned earlier about the agriculture and fisheries people getting ready. I was talking to the hon. Member from Souris-Elmira; he's pretty well ready to go and I'm sure the Member from Morell-Mermaid is as well. A lot of farmers, too, getting ready – it's going to be fresh food and fresh fish before you know it here.

Again, as the Premier said, the meeting at ADL – I spent six years on the board of ADL. They do great things. They employ a lot of people. We produce some of the finest dairy products in the world and they're processed at ADL and we're very proud of them. I hope they have a good annual meeting there.

And, most importantly, our House is only sitting two days this week and that's for a reason: We are now in Holy Week, so I want to wish everyone the very best as we prepare for the number one celebration on the Christian calendar, and that's Easter Sunday. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

I welcome everyone back to the start of our second week.

I want to recognize a young fellow in the gallery. He's a great friend of mine. His father was a friend of mine, and his grandfather was a friend of mine. That young fellow would be Brandon Holmes.

Brandon, he was – he's equipment manager for the major midget Pride team in Charlottetown, and he takes great pride in his work with the team.

On social media last week, Brandon, he messaged me and said that I was the best MLA in the House that Thursday.

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

**Mr. Myers:** That Thursday.

**Mr. LaVie:** So I messaged him back, and I said: Brandon, you should come into the House someday. He says: Well, I've got no way of getting there. I said: No worries. I said: I'll pick you up.

So, I left my third-floor office this afternoon, and I went and picked him up and I took him to the House in the gallery for the first time ever.

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

**Mr. Currie:** Next leader, right there.

**Mr. LaVie:** I hope he gets a lot out of Question Period, and I hope he continues his hard work with the Charlottetown Major Midget Hockey.

Thanks, Brandon.

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

**Speaker:** Thank you, hon. member. That was a good deed.

The hon. Minister of Communities, Land and Environment.

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

I'd certainly like to rise and welcome all to the public gallery today and those that may be watching in from home.

As mentioned a couple of times, Lorne Yeo is back in the gallery today and it's great to see him. Lorne and I will be spending a little bit of time tomorrow at a breakfast meeting about wildlife and waterfowl on Prince Edward Island. I look very forward to that, Lorne, in the morning.

I'd like to also make mention to a great event that was held just across the street on Saturday night at the Murphy centre: The awards night for the PEI Standardbred Horse Owners Association – a great evening that everybody really enjoyed, a lot of great awards given out. Horseperson of the year went to Ronnie Gass, a member from the minister of tourism's riding. Well deserved; over fifty years in the harness-racing industry, so it was great to see.

On a side note to that, my wife, Bonnie, was the lucky winner of a set of harness during a draw, which I thought –

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

**An Hon. Member:** Nice.

**Mr. Mitchell:** – I thought would surely lead to the purchase of a horse, but ultimately that wasn't in the books for my wife, Bonnie, and that harness resides in the Member from Belfast-Murray River's riding with a young gentleman by the name of Steven MacRae, a horse owner and avid fan, and there was a kind of a deal, I think, struck between Steven and Bonnie that it will go on a winning horse and she will get her picture taken in the winner's circle, so it's all not – it will all work out in the end.

I would also like to acknowledge a friend of mine and a very big supporter in the racing industry, Hugh Graham, who passed away last Friday, and I extend my condolences to his entire family, and another race fan, Doug Hill, who also was a major contributor to harness racing on Prince Edward Island, so to both their families my deepest condolences to all of you.

And as well, today, I would like to say as I close, hello to my mom who's watching in from The Mount, out in Sherwood there. I know a lot of the residents watch and I wish them all a very happy day.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

Welcome everyone to the gallery today and everyone watching from District 18, Rustico-Emerald, of course. It was a busy few days.

On Friday night, I also was at the Women's Institute Spring Fling Gala. My constituent, Jacquie Laird, is the president of the Women's Institute on PEI and when their emcee failed to show up, she gave me the nod to stand in and that was fun. Thank goodness the emcee did eventually show up.

Also, on Saturday, I got to experience something that we've all seen on Prince Edward Island and that's the community support that Islanders give each other when they need to have a benefit for someone that needs the money. It was really a great benefit out at the New London Community Complex and Clifford Chappell was doing the auctioneering – over 150 live items and first-time auctioneer Brian Cole stepped in and he did a great job and I'm sure we'll see him auctioneering at future benefits.

Thank you.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

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

I rise today to speak about the event that took place on this past Sunday. Many of us in this Legislative Assembly were in attendance. Of course, I speak about the ceremony that was held to mark the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of The Battle of Vimy Ridge. In particular, I'd like to single out the members of the Prince Edward Island Regiment and the regimental band that were in attendance; the four corps of cadets from all across the Island that were there, as well. I'd be remiss

if I didn't acknowledge, as well, the various legion members that were in attendance.

The thing that really brought it home for me at that event is the roll call that was conducted – the roll call of 31 Islanders that paid the ultimate sacrifice in this historic battle – was in particular very touching was, there was 31 of the young cadets were chosen to come forward and to read out the roll call. So, each of the 31 cadets called out the name of the individual – the deceased soldier – this deceased Islander – their name, the age and the community they came from.

Prince Edward Island, obviously, was extremely well represented because I don't think there was one part of the Island that didn't lose one of their sons, fathers, or brothers during this terrible battle.

In particular, I'd like to also congratulate Col. Jim Spears and his wife Karen for their incredible organizational skills and their dedication to keeping this, and many other national military commemorative events in the forefront and to help Islanders remember.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### Statements by Members

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

#### **Murphy's Pharmacy 13<sup>th</sup> location**

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

I'm honoured to stand and congratulate Murphy's Pharmacies for opening their 13th location.

The new pharmacy is located on Queen Street in the building that used to be the Co-op grocery store. This is an excellent example of repurposing and enhancing the community. The new renovation is a welcome addition to the area.

This full service pharmacy will also house doctor's offices, with 3 doctors and a nurse practitioner. It will also have a Receiver Coffee bar as well as offering retail products and food market with local bakery products.

Ray Murphy says he wants this to be more than a health care hub. He wants it to be a community spot and a place for the local residents of the area to shop, especially those without cars.

The Murphy family philosophy is to build healthier communities, and I applaud the Murphy Group this effort. They are definitely enhancing the Queen Street area and filling in a void that was left with the Co-op closed, as well as adding value with all of the other services they are offering.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the House of Assembly, I would like to commend Murphy's Pharmacies on the opening of the Queen Street location and wish them the best continuing success.

Thank you.

Matters of Privilege and Recognition of  
Guests (II)

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

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

With your indulgence, could I recognize a guest?

**Speaker:** Yes. Go ahead.

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

I'd like to recognize Pastor Bill. Sorry I missed you when you came in there.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Corp. John McBride generational connection to Battle of Vimy Ridge**

I rise today to speak on how one man commemorated the WWI Battle of Vimy Ridge and paid homage to a family member who fought on our nation's behalf.

Corp. John McBride of the Prince Edward Island RCMP travelled to France and was part of the RCMP ceremonial troop that joined the Canadian Armed Forces in France on Sunday.

Corp. McBride was selected to represent the RCMP due to the fact that he was a generational connection with the Battle of

Vimy. He was one of many that attended the ceremonies in Vimy who had relatives who walked that same hill in battle.

During WWI, 200 RCMP members and 700 new recruits organized as a squadron and served in France and Belgium. Corp. McBride's great-uncle, James McBride of Scotchfort, PEI was one of the brave soldiers who fought at Vimy. James was recruited to fight as part of the Eastern Ontario regiment of the Princess Pat's Canadian Light Infantry.

Unfortunately, his great-uncle lost his life a short time later in May of 1917 while still in France.

I invite all my colleagues in the House to join me in giving thanks to those who currently serve to ensure peace and freedom for our country.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Corp. John McBride for representing PEI and the RCMP in France this past weekend.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**Community-shared agriculture programs**

**Mr. Trivers:** Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise today to recognize the many community-shared agriculture programs in our province, also known as CSAs.

A CSA directly connects farmers and consumers together through food subscription. The farmer pledges to grow food for the community and the community pledges to support the farmer.

It's a direct food-to-consumer relationship, connecting a community with its food source. By making a financial commitment to a farm, people become members of the CSA. CSAs are growing in number on PEI and are helping Islanders support local farmers, create jobs in rural PEI, and eat tasty and nutritious Island food.

There are some 22 CSAs on PEI that produce everything from veggies, meat, eggs, fermented foods and drinks, strawberries, and much more. Not only are CSAs available in the summer, but the winter too, offering fresh, local produce year-round and supporting our local economy.

I have numerous examples in my area of CSAs, and my family just became a member of Debbie and Tara Stevenson's Little Victory Microfarms, which we can see as we look out across the Clyde River valley from our kitchen table, and we're going to get our fresh vegetables and herbs from them this year.

I also plan on signing up with the Sanderson family's Hope River Farm CSA to get fresh chicken, lamb, pork, duck, and maybe even rabbit.

I would encourage all Islanders to join a CSA and support the local economy and our agriculture sector. The PEI Food Exchange has a list of CSAs on their website, or of course you can find more information at [bradtrivers.com](http://bradtrivers.com).

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**An Hon. Member:** Shame, shame.

**An Hon. Member:** No, there's no shame.

Responses to Questions Taken as Notice

#### Questions by Members

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

**Mr. Gallant:** (Indistinct)

**Speaker:** Oh, wait, I'm sorry. I had you down as a response. Okay.

We'll start with a question from the hon. Leader of the Opposition.

#### **Police services review**

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

Towards the end of the fall sitting government released its long-awaited police services review. I think it's important because this issue can greatly affect the health and safety and the wellbeing of our families and communities across the whole Island.

Question to the Premier: What did your tired Liberal government's police services review tell us about sexual assault and violence against women and children?

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

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** Mr. Speaker, the work of the consultants who worked with the various police services across the province came back and told us that we needed to have a more consistent approach or practices among our police forces, and that we should take steps to put that in place, and indeed there are working groups and a full cooperation of the police services that are underway now with an aim to pursuing that, and indeed sexual assault and violence will be part of what is captured by that work.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

Sadly, Islanders are not immune to issues of sexual assault and violence against women and children. These issues have real physical, emotional, and social impacts that affect learning, health care, our justice system, and our workforce.

Question to the Premier and Attorney General: Why didn't your government's police service review look more closely at how police forces across this Island monitor and deal with issues of sexual violence?

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

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** Mr. Speaker, the work of the police services model, as the members of this House will know, was to look at the overall collaboration, effective working together of police forces in this province.

As an example of how that spirit of collaboration is indeed in place, when there were media reports earlier this year about the unfounded cases that were showing up in reviewing sexual assault complaints across the country, I made a request of all of our police forces, both municipal and RCMP, to review their files over the past three years and they are in fact fully cooperating with that.

Thank you.

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

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

#### **Public health and safety issues**

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

To me, this is another major gap in your government's \$150,000 police services review; a major hole when it comes to a serious issue of public safety for Island families and communities.

Question to the Premier and Attorney General: Why didn't your terms of reference for this review look at the impacts of these important public health and safety issues?

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

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** Mr. Speaker, as I indicated, and I'm happy to say – not happy, but in any case – I'll inform the House that we take this question very much to heart in terms of dealing with complaints and of building the confidence and the attention in the community to be sure that we're doing everything we can to reduce the incidence of sexual assault and violence, and indeed what will come out of the work that has – that will result from asking our police forces to

review their cases over the past three years is that the police forces, the ministry department, the centre for dealing with sexual assault, victim services will all come together, frontline services, and ensure: A) That there are consistent standards in terms of reporting and investigating these situations; and, that everything is being done to ensure that victims are being dealt with with the fullness and the full treatment and response that they deserve from all aspects of the public service.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

#### **Treatment of the PEI Rape and Sexual Assault Centre**

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

Premier: Do you stand by your government's treatment of the PEI Rape and Sexual Assault Centre over the past five days?

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

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

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

The PEI Rape and Sexual Centre works intimately with victims of violence and sexual assault and I know they are the frontline workers out there. It is not a crisis line, but it does work with victims impacted by sexual violence, but people who have physical needs, you know there are various access points of counseling throughout PEI and those who are victims of sexual assault should get in contact through their mental health centres or the ER.

But, I applaud the frontline workers and I applaud those women who have raised this as an issue for us to discuss. If we don't talk about it we're never going to address it face on.

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

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

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

The Government Whip used Question Period to blame the PEI Rape and Sexual Assault Centre, an NGO, for not doing enough to support victims.

Premier: Do you stand by these inferences made by your Government Whip?

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

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

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

Our government and our team are fully seized with this issue. We understand that it is something, where every aspect of a service that is offered in this province needs to be supported; needs to be paying attention; needs to be working together, including the members of this House on all sides to reduce the incidence of sexual assault and violence. And to dealing, in a sympathetic way, to complaints that come forward, and to working together through all aspects, whether it's policing; whether it's victim services; whether it's frontline services; whether it's response to victims, to make sure that we're doing the best we possibly can.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

I commend Islanders, who again, are forming groups to support one another, and showing the leadership that one would expect from this government. This Premier seems to delight in forcing Islanders into action and we are, collectively, again squaring up to our challenges in another one of his tests.

Premier: Why is this the attitude of you and your tired Liberal government? Why is this the attitude you take towards vulnerable

Islanders, who need your leadership as the Premier of this province the most?

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

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** Mr. Speaker, let me be very clear about, not only our attitude, but our commitment and responsibility to address and to respond to and to be out in front as a government and as a Legislature and as a people in dealing with sexual assault and violence.

Let me cite the example, which I mentioned earlier; when those reports appeared in the media, starting with the *Globe and Mail's* national review of the unfounded cases. I requested, as minister, that all of our police services review their files, starting with 2014 through 2016, that they have a report to us by the end of March. We're compiling that data.

We have a plan to bring all of those people together, as well as, victim services, frontline workers and our people throughout government to ensure that we're working together with the community organizations that we're giving the fullest, fastest, most appropriate response to people who have – who are victims and who have complaints of violence or sexual assault.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### **Gaps in supports and services**

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

**Ms. Compton:** Mr. Speaker, there is no recognition from this tired government that there are massive gaps in services and supports. Services and supports that we need as Islanders.

The Government Whip stated on the weekend, "I'm not here to diminish the centre, but if people perceive that as being the only face of government, we need to ensure people be aware of what it actually is."

Premier: Instead of using Question Period as an awkward staged attempt at shifting the

blame, why are you not taking meaningful action to address the gaps that this NGO and all NGOs need for their funding?

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

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

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

Let me very clear about the language that I used in response to the previous question, which said that we are stepping forward and we do so with a sense of responsibility and leadership on this very serious question.

In doing so, we stand with and we recognize and we support the efforts of the NGOs; of the people who are providing victims, and frontlines services, and everyone who is working on this issue and the people who have worked on it over decades. This is not new.

There are people who have done some very important work and shown leadership in the community over time. We celebrate that. We recognize it. Of course, because of that good work, we recognize that we can and must do better. We must live up to our responsibilities.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. LaVie:** The 18% showed that.

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

### **Public investment into frontline services**

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

The coordinator of the Rape and Sexual Assault Centre clearly articulates the problem, "We could all use more resources but there's plenty of asks out so there, so I guess it's a matter of government priorities." You tabled a \$1.8 billion Budget on Friday without any meaningful help for those NGOs, and any meaningful help to make a difference for Islanders in crises.

Premier: Why is your government wasting public money on a study, when we all know

what is needed is more public investment in frontlines services for supports for rape and sexual assault victims?

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

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

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

I think it's been said quite often over and over here already today, how much we value the important work that our NGO partners do.

Through my Department of Family and Human Services, we do fund the PEI Rape and Sexual Assault Centre. I was out there. I met with the executive director. I met with the therapists that work frontline services. They give the frontline services day after day, and they are caring. We do respect the work that they do.

Government has committed, on an annual basis, to review the funding that we do provide to our NGO partners. We will continue to evaluate it.

If I could one step further, we've all said here that we can do better as government. Government can always do better. That's the easy one. I think as a society we all can do better.

When we have, when we are still victim blaming, when have judges that say that a woman, who is unconscious in the backseat of a taxi – driver, is able to give consent. Every time we turn our head away when we hear about a victim of sexual abuse, that they have been raped and we ask: What was she wearing? Where was she walking? Was she by herself? We do every victim a disservice. Every one of us in the Chamber and every one of us out there in society can do better and should do better, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

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

**Mr. LaVie:** Eighteen per cent showing.

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

### Increase of grant funding to NGOs

**Ms. Compton:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you for that impassioned response.

We know there are massive gaps, and we know you want to do better.

Mr. Premier: Would you please support a budgetary amendment to increase grant funding to NGOs to make a real difference for Islanders in crises?

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

**Mr. Trivers:** Less talk, more action.

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** Mr. Speaker, we did fund – let me say, the estimates are coming, and that’s exactly their purpose. There will be an opportunity to take a look at that and give full consideration to it.

We did, in early March, fund representatives of victim services, the Crown and of the PEI Rape and Sexual Assault Centre to take part in conference, knowledge exchange, the criminal justice system’s response to sexual assault against adults. We intend for that knowledge, together with what comes from the police review, to be carried forward as we work together to ensure that we’re delivering the best service possible.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

### Support services for victims of sexual assault re: Budget

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

Last week, we discussed the serious issue of rape and sexual assaults here in this province and how we support victims of sexual violence.

Question to the minister of the status of women: Minister, please tell the House here today, what specific new initiatives are funded in this year’s Budget to improve

support services for victims of sexual violence?

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

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

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

As has been noted, it’s very serious that we pay attention to the needs of those that have experienced sexual assault and have the after effects of that. Within my particular department we do work with the NGOs through the Interministerial Women’s Secretariat, we fund a number of grants. I will be announcing those grants from within my department.

I do know, also, that Family and Human Services also support in funding up to \$240,000, specifically for the PEI Rape and Sexual Assault Centre. That is just a myriad of all of the programs that we support right across PEI through mental health centres and a number of other NGOs.

We will continue to work and to support and to work and support with those victims to ensure that they are getting the attention and the services that they need when they need them.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

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

We know that the issues of sexual violence are a serious problem here in our province. We’ve heard it at the standing committee, we’ve heard it at the *Child Protection Act* review, we’ve heard it from community members.

Again, question to the hon. Minister Responsible for Status of Women: Why is there not any new funding earmarked to improve services for victims of sexual violence in this year’s Budget?

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

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy and the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women.

**Ms. Biggar:** Mr. Speaker, again, I will reiterate that the work that the Interministerial Women's Secretariat does from within my department –

**Mr. Trivers:** Is that new funding?

**Ms. Biggar:** – we are not the funding agent for those particular NGOs; however, we do work closely to –

**Mr. Trivers:** My question is about new funding.

**Ms. Biggar:** – educate across government the important impact of family violence and the impacts that it has –

**Mr. Trivers:** No new funding.

**Ms. Biggar:** – starting right at – starting right at our own home level. Our home, our school, our communities – we are all in this together and when we talk about prevention of violence against women and children, it starts with you. We cannot ignore it, what's happening around us in this province, and I implore everyone to stop making victims and revictimizing those who have gone through the experience. I hold up and thank those front-line workers that work with those victims day after day and we will continue in government to support those and to ensure that those services are there.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

### **Public health and safety issues (further)**

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

The minister talks about victims and revictimizing these victims and the minister knows herself, as I do – because I've been receiving the same messages from many of these heroic individuals that are speaking up. Due to the statements made by this government last week, they are indeed feeling revictimized.

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

**Mr. Aylward:** There are many Islanders who hoped and expected that this issue would be a higher priority for government.

Question to the hon. Minister Responsible for Status of Women: Why isn't this serious public health issue more of a priority for your government?

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

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy and the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women.

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

I have been reaching out to those that I have had the opportunity and the honour to hear their stories. Just because I don't put it on Facebook that I was talking to so-and-so and so-and-so and oh, thank you very much – doesn't mean that I, as a woman first of all, and as an MLA for 10 years, have not worked hand-in-hand with women who are in need of supports, whether it is shelter from an abusive partner or making sure that they know where to go for supports. But when we hold ourselves up as the only person who has the right to talk about sexual assault in this province, then that is revictimizing the people who have experienced that.

I, not only as a woman, but also as the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women, will continue to monitor and to work with those organizations across PEI and across our government departments. We work hand in hand to implore and to rise up the awareness of what we need to do.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

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

The Islanders affected by this issue are tired. Tired of no real action and losing patience with this tired Liberal government.

Question to the hon. Minister Responsible for Status of Women: When can Islanders expect to see some meaningful action on the serious public health issue affecting Island women and children?

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

**Speaker:** Hon. Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy and Minister Responsible for Status of Women.

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

My department, minister of family services, and the minister of health and wellness have been working hand in hand across departments to put the Women's Wellness Program into place at Prince County Hospital and in community centres across Prince Edward Island. Not just for medical services of termination of pregnancy, but to ensure that those services are there for mental health, for postpartum depression, for a number – a myriad of issues that affect women day-to-day across Prince Edward Island.

That is some of the stuff that we have done that governments in the past have not had the courage to address across this province on behalf of women. I am proud to be part of the Liberal government that put that program in place so that women do not have to go and get an abortion or other services off PEI and put themselves in danger.

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

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

### **Government hiring outside legal counsel**

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

In section 13.04 of the Treasury Board Policy and Procedures Manual, which sets out the policy for the selection of contractors, legal services are explicitly exempt. It concerns me that something that costs government hundreds of thousands, if not millions of dollars every year is not covered in the procurement policy.

A question to the hon. Minister of Justice and Public Safety and Premier: Is there a separate policy on this and if so, what is the procedure for government departments or agencies to hire outside legal counsel?

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** Mr. Speaker, the government has relationships with a number of outside law firms, and in some cases, those are in fact determined through an RFB process. In other cases, there are standing relationships between a department or agency and counsel and those are built up over time and are a matter of expertise and trust in the relationship – where there are those standing relationships.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

I take it from that answer that there is no policy in place. Listening to the Auditor General testimony on e-gaming of Public Accounts, the thing that stood out for me above all else is the utter lack of oversight when departments contract outside legal services. In fact, it wasn't until the Legislative Council Office expressed concerns about the endeavor to the Deputy Attorney General that she became aware of this scheme. If there had been an effective policy, I believe that whole fiasco could have been avoided.

So, would it not make sense, Mr. Premier, to remove the exemption for legal services and introduce a policy that ensures that the Office of the Attorney General provides strict oversight of contracting for legal services?

**Speaker:** Hon. Premier.

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

**Premier MacLauchlan:** Mr. Speaker, as things have been done, and this has been for some time, departments or agencies determine their own relationships with outside counsel. There may, indeed, be a reason or an opportunity for that to be coordinated through the Department of Justice or the Attorney General and it's something that we are considering.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

As Attorney General, Mr. Premier, you are the chief law officer of the Crown and you have a unique responsibility to uphold the law and to provide legal advice to government. So, you should have, I believe, direct oversight of outside legal services.

Nova Scotia has a policy, which I will table later this afternoon, that requires the minister of justice to approve all contracts for legal services and it sets out when outside advice can be sought.

Mr. Premier: Will you agree to review and adopt the Nova Scotia policy during this sitting?

**Chair:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** Mr. Speaker, I'll be glad to have the Nova Scotia policy tabled and appreciate the hon. member bringing it forward.

I will, indeed, review it and it's something that I'll be happy to take under consideration. I'm not, obviously, in a position to say here today that precisely it would be adopted or that there'd be any timing for that. As I said, this is something that has been given – we've been giving attention to this and there is some reason whereby it might make sense for this to be more fully coordinated through the department of justice.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton.

### **Inadequacies in records management procedures in government**

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

My question is to the minister of Minister of Education, Early Learning and Culture and the Minister Responsible for Records Management –

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

**Mr. J. Brown:** Minister, a recent Auditor General report outlined inadequacies in the records management procedures in government.

Minister: Could you outline your department's records management response to the Auditor General's report?

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

**Mr. MacEwen:** Tell us how good you are.

**Ms. Biggar:** (Indistinct)

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

**An Hon. Member:** I'm going to sit down for this one.

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

Prior to Christmas I was pleased to table the three-year strategy in conjunction with the IT Shared Services and Jill MacMicken, the Provincial Archivist, and staff have done an outstanding job.

We've renewed policy, bringing in legislation, and enhanced procedures. We're bringing in more staff. We're also currently training and are undertaking training in all government departments. We've secured a new site, new infrastructure for storage. IT Shared Services has expanded and purchased more electronic storage. We've very –

**Mr. Myers:** Are you going to follow the rules?

**Mr. Currie:** – that we will be tabling a report annually to update all members of the Assembly on the work that's ongoing with records management.

Thank you.

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

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

**Timeline of new records management improvements**

**Mr. J. Brown:** Thank you, minister, and thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Minister: Could you inform the House as to when it is expected that the new records management improvements will be fully undertaken and in place by government?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister –

**Mr. Myers:** They won't follow them anyway, what difference –

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

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

**Mr. Myers:** More rules for Liberals to break.

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

We've tabled the three-year plan. As I indicated, the most important thing is that there is an annual report that will update all members of the Legislative Assembly and it will allow us the capacity to enforce compliance and enforce the legislation through the provincial archivist. That will be completed by 2019-2020. It's a three-year plan.

That work is ongoing and I'm pleased with the progress to date.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton, your second supplementary.

**Additional costs to records management program**

**Mr. J. Brown:** Thank you, minister, and thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Minister: Could you inform the House as to the additional capital and operational costs

required to implement the records management program?

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

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

We will be bringing a budget forward. We have committed to a few hundred thousand dollars to secure new positions; to staff departments to enforce and to build capacity on managing records.

We have, through TIE, secured a second records centre for storage. As we evolve in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, we've purchased more electronic space through IT Shared Services to manage the volume of records that we have the responsibility to store.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**Senior housing units in Summerside**

**Mr. Palmer:** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Family and Human Services: I get a lot of affordable senior housing inquiries from people in Summerside.

Minister: Could you inform the House as to the number of senior housing units located in Summerside?

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

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

Seniors' Housing Program provides housing, apartment-style, or apartments to low to moderate income seniors across Prince Edward Island.

In Summerside, specifically, we have 186 units available across 14 buildings in Summerside. These range from, we have pet-friendly ones; no-pet owned ones; we have no smoking ones; we have smoking ones. These are all based on 25% of the senior's income, thus leaving them more

money at the end of the month to provide for themselves.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

### **Waiting list for seniors' housing in Summerside**

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

Could you inform the House as to the waiting list for seniors' housing in the City of Summerside?

**Mr. Myers:** There's the (Indistinct)

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

**An Hon. Member:** Good questions.

**Mr. LaVie:** Good question. I knew it was coming. I asked him.

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

At the end of March, the waitlist for seniors' housing in Summerside currently sat at about 245. We do recognize the importance of strategic planning around the waitlist and addressing long-term plans for Island seniors.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Trivers:** Less talk, more action.

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

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

**Mr. Palmer:** It would seem to me that demand for affordable seniors' housing outstrips the supply.

Minister: Could you inform the House of your department's strategy for better matching supply with demand for affordable senior housing in Summerside and other Island communities?

**An Hon. Member:** Excellent question.

**Mr. LaVie:** (Indistinct)

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

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

As mentioned in the House previously, we are currently in the process of a provincial housing strategy, hoping to line that up with, also, a national housing strategy that the federal government has undertaken, as well.

This is looking to align the supply and demand with the current and future needs of Prince Edward Islanders.

I will also say that during this process we will also be consulting and collaborating with municipalities, private developers, our FTP colleagues, towards more long-term solutions for Islanders and Canadians in general.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

### **Review of Island police force cases**

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

In February of this year, *The Globe and Mail* published *Unfounded*, a 20-month investigation into how police forces in Canada deal with claims of sexual assault. The Premier has mentioned here already that his department has asked the Island police forces to review their unfounded cases over the last three years and report back to the Premier by the end of March.

Premier, a question: Do you have all of the information you need in from all of the reviews?

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

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** Mr. Speaker, we had a response from all but one of the police

forces and that is in the works and we expect to have it any day. The intention is to bring everyone together to learn everything we can and to develop some standardized practices as a result of that, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

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

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

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

Premier: What did they find out? What did the reviews tell you?

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

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** Mr. Speaker, because we're waiting for that further report, I don't have all of that information together, at this point. I can indicate to the House is, a) that I'm prepared to share that information with the House when we have it in one compilation. And that there is room, in this area, for some greater standardization, or some greater attention working together to be sure that everything is being dealt with and recorded from an information point of view in the same manner.

This is something that's been coming to light across the country, as police forces have been reviewing the experience in this area.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

### **PEI rates for sexual assault claims and national average**

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

This investigation found that, nationally, 19% of sexual assault claims brought forward to police between 2010 and 2014 are dismissed as unfounded and not pursued further.

*The Globe and Mail* investigation reported that Prince Edward Island's unfounded rate was to be 27%.

Premier: Can you explain why PEI's unfounded rate for sexual assault claims could be twice as high as the national average?

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

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** Mr. Speaker, 27 and 19 don't quite compute to 2 to 1, but let me make the full response, which is: That this has been taken to heart, whatever that rate is, to ensure that when a case is determined to be unfounded that, that, in fact, means that the case should not proceed, or that there is not evidence. That is exactly what police forces across the country, together with the officials from the ministry of justice; from people who are working with victims; or people who are working with frontlines, to come together and be sure that this is, indeed, a situation that is being dealt with properly, fully and consistently. That's exactly what we're committed to in the case of Prince Edward Island.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

Many people, including the PEI Advisory Council on the Status of Women worry that this number of unfounded cases of sexual assaults will discourage victims from reporting assaults.

Question to the Premier: What is your government doing to dispel that worry?

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

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** Mr. Speaker, I think we should all share, and I certainly do, the concern in this area that everything we

do build confidence of complainants or potential complainants and victims to come forward, to seek help, to approach frontline services, and to feel that they will be dealt with properly and vindicated when they approach the criminal justice system, and that is exactly 100% our commitment and our concern, and we see the advisory council as a very important partner as we move forward on this journey.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

### **Reviewing sexual assault complaints annually**

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

The Premier's right, and that's why we're raising this question today. We know that statistics show that only one in ten sexual assaults are even reported, and that's why it is such a concern.

As most speakers before me today have indicated, as a society we face a real issue with how we are addressing incidence of sexual violence.

Many jurisdictions across North America are adopting variations of what's become known as the Philadelphia model. Basically, once a year community members, stakeholders, and law enforcement sit down together and review all of the complaints deemed unfounded to make sure no errors or omissions have happened.

Question for the Premier: Would you consider this type of model for PEI?

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

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** Mr. Speaker, as I indicated earlier the multiple parties who address this issue have indeed already come together to take part in a conference addressing this specific question.

In early March, there will be a coming together with the data that has been

assembled by the police forces reviewing three years of cases, and that is indeed (Indistinct) – that event will itself be an example and a demonstration of what is referred to as the Philadelphia model here on Prince Edward Island, and our commitment is to come together and to ensure that we have consistency and professionalism, and the fullest, most comprehensive, and sympathetic service for victims of sexual assault.

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

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

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

Recently, the Brantford Police Services has become the first Canadian force to adopt a form of the Philadelphia model.

Question to the Premier: Would you have any objections to pursuing a review process for sexual assaults incidence in PEI annually?

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

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** Mr. Speaker, I of course am fully supportive of that and we've already commenced one going back three years, and in doing so it is our intention and our commitment for that to be a continuing process forward.

With the number of police forces that we have in Prince Edward Island, this is a great example and a great opportunity for those forces to work together, to coordinate efforts, to have consistent standards, and to learn – to learn and to ensure right through the continuum, I'll call it, of the relationship with victims, complainants, through to how the communication takes place at the end of the process and the follow-up, that that's all part of what we're working together on, and we're totally committed to that.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

### Citizens' assembly model of reviewing sexual assault cases

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

That's good. The conference is a good start.

As legislators, we need – this is something that we need to give serious thought to. It's more than that. It's a conversation that we must all engage in if we're going to make a real difference, and one of the things I didn't hear in that is that community engagement piece of the process, the Philadelphia model.

Question to the Premier: Would you be open to be having a broader public conversation on this issue through something like a citizens' assembly model?

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

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** Mr. Speaker, I certainly intended for it to be understood that the community is very much involved with that, and as the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women indicated on a number of occasions today the community partners, the NGOs, the people have been working to advance our response in this area over generations, and certainly who work very diligently on this with the greatest degree of caring and knowledge of the community.

We have been working actively with all of those partners and will continue to do so, and that's exactly what we envisage coming out of this three-year review, and we'll report to the House on exactly what we've learned from that.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Speaker:** Thank you, Premier.

Just a few remarks, hon. members, regarding today's Question Period. As you all know, and I know the opposition very possibly were getting impatient with the length of the answers.

Because of the topic of the questions, a very serious topic, women's issues, I – in most

cases, the answers went over, and to be honest with you: I didn't feel justified in cutting anybody off.

**An Hon. Member:** (Indistinct), Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** And I know you, opposition, wanted answers too, because they were good questions and honest, serious questions.

But from now on, I don't know if I'll be so generous.

**Ms. Biggar:** We understand.

**Speaker:** Okay.

### Statements by Ministers

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

### China Trade and Investment Mission

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

At the end of March, the province, together with 21 Island businesses and educational institutions, returned from a trade and investment mission to China. It was the largest-ever Island delegation to China, and it's safe to say that the connections that were made by the team that represented our province on that mission will expand upon and benefit our economy and Islanders in the coming years.

As of last year, China is now our province's second-biggest international trading partner after the United States with more than \$40 million in total commerce in 2016.

That's a big achievement for a province of our size, and we believe there is tremendous potential for growth. We certainly saw evidence of that potential during the seven-day mission. Our goal is to quadruple trade with China by 2025.

The main areas of focus from this mission were food, education, advanced manufacturing, and tourism.

Prince Edward Island is Canada's food island, and more than half of the delegates who travelled to China represented the food industry in one form or another. They

included Royal Star Foods, PEI Juice Works, and Raspberry Point Oysters, among others.

Members of the delegation met with JD.com – one of the world's largest e-commerce sites with almost 300 million users – and Alibaba.com, one of the world's largest online retail sites with almost 500 million users. Those meetings explored opportunities for Island companies, especially in the food and travel business.

The delegation wrapped up the mission with a visit to a Cows store in Beijing, of which there are now four. Since 2014, Cows has been serving premium quality ice cream, made in Prince Edward Island, imported to China.

During the mission, Cows confirmed of a partnership to take their stores to multiple sites operated in Western China by the largest cultural tourism operator in that part of the country.

Delegates were also able to scope out new opportunities in the area of advanced manufacturing. A great example is Aspin Kemp and Associates in partnership with COSCO Shipping Corporation – one of the largest shippers in China – who agreed to jointly pursue the development of advanced power and propulsion technologies in the marine and oil and gas sectors.

Lennie MacAusland from A1 Filters says the mission was very successful for his company, and he expects to start shipping product to China in the very near future.

The Minister of Economic Development and Tourism met with dozens of Chinese travel media and tour operators in both Beijing and Shanghai.

A tour operator from PEI, Frank Chen, who specializes in Chinese tourism was on the mission and will have his tour packages on Alibaba.com for the 2017 season.

There were also significant successes in China in the field of education. The University of Prince Edward Island and Holland College signed agreements to develop joint ventures and programs to exchange researchers, faculty, and students

with their fellow Chinese colleges and universities.

Dr. Sandy MacDonald, Holland College's vice president of academic and applied research, says the mission helped the school deepen and enhance its existing partnership programs as well as network and begin discussions with potential new partners.

There were many other business and educational development meetings held over the course of the mission, and I am confident that over the coming weeks and months we will see these meetings bear fruit.

The partnerships that we have made in China will help to further expand markets for Prince Edward Island products and make us more prosperous, demonstrating that we are a mighty Island that knows how to compete on the world stage.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Speaker:** Responding to the Premier's statement will be the hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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

I believe that China offers our province exceptional opportunities, for growth for our industries. I'm pleased to see the long list of businesses that took part in this recent trip.

But, I have a concern that our Premier feels it necessary to go globetrotting around the world when we have so many issues that are requiring leadership in this province.

I believe today's Question Period, which related to the department of justice and action on the issue of unfounded sexual assaults and the desperate need for improved services for Islanders, both in terms of our police services and our health services, is a matter that requires the minister's attention.

This is very serious, and once again, it is groups like Island Mothers Helping Mothers who are providing the help to Islanders who have been sexually assaulted, in the absence of help from our government.

This group has over 4,000 members. Right now, Island women and children are being denied the help they need to deal with sexual assault. Our hospitals are not equipped rape kits. Victims are being told to wait for a call back when they have access to the rape and sexual assault centres. The wait times for accessing counseling services are simply not acceptable.

I'm not going to go into all of the concerns that we have in health care –

**Ms. Biggar:** It's different –

**Leader of the Opposition:** – the lack of –

**Ms. Biggar:** – that's (Indistinct)

**Leader of the Opposition:** – affordable housing and issues like the lack of job creation strategy because it would take too long.

Perhaps, it's time for the Premier to focus on his own province and try and address the many concerns of Island families.

Islanders are looking for leadership and thus have been missed under this Premier's government. Again, I wish all those Island businesses that took part in this great successful trip all success in the world. We need our industries and businesses to prosper and to grow our economy.

I am confident that our business community can compete in any market out there.

Thank you.

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

**Speaker:** Next, responding to the Premier's statement will be the hon. Leader of the Third Party.

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

I spoke last week about the concerns that I have with our province pursuing an economic policy that relies so heavily on exports, because as long as we're dependent on distance markets and a small number of purchasers we are going to be vulnerable both in terms of pricing and also in terms of contractual stability.

China, in particular, if you look at the macroeconomics of China, while, certainly, it has enjoyed a world-leading place in terms of economic growth for a long time, there are signs that stormy days are ahead for China. Their debt load is now 255% of GDP and they've managed to maintain growth only by going further into debt.

The *Financial Times* of London has stated that, and I quote: China faces stagnation or crisis. Although things are somewhat better now than they were a year ago when the stock market collapsed and the value of the Yuan also collapsed, I think that we need to be careful of having hopes of quadrupling our exports. I think we need to pursue, if we want to nurture a more stable and sustainably prosperous Island economy, I think we should be looking to build local and regional markets, and not putting such an emphasis on distant and rather unstable situations.

**Ms. Biggar:** (Indistinct)

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

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

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

### **Food Security and Food Education Program**

**Mr. McIsaac:** Thank you very much –

**Ms. Biggar:** (Indistinct) fish plants.

**Mr. McIsaac:** – Mr. Speaker.

Today, I would like to provide the House with more details about my department's new Food Security and Food Education Program that was announced Friday as part of the 2017-2018 Budget.

The program is intended to help Islanders access fresh, local food products, while also building awareness about where our food comes from, how it's produced and its nutritional values. We see community organizations, our primary industries, municipalities, farmers' markets, schools and the child care centres taking the lead on initiatives with provincial support.

We are fortunate to live in a part of the world that offers great opportunities to produce and harvest fresh, high quality, nutritious food. Our cold, clean water is the ideal environment for our fishers to harvest the highest quality seafood in the world, and our aquaculture companies to produce product second-to-none. Our rich red soil is the perfect incubator for the fresh agricultural products.

Unfortunately, for various reasons, not all Islanders have access to local food. We want to help reduce these barriers. At the same time, we want Islanders to think about where their food is produced and harvested. It isn't in the local grocery store. It comes from rural communities across our province and from hardworking farming and fishing families who pride themselves on producing and harvesting foods of the highest quality. The Food Security and the Food Education Program will also support a pilot project in schools to increase food education and access to local food products.

**Ms. Biggar:** Great.

**Mr. McIsaac:** This work with a partnership with the Departments of Agriculture and Fisheries, Health and Wellness, Education, Early Learning and Culture, as well as the Public Schools Branch and home and school associations.

Islanders are the best ambassadors for our food product and we are at our best when we work together as a province to share the story of Canada's Food Island.

I look forward to the work that we can do together.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Speaker:** Responding to the minister's statement will be the hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

**Mr. Trivers:** Mr. Speaker, today in my member's statement, in fact, I talk about community-supported agriculture. In fact, these are the efforts of Islanders to connect consumers with locally-produced foods. It's good to hear that the government is finally stepping up in this area.

I'm glad there is going to be a pilot done with schools, but the statement from the minister is short on a lot of details. As I always say, the devil is in the details. I do hope that this program does truly engage local farmers the way the minister lays it out.

I know that what we have seen from this government so far is really –

**Mr. LaVie:** (Indistinct)

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

**Mr. Trivers:** – they're not leading the way they could with the purchasing of local food. For example, last year, I brought up in this House how Health PEI names national and international –

**Ms. Biggar:** There it is.

**Mr. Trivers:** – brands in the provincial protein tender.

Do you think we saw any change from this government? Do you think that the Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy went to the minister of health and said: Look, you need to do this because Health PEI needs to buy local –

**Mr. LaVie:** No.

**Mr. Myers:** No.

**Mr. Trivers:** – No, not at all.

In fact –

**Ms. Compton:** (Indistinct)

**Mr. Trivers:** – when you look at the provincial protein tender –

**Mr. MacDonald:** Close the –

**Mr. Trivers:** – this year –

**Mr. MacDonald:** – bridge. Don't let anybody in. Close the bridge.

**Mr. Trivers:** – we see it this year. It's the exact same –

**Ms. Biggar:** (Indistinct)

**Mr. Trivers:** – international and national brands listed.

You're going to go to our schools –

**Mr. Myers:** You're against local.

**Mr. Trivers:** You're going to have a pilot program –

**Mr. Myers:** You're against local.

**Mr. Trivers:** – to try and connect students with local food, and at the same time, government is not even buying locally. It doesn't make any sense.

I went into a store the other day. It was one of the large stores we have on our Island, a large store a big chain. I was in the meat section and I was looking at beef. And I said, to the helper, I said: I can't tell which beef here is from the Island, and can you find out for me? Oh, yeah: I'll go check into that. He came back, he said: I'm sorry to tell you sir, not a single piece of beef in this store is from Prince Edward Island –

**Mr. Myers:** Oh, Shame!

**Ms. Biggar:** Baloney! (Indistinct) Baloney!

**Mr. LaVie:** Oh!

**Mr. Trivers:** So what you're going to do –

**Ms. Biggar:** That (Indistinct) baloney!

**Mr. Trivers:** You're going to have –

**Mr. LaVie:** Oh!

**Mr. Trivers:** This is not baloney. This actually happened the other day. It's near your district there, Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy, I hate to tell you.

Minister, here we have a pilot program going into the schools to connect people with local food, and when you go to the grocery store you can't even buy it –

**Ms. Biggar:** (Indistinct)

**Mr. LaVie:** Oh!

**Mr. Trivers:** – I mean this is crazy. This government has to address thing.

**Ms. Biggar:** Sobeys (Indistinct) contract (Indistinct)

**An Hon. Member:** Go to the Co-op (Indistinct)

**Ms. Biggar:** (Indistinct) school (Indistinct)

**Mr. Trivers:** Here's an idea –

**Mr. Aylward:** (Indistinct) Souris (Indistinct) closed.

**Ms. Biggar:** (Indistinct)

**Mr. Trivers:** – for you –

**Speaker:** Order, order!

**Mr. Trivers:** I would like to see this government, as part of the food security initiatives and food sovereignty as well, take some of the social assistance programs we have and use the money given out on social assistance –

**Ms. Biggar:** (Indistinct)

**Mr. Trivers:** – as credits that can be used to community-supported agriculture –

**Mr. LaVie:** Good idea.

**Mr. Trivers:** Now, that would be a way that would get local food –

**Ms. Biggar:** I don't know.

**Mr. Trivers:** – from farmers directly into consumers' hands. Healthy food to people that need it most.

I'm afraid that if this government doesn't step up soon we're going to have people on this Island that are going to be forced to, I hate to say it, eat crow.

Thank you.

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

**Ms. Biggar:** Lots of baloney over there.

**Mr. LaVie:** Lots of crow over there.

**Mr. Trivers:** Not a word of a lie –

**Speaker:** Next –

**Mr. Trivers:** – it's all true.

**Speaker:** Order!

The hon. –

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

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

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

There are lovely things about this statement. I want to acknowledge a couple of things: Firstly, that this initiative is working across departmental boundaries, as the minister said. It involves social services, it involves education, it involves agriculture, it involves health and wellness, Public Schools Branch, and we need always need to be thinking more in this collaborative way.

When Tony Geraci was here last fall talking about this and explaining all the benefits that could accrue to the Island – economic benefits, health benefits, educational benefits, environmental benefits – it just seemed like a no-brainer that we go ahead with this.

I'm glad that government is going to pursue this. I understand this is just a pilot. I'm sure there are many barriers in the way in order to make this a program which will cover every Island school from tip-to-tip. But if Tony Geraci can do this with 90,000 students in Baltimore – in the city of Baltimore – surely on the Food Island, with less than 20,000 students in all of our schools, we can muster the energy, and the will, and the vision to do this. I hope this pilot project goes on to be a project that we can embrace from tip-to-tip.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

### **Canadian Free Trade Agreement in Toronto**

**Mr. MacDonald:** On Friday, I had the honour of representing the Province at the unveiling of the new Canadian Free Trade Agreement in Toronto. I'm pleased to say that this historic agreement is tremendous news for Prince Edward Island and our entrepreneurs across all sectors of our economy. It will make it easier to get Island products to markets in other Canadian provinces by creating new rules and provisions that open up domestic trade in goods and services. This is especially critical to our agricultural and fisheries sectors, which export a large percentage of their goods across Canada.

Rodney Dingwell from the PEI Potato Board says the new regulatory reconciliation process will eventually make it easier and less costly to move products across provincial and territorial borders.

Our emerging industries like aerospace, bio-science, advanced marine technology, green technology, IT, and manufacturing also stand to benefit from this agreement. Kirk MacKinnon from MacDougall Steel Erectors says the new agreement will put that company on a level playing field when bidding for large public-sector contracts in other provinces, but especially in Alberta where MSE does a large percentage of its business.

There will be increased opportunities for Island companies in large infrastructure and energy contracts, and in professional services such as engineering and architecture. Greg MacDonald from Harbourside Engineering says his firm will benefit from having greater opportunities to compete for contracts in other jurisdictions.

The new agreement also provides dispute resolution mechanisms to ensure that the small and medium-sized businesses can challenge any issue that may arise when competing for public sector contracts. This is important because it helps ensure that all companies are treated fairly – no matter their home province.

This new Canadian Free Trade Agreement levels the playing field so the rest of Canada can easily see how mighty Prince Edward Island companies can be.

I look forward to continued positive discussions between the provinces, territories and the federal government.

Thank you Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**Mr. MacKay:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Certainly a great announcement – so many successful businesses on PEI right now that this is going to help out. We see it year after year, businesses growing. They're certainly part of the backbone of Prince Edward Island. I think it's great news – the announcement from the minister – and I'm not going to say anything negative at all. I'm scared I'm going to upset the transportation minister even more. I haven't seen her this fired up in 18 months I've been elected so I'm going to keep my comments short.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** Order, order!

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

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** Thanks Mr. Speaker.

Indeed this is good news and the agreement that was penned on Friday is far, far better than its predecessor – the agreement on internal trade which dates back to, I think, 1995. This is a far more comprehensive agreement, includes far more sectors than the previous agreement.

As I was saying earlier in my response to the previous minister's statement, I would far better see trade amongst ourselves in Canada here than far-flung, unsteady, wobbly markets. From that perspective, I think this is a good thing.

Unfortunately, this agreement is carrying on the century and a half of debate and acrimony about the availability of alcohol across the Canada, which continues to be excluded. When I think of the great wineries, and distilleries, and breweries that we have on Prince Edward Island that are being excluded from neighboring markets –

that saddens me a lot. I'm disappointed that no agreement could be reached on that.

Finally, I have to mention this because in terms of internal trade, we have some inconsistent regulations and standards and particularly when it comes to organic certification. Here on Prince Edward Island, we have no policy on what organic means. So, therefore, it's essentially unregulated here on Prince Edward Island and I know organic producers here are upset that there is sometimes misuse and abuse of that terminology. And now we open ourselves up – without any regulations here on Prince Edward Island – to food from off our shores, which can claim to be organic. I think that's a real big problem here on Prince Edward Island and I hope that that is resolved very soon.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

### **Home Energy Low-income Program - HELP**

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

Mr. Speaker, our government is strongly committed to help all Islanders to conserve energy and save money on their energy bills. That is the key objective of the new energy strategy which is aimed at reducing energy use, increasing the production of renewable energy and moderating future price increases.

As part of that strategy, through efficiencyPEI, we are relaunching the Home Energy Low-income Program called HELP. The program provides a free weatherization service to low-income Islanders. That includes having a tradesperson install caulking, weather-stripping and other air sealing measures. It also offers a free programmable thermostat, a low-flow shower head, LED light bulbs and a voucher for furnace cleaning.

Since the inception of the program, 3,800 Island households have been assisted in reducing their energy costs. The average household can save in the area of \$250 a

year, while providing more comfort and reducing environmental impacts. All those who pay for heat and lights, including renters are eligible.

Today I'm pleased to announce a key measure that will improve the effectiveness of the HELP program. The program will now be open to all households with incomes of less than \$50,000.

**An Hon. Member:** Great.

**Ms. Biggar:** Previously, those households with incomes – had to be less than \$35,000 to be eligible.

**An Hon. Member:** Good.

**Ms. Biggar:** This will allow approximately 9,000 more households to access the HELP program.

In addition to the changes to HELP, we are changing the way clients access our rebate programs. Previously, clients had to pay the contractor for the full amount and then submit a receipt to efficiencyPEI for payment. In the future, efficiencyPEI will pay the rebate directly to the contractor, making it easier and for residents to access the program.

At the same time, we are increasing our collaboration with the Department of Family and Human Services, which offers renovation programs to low-income Islanders and low-income seniors. This will help ensure that efficiency measures will be incorporated into renovation projects.

We will continue to work closely with all Islanders to help them save energy and put money back in their pockets.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

As you all recall, over here on this side, the opposition has been pushing on government to do some of those exact measures for a long time – where people couldn't afford to

get any of the retrofits done to their home because they had to first pay up front. So, I want to congratulate, first, the opposition for the great work they did holding government accountable.

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

**Ms. Biggar:** (Indistinct) the program.

**Speaker:** Order, order!

**Mr. Myers:** Government has done a lot to make Islanders poor and this minister of transportation has been involved with that for 10 years. Islanders have been getting continually poorer under this government. For 10 years now, this government has allowed electricity rates to go through the roof. This government has allowed the costs to run a home to go through the roof because you brought in things like HST. You haven't taken the basic exemption up until the last two years. You've let Islanders become poorer in their own homes. You've made it so Islanders can't afford to leave their homes. You made it so Islanders can hardly afford to eat and you've made it so Islanders can't afford to heat their homes.

**Ms. Compton:** You're going to get a tube of caulking. A tube of caulking.

**Mr. Myers:** So it's high time you give them a tube of caulking to put around their windows so they don't freeze to death at night.

You shouldn't be congratulating yourself because you finally realized that Islanders are freezing to death under your watch for 10 years of reckless spending and raising taxes and forcing Islanders by the baleful to show up at the food bank to eat, because they can no longer afford to buy groceries under your rule.

No pats on the back for you today. You should be embarrassed for starving Islanders for 10 years.

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

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

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

I'm going to respond directly to the statement and say –

**Ms. Biggar:** The same way?

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** No, not at all.

When we do this, this is the gift that keeps on giving because, it not only provides immediate savings for the families for whom we provide it, but for year after year – \$250, I heard you say, on average per year. There are two good things about this that I heard: One is raising the limit to \$50,000, which will include thousands more Islanders who will become eligible for this. But I should say of the 9,000 Islanders who were previously eligible when the ceiling was at \$35,000, less than half of them actually accessed that program. I hope there is a good uptake on this and that all of the new Islanders who are eligible for this program are made aware of that and that they have a chance to do it.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

Presenting and Receiving Petitions

Tabling of Documents

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** Mr. Speaker, by Command of His Honour the Lieutenant Governor, I beg leave to table Orders in Council required pursuant to Section 5 of the *Public Departments Act* since my last report and I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Finance, that the said document be now received and do lie on the Table.

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

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

**Mr. Currie:** Mr. Speaker, by leave of the House, I beg leave to table the answers to written questions Nos. 634 through 717 and I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Economic Development and Tourism, that the said document be now received and do lie on the Table.

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

**Mr. Currie:** And that's your Question Period for the next month.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

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

Mr. Speaker, by leave of the House, I beg leave to table eight written questions related to the Strength Program and I move, seconded by the Honourable Member from Kensington-Malpeque, that the said document be now received and do lie on the Table.

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

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

The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

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

By leave of the House, I beg leave to table the Nova Scotia policy on approval and acquisition of private legal services as I reference earlier today in Question Period and I move, seconded by the Honourable Member from Tignish-Palmer Road, that the said document be now received and do lie on the Table.

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

Reports by Committees

Introduction of Government Bills

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce a bill to be intituled *Appropriation Act (Current Expenditures) 2017* and I move, seconded by the Honourable Member from West Royalty-Springvale, that the same be now received and read a first time.

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

**Clerk:** *Appropriation Act (Current Expenditures) 2017*, Bill No. 68, read a first time.

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

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

This bill seeks approval for the legislative authority to spend the monies tabled in the Budget that we tabled last week on the 7<sup>th</sup> of April.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.  
Government Motions

Orders of the Day (Government)

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

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

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

**Clerk:** Order No. 1, Consideration of the Estimates, in Committee.

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

**Mr. McIsaac:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Premier, that this House do now resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole House to take into consideration the grant of supply to Her Majesty.

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

I will now ask the hon. Member from Charlottetown-Lewis Point to come and Chair the Committee of the Whole House.

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

Hon. members, we're on page 22.

Minister, do you wish to take somebody on the floor with you?

**Mr. McIsaac:** Yes, can I ask Mary Kinsman to come forward please.

**Chair:** Thank you. Permission for a stranger to come to the floor?

**Some Hon. Members:** Granted.

**Chair:** Thank you.

**Mr. Aylward:** Chair?

**Chair:** Yes?

**Mr. Aylward:** Just before we start on this department, I'm wondering if there are any handouts –

**Mr. McIsaac:** We have them all, yes. We'll get them for you.

**Chair:** We'll let the stranger come to the floor. Thank you.

Good afternoon. Could you please introduce yourself and your position for the records?

**Mary Kinsman Director:** Mary Kinsman, Director of Finance at the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries.

**Chair:** Thank you.

Minister, an opening statement?

**Mr. McIsaac:** Please, yes.

I just want to give a little bit of a brief review of what our department is doing, so just a couple of pages here; I'll whip through it.

It gives me great pleasure to present the budget of the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries.

Our primary industries of agriculture, aquaculture, and the fisheries are important economic drivers for our province.

The integrated nature of our province means that when our primary industries are doing well, the entire province benefits.

**Mr. R. Brown:** Right on.

**Mr. McIsaac:** The member from downtown Charlottetown says that on a regular basis.

Our Island's beef industry is seeing strong prices, even with a larger supply, which speaks to the strong demand for Island beef.

The dairy industry is seeing record milk production because of the demand for butter.

Our oyster industry is seeing exponential growth opportunities.

The Island's lobster fishers, while seeing smaller landings last year, have seen an increased price per pound.

We are seeing interest in new crop production, such as highbush blueberries and pulses.

Recognizing the importance of our primary industries, our government will continue to support the growth and development of the sector. I'm pleased to see that our budget reflects an enabling and encouraging tone that will allow us to continue to proudly support our Island fishers and farmers.

As you will see, approximately 67% of the department's budget goes towards the delivery of programs and services to the primary industries of agriculture, aquaculture and fisheries.

Through Growing Forward 2, our agriculture industry has been able to leverage \$163 million over the last five years. Of that, \$37 million has gone to non-business risk management programming to increase stewardship practices; research; innovation; competitiveness, and market development.

Department staff helps industry to develop projects and offer support throughout the venture. While Growing Forward 2 is a five-year funding commitment, the dollar value expended each year fluctuates depending on the project uptake.

This means that money earmarked for one year that is not used can be carried over to the next. It also means that if there is a strong demand in that particular year, money can be pulled forward from upcoming years. This fluctuation ensures that every dollar is spent.

We have had great uptake in our programs and the benefits are being seen right across the province.

Growing Forward 2 ends March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2018. Department staff is working diligently with the federal government and our industry to ensure that the next policy framework works for Prince Edward Island's needs.

I want to recognize the level of engagement we have seen from industry throughout the program evaluation and consultation process. This will guarantee a framework that maximizes opportunities for the Island's industry.

The department has a strong staff complement of biologists; soil scientists; engineers, and technical staff supporting the Island's primary industries through programs such as; the Agriculture Stewardship Program; Aquaculture Futures Program, and monitoring programs for lobsters, oysters and mussels.

We also have a nationally accredited state of the art lab that supports the needs of our primary industries.

Restructuring of the department's divisions in the past year has allowed for greater collaboration between agriculture and fisheries staff and allows us to better align our programming and services as we honour our department mandate.

For example, the new Marine Fisheries, Agriculture-Food Seafood Regulatory division is responsible for the development and execution of marketing and promotional activities for both industries.

We have seen great success in this collaboration. For example; That's Island Style promotion, and the PEI Fresh Product Directory.

Buy Local campaigns such as; Best of Sea; Burger Love; Fall Flavours; PEI shellfish festival, and Porktoberfest continue to be supported by our department. Much work is being done through core funding to the Food Island Partnership to leverage Prince Edward Island as Canada's Food Island, and increase our exports in value-added food products and businesses.

The department also continues to support the Women's Institute and 4-H, which are vibrant organizations that create community leaders and support community growth across the province.

Last year, I was pleased to announce the hire of a part-time provincial veterinarian. I'm pleased to say that in the Budget of 2017-

2018, it commits funds to make this a full-time position. We are the only province that doesn't have one, until now. This position is extremely important moving forward for the growth of our aquaculture and fin fish industries, as well as our animal welfare concerns.

Over the past several years we have seen a surplus in our AgriInsurance program, and because of this accumulated surplus, our government has been able to drop crop insurance premiums by 24% over the past two years. This year we will see crop insurance premiums drop another 10%.

As well, at the request of the PEI Potato Board, we are raising the unit price for potatoes from \$9.50 to \$10. We expect these changes will mean greater uptake in insurance programs, which will allow for better coverage for the industry. I spoke to Greg Donald about this today, and he was elated about it.

Canada's food sector is one of the most respected in the world due to our efficient and effective regulatory framework. Assurance systems; premise identification, and the ability of our sector to produce food products in a responsible and sustainable manner. This has helped build public confidence in Canada's food system.

Through Budget 2017-2018, my department will establish a public trust program that will provide funding to industry for greater collaboration and efforts to enhance consumer understanding of where our food comes from, how it is produced, and the health standards that producers follow.

This program will help contribute to the competitiveness, reliability and long-term resiliency of the sectors.

As announced on Friday, my department is also creating a Food Security and Food Education Program. We are also working on a local food act, that will support local food producers; encourage local consumption, and examine the potential for an additional tax credit to the producers.

These are just a few of the highlights of my department. I welcome any questions the members of the Legislative Assembly may have.

**Chair:** Minister, the Member from Stratford-Kinlock asked if you had any handouts that you would like to distribute before we go into discuss the Budget.

**Mr. McIsaac:** Certainly, we have a list of grants and a few other documents here that we can have Pages circulate.

**Chair:** Thank you. Hon. members, while they're being circulated, what I will be doing, chairing the Budget, is that I will read a section, and then we'll ask questions on that section. Then, we'll carry a section before I move on. Just so that we can keep the discussion orderly.

I have a question from the hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid before we start.

**Mr. MacEwen:** Thank you, Chair, and thank you, minister for coming to the floor.

Minister, last year during budget estimates, a number of our caucus members asked really good questions. Many times we'd ask for information that you wouldn't have right at hand. Many of the ministers, including yourself, would say: Yea, I'll get that right back to you, can we just move on and I promise to get it back to you. We said: Sure, no problem at all.

I brought it up last fall. That didn't happen. We didn't get a lot of the things back that we had asked for. I know you're a good person; you're a great constituent –

**Mr. LaVie:** Wow, easy now.

**Mr. MacEwen:** – one of the best ones out there, but you did promise you'd bring that stuff back, and we haven't gotten those answers back.

Some of them are little things. Some of them are more major. I'm wondering if this time it's going to be different.

**Mr. McIsaac:** Hon. member, I certainly apologize if you didn't get it back. We did bring some of the stuff back –

**Mr. MacEwen:** Yeah.

**Mr. McIsaac:** – I thought we brought it all back, but if we didn't. I will ask Mary to

make a strong list this time and I will bring everything back that I can bring back to the floor of the Legislature.

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

**Mr. MacEwen:** Thank you, minister because I'd appreciate that.

I went back and, with staff, we went back through and found all of the things that we had asked for that we didn't get back. I'll talk about them as we go on, but I would appreciate it if we could mean what we say this time and actually get that stuff back to us, and take detailed notes.

A lot of the times, it's something that, we move onto another department and the Legislature can move quickly so we don't get that back.

I appreciate your commitment to do that.

Thank you, Chair.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

**Mr. Aylward:** Thanks, Chair.

I appreciate your opening comments with regards to the process that you would like us to follow from your direction as Chair as we go through this department section by section.

I just had one question, though. Say, I had a question that I wasn't sure exactly where it fit into this, that's – you're okay with me –

**Chair:** Sure, we can ask the minister where that question is and he can direct you to say that it's coming up and if you could hold the question to that, that would be great.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

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

One other question, then, before we actually get into the meat of this departmental budget.

If we go back to page 21 under Revenue, Agriculture and Fisheries, could the minister provide us with a breakdown or direct me to where that actual breakdown is of the revenues?

It's slightly over 6 million.

**Mary Kinsman Director:** There is not a detailed breakdown of revenue in this process. We actually go through the expenditure estimates. Would you like something tabled? Would you like us to bring back some information on the detailed revenue?

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

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

I would like to be able to see where the revenue is derived from so that I can see where it balances off against the expenditures.

**Mary Kinsman Director:** I can generally – in our revenue, most of our revenue is federal revenue. The Growing Forward 2 agreement is our largest agreement. Another agreement that we have with the federal government is with CFIA for what we call the potato wart program.

Other revenue would include our lab fees, so we charge a service at our labs. There's a small amount of revenue in the fishing side of things where we charge on the processing side for licenses. That's mainly the gist of what we have.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

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

Thanks for that, but I still would like to see the breakdown if you could bring it back.

I guess my other question, then, would be where the crop insurance would fall under. I don't assume it's held under a revenue line because it's an insurance that farmers, producers, pay into. But, where would I find that line item for crop insurance?

**Mary Kinsman Director:** For crop insurance? It's on two places in here. If you

want to look at page 12, you see the Agriculture Insurance Corporation – it shows up here that's the 8.2 million. That's the difference between the premiums we collect and what we pay out in indemnities. That goes into the fund.

The other place there is revenue for AIC is – let me see here – page 16. You see crop insurance under non-core funding.

**Mr. Aylward:** Yes.

**Mary Kinsman Director:** That is the administrative – the administrative cost to deliver the program is shared 60-40 federal-provincial. This is the 60% of federal revenue.

**Mr. Aylward:** Okay.

**Chair:** You okay, hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock?

**Mr. Aylward:** Yes, thank you, Chair.

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

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

Your revenues, everything is all said and done, federal or whatever – revenues are down 400,000. Why?

**Mr. McIsaac:** That's under the Growing Forward 2. As I said in my opening comments, it's a five-year program. It usually starts off slow in the first year and peaks in the middle and ends at the bottom, so we're – usually the first year and the last year are lower numbers, that's why the revenue part is off in there. We don't get exactly even year every year right through, but we can pull forward or push back whatever dollars we may need.

In the last year we have X amount of dollars left. It's down a little bit, but we're just finishing up that program and hopefully it will be seamless from when we go from GF2 through to the next policy framework and that's going to happen – we're going to sign that this summer.

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

**Mr. LaVie:** Thanks, Chair.

So that's to do with the federal money coming down?

**Mr. McIsaac:** Yeah.

Well, the total program, really. Yeah.

**Mr. LaVie:** When does that go back up?

**Mr. McIsaac:** Well, when we get to the new program – like we had X amount of dollars for the Growing Forward 2. We're going to use all of that allotment by April of next year when the program ends. We want to make sure we take advantage of every dollar. We use that up then, and hopefully there will be no – it will be seamless. There will be no gap between end of GF2 and the start of the next policy framework.

The next year we can start off again to be – the programs will be somewhat different, yet a lot of them will be the same, so the uptake on the first year will likely be less again but peak in year three, year four and then drop off in year five again. It's another new five-year agreement.

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

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

I don't remember last year or the year before, or the year before. As every year goes on, does this drop slowly? Do we see revenue drop every year?

**Mr. McIsaac:** Well, no. We saw (Indistinct) –

**Mr. LaVie:** So next year we'll see it go up?

**Mr. McIsaac:** It could go up next year. But, we saw it low in year one of the five-year agreement because there were new programs; people just getting an idea of what was eligible in the program. Year two and year three – by year three, everyone was very aware and had keyed up for it. So usually year three and year two, three, and four are usually the higher years. The first year start-up and the last year finishing off with what dollars we have left. That's usually the way the curve goes.

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

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

When this is used up in April –

**Mr. McIsaac:** Yes?

**Mr. LaVie:** – do you have to go to the feds again or is does this automatically come to you?

**Mr. McIsaac:** We were working with the feds the last couple of years; working with the feds to make sure the program – the next program, the next policy framework – it could be called GF3, we don't know. But, the third program now will be seamless and the day after GF2 stops, GF3 will start. We're actually meeting on that for a day and a half in May and in July at our FPT meeting, federal/provincial/territorial meetings, we will be signing off so that new program can start again on May 1<sup>st</sup> – or April 1<sup>st</sup>, excuse me, April 1<sup>st</sup>.

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

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

So next year we will see balanced revenues in this book, next year?

**Mr. McIsaac:** Well, it varies year to year depending on the uptake of the programs. But if you took – we could give you a five-year average, but it doesn't actually work evenly every year. That's what makes the books look somewhat funny each year because we had the same question on that last year.

**Mr. LaVie:** Yes.

That's good for now, Chair.

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

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

Just a generic question, minister, on the department: Are there currently any lawsuits with the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries?

**Mr. McIsaac:** Not that we're aware of, no.

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

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

**Leader of the Opposition:** Thanks, Chair.

Can you give us an update, minister, on Atlantic Beef Products – where they are at and –

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

**Mr. McIsaac:** It is coming up. Do you want to deal with it now or do you want to deal with (Indistinct) –

**Leader of the Opposition:** (Indistinct)

**Chair:** Leader of the Opposition, what we talked about is what we'll do if somebody can't find where a section is –

**Leader of the Opposition:** Yeah.

**Chair:** – the minister will advise that, but what we're going to do to keep things orderly, is I'm going to read a section. We'll talk about questions for that section.

**Leader of the Opposition:** Yes.

**Chair:** And then we'll move onto the next section, but the minister said that we're coming up to Island beef. Would it be possible to hold your question –

**Leader of the Opposition:** Yeah, that's fine.

**Chair:** – until we get there?

Thank you.

Hon. members, we're on page 22 and we'll commence reading of that top section. If you have any questions, please just indicate to the Chair and I'd be happy to give you the floor.

Department Management

Corporate Services

“Appropriations provided for the operation of the Minister's and Deputy Minister's offices and centralized administrative

functions for the Department.”  
Administration: 62,100. Equipment: 3,000.  
Materials, Supplies and Services: 54,500.  
Professional Services: 15,600. Salaries:  
541,800. Travel and Training: 65,400. Total  
Corporate Services: 742,400.

Total Department Management: 742,400.

Shall the section –

The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock  
and then the hon. Member from Rustico-  
Emerald.

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

I’m just –

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

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

I’m curious about the salary line. Minister,  
you spoke about putting a full-time  
veterinarian in place now. Is that what that  
106,000 represents?

**Mr. McIsaac:** That’s the basis of it. You  
want to jump to salaries, I’ll give you the  
exact (Indistinct) – page six here. That’s  
exactly what it is, yes. It’s really a beneficial  
appointment or staffing position that we  
took on there. It’s good for both ag and for  
fish,

**Mr. Aylward:** Yes.

**Mr. McIsaac:** We’re pretty pleased with  
that.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Stratford-  
Kinlock.

**Mr. Aylward:** Yeah, I think that’s an  
excellent initiative and I congratulate your  
department on that, minister. I guess my  
question in relation to that – prior to having  
a full-time veterinarian on staff, I’m  
assuming we were having to contract out?

**Mr. McIsaac:** We used some of the services  
at the veterinary college. Then we took on  
one part-time, but it was deemed to be most  
advantageous to have our own and have her  
full-time there and it worked out really well.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Stratford-  
Kinlock.

**Mr. Aylward:** Thank you, Chair.  
Having the full-time veterinarian, are we  
still going to be contracting out? Will there  
still be need to contract out to the AVC or –

**Mr. McIsaac:** We don’t anticipate that. She  
is going to be full-time dealing with some of  
the projects we have and we find it very  
beneficial that way. So we can control our  
costs that way as well.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Stratford-  
Kinlock.

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

Can you just sort of – not getting down to  
the weeds, but just sort of an overview of  
what kind of responsibilities a provincial  
veterinarian would have?

**Mr. McIsaac:** Well, she can work in the  
fish part of it with us with regards to the  
finfish and that sort of thing transferring  
animals in and out-of-province, work on the  
*Animal Welfare Act* as well, so she covers  
both of those areas very well. Whenever  
something crops up, she’s right there on top  
of it and we don’t have to – there should be  
no delay going to find some expert in the  
field on that certain topic. (Indistinct)  
(Indistinct) pretty busy (Indistinct)

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Stratford-  
Kinlock.

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

So this new provincial veterinarian, would  
this individual be a graduate of the Atlantic  
Veterinary College?

**Mr. McIsaac:** I’m not sure. Dr. Carolyn  
Sanford’s the name. She’s well recognized.  
I’m not sure if she’s a graduate from there or  
not. We held an open competition and she  
was the one that won the competition.–

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Stratford-  
Kinlock.

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

Just a comment more than a question: The  
reason I asked is just obviously, if it was a

graduate of the AVC, they would already have a very interment close working relationship with the faculty and many of the other staff there. If she needed to, she would have the comfort of having that –

**Mr. McIsaac:** My understanding is –

**Mr. Aylward:** – ability, resource –

**Mr. McIsaac:** – she has that anyway, hon. member, but I'm not sure if she did graduate from there or not.

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

**Chair:** Thank you.

The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

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

First question: For the Member from Souris-Elmira, he just had to step out, but why would the vet's salary be in the minister's office?

**Mr. McIsaac:** It shows up actually later on. This is just in the corporate service area, but –

**Mary Kinsman Director:** It's actually (Indistinct)

**Mr. McIsaac:** Yeah, okay.

She does report to the deputy minister, so this is the overall picture right here. She will report to there, but –

**Mr. Trivers:** Are her services used across multiple –

**Mr. McIsaac:** Yeah.

**Mr. Trivers:** – programs and departments within? Is that why (Indistinct)

**Mr. McIsaac:** Yeah.

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

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

**Mr. Trivers:** Yes, I'm looking at professional services: 15,600. It looks like that's sort of a standing budget estimate? Last year only about 5,100 of that was used.

In the handout, it's broken down into 5,600 for these ever-so-descriptive consultant services.

**Mr. McIsaac:** Professional services?

**Mr. Trivers:** Then 10,000 for legal services related to the natural products field tribunal.

**Mr. McIsaac:** Yeah.

**Mr. Trivers:** Can you expand on what sort of consultant services that 5,600 would be used for?

**Mr. McIsaac:** There were no appeals on the natural products last time, right?

**Mary Kinsman Director:** (Indistinct)

**Mr. McIsaac:** So that's why the number's down. There were no appeals on the *Natural Products Marketing Act*, so we didn't need to put professional services there as much.

**Mr. Trivers:** Okay, that's good.

**Mr. McIsaac:** That's the basic.

**Mr. Trivers:** So the first line, the consultant services, 5,600. What sort of consultant services are we talking about?

**Mary Kinsman Director:** It would be something that would come up from time to time. We might bring in an expert, maybe for training purposes for all staff, on a particular topic.

**Mr. Trivers:** And I want to be really frank with you here.

**Chair:** Rustico-Emerald, if you could come through the Chair?

**Mr. Trivers:** Sorry, Chair.

**Chair:** That would be great, thanks.

**Mr. Trivers:** I just want to be frank with you. When I see lines like this in a budget that just say consultant services and you just say: Well, it's just for services that come up from time to time – the more cynical among us might think: Oh, slush fund, slush fund. You know? Honestly, and so I'm just curious. There was none used last year, it looks like, but do you have any concrete

examples of what you used that for in the past?

**Mary Kinsman Director:** We did hire a consultant to come in and talk to a number of management staff on performance management, on program management, so he was in to talk to them about how to set up a program, what processes you need to follow – that type of thing within developing a program, type of thing. We had that – that was probably two years ago.

We didn't have any need this year, but sometimes we do for our appeals. There are legal services that are there.

**Mr. Trivers:** Chair?

**Mary Kinsman Director:** I can go back to pull some previous years.

**Mr. McIsaac:** Actually, there were none last year though, right?

**Mr. Trivers:** Right.

**Mr. McIsaac:** It was budgeted for. None was used, and it's budgeted again for next year in case – so there was no slush fund, that's for sure because none was used.

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

**Mr. Trivers:** Yeah, so when you need to hire people for this sort of consultant service, I'm guessing it wouldn't go out to tender. Is that correct?

**Mr. McIsaac:** Small amounts don't go to tender, I don't think. Do they?

**Mary Kinsman Director:** Under 10,000, we don't normally go to tender.

**Mr. Trivers:** Right, okay.

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

**Mr. Trivers:** Thank you.

Given the nature of the services you discussed, they're all sort of management consulting type of services, in my opinion, based on your description. Do you have any

particular companies that you like to use for those services?

**Mary Kinsman Director:** No. There's nobody in particular that comes to mind.

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

**Mr. Trivers:** If you don't issue a tender because it's under 10,000, then what's your process for typically choosing a consultant to come in and provide those services?

**Mary Kinsman Director:** If we find that there's a topic – if there's a reason to bring in a consultant on a specific issue, then we would, first of all, find out if there's anybody that has those particular services on PEI, or we usually know the type of profession that we want. If not, then we will tender or go out and look for quotes at different types of companies that provide that service.

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

**Mr. Trivers:** You might go out and do an Internet search, for example, that sort of thing?

**Mary Kinsman Director:** We could.

**Mr. McIsaac:** Could do it that way.

**Mary Kinsman Director:** Yeah.

**Mr. McIsaac:** Or like Mary says, if we know someone has an expertise in a field we'll look at that firm. We may find out next time somebody else has an expert from that field and we could hire someone completely different, but under 10,000, we don't tender for.

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

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

**Leader of the Opposition:** I'm interested in, Chair, what's the food safety officer do, minister, under corporate services?

**Mr. McIsaac:** Food safety officer under social services?

**Leader of the Opposition:** Under corporate services.

**Chair:** Corporate.

**Mr. McIsaac:** Corporate services?

**Leader of the Opposition:** Her budget (Indistinct)

**Mr. McIsaac:** What note is it?

**Leader of the Opposition:** The Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, permanent position staff. Right at the very top; right underneath the provincial veterinarian – food safety officer.

**Mr. McIsaac:** Okay.

**Mary Kinsman Director:** (Indistinct)

**Mr. McIsaac:** She's moving to work underneath the veterinarian now. She was in there before we had the full-time service and she's going to be working for the vet now.

**Leader of the Opposition:** So we're keeping that position?

**Mary Kinsman Director:** This position (Indistinct)

**Mr. McIsaac:** Oh yeah – moved from policy and planning over to the veterinarian, so we still – she worked with federal programs and federal people there when we had issues with regards to food safety and areas like that. Now, that's going to be included underneath the veterinarian so it will be more together there than it was before. Because we had a gap there when we didn't have a veterinarian in place, and she was doing that work. Now, she will be working with the vet to bring the whole thing together.

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

**Leader of the Opposition:** If I understand this right, she was in policy first. You're moving her now from policy over to corporate services and she is going to be under the veterinarian services?

**Mr. McIsaac:** She'll be working with the vet, yeah.

**Leader of the Opposition:** Who is it?

**Mr. McIsaac:** What's her name?

**Leader of the Opposition:** Yeah.

**Mr. McIsaac:** Shauna McLeod.

**Leader of the Opposition:** Okay, thank you for now.

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

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

This is a housekeeping item, I think, just for me. When I look at under corporate services and it says salaries at 541,000, does that – is that matching up with this Department of Agriculture and Fisheries permanent position staff list?

**Mr. McIsaac:** (Indistinct) corporate service part.

**Mary Kinsman Director:** (Indistinct)

**Mr. McIsaac:** That's the salary range there –

**Mr. Palmer:** Yes?

**Mr. McIsaac:** – and it does include the benefit piece, okay?

**Mr. Palmer:** So if we take the corporate services and take the high number on there and add those all up, it's about 70,000 or 80,000 different than the salaries line?

**Mr. McIsaac:** They may not have all reached their max in their (Indistinct) sideways, either though, right?

**Mr. Palmer:** But, it's lower than the salaries that are in the Budget. I just want to make sure that I'm looking at the right stuff.

**Mary Kinsman Director:** That is a staff list. That's not meant to match the salary budget. You're looking at permanent positions in that list. In the Budget, we have all of the benefits for those positions. You may have casual, you may have honoraria –

**Mr. Palmer:** Okay.

**Mary Kinsman Director:** – type of thing under salaries.

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

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

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

You opened the door, what benefits would you be including in there or a second ago you also said honorariums. What would they be getting for honorariums or other benefits?

**Mary Kinsman Director:** Okay, in the corporate service division we have a Natural Products Appeals Tribunal so those –

**Mr. McIsaac:** Committee members.

**Mary Kinsman Director:** – committee members, sorry. Thank you. Those committee members would receive a stipend for their meetings.

**Leader of the Opposition:** Okay.

**Mary Kinsman Director:** That's the honorarium there, yeah, hon. member. The benefits are under the collective agreement, so those are any salary benefits, health benefits, that type of thing.

**Leader of the Opposition:** Okay, that makes sense.

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

**Leader of the Opposition:** You mentioned a committee there a second ago, a tribunal?

**Mr. McIsaac:** Yes.

**Mary Kinsman Director:** Yes.

**Leader of the Opposition:** What is that and who are they?

**Mr. McIsaac:** Who serves on that?

**Mary Kinsman:** The Natural Products Appeals Tribunal hears appeals, but from a commodity board – so, anything under the marketing council, they appeal. Anything appealed to the marketing council, if they wish to appeal it farther, it's (Indistinct) that hears that.

**Mr. McIsaac:** It goes to a tribunal. So it's like the higher court.

**Leader of the Opposition:** Yes.

**Chair:** Leader of the Opposition.

**Leader of the Opposition:** How big is the tribunal and who's on it?

**Mr. McIsaac:** It's three, isn't it?

**Mary Kinsman:** I'll get that for you.

**Mr. McIsaac:** We have a list all in here. Here it is, yes.

Brian Morrison, you know Brian from –

**Leader of the Opposition:** Yes.

**Mr. McIsaac:** Donald Drake and Ralph Yeo.

**Leader of the Opposition:** So, just three.

Okay, thank you.

**Chair:** Total Department Management: 742,400.

Shall the section carry? Carried.

Farm Business Risk Management

“Appropriations provided for the administration of the Department's farm income support programs.” Administration: 60,500. Equipment: 9,300. Materials, Supplies and Services: 35,700. Professional Services: 11,000. Salaries: 2,007,300. Travel and Training: 232,900. Grants: 11,183,900.

Total Farm Business Risk Management: 13,540,600.

Question from the Leader of the Opposition.

**Leader of the Opposition:** When I go into the permanent position staff list, I see we have four positions for safety net officers. What actually is that position of safety net officer?

**Mr. McIsaac:** It's the GF2 programs. It's safety net. It's AgriStability and AgriInvest,

AgriInsurance – in that area there. Safety net officers are the ones who work for us.

**Leader of the Opposition:** Chair?

**Chair:** Leader of the Opposition.

**Leader of the Opposition:** Why do we have 16 insurance agents?

**Mr. McIsaac:** Six what?

**Leader of the Opposition:** Sixteen insurance agents?

**Mary Kinsman:** Those are crop agents.

**Mr. McIsaac:** They're crop insurance agents. They go around the province to sell the crop insurance and work with the farmers.

**Leader of the Opposition:** So, what would their caseload be?

**Mr. McIsaac:** It's pretty heavy – pretty good uptake. We had about 80% of our farmers' uptake on the crop insurance itself and they have a very good workload. Number of clients? I can't tell you, but they're spaced all across the province.

**Chair:** Leader of the Opposition.

**Leader of the Opposition:** Would they be assigned a zone, would they minister?

**Mr. McIsaac:** Yes.

**Leader of the Opposition:** So they would do everything with crop insurance – and selling the program and managing the program, but would they also do farm inspections to find out how the crops are doing?

**Mr. McIsaac:** Yes. They follow up in the field and everything. Yes.

**Chair:** Are you good, Leader of the Opposition, for now?

The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

**Leader of the Opposition:** Where would the – remember we talked last year, minister, about the new program we started – the guys were going around to work with

the farmers to make sure they comply and stuff like that – what were they called? They weren't enforcement officers, they were –

**Mr. McIsaac:** No. They were agriculture enforcement officers. They're under the Minister of Communities, Land and Environment. To work with the farmers with regards to –

**Leader of the Opposition:** Okay. So they're not with your department?

**Mr. McIsaac:** No. They're with Communities, Land and Environment.

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

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

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

Grants. What do these grants consist of?

**Mr. McIsaac:** Money. Business risk managements programs: AgriInvest, AgriStability and AgriInsurance.

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

**Mr. LaVie:** Thank you, Chair. And salaries, salaries are up in this section –

**Mr. McIsaac:** That's basically the steps – is the increase in the salaries there this year for the people who work there.

You're in a certain line – say a 16, and then you can be 16.1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6. So every year, if you get a step, you get that increase. That's right across government. It's basically made up of salary increases.

**Chair:** Hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

**Mr. LaVie:** Every year that goes up?

**Mr. McIsaac:** We have salary increases basically every year, yes. Maybe you get a 1% increase –

**Mr. LaVie:** Okay.

**Mr. McIsaac:** – but if you get a step increase as well, that's added on there too.

**Mr. LaVie:** So what happens if you get a drop?

**Mr. McIsaac:** You shouldn't get a drop.

**Mr. LaVie:** You shouldn't, unless somebody is fired?

**Mr. McIsaac:** If we have a vacancy, it would drop – that number would drop. But if the staff numbers stayed the same, you'll see an increase in salaries on a year-to-year basis.

**Chair:** Are you good, Souris-Elmira?

**Mr. LaVie:** So it's up 38,000. What was it up last year?

**Mr. McIsaac:** We can get that and bring that back. I'm not sure exactly what it was last year and we'll do our best to bring (Indistinct).

**Mr. LaVie:** I'm not going to close this section until that comes back. The section is not going to close until that comes back.

**Mr. MacEwen:** I second the motion.

**Mr. LaVie:** You see what happened before? When you start taking stuff back, you've got to commit to taking stuff back.

**Chair:** Have you finished your question hon. Member from Souris-Elmira?

**Mr. LaVie:** Just for now.

**Chair:** Hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

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

I was wondering – the farm income support program and the insurance that comes along with them – does that cover loss of income due to drought?

**Mr. McIsaac:** That's in the AgriStability Program.

**Mr. Trivers:** Okay.

**Mary Kinsman:** AgriInsurance.

**Mr. McIsaac:** And AgriInsurance cover that.

**Mary Kinsman:** Natural hazards.

**Mr. McIsaac:** Natural hazards are covered in the AgriInsurance. That's what the insurance program is for – or drought or too much water – whatever one.

**Chair:** Hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

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

If someone wasn't able to irrigate their crop to make it meet the specifications of a buyer, would that be covered under the program?

**Mr. McIsaac:** We're not responsible for whether you irrigate your land or not, okay? You buy insurance on so many hundredweight – so much per hundredweight, but you do have to meet your contract. We don't guarantee you meet your contract – if you don't irrigate or if it's too dry or whatever like that sort of thing.

**Chair:** Hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

**Mr. Trivers:** Are you saying there's sort of a threshold on the drought? If we have dry periods during the summer and you have a bad crop, it might be the quality – let's use potatoes as an example – it might be the quality of the potato, it might be the amount of scabs on the potato, it might be the length of the potato. Is that covered under the insurance?

**Mr. McIsaac:** It's a yield-based program that you buy for your potatoes, so if it's scab – it could be some scab, it could be other different reasons. If those specifics are covered under the insurance program, yes, then you would receive the insurance for that. I'm not quite sure if scab is covered on that or not, but your insuring yourself against – to get a crop – against drought be it, or too much rain, or whatever it might be, but that's the whole idea behind it.

**Chair:** Hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

**Mr. Trivers:** For example, farmers can choose to mitigate the effects of weather –

including, for example, a drought – that’s an easy one to think of. They could say: We’re going to build an irrigation pond, just in case there’s a drought; we’re going to dig a high capacity well, just in case there’s a drought.

If there are policies that don’t allow them to have irrigation measures in place like that, would they qualify for the insurance? I guess that’s what I’m trying to get at.

**Mr. McIsaac:** Based on the fact that they’re not allowed to have irrigation?

**Mr. Trivers:** Yeah, well, could the insurance company say: Look, if you would have irrigated, then you would have the yield that you expected and then we wouldn’t have to provide insurance? But because you didn’t irrigate, even though we thought you should, we’re not going to honour the insurance.

**Mary Kinsman:** No. There’s not a requirement for irrigation and this insurance program is run by the province, so it’s a provincially-run program. It’s based on yield and for natural hazards.

Pests, weather, too much rain, not enough rain will impact your yield, and that’s what this program is based on.

**Mr. Trivers:** Chair?

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

**Mr. Trivers:** Right now, there’s a moratorium on high capacity wells for agriculture, which of course would impact the ability of farmers to irrigate, right? And so, the question is: If they couldn’t irrigate because of the high capacity well ban, would they be compensated through insurance if they had a poor yield?

**Mary Kinsman Director:** It would be based on what their yield is whether they irrigated – like, irrigation isn’t a requirement.

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

**Mr. J. Brown:** (Indistinct) the party leadership (Indistinct)

**Mr. McIsaac:** If you don’t get the crop because there’s a lack of rain, you get (Indistinct), okay? So, it doesn’t really – it’s not really based on whether the – another minister isn’t giving them (Indistinct) –

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

**Mr. Trivers:** Is it safe to say that the –

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

**Chair:** Members, I’m having difficulty hearing the question. I don’t mind if you bring your conversations outside the room.

Thank you.

**Mr. Trivers:** Is it safe to say that the moratorium on high capacity wells for agriculture and irrigation really shouldn’t impact the bottom line of farmers, because if they have a poor yield because they couldn’t irrigate because of those limits, they will be compensated through insurance?

**Mr. McIsaac:** Well, they also want to (Indistinct) – they also want to fill contracts. They also want to fill their contracts if they have them with, say, Cavendish foods or whatever.

The farmers themselves, they’re not interested really in collecting insurance. They want to produce their crop. They would much rather produce their crop; fill their contracts, than take it out through crop insurance and it’s based on a three-year five-year average with regards to –

**Mary Kinsman Director:** It’s a five-year Olympic average.

**Mr. McIsaac:** It’s a five-year Olympic average for their crops, so if they have quota year over year, their payout on insurance is not that great anyway.

But they’re not taking insurance (Indistinct) offset some catastrophe that might be – catastrophe not being, though, that they can’t get now that there’s a moratorium on high capacity wells, but some of them really would like to get that so they can fill their contracts. Other farmers there are not interested in that (Indistinct)

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

**Mr. Trivers:** Minister, do you think that farmers should be allowed to have high capacity wells so they can irrigate and mitigate the use of having to claim insurance?

**Mr. McIsaac:** We're going through a *Water Act* process right now, looking for input from the community. We're looking at the science and I would say, first and foremost, any decision that's made has to be based on science. Until we get that information back, I'm not making a decision one way or the other, but I certainly want it looked at seriously.

That's why we're taking – the Minister of Communities, Land and Environment is taking the process across the province to see, and then discuss from the science point of view: Is it okay to lift the moratorium or is it not?

**Mr. Trivers:** Chair?

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

**Mr. Trivers:** Do you have many farmers that call you, asking to have the moratorium lifted, so that they can irrigate and get better yields?

**Mr. McIsaac:** I can honestly tell you I've heard from both sides.

**Mr. Myers:** That's a good (Indistinct)

**Mr. Trivers:** You've heard – how many are you hearing from one side more than the other?

**Mr. McIsaac:** I can't really say one more than the other, but I've heard strongly from both sides, which makes it tough.

**Mr. Trivers:** Okay, thank you, Chair.

**Chair:** Thank you.

Total Farm Business Risk Management.

Shall the section carry? Carried.

**Mr. McIsaac:** (Indistinct) I'll bring that back. Good.

**Chair:** Policy and Agriculture Resources

Policy and Agriculture Resources Division –

Excuse me, the hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid.

**Mr. MacEwen:** Sorry, Chair.

What's the process now on when we say carried? Do you have to speak up at that exact time and say: No, I don't want to carry it? Or, how do you voice your displeasure in not wanting to carry that section?

**Chair:** Sure, just out – while I'm reading –

**Mr. Roach:** You vote on that.

**Chair:** While I'm reading, just get my attention and then I'll stop reading it and then I'll entertain your question before I move on.

**Ms. Biggar:** Can't stop.

**Mr. MacEwen:** Okay, so Chair?

**Mr. McIsaac:** I will bring that back. I have it written down here in (Indistinct) –

**Mr. MacEwen:** It's just, well (Indistinct) Member from Souris-Elmira had made a comment that he would like to get the information before we passed it, and so I just wanted to make sure that we were in the act of passing that.

**Ms. Compton:** Carrying that section.

**Chair:** Yeah, he said –

**Mr. MacEwen:** Everybody (Indistinct) comfortable with that?

**Chair:** In order for an hon. –

**Mr. Roach:** (Indistinct) vote on it. That's why we're here.

**Mr. MacEwen:** No, absolutely. We can vote on it.

**Chair:** Sure. The minister has said that he would take it back and maybe before we pass the whole Budget –

**Mr. McIsaac:** Just relax.

**Chair:** – you could keep a list of the things that haven't been brought back before we pass the whole agriculture budget.

**Mr. Myers:** Waiting five years for some of the stuff.

**Chair:** Is that okay, hon. member?

**Mr. MacEwen:** Yeah, that's fine. I just –

**Mr. Myers:** Does that count for the stuff I asked for five years ago, or do I not get any of that either?

**Chair:** That's something you'll have to bring up with the minister, thanks.

**Mr. Myers:** Yeah, I think that the point is that it's – the untrustworthiness of the process –

**Ms. Biggar:** Oh, come on.

**Mr. Myers:** – has left us holding the bag over and over again. We don't get information –

**Mr. Roach:** I disagree with that statement, Chair.

**Mr. Myers:** Bring the Speaker back.

**Mr. Roach:** You've got a trust word in this –

**Mr. Myers:** Bring the Speaker back.

**Mr. Roach:** You can use better language than that.

**Mr. Myers:** Bring the Speaker back.

**Chair:** Thank you.

**Mr. Roach:** Show a little respect.

**Mr. Myers:** You can bring the Speaker back.

**Chair:** All right, so –

**Mr. LaVie:** (Indistinct)

**Mr. McIsaac:** Madam Chair, I will bring that information back for the Member from Souris-Elmira and for the Member from Morell-Mermaid.

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

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

**Chair:** Policy and Agriculture Resources Division Management

“Appropriations provided for the management and support of the Policy and Agriculture Resources Division.”  
Administration: 14,300; Equipment: 4,000; Materials, Supplies and Services: 7,100; Professional Services: 34,000; Salaries: 236,700; Travel and Training: 46,900; Grants: 1,701,400.

Total Policy and Agriculture Resources Division Management: 2,044,400.

Shall the section –

The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

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

My first question has to do with Professional Services. It's estimated at 34,000, and then again we have 33,000 of that as provision for consultant – consultation services in support of industry needs as required.

Again, a more cynical person might say the looks like the ability to use 33,000 as needed for any consultant services. You know, it could be misconstrued, again, as a slush fund if someone was being cynical.

I just was curious as to –

**Mr. J. Brown:** I guess you're not.

**Mr. Trivers:** – the type of services you'd use that for.

I'm not cynical like the Member from Charlottetown-Brighton is.

**Mr. J. Brown:** I'm not either, so we don't need to worry about that.

**Chair:** Hon. members, there's not going to be debate amongst you, so the minister – minister, do you have answers?

**Mr. McIsaac:** So, your question is on the 15,000 that was used? Or on the fact that we budgeted 33,000 last year and put the same number in for next year.

**Mr. Trivers:** Yeah, that's what I'm interested in.

**Mr. McIsaac:** Okay.

**Mr. Trivers:** Like, that's a pretty specific number.

**Mr. McIsaac:** Some years it changes, so last year we didn't use this much in consulting services. We did have some for the implementation of a database for Growing Forward 2, but next year we may need more so we just budgeted for the same amount, because it does vary. Some years we use less, some years we use more. We thought 33,000 was a good number, so we're going with that again this year.

**Mr. Trivers:** Chair?

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

**Mr. Trivers:** I was just curious why is it 30,000 – or 33,000 versus 30,000, or 35,000, or 25,000?

Like, 33,000 to me is a fairly specific number, and so I'm guessing you must have some inkling as to what you might use that money for.

**Mr. McIsaac:** I think it usually was running around that number. That's the number that was picked for last year, and then it dropped this year so we didn't need it as much, so we just said: Well, if historically it's around 33,000, we're going to go with it.

**Mr. R. Brown:** That sounds good (Indistinct)

**Mr. McIsaac:** And just on that, I have the answer back already for the Member from Souris-Elmira and the Member from Morell-Mermaid –

**Mr. R. Brown:** He's the accountant of the group.

**Mr. McIsaac:** – so I'll give you that. There's a promise fulfilled already right there.

**Mr. MacEwen:** (Indistinct) this is great.

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

**Mr. Trivers:** Chair?

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

**Mr. Trivers:** I'm just curious, the 1,000 for lab services – don't we – doesn't your department actually provide lab services?

**Mr. McIsaac:** Yes, and we'll get to that in the back section of this. We're going to deal with the two lab areas. That was soil analysis for miscellaneous government participation in research trials, so it was away from regular lab purposes.

**Mr. Trivers:** Chair?

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

**Mr. Trivers:** You don't – so you don't have the services in-house to provide that type of soil analysis? Is that why you had to contract it out?

**Mr. McIsaac:** Did we do that in here or did (Indistinct) away?

**Mary Kinsman Director:** There are some services that we do (Indistinct)

**Mr. McIsaac:** It was one that was done, to my understanding, away from our lands and couldn't do there, and it was in a research project, I believe. Well, yeah, it was a research trial, and we – I guess – cost-share sort of thing. So, we did this away from our regular land (Indistinct) testing.

**Mr. Trivers:** You were in partnership with another group –

**Mr. McIsaac:** Yes, it was in a research project.

**Mr. Trivers:** – and so, as part of that research project, the lab analysis was done somewhere else and for your share of the cost you chipped in 1,000?

**Mr. McIsaac:** Exactly right.

**Mr. Trivers:** I get it.

Thank you, Chair.

**Mr. McIsaac:** Good.

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

**Mr. LaVie:** Thank you, Chair. Minister, 101,000 dropped in salaries. How many positions is that?

**Mr. McIsaac:** (Indistinct)

**Mr. LaVie:** True. The other two sections salaries –

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

**Mr. LaVie:** You fellows do books like that fellow over there does books.

**Mr. McIsaac:** Hon. member, we did a restructuring in the department. We are down a director. You will see once we go through this, there is, because of the restructuring of our department, there has been a movement of some salary between sections here. But in that section there, we're down one director, as well.

**Mr. LaVie:** Just one director?

Thank you, Chair.

**Mr. McIsaac:** Okay.

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

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

**Mr. LaVie:** (Indistinct)

**Chair:** Sorry. I thought –

**Mr. LaVie:** Oh, that's fine.

**Chair:** – you meant, I'm finished.

**Mr. LaVie:** No, thank you (Indistinct)

**Chair:** Sorry, I'll come to you in a minute.

The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

**Mr. LaVie:** That's just one director gets 101,000? And does that allow for salary increases also?

**Mr. McIsaac:** It's mainly for –

**Mary Kinsman Director:** There will be some increases and some decreases.

**Mr. McIsaac:** There are increases and decreases, but the main part of that is the reduction of one director in that section.

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

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

There are increases and decreases.

**Mr. McIsaac:** The steps, again, there was steps, like I had explained to you before, for salary increases and then the reduction of a director there, as well. Anywhere you're going to see salaries you're going to see that there is a step piece in it if people in the area, in that section, went from a one to a two, to a three to a four or whatever.

Plus, we have salary increases. And there was – because of the restructuring and the dropping of one director in there that made up the basis of that.

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

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

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

There are salary increases and decreases in this section, but there are no salary increases and decreases in the section before that. Some sections have increases and decreases and some sections don't?

**Mr. McIsaac:** Because of the restructuring it makes them look a little different there, but there was increase in salary last time of 37.9. That was the increase in salaries in the last section.

**Mr. LaVie:** I can't figure it out.

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

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

You were talking a few minutes ago, minister, about your ability within the department to do testing. There are several departments that have facilities for testing, whether it's soil or water.

I asked a question the last sitting, about the testing of the water quality in our beaches, and I think you were the minister that answered that.

I'm wondering if that is going to be done in your department, is there budgeting for that?

**Mr. McIsaac:** The lab is a shared lab.

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** Yeah.

**Mr. McIsaac:** Between ourselves and environment. That would run through the same lab, but a different section of it per say.

We have partial – we have the soil and water, the soil lab and we have the dairy lab, as well. That would likely come in under environment, but it would be done at the same – under the same premises, at the same premises that we have our work done at. It's a shared lab, is what it is.

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

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

Do I read into that that there is nothing budgeted in agriculture and fisheries for testing water on Island beaches this summer?

**Mr. McIsaac:** Yeah, that's right. It would be done under environment.

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

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

Do you have any idea of how much your department spends on outside legal services on an annual basis?

**Chair:** Is that question pertaining to this section?

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** It's hard – it's impossible, actually to tell where that would come from –

**Chair:** Yeah, sure.

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** – the professional services in each department.

**Chair:** Absolutely.

**Mr. McIsaac:** We had budgeted 21,000 for the department.

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** That, if you look at the seven-year average –

I'm sorry, Chair.

**Chair:** It's okay.

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** That makes sense to me.

When you contract for outside legal opinions, is that something you send an RFP out for, or do you have a particular legal firm that you go to?

**Mr. McIsaac:** We don't necessarily do an RFP for legal. It's 21,000 but –

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** Right.

Do you have a particular legal firm that you go to, in preference to others?

**Mary Kinsman Director:** No, it's not specific to a firm. There are certain – Natural Products Appeals Tribunal, and I can't think, for the life of me the legal firm that actually helps us with that particular tribunal. We may have another group that uses a different legal firm.

Historically, we tend to use the same firm –

**Mr. McIsaac:** When they have experience and expertise in that area, we find it more reasonable to go back to the same one.

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

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

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

I'm looking at the grant section in the handout. It's on page – it says page one of four. Miscellaneous industry support, then, it breaks down those various – the 201,400 into all the different projects.

I was curious, first of all, how you apply it for grants under miscellaneous industry support, is it as the discretion of the minister?

If I have someone in the agriculture industry in my district that wants to apply for the grant money, how would they do that?

**Mr. McIsaac:** Write in and ask for it.

**Mr. Trivers:** Write in and ask –

**Mr. McIsaac:** Apply for it, yes.

**Mr. Trivers:** Straight forward, okay.

Chair?

**Mr. McIsaac:** We have certain ones that regularly get the grants, and then we have a small pot of money that we have no idea, they may come in at the last minute and ask for 500 or whatever.

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

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

On the next page, 2.4, the breakdown, the miscellaneous industry support. There was project funding for a renewable energy study.

I was just curious, that 10,000, what was the project and what did you find out about the renewable energy?

Or, if you want, you can point me to read the results of the study.

**Mr. McIsaac:** What number was that hon. member?

**Mr. Trivers:** That's page 2 of 4 and it's PEI Federation of Agriculture was the recipient for a renewable energy study.

I'm just kind of curious, was it looking at wind turbines, or solar panels or –

**Mr. McIsaac:** I'll get it for you. (Indistinct) right here.

**Mr. Trivers:** Thank you.

If you wanted to send me the link to where you published it on your website that would be great.

I do have another question, Chair.

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

**Mr. Trivers:** I'm moving on to page 4 of 4.

I guess I'll start at near the top of the page. The PEI Potato Board received 15,000 and it was PEI's contribution towards Potatoes Canada. A federal government export market development program for Canadian potatoes.

**Mr. McIsaac:** Yeah.

**Mr. Trivers:** What percentage of Canadian potatoes would come from PEI? Do you know that off of the top –

**Mr. McIsaac:** About 30%.

**Mr. Trivers:** About 30%.

What was the total amount of the Potatoes Canada program? Do you know? Any idea?

**Mr. McIsaac:** I don't know what it was, but the request came in for that and that's what we gave them.

We play a major part in the potato industry in Canada, so we pay a fair share of that.

**Mr. Trivers:** Chair?

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

**Mr. Trivers:** I'm just curious, if we produce both 30% of Canadian potatoes, if we're paying 30% of the Potatoes Canada budget or –

**Mr. McIsaac:** We would make a contribution, the board and the producers

would make a contribution and maybe the feds put some money into it too. I can't tell you exactly what the number was.

When the request came in likely asking for that amount, we discuss it and grant them that number of dollars.

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

**Mr. Trivers:** The next line item is 27,500 for Farm & Food Care Canada.

Now, do they have any Island activities in the 206-207 year?

**Mr. McIsaac:** That gets back into the public trust issue. It affects every Islander, every farmer, every Canadian. It's actually one of the things that have expanded in the programs for Growing Forward 3 on the next policy framework. The whole idea behind public trust, and we're trying to build that, being that trust between the farmer and the consumer. We put dollars into programs like the Farm & Food Care Canada that works very strongly on that.

This is a very important piece of business. The fact that our consumer know where their food comes from; that it's high quality product, and it affects not only just PEI, but every producer, every consumer right across the country. That was our share towards that.

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

**Mr. Trivers:** You have budgeted 100,000 for your new public trust program that you're introducing and you're giving 27,500 to Farm & Food Care Canada for essentially the same purpose.

Maybe I'm getting this wrong, and I was wondering if maybe you didn't give the money to FFCC you could use that money for your own public trust program? Is there an overlap between the two?

**Mr. McIsaac:** No, this is –

**Mr. Trivers:** What are we getting out of the FFCC?

**Mr. McIsaac:** The national – this FFCC here is a national program right?

**Mr. Trivers:** Yes.

**Mr. McIsaac:** The program that I announced there today, is a provincial program. It's brand new that we're putting – that 100,000 is specifically for PEI. This is for, overall, public trust across the country and this is our piece into that.

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

**Mr. Trivers:** What I'm trying to determine is: Are we getting our money's worth for the 27,500 we put into the FFCC?

Are there local Island activities? What is coming back to PEI for that 27,500? Because that's roughly 30% of what we're planning to spend on our own provincial program for the same purpose.

Do you think we're getting our money's worth from that (Indistinct) –

**Mr. McIsaac:** We're definitely getting our money's worth.

It's something that we discussed at the minister's meetings with regards to the whole idea behind public trust. Consumers are becoming much more aware, and want to be much more aware of where their food comes from. You've often heard about the Buy Local program, even on PEI that's very concerning. We think we're getting great dollar value for that.

The whole broad spectrum of public trust, it's almost like a new initiative within the last couple of years. It's very important. This is our contribution towards the national program.

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

**Mr. Trivers:** Can you, maybe, just explain what the FFCC does to build public trust and confidence in today's food system?

It talks about the Canadian Centre for Food Integrity. To me this sounds very high level, very bureaucratic, very, you know, academic.

I was wondering if there's any – we see that on the ground on PEI anywhere because some of the programs that you're trumpeting with the public trust program and then the pilot program for food security.

**Mr. McIsaac:** Yeah.

**Mr. Trivers:** Those are accomplishing the same thing, and we could spend that money locally. I'm just saying, you know.

**Mr. McIsaac:** I'll tell you what our membership gets from that: It provides our department with access to research on consumer opinions; questions and concerns; best practices, and models that build public trust and forums for thought that leaders from across the food system can come together at an annual summit. That's what we're doing with this.

It's a new program, basically taking off just to build public trust and to continue in that fashion because consumers are more and more smart about their food, where they buy it and where it comes from.

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

**Mr. Trivers:** Moving down to the bottom of the page – and thank you, minister, for that.

You have a project that you did with communities, land and environment, a joint project that you spent 5,000 on. Just curious, what that joint project was?

**Mr. McIsaac:** We shared that with the other department there.

**Mr. Trivers:** Yeah.

**Mr. McIsaac:** Around the time of the Charlottetown exhibition so we put a few extra dollars into that program to make sure the program ran well, the whole exhibition.

**Mr. Trivers:** Okay.

**Mr. McIsaac:** It was like, you might say, a subsidy towards that.

**Mr. Trivers:** That was the exhibition –

**Mr. McIsaac:** Old Home Week.

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

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

Minister, I'm going to go back to the membership in Farm & Food Care Canada.

**Mr. McIsaac:** Yeah.

**Mr. MacEwen:** The consumer opinions, can you give me examples of what we are gathering there? What do we have access to? There is research on consumer opinions.

**Mr. McIsaac:** They will survey consumers to find out what they look for in food, and what they need to know on labeling or whatever it might be as to whether it is local, maybe, whether it is Canadian or whether it's from China or whatever it might be. What they need to see on labels. What their interest lie in. They do surveys on all that sort of thing to come back to the point that our consumers are very much more wary of where their food comes from, who is producing it, and that sort of thing.

**Mr. MacEwen:** Chair?

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

**Mr. MacEwen:** Thank you.

Do we get to submit our own questions or is it the Farm & Food Care Canada's research. Is it like polling? Do we get monthly updates on consumer opinions? Is it an annual report that we get? I'm trying to see, is there a document that you have to say that because we have membership we get access to this kind of – what is it (Indistinct)

**Mr. McIsaac:** It's a two-way thing. We seek input, and we receive information back from that.

It's just new. It was just kicked off within the last year or so. Mainly, because we see that we need to be smarter because our consumers are certainly getting sharper about their food.

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

**Mr. MacEwen:** Thank you.

Who is our person in government that is responsible for this membership? Who is submitting that? Getting the information back, analyzing it?

**Mr. McIsaac:** Actually, my deputy was one of the ones who put this whole program together; worked with a gentleman from Calgary, and they were two of the first that discussed this type of project going forward.

We had a big presentation on it at our federal/provincial/territorial meetings last year in Calgary and approved to go forward with this. We have been having sessions on that. We had a session in Ottawa prior to that. At a session in Moncton, we approved – went to first. I believe it was in between 15 and 16 in getting the final approval at our annual meeting last year, annual minister's meeting.

It went across the country. I think there are five different areas. One in the east, the west, a couple in central, to get approval for the whole concept of the program, and it was approved at the minister's meeting. But actually, my deputy, like I said, was one of the first ones to set that up.

**Mr. MacEwen:** One more?

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

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

Minister, is this – the 27,500, is that an annual fee? Also, is what is it based on? Is it based on population? What would Ontario pay versus us, or versus BC? Is it a set rate across all provinces or is it based on per capita?

**Mr. McIsaac:** Is it based on per capita –

**Mr. MacEwen:** And, is it an annual fee?

**Mary Kinsman Director:** (Indistinct)

**Mr. McIsaac:** We'll have to bring that back. I don't know if it's a set rate, but I'm sure it's proportional to population, but we'll check on that and bring it back.

**Mr. MacEwen:** Is it every year, or is it a one-time thing?

**Mary Kinsman Director:** Every year.

**Mr. McIsaac:** It's every year.

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

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

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

I have a generic question here I just don't know where it falls under.

Minister, last year you were asked where Cabinet liaisons were paid out of. Is that paid out of your department now?

**Mr. McIsaac:** Not now, no.

**Mr. MacKay:** Where are they at now?

**Mr. McIsaac:** They're out of rural and regional development.

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

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

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

It's wonderful to have technology here. A person just texted me and wanted me to ask the question. I want to thank my colleagues for helping me out on some biology questions here.

We see in the media lately that Vesey's Seeds is doing a wonderful job putting one million packages of seeds in Cheerios boxes. This person is just wondering: Is there any money available for bee and pollination program – in your budget, bees and pollination?

**Mr. McIsaac:** We do –

**Mr. MacDonald:** Is it a business?

**Mr. R. Brown:** What?

**Mr. MacDonald:** Is it a business?

**Mr. R. Brown:** No, it's just an interested constituent. I have got smart constituents.

**Mr. McIsaac:** That program at Vesey's, we do not put money into –

**Mr. R. Brown:** No, I mean –

**Mr. McIsaac:** – but we do deal with bees and pollination. Yes, and that's coming up later in the book.

**Ms. Biggar:** (Indistinct)

**Mr. R. Brown:** You'll have your answer in about 20 minutes there.

**An Hon. Member:** (Indistinct) birds and the bees –

**Mr. R. Brown:** No, I wasn't talking the birds and the bees.

**Chair:** Are you good, hon. Member from Charlottetown-Victoria Park?

**Mr. R. Brown:** Yes, thank you.

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

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

My question is, going back to the grants. It has to do with the supports related to the Atlantic beef plant.

**Mr. McIsaac:** Yeah.

**Mr. Trivers:** I noticed that it's 200,000 less. Can you comment on why they need 200,000 less in the coming year?

**Mr. McIsaac:** They're doing better than they were before. We are giving them a grant of 1,000,000 this year, I believe.

**Mr. Trivers:** One million three hundred thousand in the Budget.

**Mary Kinsman Director:** (Indistinct).

**Mr. McIsaac:** Yeah, 1,000,000 to the plant; 300,000 has to do with an upgrade that we're putting forward. It's not approved it. We need federal help with that too, but we're putting that towards upgrade of the waste management part (Indistinct).

We're setting that aside and hopefully the feds will agree to the programs.

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

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

Minister, will that upgrade of the waste treatment plant allow for the potentially planned poultry processing plant? Will it – is that part of what those upgrades will allow for?

**Mr. McIsaac:** That announcement will be made hopefully soon.

**Mr. Trivers:** Okay.

**Mr. McIsaac:** Hopefully that will be part of it, but that's not my announcement to make.

**Mr. Trivers:** Good, I don't want to rock that boat. That's for sure.

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

**Mr. Trivers:** I was just curious; in that 1,300,000 – and I'm asking this question because I, too, have constituents that I talk to. Actually, I think this is a constituent from Charlottetown, not one of mine, but –

**Mr. R. Brown:** You're smart minded (Indistinct).

**Mr. Trivers:** Do you know specifically what kind of things that the money would be spent on at the beef plant? Is it designated to a particular area, or is it just: We're giving you the money. You guys decide how you best can use it?

**Mr. McIsaac:** That's the best way of putting it, yes. We put the dollars in there. It's a grant. We don't run the plant, they run the plant, but we show support through the 1,000,000 towards the running of the plant.

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

**Mr. Trivers:** Are there any other supports that you provide to the Atlantic beef plant through – I don't know – laundry facilities,

or providing packaging or transportation, subsidies of some other – any other sort?

**Mr. LaVie:** Lunch program.

**Mr. McIsaac:** If they find they can fit in on the program and we feel they can, they can apply for other funding. But this is the basic funding to them.

Plus, from time to time, there might be a program they could fit under for a specific piece of change to the plant or whatever it might be.

But, (Indistinct) this is the main grant that we give them, but from time to time there may be something else that fits in there through innovation or whatever it might be.

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

**Mr. Trivers:** Are there any additional services that you know of that government provides to the Atlantic beef plant off the top of your head?

**Mr. McIsaac:** There may be something under Growing Forward 2, but it's just a small program, maybe.

**Mr. Trivers:** Okay. That's good, Chair. Thank you.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

**Mr. Aylward:** Thank you, Chair. Just to continue on with the grant for the Atlantic beef plant; is there any funding currently being made, as well, from the other Atlantic Provinces to the beef plant? I know when at first – the conception of the beef plant first came about, there was additional funding.

**Mr. McIsaac:** We haven't – they haven't received any other dollars from the other provincial governments. They started off with – I think it was – 2,000,000 from each of the provinces and then six from ACOA to begin with when we came into play here, but since then they haven't put any others in.

What we are expecting from them and working on is getting the cattle from other provinces to make sure we run as many animals through our plant as possible, and

we want that, not just from PEI, but from Nova Scotia and New Brunswick as well, so we are working on that. All of that helps the bottom line of the plant (Indistinct) through the – the more profitable the plant will be.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

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

That leads me into a natural progression of some questions here with regards to the beef plant.

Do you know right now where they're at as far as efficiency goes with the volume of animals that they render every day?

**Mr. McIsaac:** The efficiency is getting much better, and actually they have had months when they're actually showing in the black, which is a very positive thing.

There were some structural problems to begin with within the plant, like they didn't have the proper line in place or –

**Mr. Aylward:** For ground beef –

**Mr. McIsaac:** Pardon me?

**Mr. Aylward:** Yeah, they couldn't have a ground beef (Indistinct) at one point.

**Mr. McIsaac:** Ground beef, (Indistinct) and actually I think they'd like to expand on the ground beef piece as well, but they're always looking at making things more efficient and changing the plant isn't hard.

But they've got a good contract now with Sobeys, for sure, so that you can get local beef. I don't know which store that was that didn't have the local beef, but that's unfortunate – but Sobeys and Co-op, they're good supporters of our plant, but the quality of the product coming out of the plant is A-1.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

**Mr. Aylward:** Thanks, Chair.

With your statement about trying to increase the production levels from this plant, and naturally we need to bring some animals in

from New Brunswick and Nova Scotia in particular, but for many years now a lot of those animals have been going to – some to Ontario – a lot to Quebec –

**An Hon. Member:** Call the hour.

**Mr. Aylward:** – because of the –

**Chair:** Hon. members, the hour has been called.

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

**Mr. McIsaac:** Good question, though. Keep it coming when (Indistinct).

**Chair:** Minister, if you could read this.

**Mr. McIsaac:** Madam Chair, I move that the Speaker take the chair, and the Chair report progress and beg leave to sit again.

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

**Mr. McIsaac:** Thanks, Mary.

**Chair:** Mr. Speaker, as Chair of a Committee of the Whole House having under consideration the grant of supply to Her Majesty, I beg leave to report that the committee has made some progress and begs leave to sit again. I move that the report of the committee be adopted.

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

This House will recess until 7:00 p.m. this evening.

**The Legislature recessed until 7:00 p.m.**

**Speaker:** You may be seated.

The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Lewis Point.

Matters of Privilege and Recognition of  
Guests (II)

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

I would like to welcome everybody back to our evening session and I would like to welcome my friend and neighbour, Gord McNeilly, who is here joining us in the gallery tonight and hopefully he will enjoy the proceedings.

Thank you.

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

**Mr. Aylward:** (Indistinct)

**Mr. Trivers:** gordmneilly.com.

**Mr. Aylward:** (Indistinct)

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

Private Member's Bill

**Leader of the Opposition:** First time you've called me that, Mr. Speaker.

With the unanimous consent of the House, I beg leave to introduce a bill to be intituled *An Act to Amend the Highway Traffic Act* (No. 4).

**Speaker:** Hon. members, is there unanimous consent for this bill?

**Mr. R. Brown:** Yes.

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

**Mr. R. Brown:** Unless the Green Party (Indistinct)

**Leader of the Opposition:** I move, seconded by the hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid, that the same be now received and read a first time.

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

**Clerk Assistant (E. Doiron):** *An Act to Amend the Highway Traffic Act* (No. 4), Bill No. 104, read a first time.

**Speaker:** Hon. member, could you give us a brief explanation of this bill?

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

The intent of the bill is to actually assist law enforcement agencies, which I have met across the Island. I actually had a meeting with them last week and the bill is actually to give them strength in powers which would require when a police officer or peace

officer in the province stops a motorcycle, an operator or a passenger would be required to remove his helmet and/or any face covering that he may have or she may have on her face.

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

Orders Other Than Government

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

Opposition would like to call Motion No. 95 to the floor.

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

**Clerk:** Motion No. 95.

The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock moves, seconded by the hon. Leader of the Opposition, the following motion:

**WHEREAS** Prince Edward Island remains the only province in Canada that does not have a passport office;

**AND WHEREAS** trying to get a passport off-Island is a cumbersome and expensive process;

**AND WHEREAS** many provinces have a large number of passport offices available to serve their travelling population;

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that this Legislative Assembly call upon the Government of Canada to take immediate action to establish an accessible passport office in Prince Edward Island.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

**Mr. Aylward:** Thank you very much.

If I could request the podium, please?

**Speaker:** Yes, of course.

**Mr. Aylward:** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to move our opposition motion which calls for the establishment of a long overdue Passport Canada office here in our province.

Prince Edward Island is currently the only province in Canada that does not have a dedicated passport office. The fact is, as well, that all the other provinces have more than one office, and most have several offices located in various locations. I realize and I understand the geographic differences between our province being the smallest province in all of Canada and many of the other provinces in Canada, but the fact remains: We are a province. We deserve equal rights as every other province. We pay taxes here on Prince Edward Island, as does every other Canadian in every other province.

The fact that we don't have an office in our province is both inconvenient and costly. Islanders who need an emergency passport for, as an example, a death in a family in another country have to travel to Halifax to get one and should they fail to take with them all the necessary documents of identification they may find themselves facing huge delays.

Many Islanders who make plans for vacation in another country may find out that their passport is about to expire and again, they have to make a rush trip to Halifax to try and speed up the process. It's an added expense for travelling across the bridge, for mileage, and for a meal along the way. But, they simply cannot wait for five to eight weeks or more, to get a passport sent to them. I believe that with the large number of immigrants and refugees who are settling in our province, a passport office is simply a necessity.

Our MPs have been asking the federal government to provide this service to our province, but to date their requests have fallen flat. A CBC story quoted a federal government spokesperson as indicating that from April 2015 to March 2016, the four MP offices in PEI received 1,118 passport applications out of a total of 13,666 for the whole Island. Almost 60%, that would be 8,178, were received by Service Canada in Charlottetown. I don't think anybody would disagree that our MPs have been doing tremendous work, their office; their staff have been trying to accommodate Islanders –

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

**Mr. Aylward:** – as much as they can, but once again, we are a province in a great nation called Canada. We deserve to be treated equally and equitably, the same as every other province.

It was indicated as well that more than 10% of PEI passport applications were made in person either in Halifax or Fredericton, and more than 600 were urgent or express applications. What is particularly unfair is that urgent or express applications cost an extra \$110 and they must be submitted in person at a passport office. The Halifax and Fredericton locations are all there is for Islanders to use. That's an eight hour trip to both locations and if someone is elderly or ill, that's a long day's travel, and expensive to boot.

No other citizens in our great country have to leave their province to get their passport fast-tracked, and frankly, I don't think it is fair to Islanders. We have a provincial status and I feel we deserve to have passport services located here. We have heard all the great things that will happen with a federal Liberal government and a provincial Liberal government. We urge this government to represent us on this issue and request that the federal government take immediate action to locate a passport office in our province.

Thank you

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

I am pleased to rise today to second our motion which calls for the establishment of a passport office in our province. Prince Edward Island is currently the only province in Canada that does not support a passport office. The fact is, as well, that all other provinces have more than one office in some cases, and most have several offices located throughout their provinces in different locations. In fact, we don't have an office in our office is both an inconvenient and costly to Islanders.

I, myself, had to travel to Fredericton, New Brunswick to get a passport taken care of. Islanders who need an emergency passport for death in the family in another country have to Halifax or Fredericton to get one, and should they fail to take with them all necessary documents of identification, they may find themselves with huge delays. I must give a shout-out Island MPs in the past that have assisted people in my area with getting passports though.

Many Islanders who make plans for a vacation in another country may find out that their passport is about to expire again. They have to make a rush trip off Island to get this and try deal and speed up the process.

It's an added expense – for travelling across the bridge, for mileage, and for possibly meals along the way – and in some cases, overnight accommodations. They simply cannot wait for five to eight weeks, or more, to get a passport sent their way. I believe that with the large number of immigrants and refugees who are settling in our province, a passport office is a necessity and would also assist these individuals.

Our MPs have been asking the federal government to provide this service to our province, but to date their requests have fallen flat. A CBC story quoted a federal government spokesperson – has indicated that from April 2015 to March 2016, the four MP offices received more than 1,118 passport applications out of a total 13,666 for the whole Island. Almost 60% – 8,178 were received by Service Canada in Charlottetown.

It was indicated, as well, that more than 10% of PEI passport applications were made in person, either in Halifax or Fredericton and more than 600 were of a near-urgent or express need. What is particularly unfair is that urgent or express applications cost an extra \$110 and they must be submitted in person, at the passport office. The Fredericton and Halifax locations are all there is for Islanders to use. That's an eight hour trip in both locations. If someone is elderly or ill that's a long day's ride and expensive, to boot.

No other citizens in our great country have to leave their province to get their passport fast-tracked and frankly, I don't think it is fair to Islanders. We have a provincial status and I feel we deserve to have passport services located here within Prince Edward Island. We have heard all the great things that will happen with a federal Liberal government and a provincial Liberal government. We urge this government to represent us on this issue and request that the federal government take immediate action to locate a passport office in our province.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

I had to get my passport there last year and I just want to thank the staff over at Service Canada that we have in downtown Charlottetown here, over at the Jean Canfield Building. The staff over there does a tremendous job. They were courteous – fast service over there. I went over and I think I had my passport in three days. They mail it up –

**Ms. Biggar:** Yes. They do a great job.

**Mr. R. Brown:** – fax it up, and get it back pretty quick. So I really want to thank them. I agree with the opposition – we agree with the opposition that we are a province and we deserve all the services of any other province. The argument that's going to be said by the federal – and I want to thank the four MPs that are working extremely hard on this issue, especially the one from Charlottetown. I know his commitment towards a passport office has been ongoing and continuous in Ottawa. We're going to hear an argument from Canada, probably, that a passport office doesn't really – there would not be enough service on Prince Edward Island to do it. I would promote that we also need an immigration office here on Prince Edward Island, because that's more important.

It's Islanders leaving and going on vacation or going on medical treatment and stuff like that, but there's a tremendous amount of new Islanders coming to Prince Edward

Island that I think we need that immigration service here on Prince Edward Island. I think it's a major hold-back to us, although we have been extremely successful in immigration – one of the most successful provinces in Canada, I would argue. In all, immigration has been good for Prince Edward Island and I don't think anyone on Prince Edward Island would deny that. You can see that it has improved our culture on Prince Edward Island. It is tremendous improvements to our economy on Prince Edward Island.

I will support the motion, but I may – if a friendly amendment: We would also request the federal government to also open an immigration office and a BDC office here on Prince Edward Island. Then that way the economies of scale could be achieved by the federal government in terms of full service. I know we're going to send this resolution off and they're going to say: There's six applications a year, but I think if we combine it with a total federal government service office here in Charlottetown and across Prince Edward Island, then we can help people that are coming to PEI, people who want to leave PEI for various reasons –

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

**Mr. R. Brown:** – and to come to rural PEI – that's extremely important too because if we have a full immigration service here on Prince Edward Island, I think it would only good – not only for Charlottetown, but also for all of Prince Edward Island.

A business development corporation office here on Prince Edward Island would allow a lot of our new immigrants that are coming to Prince Edward Island are looking for business opportunities. By combining it all into one office – and I know there's other projects that are being worked on right now that are going to be extreme benefit to Prince Edward Island. When we combine all those services into one service for total immigration, population growth service, I think it would be the way to go on Prince Edward Island.

So if you would accept a friendly amendment to the motion on an immigration and BDC office.

I move the motion, seconded by the hon. Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** We have an amendment to the motion. Hon. member, you don't have copies?

**Mr. R. Brown:** No, I don't.

**Speaker:** Hon. minister, would you like to second the amendment?

The hon. Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy.

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

I certainly want to thank the government opposite for their motion this evening and also support the friendly amendment to it. I think I've had experience myself, as well, to come to Charlottetown to the Jean Canfield Building and they were able to assist in expediting my application as well.

To speak, as well, to all of the new immigrants that we have and the other services that could be provided through a one-stop shopping, we'll call it. We all seem to be on that these days. I think it would be a great addition to Prince Edward Island to access that number of services and I'm sure that with discussions with our dedicated federal MPs, that we could all work together on this collectively to bring it to the attention of our federal government and I support the amendment to the motion.

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

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

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

I thank the hon. members across for moving and seconding the amendment – a friendly amendment to this motion. I do not disagree with the need for an immigration office to be reestablished here in the province of Prince Edward Island. I guess my only concern with it is, the larger we make the request, the more ammunition or the more fodder that the federal government will have to say: No

because now you're asking for too much for such a little province.

I guess the intention of our request on this motion, essentially, was to first and foremost, with regards to access to a passport office, put us on a level playing with all the other provinces across Canada.

Again, I thank you for your friendly amendment. I'm certainly not going to vote against it, but I think what we need to do, particularly with the federal government that's now in place, is to take smaller steps as we move forward because I've already seen that if you go too large, they just can't understand the concept.

With that, Mr. Speaker, thank you.

**Speaker:** Are there any other hon. members who would like to speaker to the amendment?

**An Hon. Member:** Question.

**Speaker:** Are you ready for the question?

**Some Hon. Members:** Question.

**Speaker:** All those voting in favour of the amendment signify by saying 'aye.'

**An Hon. Member:** Aye!

**Speaker:** All those voting against the amendment signify by saying 'nay.'

The amendment is carried and is unanimous.

Now, we'll continue with speaking to the motion as amended.

The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Lewis Point.

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

Could I have the podium please?

**Speaker:** Sure.

**Ms. Casey:** Thanks.

Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise and say that I'm thrilled to support this much-needed service and this motion. I do have before me, I do know that there has been discussion

in the House about the Member of Parliament for Charlottetown in receiving a number of phone calls, desperate phone calls, about people's whose passports have expired.

I can tell you, as somebody who knows the Member of Parliament for Charlottetown, and has often answered the phone, and on the other line is a constituent with a panicked voice because their passport has ran out.

On September 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2016, *The Hill Times* wrote about: Grit MP's constituency office a de facto passport office. It said: Charlottetown MP, Sean Casey, says his constituency office received between 10 and 40 passport applications per week.

I know, as of December, October, or September 30<sup>th</sup>, the Member of Parliament for Charlottetown wrote the then Minister of Immigration, Citizenship and Refugees Canada a request to have a passport office in Charlottetown.

He wrote: Unlike in every other province, I cannot refer people in my constituency to a passport office within our province. My recommendation is invariably to direct them to the passports offices in either Halifax or Fredericton, upwards to a five-hour drive from Charlottetown, and even further from points east and west in our province.

The added cost of the bridge, and sometimes having to stay overnight in the province that you've journeyed to, Halifax or Fredericton, also adds to the cost. The Member of Parliament suggests the if for reasons of population and the number of passports that the government are citing that are held, that you need to have in order to validate or to have a passport office; an alternate service model is suggested by the Member of Parliament. That service model could be explored to provide adequate services to Prince Edward Island communities. For example, urgent and express services be extended to passports received through receiving agents such as Service Canada for special circumstances.

There are alternate ways that we can work together so that we can ensure that our citizens have access to passport services for emergencies or extenuating circumstances.

I do support this motion, but I also support and think that Prince Edward Islanders deserve a passport office as we are a province and have all of the powers of the other provinces have. I think our citizens deserve a passport office. I commend all of the MPs, who are working for this and I thank the opposition for the motion.

Mr. Speaker, I'd be happy to support it.

Thank you.

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

**Speaker:** Also speaking to the motion, as amended, will be the hon. Premier.

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

I support the motion as amended and thank the mover and seconder, and the mover and seconder of the amendment. Prince Edward Islanders are people on the go. Increasingly, there is a lot of travel. You just have to go to the airport any early morning and see that people are on the move.

Indeed, our ability to travel out of the province, or out of the country, and to do business outside of the country is a big part of our ongoing success as a province, and indeed to fulfill the real enterprise and the quality that our businesses offer, in both goods and services, and what that means in terms of our ability to bring the sort of resources into the province that enable us to continue to prosper and do well, and to bring in a balanced Budget.

I support the proposal that there be a passport office and I support the amendment. I think it's a really important pairing. It may indeed make it – drive home the point, and make it easier for the federal government to say, yes, to this.

We've raised it with the former and then the current Minister of Immigration, Citizenship and Refugees. Our province has a very strong case to make on this. We've seen the number of newcomers to our province who are coming. Whether it's as express entry skilled workers, temporary workers, people who are coming as investors, people who are

coming as refugees; an increasingly diverse mix of people.

When you go to a citizenship ceremony, and you realize that people have been resident in this province six or seven years, the number of transactions that they go through, through that whole process. Then, you think about when people come here, they may indeed come with some uncertainty in their lives. It's the nature of the thing.

To then come here and the very first time you need to deal with someone who is an immigration official to be told, you have to leave the province to do it. It doesn't send a very good signal about their choice of Prince Edward Island. It certainly doesn't do anything to add to their confidence, which, we, of course, want to do.

Indeed, the whole aspect of retention or ensuring that people do well here, and intend to stay here and see this as their place, is very much part of our whole effort, and really our positive development as the hon. house leader has said: Prince Edward Island, in 2016, led the country, in terms of, the number of new immigrants per capita, tied with Alberta, which said a lot about where we're getting on this path, and a path that has been a very positive one in every sense; culturally; economically, in terms of our ability to produce and to be the great province that we are.

I would also say that when people come as refugees it's not unusual that they have various dealings and issues, then about the language in which they might be needing to fill out forms and so on. Many people coming from countries where you have to be pretty careful when you go filling out forms that you might not just do the right thing and where that might – what they might kind of cause you, in terms of consequences.

For all of those reasons, I would entirely support the combined initiative and the combined message about who we are and what we're up to and where we think we're going as a province.

I would also underscore the federal government's commitment through the immigration aspect and the Atlantic pilot of the Atlantic Growth Strategy –

**Ms. Biggar:** Yes, excellent.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** – and to underscore that as a way for the federal government to understand, that if they intend for that program, their program, together with us to succeed, then they need to have the service and the capacity here in the province to be responsive to all of that in a way that people are going to, not spend a whole lot of their time going in and out of the province to get their business done.

I have, in fact, on passport renewal, had to go to Fredericton on one occasion myself, and it does – you can't do it in, really, it's a stretch to do it in a single day. In fact, when you get there, as the Leader of the Opposition said: If you do want to do it in a single day, there is a pretty hefty premium for that. In fact, I think you pretty near have to stay more than 48 hours if I'm not – some different scale in which they provide an incentive for it to be, at best, a next day service, if not into a further day.

For those reasons, Mr. Speaker, and then let me add what I think is the good sense of adding the BDC and how that ties in with the availability of federal government programs and investment capital and support for business growth, which is very much part of the plan for many people who do come to Prince Edward Island as immigrants.

Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to support the motion as amended. Thank you.

**Speaker:** Thank you, Premier.

**Mr. Aylward:** Keep up these good ideas; you might crawl back into Cabinet yet.

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

**Speaker:** Also speaking to the motion as amended, the hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

**Mr. Trivers:** Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this motion. I think it's important that on Prince Edward Island we do have both a passport office as well as an immigration office. I think that's a great idea to decentralize these services, make sure that as a province we have those services here.

It's great to see the support from the government on this motion, and I would like to just speak for a moment and take this thinking a little bit further –

**An Hon. Member:** Uh-oh.

**Mr. Trivers:** – and say: What's good for the goose is good for the gander, if PEI as a part of Canada should have decentralized services, I'm thinking we need to see more decentralization of services within our province.

For example, there's eight Access PEI locations in the province, which is good. I have to say that there is a big gap between Summerside and Charlottetown where there aren't any Access PEI offices, and that happens to be where my district is. I would love to see an Access PEI office in Hunter River or perhaps North Rustico or –

**An Hon. Member:** Crapaud.

**Mr. Trivers:** – Breadalbane or maybe Crapaud; and you know, these are the sorts of initiatives, and Access PEI is one example, we might even see some government offices that are moved to different spots on the Island.

These are the sorts of things that can revitalize and help grow rural PEI, and many of the same arguments that we've heard about having a passport office on PEI could be used to say we should decentralize services on Prince Edward Island of the Prince Edward Island government as well.

I just wanted to make that point, and thank the government members – especially the Member from Charlottetown-Victoria Park – for that amendment, and also thank my colleague here from Stratford-Kinlock for bringing this motion to the floor.  
Thank you.

**Speaker:** Thank you, hon. member.

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

**Speaker:** Also speaking to the motion as amended, the hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

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

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

As an MLA for District 1, Souris-Elmira, I do receive a lot of phone calls on the passports and how can I get my passport and how fast can I get my passport, why do I have to go to Halifax, why do I have to phone Halifax. I support the opposition's motion here to have our own office in an Access building in Souris.

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

**Mr. MacEwen:** Here we go.

**Mr. R. Brown:** Okay.

**Mr. LaVie:** There's nothing wrong with spreading it outside of Charlottetown.

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

**Mr. LaVie:** Let's get one on the Island. Let's get it out into rural PEI. There's nothing wrong with that. At least we got her on Prince Edward Island.

I do support this motion heavily because I do receive a lot of phone calls over the last five and a half years on passports.

**Mr. R. Brown:** From Magdalens?

**Mr. LaVie:** And there's no need of us as an Island traveling to Halifax at the cost of the individual to get a passport to travel outside of the province. Let's have our own office right here. I have a gentleman in Souris that takes the pictures for the passports.

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

**Mr. LaVie:** You go down there?

**An Hon. Member:** Yes, I do.

**An Hon. Member:** One stop shop.

**Mr. LaVie:** You go down there, get your picture taken there. Why can't you get your passport right there?

**Mr. R. Brown:** That's a good point.

**Mr. LaVie:** (Indistinct) –

**Ms. Biggar:** (Indistinct)

**Mr. LaVie:** – and we always talk Charlottetown. Charlottetown's a great spot, love Charlottetown.

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

**Mr. LaVie:** Charlottetown is going to survive; but without rural –

**Mr. R. Brown:** I know.

**Mr. LaVie:** – it will not –

**Mr. R. Brown:** Survive.

**Mr. LaVie:** Exactly. That's his favourite line for the last 17 years.

So Mr. Speaker –

**Mr. R. Brown:** It still works.

**Mr. LaVie:** – I do support this motion that there should be a passport office right here on Prince Edward Island.

Thank you.

**Speaker:** Thank you, hon. member.

Any other members who would like to speak to the motion?

If not, I will go back to the mover to close debate on the motion.

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

If I can indulge for a moment, just for recognition of guests, I'd like to –

**Speaker:** Go ahead, hon. member.

**Mr. Aylward:** – recognize Chris Ortenburger, who's joined us this evening here. It's great to see you, Chris. Mr. Speaker, We've had many great examples brought up here tonight with regards to why Prince Edward Island not only needs but deserves to have our own dedicated passport office; but in addition to that – and I'd again like to thank the Member from Charlottetown-Victoria Park for the friendly amendment with regards to an immigration office dedicated here in PEI – but we have, over the last year or so, had a senator here from Prince Edward Island, Senator Downe, who has been talking about

bridge tolls, and why we need to pay to cross the Confederation Bridge as we are part of Confederation. There's a new bridge being built from Quebec into the United States and apparently there's going to be no toll on that. So again, that's one example of why we need to be on a level playing field.

But I want to bring it a little bit more personal and to home. One of my constituents – and this is essentially why I brought this motion forward – reached out to me this past winter and essentially it wasn't that they were in the process of needing a passport urgently. It had more to do with this individual, my constituent, his – I shouldn't say elderly, but he is older than my constituent – his brother and his wife, that does holiday down in Florida for the entire winter.

My constituent was going to be going down to Florida for a couple of weeks to visit with him, and he was wise enough to realize that: My passport is going to be expiring here in the next month or so, so before I go on my trip I need to be proactive and submit my passport for renewal.

So he contacted the proper agency and he was told that what he needed to do was to get his new pictures updated, to fill out the appropriate paperwork for passport renewal, and to mail in his old passport so that they could process it and then eventually send it back, which would probably take about six, maybe eight weeks at the very most.

My constituent was very concerned and upset, because with his brother, family members being down in the United States, if there was ever an illness (Indistinct) occurred or God forbid a death occurred and he needed to get down to support his family member in the United States, he has no passport. So when he called me and told me that and explained that story to me, I was flabbergasted. I was like: Yeah, that's not right.

The other issue he brought up was we're all told that a Canadian passport is probably one of the most sought-after passports in all of the world: stolen passports, fraudulent passports, etcetera. They're in high demand on the black market. So now we have, again, a process where we have to mail our passport back to the federal government through snail mail, they'll process it, and

then they will mail it back to us. So we have one of the most sought-after documents in all of the world, and we are sending it back and forth through the mail system. I don't think that makes a whole lot of sense.

Again, I do ask all members to support this motion, along with the friendly amendment, and get equality here once and for all for all Islanders; and in particular so that if we have proper services here for all of our newcomers and our immigrants that have come to PEI, the more services that we can provide here on PEI for these people, the better chance that we will have for permanent settlement as well.

Because right now, we have a great immigration program happening, we have people coming into our province, but unfortunately we have too many of those individuals leaving our province. So, the more services that we can provide here and to show them that they don't have to go to the larger centres to access all of the services that they require, the more likely they are to stay here.

With that, I will close debate and, once again, ask all members to support this motion.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Speaker:** Are we ready for the question?

**Some Hon. Members:** Question.

**Speaker:** All those voting in favour of the motion as amended, please signify by saying 'aye'.

**Some Hon. Members:** Aye!

**Speaker:** All those voting against the motion as amended, signify by saying 'nay'.

The motion is carried and is unanimous.

Thank you.

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

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

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

Opposition would like to call Motion No. 33 to the floor.

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

**Clerk Assistant:** The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira moves, seconded by the hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock, the following Motion:

**WHEREAS** 157 Islanders took their own lives between Jan. 1, 2002 and Dec. 31, 2011;

**AND WHEREAS** suicide is the leading cause of non-natural deaths on P.E.I. and in many years exceeds the number of Islanders who die each year in fatal accidents;

**AND WHEREAS** the Medical Society of P.E.I. since 2010, as well as the PEI Mental Health Association, have been calling for government to produce an epidemiological study on suicides so the province can develop a prevention strategy;

**AND WHEREAS** statistical information on suicide incidents is inconsistent in P.E.I.;

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that this Legislative Assembly urge the provincial government to initiate the steps necessary towards the development of a Suicide Prevention Strategy for Prince Edward Islanders.

**Mr. R. Brown:** Mr. Speaker, a point of order.

**Speaker:** Go ahead, hon. member.

**Mr. R. Brown:** In consultation today – and I'll go to the Leader of the Third Party, also – my understanding from the Opposition House Leader we were doing Motion 30: Calling for the development of a long-term comprehensive plan for Prince Edward Island's fire services.

Is that true?

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** I didn't actually take the phone call, sorry.

Mr. Speaker, I didn't actually take the phone call, but I do have 33 down –

**Mr. R. Brown:** Thirty-three?

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** – from my assistant, yes.

**Speaker:** So – okay.

**Mr. LaVie:** It's up to you.

**Speaker:** Okay, go ahead.

**Mr. LaVie:** It's up to the House, whatever you fellows decide to do, whether it's fire services or suicide prevention. I'm standing here no matter what.

**Speaker:** Do we have unanimous consent –

**Mr. LaVie:** Don't make any difference, you decide.

**Speaker:** – for No. 33?

**Mr. LaVie:** Our House Leader isn't here. You're here and you're here.

**Speaker:** Okay.

**Mr. R. Brown:** Mr. Speaker, I'd rather us go with the motion that we decided on, 30, if that's the case.

**Mr. LaVie:** I'll stay right here, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. LaVie:** Yeah. I've got you covered.

**Speaker:** Anyway, just wait hon. member.

Do we have unanimous consent of the House to drop No. 33 and go with the original plan for Motion No. 30?

**Some Hon. Members:** Yes.

**Speaker:** Okay. Clerk, we'll get you to read Motion No. 30.

**Clerk Assistant:** The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira moves, seconded by the hon. Leader of the Opposition, the following Motion:

**WHEREAS** the 2013 PEI Fire Services, Environmental Scan and Gap Analysis

identified a wide range of deficiencies in the provision of fire services in our province;

**AND WHEREAS** the need for a collaborative process to develop a comprehensive plan for PEI's fire services has been identified;

**AND WHEREAS** with escalating costs and limited budgets, there is a need for accountability, fiscal responsibility and effective and efficient utilization of our fire services and complimentary resources across the province;

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that this Legislative Assembly urge this government to facilitate the development of a comprehensive long term-plan for the sustainability of Prince Edward Island's fire services;

**THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that this Legislative Assembly also urge the provincial Department of Justice and Public Safety to work in collaboration with the various stakeholders involved, including our municipalities and our firefighter organizations to overhaul and develop a new PEI Fire Prevention Act.

**Speaker:** Thank you, and I will call on the mover of the motion to speak to the motion, the hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

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

I'm pleased to rise today to support our motion, which ultimately calls upon government to take action to ensure sustainability of our volunteer fire services.

After spending 36 years in the service myself and the last 14 as a fire chief, it's an honour to stand and move this motion.

The 2013 PEI Fire Services, Environmental Scan and Gap Analysis outlined a number of deficiencies in the provision of the fire services in our province. It also called for the PEI *Fire Prevention Act* to be overhauled.

Prince Edward Island's volunteer fire departments are being asked to do more and more with less and less.

I believe it is time we begin to listen to their concerns and clearly define their role and the provisions of the fire services in our province.

Firefighting today is much different than in the past. Today's construction materials contain various kinds of materials that can turn toxic with fire. These materials can cause fires to spread more rapidly, burn hotter and more quickly, and compromise structural integrity.

Structural's collapse are common in today's buildings that are multilevel and awful hard to access.

Today's furnishing, such as couches and chairs often include petroleum-based fibres and plastics that create toxic fumes. Today's families often have two or three vehicles in their yard, as well as all kinds of recreational vehicles: Snowmobiles, Sea-Doos, motorcycles, and four-wheelers, all have the potential for serious accidents that often call upon a response from our first responders, as well as Island EMS.

Today's firefighters must also deal with incidents involving chemical spills and dangerous chemicals in buildings, including explosive materials.

Firefighters involve many high-tech instruments, like heat sensors, breathing apparatuses. Basically, it is a new world for our fire services and for our population, who experience more evacuations, due to both forest fires and chemical threats.

I believe one of the most important mandates of a comprehensive review of our fire services should be to determine very clearly what the role of a firefighter should be.

For example, should a firefighter be responding to medical emergencies in their job?

What is the role of Island EMS, and is there clearly a defined distinction between who does what? Should their roles be expanded or reduced?

I'll give you a little example of one of my experiences as a fire chief in a rural

community where everybody knows everybody.

We got a call one evening just after supper. It was daylight. An older gentleman went over a 75 foot cliff on a tractor. This gentleman was a real good family friend. I was the first on site. I could see this man, the tractor, the gentleman, 75 feet down.

Nobody knew his condition, he was 75 feet down. You don't know his condition. I had to take the role on of getting some of my men down there. Island EMS sat up in the field for two and half hours as they watched. I did get the RCMP to call the Coast Guard for me to get their boat up, but their boat broke down half way up. Then, we had to get our boat and get it in the water and get it up. It took some time.

What I'm trying to say is, we took over the scene. We had to pronounce this man dead at the scene. We had to get this man into our boat, into a body bag, drag him over the sand dunes into Dingwell's hearse. We had to go to the family and we had to tell the family that the man was deceased. That's all on the fire department.

That's just one incidence. I can go on with numerous, but that's pretty touching for a rural fire department to take on. That's quite a role to put on to a fire department.

Some firefighters do not feel comfortable dealing with medical emergencies or cleaning up environmental disasters. Firefighters want to fight fires. They make a physical and mental commitment to do that work, but the truth is our firefighters are very compassionate, and a caring group of individuals.

I see that right across Prince Edward Island in our fire departments. They're very compassionate about their community. The firefighters will help out in any way, whether it be a water rescue, a snowstorm rescue, a Ski-doo rescue, a cat in a pole rescue; it doesn't make any difference. I hear it right across Prince Edward Island as we meet, that every firefighter is compassionate about their community, and I feel that. It's in my own community.

They take their responsibilities to keep their communities safe very seriously. That's

what I hear from own. That's why they joined the fire departments; to keep their communities safe. When somebody is down and out these gentlemen come forward.

They turn out to assist in rescues, not just from fires, but during snow storms, when a road is blocked and someone needs to be transported to the hospital. Just our last major storm here on Prince Edward Island with high winds at 6:00 – sorry, at 5:45 or 5:50 we received a call of a house fire, engulfed.

I got my car out of the driveway, or my truck out of my driveway, but as soon as I turned on the highway I could not make it any further. So, I called dispatch right away. I called Chapman's snow clearing right away. Chapman's put three snowplows on the roads to get firemen to the fire or to the fire station. I was talking to six different people at the same time trying to organize a fire sitting in a snow bank on Highway 2.

It worked out, the outcome was not good for the homeowner, but we did manage to get three people east of us to the fire scene. We got five people to the fire hall, Chapman's did. Chapman's escorted us to the fire. The outcome wasn't good, but it was a snowstorm that was – you fellows went through it just as well as I did. There was a high wind.

Actually, that fire was at a former member, that used to sit in this seat, it was Andy Mooney's. That's where the fire was that night, Mr. Mooney. I was talking to him on the phone and he was sitting in his driveway watching his home burn. It's hard, and it's hard on the firefighters to watch somebody's home burn.

If someone needs to be transported to hospital; I remember one time we were at a house fire. My dad was fire chief back then. I was on the fire department. This fellow was, the gentleman, was fairly badly burned. He was still alive. So, wrapped him in the fire blanket and we transported him to hospital. Boys oh boys, did my father ever get it. That was a no-no. We don't transport. The ambulance wasn't very happy with us. It's all about liabilities.

You know, my father said it again: If it was a man laying in the yard alive, burning, he

would transport him again, too. He would take his own rig this time. He wouldn't use the fire service. He'd take him in his own rig that was they couldn't say anything to him.

That's the stuff we're up against when we get on scene and we're there alone and how to handle a situation. This is why we need a review.

Even when people are in our waters that are in trouble, we had, last summer we had two calls out in the water. What happens, yes, we do have coast guard, but coast guard only respond, Mr. Speaker, you'd be aware of this, or the Member from Morell-Mermaid, as fishermen yourselves, that if it's on the water and a fisherman calls Sydney Coast Guard or Halifax Coast Guard, they're looking for a position; a longitude and a latitude, but if somebody calls from the land that says somebody is in trouble in the water the coast guard doesn't recognize it.

You can understand that. They're over in Sydney, they're over in Halifax. They don't know where Red Point is, or they don't know where Little Harbour is, or they don't know where Lobster Point is. It comes back on the fire departments.

Here we are with the 14-foot dingy with a 25 horsepower motor on it, just iffy if we should be there or not trying to rescue these people. There is a plan for the – what is the word I'm looking for? Review. There is another plan for the review.

They take part in search and rescue. We took – you know when you're in the service for 36 years, you take part in a lot of different incidences over the years in the community. Search and rescue is another one we were very involved in. We have a great team, a great team in Charlottetown here of Ground Search and Rescue, it's a great team.

Something else that should be put in the review is – all these resources have got to come together and work together. They should be training together, all these resources I'm talking about.

These firefighters are also volunteers. We're volunteers. They have to leave their work. They have to leave the family. They have to

leave the Christmas dinner. They have to leave Easter. They pagers don't hold for what we do.

There are all kinds of situations that are not necessarily what they signed up for. Some find the expectations too much. And sometimes feel pressure from the employers when they're off work for long periods at a time, for attending accidents or other events that, perhaps, have nothing to do with firefighting.

Not only is there a need for a clearly defined role for volunteer firefighters, but there is also a need to ensure that the resources are in place to sustain the fire services into the future.

We all know that many of our young people are leaving our province to find work. We know that some fire departments have lost excellent firefighters and have had great difficulty in replacing them. I hear that. I hear that right across Prince Edward Island. I hear it in Nova Scotia. I hear it in New Brunswick. Communities are getting smaller. Families are getting smaller.

I know I have three brothers; I have two sisters and three brothers, and three of us – my father plus three boys – were at the fire service at the same time. Actually, I'm a fourth-generation fire chief in my family.

**Mr. R. Brown:** Good job.

**Mr. LaVie:** We took our job very serious. It was pretty hectic at times with the phone ringing and four pagers going off in the same house.

But do you know what? I'm lucky. The last 14 years as fire chief, I'm lucky I have a list of people waiting to get onto the fire department, so I'm pretty lucky that way. I never – we never had to go out and ask anybody to join. We've got a list waiting to get on, so that's pretty impressive if I can continue that. I'm pretty proud of that.

But a lot of the departments are not in that shape, a lot of our smaller communities.

We also know that many of our firefighters are ageing and nearing retirement age, and my department is in that situation. I might

be young now – I'm young now, but put another 10 years on me –

**Mr. R. Brown:** You'd be still young.

**Mr. LaVie:** I'll be still young.

**An Hon. Member:** Next leader.

**Mr. R. Brown:** Next leader of the PC Party.

**Mr. LaVie:** But, Mr. Speaker, when I take over for leader, I'll probably have to give up the position.

A comprehensive plan has to be addressed to ensure recruitment and what the job involves. We've got to have a plan for these firefighters and departments right across Prince Edward Island.

I believe we have excellent training facilities – and we do – for our firefighters through the firefighting school in the Holland College, but we also know that there are inconsistencies from fire departments to fire departments in terms of equipment and capability.

And that's true: Some departments have, say, a rescue boat, some departments don't; some departments have the Jaws of Life – the Jaws of Life is an extraction tool for if you have to take somebody out of a vehicle that's stuck in the vehicle or something like that – so, some departments got it, and some departments don't, and it's a great asset to have, but it's expensive.

Actually, we just purchased one four or five years ago, and each tool is worth \$15,000, and we bought three tools, \$45,000. So it is expensive, too, for these departments and smaller departments.

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

**Mr. LaVie:** Pardon?

**Ms. Biggar:** Island Community Fund –

**Mr. LaVie:** Island Community –

**Mr. Aylward:** (Indistinct) did help a bit. It was a great fund when it existed.

**Mr. LaVie:** Yeah, Island Community Funds.

**Mr. Aylward:** (Indistinct) in the Island coastal fund.

**Mr. LaVie:** But there's a fund that should be really –

**Mr. Aylward:** Brought back.

**Mr. LaVie:** - brought back and bumped up for our fire services across Prince Edward Island.

But Mr. Speaker, we should be sure that there's a standardization of servicing equipment in each of our departments to eliminate inconsistencies.

I believe we need to determine the role of the services provided by our fire departments and then clearly let Islanders know what they can expect.

If somebody gets stuck on the road in a snowstorm – in a very bad snowstorm – when, frankly, they shouldn't even be on the road in the first place, who do they call? Not the Ghostbusters; the fire department.

**Mr. Aylward:** And who's the head of the fire department?

**Mr. LaVie:** Provincial snowplow operators, the police or RCMP, Island EMS, our tow operators; no doubt all these services would likely respond, but the question is who should respond.

We all go to respond, but who should?

We find ourselves in this situation a lot. I know one night – actually, when the Souris bridge was being built, there was – the barricades were put up with no lights. That's just the fault of the former minister. I won't fire him under the bus, but –

**Mr. R. Brown:** Not the current.

**Mr. LaVie:** - I can fire him under – not the current – I can fire him under the bus now he's not here, but I don't want to fire him under the bus because he's still in the Premier's Office; I might need a favour.

But no, seriously, the car hit the barricade – just, he's so used to coming around that, them S-turns before the bridge, he was just

used to it. Too much speed, bounced off, and he landed in the middle of the highway.

**Ms. Biggar:** Lucky the bridge is still there.

**Mr. LaVie:** So what happens to our resources, and especially the RCMP? We got them cut back so bad that the fire department is doing the RCMP's work.

There was no RCMP in the area because after 3:00 a.m., the RCMP are anywhere from Bonshaw to East Point; two RCMP.

What we had to do, we had to direct traffic – there was not much traffic, but there was a Magdalen boat in Souris leaving with 300 cars on it, so we had to be careful of that – so we had to sit there and directed traffic and wait for an RCMP to show up. See, there's another resource that is cut that the fire departments are picking up.

There's lots – I can talk for days, but I know there's other members that want to speak to this important motion.

Islanders need to know who's responsible for these kinds of services so that the most qualified person responds to their particular situation.

A paramedic is much better prepared to deal with a heart attack or a stroke, but often the fire department is called.

There's another resource that was cut was our ambulances, and the former minister –

**Mr. R. Brown:** Got it back.

**Mr. LaVie:** – of health –

**Mr. R. Brown:** Good man.

**Mr. LaVie:** – cut them. Cut them.

**Mr. R. Brown:** No, he didn't. He gave you the other one.

**Mr. LaVie:** He didn't give us another one.

**Mr. R. Brown:** Schools. Manor, school, bridge –

**An Hon. Member:** Ambulance.

**An Hon. Member:** Ambulance.

**Mr. R. Brown:** Ambulance.

**Mr. LaVie:** Just wait now.

**Mr. R. Brown:** Palliative nurses.

**Mr. LaVie:** Wait now, you just hit a nerve.

**Ms. Biggar:** (Indistinct)

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

**Mr. LaVie:** Premier, you just hit a nerve.

You come into Souris in 2015 and promised a second ambulance, right?

**Premier MacLauchlan:** In eastern PEI.

**Mr. LaVie:** But we never got that second ambulance.

**An Hon. Member:** He said he was going to drive it.

**Mr. R. Brown:** Yes, he did.

**Mr. LaVie:** No.

**An Hon. Member:** Better watch out, your (Indistinct) might someday be (Indistinct).

**An Hon. Member:** You're waiting on it (Indistinct) –

**Mr. LaVie:** I'll tell you how it works. You hit this nerve. You and I had this nerve for a long time.

The situation is better, but there's no second ambulance like you promised.

**Ms. Biggar:** There is.

**Mr. LaVie:** You put us in the rotation. Now, we're in the rotation. If our ambulance leaves, there's one comes into our district.

**An Hon. Member:** Seven minutes has gone.

**Mr. LaVie:** So that's still only one ambulance in the district, because the other one's gone.

**An Hon. Member:** Come on, really?

**Mr. LaVie:** Before, we were not in the rotation. When our ambulance left, that was gone. There was none filled in for it. Now, with the former minister of health, he put us in that rotation and I did see the difference.

**Ms. Biggar:** Great.

**Mr. LaVie:** It is a difference, but there is no second ambulance.

**Ms. Biggar:** There is.

**Mr. LaVie:** There is no second ambulance – yes, I'm sorry, there is.

**Ms. Biggar:** Yes.

**Mr. LaVie:** You've got one parked. It's a spare one, in case one breaks down, that's not manned. It's not manned. Don't go with that nerve –

**An Hon. Member:** We will.

**Mr. LaVie:** - because that was a promise that was –

**Premier MacLauchlan:** (Indistinct).

**Mr. LaVie:** That was a promise that was broken. That's a broken promise. That's a nerve of mine, and that will be a nerve of mine as long as I'm sitting in this seat.

**Mr. Currie:** You closed your emergency room.

**Mr. LaVie:** Who closed my emergency room?

**Mr. Currie:** Your party.

**Mr. LaVie:** My party closed the emergency room, it did. And did I agree with it? I was one of them fellows that couldn't get into the Parish Hall because it was packed, because we didn't want it closed.

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

**Mr. LaVie:** Do I agree with it?

**Some Hon. Members:** I'd vote for you.

**Mr. LaVie:** Did I agree with it?

**Ms. Biggar:** You're the fire chief. Why wouldn't you vote for it?

**An Hon. Member:** Next leader.

**Mr. R. Brown:** Colinlavie.com

**Mr. LaVie:** Just watch that nerve. If you want that nerve, that's how to bring it up.

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

**Mr. LaVie:** Or my promised doctor.

Mr. Speaker, back to the motion.

**Speaker:** Thank you.

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

**Mr. LaVie:** Mr. Speaker, I have responded to many accidents, fire, and rescues because, essentially, I'm trained as a firefighter. At any incident I feel comfortable in command, whether it be fire, car collisions, water rescue, a cat in a tree, it doesn't make any difference. I feel comfortable in control of a scene. I tell my firefighters that and they feel comfortable in me. That means a lot. That was my expectations when I went there as a volunteer firefighter.

Over the years, expectations have grown in the fire services. What we do see – and we did have a female firefighter in Souris at one time. We have none now and we haven't had any names in as females, but now the thing is growing – you see more females in the fire services. Actually, we have our first chief female on Prince Edward Island. So it's good. Things have changed in the fire services, not only in Prince Edward Island, right across Canada.

Today, so many different services show up. There's often confusion about who's supposed to do what. This is where we've got to have the review and all these services have got to come together.

Even with our Maritime Electric. It's not a big deal, but it is when you're on a fire scene in a house and you have to send somebody in a house and the power was still on. Can we wait 45 minutes, an hour, an hour and a half for Maritime Electric to come to the scene? No, it's true. You wait 45 minutes now. They cover all King's

County now, right? They could be down in Murray River when we have a house fire. It's a decision I have to make. If the breaker don't go with the pole, I've got to make a decision whether to send men into that house with power on. I've got to assess the situation.

**An Hon. Member:** You have to wait for Maritime Electric?

**Mr. LaVie:** To shut the power off.

**Ms. Biggar:** Not before you enter the house, though? You've got to make the decision.

**Mr. LaVie:** We got to make the decision what we're going to do, yes.

It's just extra stress that is put on fire services that nobody sees and nobody hears about. It's all this – I shouldn't call it little stuff, but it's all this different stuff that's just put back on the fire services now.

Mr. Speaker, should firefighters be cleaning up oil spills? Or is that the job of trained individuals from hazard materials? Should firefighters be clearing down trees and limbs that come down on the highways? That should be highways. It should be just one phone call. This is where the review would come in. Even for me to make that phone call – 911 is going to dispatch Souris Fire Department, Souris Fire Department is going to show up to the fire, then we call transportation. Then the municipality's got all that expense of the firemen showing up – just to make one phone call.

**An Hon. Member:** How many calls did you get last year?

**Mr. LaVie:** Eighty.

So, in this review, it should be at dispatch – determines if it's an oil spill – well they'll call Highway Safety. There's little things like this that we got to have this review and it's got to be worked out in this review.

The role of a firefighter has evolved over the years. I just see that in my short time there. I've seen the difference since I went there. We had two old trucks when I took over from Gerald – and no fault of the chiefs prior to me – they worked with what they had. That's what departments do now. They

work with what they had – to what they have to deal with.

When I took over from Gerald – Gerald passed away – Gerald Clinton. Most of you probably know him. He's a great ball player, great fellow, great chief, great community guy. Anyway, he passed away and I took over from Gerald. No fault of Gerald, all he had was two old trucks to work with. You know, it was pretty simple. You just pulled two handles and you had water.

But with today's standard, you order a truck – it's NFPA standards that tell you what you get. I want a thousand gallons of water with a 1050 pumper. They'll tell you where your outlets are going to be, how many outlets you're going to have. When you look at a fire truck, it almost looks like an airplane to you. You get all excited and you don't –. But once you're on a truck and learn the pumps and you know what's what – same as an airplane pilot, right? It's quite a change, just in my time. My father raised – I think it was \$15,000 we raised to buy our first Jaws of Life and we've had that since 1985, up until four years ago – 2011, is it? 2012. We had that same piece of tool.

That's happening in a lot of our departments. I remember our breathing apparatus – we really stress breathing apparatuses now to all our firefighters – it's a safety –. I remember back in the early 1980s, my father got six breathing apparatuses off of the fishing draggers at Usen Fisheries. That should have been a no-go, but that's all we could afford, that's all we could get. Times have changed over the years, just in my time as a young fellow. I've seen changes.

People are not volunteering in the fire services because they cannot make the time and commitment involved. If they were only fighting fires, perhaps the commitment would be reduced. A comprehensive review would determine that. We've got to have that comprehensive review. Premier, I believe that's in your department – this comprehensive review. Our firefighting service needs a comprehensive plan that ensures a standardization of equipment and of services.

One thing I find is a problem – we put in this new PICS Radio. It's a good radio

system – costs a lot of money, but no contract. We can talk to dispatch or – the RCMP are not on it. We can talk to our Island EMS, we can talk to the departments. Our department and a lot of departments are still on the phone line system. I can't talk directly from my department to the dispatch. I have to go through my phone line services.

It happened to my department three times now, that when the phone line goes down, our paging system is down. We have no backup system; none whatsoever. So, when our phone lines go down, our paging system is down with no backup system. There's something that should be in the comprehensive review to determine how we can get a backup system for the departments.

In a lot of departments, some equipment is aging and are outdated. As the report points out, some fire departments have the Jaws of Life, like I said, and some don't.

I must say, I have a great relationship – our department is under the town of Souris, the municipality of Souris – and we have a great relationship with the town of Souris. I can honestly say in the last 14 years I'm there with chief, I'm after spending over \$1.5 million on the fire department in Souris. That's a lot of money in 14 years for a rural fire department.

What I did when I first went on as chief, back in 2002, I took a gentleman in to review the fire department, where we're at and where we need to go. We used to have a car dump out in St. Catherines. He said: Take everything to the car dump and drop it off. Whoa. Oh, where do I start here?

But Mr. Speaker, we started. We made a plan and we started. The first thing was the safety of all firefighters. That was our first mandate. So we had to buy turnout gear. At that time, I think it was \$1,500 a set. That's just for the turnout gear. That's not your helmet and your boots. Your boots were \$300 your helmet was \$300. We got 30 sets of gear.

Then what we had to do, we had to get new breathing apparatuses. We got 16 new breathing apparatuses and 32 bottles, and we bought themselves their own mask. At that time, they were \$3,500 apiece, plus \$500 for

the extra bottle. So my safety of my firefighters I was comfortable with.

Then we had to start with our trucks. I can say the municipality of Souris was pretty good to us when it came to trucks. The town of Souris would be lucky in the past to get a truck every 20 years. Ten's something, but every 20 years we got a truck. The town of Souris got us two trucks in four years at \$375,000 a truck, and that's not counting equipment.

Since then, we've purchased – actually, it just arrived within the last couple of days – we purchased a new rescue boat. We purchased our Argos, so we have a great working relationship and I want to thank the town of Souris for the great working relationship we have. We have a great finance minister up in Souris and a great district council, so –

**Ms. Biggar:** Town administrator.

**Mr. LaVie:** A perfect town administrator, perfect. She's a perfect little girl.

We recently learned that our forest fire equipment is inadequate and badly in need of replacement, and I must say the minister did announce new trucks for the forestry department. But when I see Souris is one of the departments – has –

**Mr. R. Brown:** No way, you're not getting it.

**Mr. LaVie:** We have –

**Ms. Biggar:** (Indistinct)

**Mr. LaVie:** We have one of the forestry trucks in Souris, and had it since my grandfather; but you know, I brought the department to such a level that we're starting to run out of room. We pretty near – I made the room, because the government's got no money because they're poor at financing.

The Premier had to get this forestry truck off. I was to the point where I was running out of the room, so I convinced the town to build us a little building to put the boat and the Argos in. That cost them \$30,000 and that allowed us to keep the forestry truck. I will believe the minister that is replacing the

trucks when I see that truck in our hall with the keys in our hands. I will. He says he's going to replace them.

These are the kinds of things that should be part of the province-wide system that ensures all firefighting needs for all residents in Prince Edward Island are being met and maintained across the province. We need to determine the level of training we want for our fire departments.

I have heard of several incidents where firefighter and Island EMS personnel have had difficulty finding an address due to problems with civic address systems, and that is a problem. This review would help with this problem.

It's not too bad for rural fire departments. We still have that problem, but it's Island EMS, they do shift work, and of course they're not from the community where they are working, so it's a bigger problem for them, or RCMP that are coming into the area that are not familiar with the area. The civic address numbers are a problem.

You know, people don't realize it. It's a small thing, your civic number. It's a small, small thing, and people don't really take any pass of their civic number until they need us. Then their civic number is very, very important.

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

**Ms. Biggar:** That's right.

**Mr. LaVie:** Yeah.

All civic numbers should be very visible. It's to our own advantage. It's not only for the fire service. Police service, Island EMS, Maritime Electric, all sources, you've got to have your civic number address visible; and what we find, especially in the wintertime, and it's hard in the wintertime because snowplows have to have plow the roads and they plow the snow up over the civic number, or the snow blowers in the driveways, and what I really find is the civic numbers in different places. Some have it up in the corner of the house, some at the bottom of the house, some don't have any, and some are up by the front door.

When you're going by, not too bad for us because if we're going to a fire scene, we pretty well know where the fire is. There's smoke or there's traffic or there's somebody outside roaring or hollering. It's not too bad for us. As long as we can find the road, we'll find the fire; but it's Island EMS I worry about, really. These people are strangers to the community, and when you call 911 for Island EMS, you want them there quick and they want to be there quick.

These are the concerns for the review, and I really hope that the Premier takes this review seriously for the volunteer fire services across Prince Edward Island: concerns that the current funding model for the team is insufficient to maintain operations and conduct necessary upgrades to apparatus and equipment.

A lot of these departments are having it difficult. Not all departments. A lot of the departments fundraise, and they're lucky with their fundraisers, but there are a lot of departments out in these communities that don't have the population to fundraise, they don't have the population for their taxes, and it's really difficult for them.

We got our new jaws of life now and our old jaws of life we're kind of donating to a neighbouring department just to help them out. We give them whatever we can. We get new equipment, if the old equipment is still good for use; we try to help them out as much as we can. That's what it's all about, because we're a volunteer service that's right here across this fine province.

Here's one for the Premier's review. There is also a wide range of how fire services providers are governed and funded. We took that fund out.

**An Hon. Member:** What fund?

**Mr. LaVie:** The community fund, I guess it's –

**Ms. Biggar:** Not my fund.

**Mr. LaVie:** No, it's not yours. No, no, definitely not.

But we took that fund out, and there's a fund that, Premier, you should look at when you're looking at your voluntary fire services. There's quite an expense today,

even for the first responders. When we attend a first responder, when we use our equipment, we've got to replace it. We have to replace the stuff. If we use oxygen, we've got to replace it.

This first responder was a big expense that was put onto these fire departments, Premier, and when you look at this review, I really hope you look at it thoroughly and I hope you engage the fire services on Prince Edward Island when you are doing this review.

Actually, this review was done – I was one of the fire chiefs that was being interviewed – and actually, it was the Member from Morell-Mermaid was doing the interviews back then. I had to decline. I had to come off of the board because I was an elected member. I had to leave so that put me out of the review.

I do hope you do call in the fire services when you are doing over this review and that's –

**Mr. R. Brown:** How many chiefs are there on the Island?

**Mr. LaVie:** There are about 37. Thirty-seven or so, something like that.

**Mr. R. Brown:** Do you have a council?

**Mr. LaVie:** Anyway, I'm going to –

**Mr. R. Brown:** Oh, no, keep going.

**Mr. LaVie:** No.

**Ms. Biggar:** You're doing a great job.

**Mr. LaVie:** I have to adjourn? I do. I respect the time that you gave me. I'm sorry I talked so much. I know there were other hon. members that did want to talk –

**Ms. Biggar:** (Indistinct)

**Mr. R. Brown:** We move that you keep going.

**Mr. LaVie:** We will bring this back for other hon. members to talk. I'm sorry about that.

**Ms. Biggar:** That's great.

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

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

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

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. Member from Tignish-Palmer Road, that the 9<sup>th</sup> order of the day be now read.

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

**Clerk:** Order No. 9, *Election Age Act*, Bill No. 103, ordered for second reading.

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Member from Tignish-Palmer Road, that the said bill be now read a second time.

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

**Clerk:** *Election Age Act*, Bill No. 103, read a second time.

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

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Member from Tignish-Palmer Road, that this House do now resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole House to take into consideration the said bill.

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

Can I call on the hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton, would you mind and coming and chairing this bill for the Committee of the Whole House?

**Chair (J. Brown):** The House is now in a Committee of the Whole House to take into consideration a bill to be intitled *Election Age Act*. Is it the pleasure of the committee that the bill be now read clause by clause?

**Mr. Aylward:** Chair?

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

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

If we could, perhaps, have just an overview first?

**Chair:** Sure.

**Mr. Aylward:** Thank you.

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** Thank you, hon. member.

This bill is an act to amend the *Election Act* to lower the voting age from 18 years of age to 16 years of age. It also would also lower the qualification for nomination to be a candidate in an election from 18 years of age to 16 years of age. Therefore, it would also lower the age of qualification for eligibility to be elected as a member of this Legislative Assembly from 18 years of age to 16 years of age.

**Chair:** Satisfied, hon. member?

**Mr. Aylward:** If we could go –

**Chair:** Clause by clause?

**Mr. Aylward:** That would be great.

Thank you.

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** Chair, may I have permission to call a stranger to the floor?

**Chair:** Yeah.

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

Joanne MacKinnon.

**Chair:** Ms. MacKinnon, if you could introduce yourself for the record and state your role or your part in this here this evening.

**Joanne MacKinnon Assistant:** Joanne MacKinnon. I'm the legislative assistant for the Office of the Third Party.

**Chair:** Thank you.

Going line by line.

Be it enacted by the Lieutenant Governor and the Legislative Assembly – sorry.

Section 1, subsection 1:

The Election Act R.S.P.E.I. 1988, Cap. E-1.1, is amended by this section.

Sub 2:

Clause 20(a) of the Act is amended by the deletion of the words “18 years of age” and the substitution of the words “16 years of age”.

Shall it carry?

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

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

I guess I would ask, what the rationale is behind, first and foremost, picking the age of 16, reducing it from the age of 18.

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** Of course, that is the central question here. There are several ways I can answer that, hon. member.

The first is, that this is not an unusual situation. There are many jurisdictions around the world, Argentina, Germany, Scotland, where the voting age is 16. And many other jurisdictions where the voting age for general elections is 16.

The other rationale I used for 16 is that in the recent plebiscite that we held, 16 and 17-year-olds voted in good numbers. In fact, that cohort, 16 and 17-year-olds voted in the largest percentage of any age group between them and 45-year-olds. Forty-five year old and up had a higher percentage turn out. From 16 up to 45 they were the cohort that voted more than any other.

If you look at the way that they voted, they demonstrated the same range of opinion. They didn't speak with one voice. They weren't a unified voice. They spoke with the same sort of range and diversity of opinion as others. That demonstrates to me that 16-year-olds are perfectly capable of understanding what is required to vote in an election.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

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

I know that I attended several of the electoral reform public meetings where there were presentations made. Probably, the one that I thought the best youth engagement we had was the one that took place at Charlottetown Rural. There were presentations both from Rural students and Grey students.

I thought that they did a fabulous job. My only concern when we did question them at the end, is why they all spoke on one particular model of electoral reform and the response was: Well, that's what was taught in our class. We only looked at one system, which is fine.

I guess my question would be we were all in agreement to move the age to vote in the plebiscite from the age of 18 down to 16 for the obvious reason that if the electoral system did change that those individuals, age 16 to 18 would be the ones that would be voting, presumably, in the next provincial election.

**Ms. Biggar:** (Indistinct) rationale.

**Mr. Aylward:** Exactly, minister. That made a great deal of sense for me.

I'm just trying to get a little more basis why you feel the need is there to lower the voting age from the age of 18 down to 16.

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** Okay.

I can give you some other rationale, as well. 16-year-olds, some of them work full-time. Any that do work, pay taxes.

**Mr. Aylward:** Yeah, good point.

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** 16-year-olds can get married. They can start a family. 16-year-olds can leave school voluntarily. 16-year-olds can drive a car. All of these responsibilities of adulthood that 16-year-olds Prince Edward Island enjoy suggest to me that they're perfectly capable of picking up a pencil and putting an X in a box during an election.

Indeed, the rationale, or one of the rationale, I should say, not the only rationale, for including 16 and 17-year-olds in the plebiscite was that they would be voting in the next election. But, let's not forget that 16

and 17-year-olds live with the consequences of the laws and the legislation, which is passed in this House.

Those 16 and 17-year-olds, if their birthday happens to fall in between elections, which almost all of them do, could be 20-years-old by the time the first opportunity that they would have to vote – currently with a voting age of 18, many young people do not actually vote until they're 21 or even 22-years-old. Of course, they live with the consequences of the legislation that we pass in this House.

Even though the plebiscite, yes, they actually would be of voting age by the time the next election came around, 16 and 17-year olds now, I believe, not only have the intellectual capacity to make a decision like this, but I think we should grant them the right and the responsibility to do it also.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock, further follow-up.

**Ms. Biggar:** Chair? Do you have us – (Indistinct) the list?

**Chair:** We'll get to you.

**Ms. Biggar:** Just checking

**Chair:** I have the list.

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

Hon. member you make some extremely good points. Now, you spoke about the age of the 16 and 17-year-olds had one of the higher voter turnouts in the plebiscite. Moving onto the next age category; 18 to 24, do you have the information with regards to the percentage of voter turnout in that demographic?

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** I can find that for you, hon. member.

**Mr. Aylward:** Perfect.

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** As we all know, the voting turnout for the plebiscite was not what we had all hoped for, but I can read it: 16 and 17-year-olds voted 32.16% of them voted; 18 to 24, it was 25%. That's a fairly substantial drop, 7%.

Then, again, it doesn't go above 32% until we get to 45-year-olds. Every age group in between is less than 32%.

I just wanted – it's not a question, I just didn't catch –

**Chair:** Follow-up?

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** (Indistinct) information –

**Mr. Aylward:** So the 16 to 17 was 32.16%?

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** Yes.

**Mr. Aylward:** Then, the age demographic from 18 to what, was 25%?

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** To 24.

**Mr. Aylward:** To 24 years of age.

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** It was 25.47.

**Mr. Aylward:** 25.47.

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** 25 to 34 was 29.32%.

**Mr. Aylward:** Okay.

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** We can go on up, if you wish.

**Mr. Aylward:** That's fine, thank you.

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

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

I'm curious. Is there any other state or province in North America that allows voting at 16? Or is there any other country, jurisdiction worldwide that allows that age to vote?

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** Yes, there is. There are many other jurisdictions around the world. I have a whole page here of maybe 20 of them.

Some of these jurisdictions, the voting age is only for municipal or provincial voting. Most of them it's for a national election for federal general election. Argentina, Austria, Bosnia, Brazil, Croatia, I could go through the whole list.

In North America, I don't believe there are any that use it for a general election. However, the New Brunswick, the Commission on Electoral Reform, which just finished its work recommended that in New Brunswick, the age of voting be reduced to 16.

**Leader of the Opposition:** Chair?

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** (Indistinct) no, for general elections.

**Leader of the Opposition:** One other question I have is, you spoke a minute ago about the privilege of having a licence and other things in regards to that.

I'm wondering about all provinces and states have a legal drinking age of 18 or 21. In some states –

**Ms. Biggar:** (Indistinct)

**Leader of the Opposition:** Pardon me?

**Ms. Biggar:** And 19.

**Leader of the Opposition:** That's right. Yeah, you're right.

In some jurisdictions the use of soft drugs and the responsibility that can go behind that is not below 18, and it's above. I'm wondering the correlation or the comparison in between of that?

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** All kinds of laws in different jurisdictions kick in at different ages. Of course, we all know, I have four children, and they weren't all equally responsible when they hit 16, I can tell you. I'm sure we're all aware of that.

You have to set some benchmarks. You have to set some perimeters. Again, this is not an uncommon one. I absolutely feel that 16-year-olds are perfectly capable of taking on the responsibility and enjoying the right of voting in elections.

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

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

**Ms. Biggar:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. That's a mouthful.

I'm just interested in, having sat, of course, on our special committee for electoral reform, and was in agreement to engage our youth in the province.

But the rationale behind it, as you know, from committee's perspective, was that those would be the individuals voting in the next general election for PEI.

I'm interested, though, too, in your proposal to amend the eligible age for which a member can be elected to the Legislature of Prince Edward Island, that being to go down to 16.

Where at – is there anywhere else in the world?

**Chair:** Can we maybe just hold, because I think we're getting further down in the –

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** We haven't gotten to that –

**Ms. Biggar:** Okay, we haven't got to that.

**Chair:** We haven't gotten to that clause yet –

**Ms. Biggar:** Okay.

**Chair:** – so I'll come back to you hon. minister.

**Ms. Biggar:** I thought we were just having general discussions.

**Chair:** No. We're just on clause one there, so far.

**Ms. Biggar:** That's great. No problem.

**Chair:** Perfect, thanks.

**Ms. Biggar:** Thank you.

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

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

Leader of the Third Party, when you were explaining the premise of the bill, you mentioned that there were many other

jurisdictions that have provisions to elect 16-year-olds to their Legislature.

Can you tell me, or name me a legislature that has actually elected a 16-year-old?

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** Hon. member, I cannot.

I think, although, I'm imagining that this provision be in there, we all – I mean, it's difficult to get elected under 30 in almost any jurisdiction. You have to demonstrate a certain level of expertise and experience before voters will take you seriously. The provision is there to offer that possibility, but I don't expect the Legislature to be filled with 16 and 17-year-olds come the next election.

**Chair:** Hon. members, before we get too far into that debate, can we go back to section 1?  
Are there any further questions on the first section?

**An Hon. Member:** Carry.

**Ms. Biggar:** No, it's not (Indistinct)

**Chair:** Shall the section carry?

**Ms. Biggar:** No.

**Chair:** Okay. Are there any further questions before we get to asking for the vote on it?

No.

**Ms. Biggar:** Question.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

**Mr. Aylward:** Just to confirm. We are still going through this bill clause by clause, correct?

**Chair:** That's correct.

**Mr. Aylward:** You asked if section 1, the first clause –

**Chair:** I read the first clause.

**Mr. Aylward:** Yeah.

**Chair:** So far I haven't asked anything, yet, other than when there are questions on it.

**Mr. Aylward:** Exactly.

Thank you.

**Chair:** Do you have a question, hon. member?

**Mr. Aylward:** No. I just wanted to clarify where we were going with this.

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

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

I'm wondering if you would agree that most 16-year-olds do not live on their own independently. Would you agree with that statement? Do you think that's generally true?

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** I think that is generally true, yeah.

**Mr. Trivers:** One of the rationale you were using was that 16-year-olds have to abide by, sorry, Chair –

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

**Mr. Trivers:** Is they will have to abide by the rules and laws of the land like everyone else does, but in most cases, and maybe, I don't know if this is the right legal term, 16-year-olds are really, they still have guardians, right? They're still under the guardianship of their parents? Is that a true statement, do you think?

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** Yes, but at 16, you do have the right to declare your independence and move out and be independent on Prince Edward Island.

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

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

Do you think that all 16-year-olds, regardless of whether they are actually under the guardianship of their parents, should have the right to vote, or just those that have said: Look, I'm ready to take this step, I'm

going to be responsible for myself in all areas.

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** No, I think 16-year-olds, whether they live at home, or are married or in common law or living with friends, are equally able to, and should be able to, vote in an election.

**Mr. Trivers:** Okay, thanks for clarifying that.

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

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

Something just popped in here. What is your opinion in regards to the young offenders act? Because below the age of 18, youth between the ages of 16, 17 are applied federal laws under the young offenders act. How would that come into play?

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** That's a different piece of legislation. We apply different standards in all kinds of things. I don't think the two are incompatible, at all.

**Leader of the Opposition:** Yeah, but as –

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

**Leader of the Opposition:** If you're charged – if a 16 is charged and he has an offence or conviction under the young offenders act, then that record is seized, or pardon me, sealed at age 17 and 364 days, so –

**Ms. Biggar:** (Indistinct)

**Leader of the Opposition:** Pardon me?

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

**Leader of the Opposition:** I'm just wondering. I see a possibility of a conflict between the *Young Offenders Act* – which is a federal statute – and this. I'm not a lawyer, but –

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** As far as I'm aware, and I stand to be corrected, that inmates in Sleepy Hollow, for example, have the right to vote. Can anybody clarify that?

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

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** Yes.

**Leader of the Opposition:** Yeah but you've got the possibility to (Indistinct)

**Ms. Biggar:** You just can't run for elected office.

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** Right.

**Leader of the Opposition:** But you've got to possibly there, hon. member –

**Chair:** Hon. Leader of the Opposition.

**Leader of the Opposition:** You've got a federal act which governs how youth are charged and sentenced and that whole justice system way, right? I'm sort of wondering about that – before 18, will the record be sealed? I almost have to ask for a legal opinion from –

**An Hon. Member:** The chair?

**Leader of the Opposition:** – from somebody.

**Mr. LaVie:** Chair?

**Leader of the Opposition:** I think it's something to consider.

**Chair:** Not my expertise.

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

**Chair:** The chair can't answer that. I'm sorry.

Hon. Member from Charlottetown-Victoria Park.

**Mr. R. Brown:** I commend the Leader of the Third Party for the discussion around election reform and we are on a journey of election reform – there's no doubt about it. We've seen a great discussion over the last year on electoral reform and we did have a plebiscite. We are moving forward with more discussion on election reform and when the PCs get their leadership, I think there will be a leader's discussion between all parties on the next step and what we're going to have on the plebiscite in the next election.

**Ms. Biggar:** No, referendum.

**Mr. R. Brown:** Referendum, sorry. Referendum in the next election.

This is a whole package we should be bringing to the electorate of PEI and I believe, and I think my colleagues do, we are getting to present a package to the electorate in the next election and all of this should be put together in one package.

We will not be supporting this because we believe in a bigger package in the next election on a comprehensive review –

**Ms. Compton:** Is he speaking for Caucus?

**Mr. R. Brown:** – of this. When I say ‘we’ I mean ‘leader’.

**Mr. LaVie:** The next leader, or what?

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

**Mr. R. Brown:** Although I commend you for your efforts here, I’ll not be supporting it because I think we will be putting a package together in consultation with the third party, with the opposition, with the NPD. The discussion hasn’t ended and I’d rather see a comprehensive package delivered to the people of Prince Edward Island in the next election.

Thank you.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Tignish-Palmer Road.

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

What research have you done in preparing this bill? Did you speak to pediatricians to see what the ability to reason would be for a 16 year old? Or other experts?

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** No, I did not.

**Mr. Perry:** Yes.

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** I read literature on that, however. The accepted age where one’s brain completely develops is actually 25 years old.

**Mr. Perry:** Yes.

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** So, do we therefore exclude everybody up to 25 years old from voting? I suspect not. Evolution and our cognitive intellectual capabilities are hopefully expanding all the time, but I believe that by 16 years of age, children – young people are capable of doing this.

I didn’t actually speak to the hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock’s comment earlier about the youth at Colonel Gray who spoke with one voice. I suspect that, as you rightly point out, hon. member, that it was the system that they were taught in classroom. I suspect there are a couple of things going on: One is that that’s, perhaps, a failure of our education system. It’s not a failure of youth to understand a variety of different options. And one of the big advantages of this, I believe, is that it would incite a greater desire to teach civics in our schools and involve children and engage younger adults – young Islanders – in the notion that politics is important and understanding how this works and getting involved in politics is a civic duty. It’s a responsibility.

While I, too, was a little – I’m not concerned about the unity of the voice that we heard at Colonel Gray. I think if civics were expanded and taught in schools more widely and a broader curriculum, I think we would have had a variety of opinions that day

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

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

I was wondering if you’ve gone out and done a pole among the 16 year olds to see what they think of the idea, either formally or informally.

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** Informally, absolutely. I speak to young people on PEI all the time. I go into schools fairly frequently. Generally speaking, they are excited at the opportunity of being able to vote. I think, again, that’s reflected in the numbers that voted in the plebiscite – although it wasn’t stellar. They voted in reasonable number. I would have hoped for more. I think 16 years old are excited about the opportunity to be engaged in the electoral process.

**Chair:** Hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

**Mr. Trivers:** Will you say that 16 year olds are asking for this opportunity to vote? Is it something they're pushing for? They would like to see this? They want this?

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** A small number have actually contacted me. Not in the recent past, but during the debate on the plebiscite. It was hot topic of conversation. I spoke to many school-aged children then who were very excited at the prospect of voting.

**Chair:** Hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

**Mr. Trivers:** Have you done any surveys, poles – formally or informally – of parents of 16 year olds to see what their opinion is on this?

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** No, I haven't. I'm not sure what the response to that would be. I do think that – we have this fanciful notion that we sit around the dinner table and talk about politics. I know that doesn't happen in many houses, but it does happen. I think if children were taught civics in school and then went home, there would be a much greater opportunity for those sorts of conversations to happen. The more Islanders who become aware and become engaged in politics, I think, the better our political system will be – the stronger our democracy will be.

**Chair:** Hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

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

Do you feel that, as a whole, most parents would be in favour of having their 16 year olds with the ability to vote?

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** I do, but that's just an opinion. I have no scientific evidence to base that.

**Mr. Trivers:** All right.

Thank you.

**Chair:** Hon. Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy.

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

From your – I think you have your figures there from the voting. You quoted percentages of 16 year olds. What's the actual number of recorded votes that was recorded for that age group? Is that in your data?

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** It is. 2068.

**Ms. Biggar:** How many voted?

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** Oh. 667.

**Ms. Biggar:** Okay. That's what I was wondering. And I'm going to ask the question again: How many countries in the world have 16 year olds as elected representatives, in your research?

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** I don't know the answer to that.

**Ms. Biggar:** Okay.

Thank you.

**Chair:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** I just wanted to make a comment on the percentage of 16 and 17-year-olds who voted. That 30% plus was of those who registered. I believe the group that could have registered would be approximately double for the number that actually did. I just wanted to clarify what that 30 plus per cent means. It was 32% of those who took the step to register.

**Chair:** Hon. Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy.

**Ms. Biggar:** If my memory serves me correctly, it was around 4,000 eligible to register, in that ballpark figure and you said from your figures there it was about 2,000 –

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** 2,068 were registered.

**Ms. Biggar:** – that were registered and 600 and some of those voted.

Thank you.

**An Hon. Member:** Call the hour.

**Chair:** The hour has been called.

**Mr. LaVie:** Extend the hour?

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

**Ms. Biggar:** You just want to go back to the motion.

**Chair:** Is it unanimous consent to extend the hour?

**Some Hon. Members:** No.

**Chair:** No, there's not.

**Ms. Biggar:** You can call him back.

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** (Indistinct) anticlimax.

**Clerk Assistant:** (Indistinct)

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** Mr. Chair, I move that the Speaker take the chair, and the Chair report progress and beg leave to sit again.

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

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** That's it. Thank you, Joanne.

**Chair:** Mr. Speaker, as Chair of a Committee of the Whole House, having had under consideration a bill to be intituled *Election Age Act*, I beg leave to report that the committee has made some progress and begs leave to sit again. I move that the report of the committee be adopted.

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

The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

**Mr. McIsaac:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. Member from West Royalty-Springvale, that this House adjourn until tomorrow, April 12<sup>th</sup>, at 2:00 p.m.

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

Have a good evening.

The Legislature adjourned until tomorrow, Wednesday, at 2:00 p.m.