

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY



Speaker: Hon. Francis (Buck) Watts

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MATTERS OF PRIVILEGE AND RECOGNITION OF GUESTS	3352
STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS	3356
SUMMERSIDE-WILMOT (East Prince Senior's Initiative).....	3356
WEST ROYALTY-SPRINGVALE (Hospice PEI)	3356
LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION (Ice Boat Crossings).....	3357
LEADER OF TH ETHIRD PARTY (Cathy Cairns)	3357
ORAL QUESTIONS	3358
GEORGETOWN-ST. PETERS (Jeopardy of Old Home Week)	3359
GEORGETOWN-ST. PETERS (Funding Cut to Exhibitions).....	3359
GEORGETOWN-ST. PETERS (Impact on Tourism re: Old Home Week)	3360
GEORGETOWN-ST. PETERS (Jeopardy of Old Home Week further).....	3361
GEORGETOWN-ST. PETERS (Red Shores and Old Home Week Committee)	3362
GEORGETOWN-ST. PETERS (Government Support of Old Home Week)	3363
MORELL-MERMAID (Hillsborough Hospital Replacement)	3363
MORELL-MERMAID (Youth In-patient Psychiatric Unit)	3365
LEADER OF THE THIRD PARTY (Reducing Carbon Emissions/Carbon Tax).....	3365
CHARLOTTETOWN-LEWIS POINT (Snowbirds Accessing Provincial Healthcare)	3367
CHARLOTTETOWN-LEWIS POINT (Health Insurance While Out-of-Province)	3367
TIGNISH-PALMER ROAD (A+Program for Westisle Family of Schools)	3368
BELFAST-MURRAY RIVER (Seven Groups Interested in Provincial Golf Courses).....	3369
BELFAST-MURRAY RIVER (EOI Responses)	3371
BELFAST-MURRAY RIVER (Mill River Deal)	3371
BELFAST-MURRAY RIVER (Other Options for Purchase of Mill River)	3372
BELFAST-MURRAY RIVER (Tabling of Mill River Contract)	3373
STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS	3374
PREMIER (Opioids).....	3374
HEALTH AND WELLNESS (Immunization)	3376
EDUCATION, EARLY LEARNING AND CULTURE (East Coast Music Awards)	3377

TABLING OF DOCUMENTS.....	3379
ORDERS OTHER THAN GOVERNMENT.....	3379
BILL 105 – Reward Points Protection Act	3379
MOTIONS OTHER THAN GOVERNMENT.....	3380
MOTION 28 (In support of planning now for the replacement of the aging Hillsborough Hospital).....	3380
STRATFORD-KINLOCK	3380
GEORGETOWN-ST. PETERS	3382
HEALTH AND WELLNESS	3382
EDUCATION, EARLY LEARNING AND CULTURE	3388
LEADER OF THE THIRD PARTY	3391
CHARLOTTETOWN-VICTORIA PARK	3392
SOURIS-ELMIRA	3393
ORDERS OF THE DAY (GOVERNMENT)	3396
ESTIMATES	3396
EXECUTIVE COUNCIL.....	3396
JUSTICE AND PUBLIC SAFETY	3400
SECOND READING AND COMMITTEE	3414
BILL 69 – Building Codes Act.....	3415
ADJOURNED.....	3433

The Legislature sat at 2:00 p.m.

Matters of Privilege and Recognition of
Guests

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Welcome everyone to the Legislative Assembly for this great spring day, first of a string of warm days that will make a great change in our province.

Welcome those in the gallery, Doreen Wall who serves the province in many ways, including soon to be president of the Women's Institute. Eddie Lund, Dick Arsenault and a great group here from hospice; Linda Callard, Lorna Jenkins, Laurie-Ann McCardle, and Ellen Davis-Ward will be recognized later.

This morning I stopped by the Jack Blanchard centre where there is a great event to offer services to help out with homeless Islanders, a PEI Connects event. Wendi James-Poirier is playing the role there as the homelessness partnering strategy coordinator for our province.

It's providing meals; hygiene, clothing. I was dropping off some clothing. There are many organizations represented there, and people who give a lot to our community for – great need. It's important, of course, that that's – or noteworthy that that's happening in National Volunteer Week. There are a lot of people and organizations who support our community in that way.

Later this afternoon, I'll take part of the swearing in of our newest Supreme Court Justice, Tracey Clements, the hon. Tracey Clements. A former student, a great, productive, hardworking, loyal, volunteer leader contributor to our community, and I have every expectation and confidence that she'll make a great contribution as a justice of the PEI Supreme Court.

This evening, there will be the send-off for the salute to Bruce Rainnie and Kevin 'Boomer' Gallant at the Eastlink Centre. With Bruce having been in his position for almost 14 years, and Boomer, with CBC, for

more than 30 years, they've become really, what you could call cultural icons and a pair throughout the province. I'm sure that will be recognized tonight and into the future. We wish them well in their next chapter.

On the home front, I had the opportunity, starting out early this morning, to stop to wish happy birthday to Shirley Lawson, who turns 93 today, a long-time neighbour and a teacher, a grade-school teacher, grades 5 through 8, a principal and many other ways in which she had an influence on us.

When I was there, this morning, she was about to start what she calls 'the puzzle' the crossword, which she does every day. Among topics that we discussed she made the observation that she thinks the journalists should use more commas. Maybe that's something that we can pass along for anyone, although I think the style, perhaps, has changed.

While we're wishing to happy birthday to neighbours, Lorne Kielly was born just a day before Shirley; turned 93 yesterday. I want to wish happy birthday to Lorne, as well.

Greetings, of course, to everyone in our district who's watching, and who is taking an interest in what we're doing here.

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 everyone back today. Welcome everybody in District 19.

It's shaping up that Borden-Carleton is going to be a very busy place in the next month and a half.

I had the privilege of attending the confederation – or the cup in Summerside this morning, where they announced the line-up for the BridgeFest festivities coming up, which I'm taking a very good interest in.

It's going to start with the major fireworks on a Friday night. That is going to lead into a major dance with Burton Cummings on Saturday night. Then, activities in Borden-Carleton all day Sunday from the IWK walk and run across and also events for families alike.

I wish them all the best in this announcement.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

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

I'd like to welcome everybody back.

Today, I'd just like to make mention of one of the Pages here in our Assembly. She has been a Page, actually, ever since the day she was born. Her name is Paige, Paige Miller. She recently was one of two Island women, who won an EF Tours One Idea competition which allowed her to go to – amongst other places – Ottawa, and Vimy Ridge. I'd like the rest of you to join me in congratulating Paige on that.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

Mr. LaVie: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I want to say hello to everyone back in District 1.

There's two individuals here on Prince Edward Island I want to get a real big shout-out too: and that'd be Bruce Rainnie and Kevin 'Boomer' Gallant. I know – they're not only known for their broadcasting on CBC, but they're better known for going out into the community and doing events with the community to raise money.

This shirt I am wearing here today – that was at the event that the Souris Legion that the project's about to start – that Boomer and Bruce came up as a fundraiser and this shirt was on the auction block. Actually, it was Lawrence MacAulay and I that were

bidding against this shirt. There's no way Lawrence MacAulay is coming into my community and taking this shirt off of my back.

Ms. Biggar: (Indistinct).

Mr. LaVie: Mr. Speaker, I paid big money for this shirt – actually, \$590. I think that's Boomer's age – five nine, right?

We have lots in common, Bruce and Boomer and I. We have lots in common. Bruce and I, we don't cook. Bruce don't cook. I don't cook. My wife says I couldn't boil a pot of water. Boomer and I, we both sing. And on my bucket list, actually – I knew Boomer for a few years now and on my bucket list is to sing on the stage with Boomer Gallant. That's on my bucket list and hopefully that'll happen.

Putting all jokes aside, what Boomer and Bruce did with CBC, nobody else has ever done. They put CBC, with *Compass* on the map right across this country. And I want to give a big thank you, not only to what they did with CBC, but what they did for the communities right across Prince Edward Island. These two individuals went across Prince Edward Island, into the communities and were loved by the communities and had big fund raisers come out of that. They packed every room they went into.

I can honestly say that I made great friends over the years with Bruce and Boomer. I wish them both the very best into the future.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Dumville: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'd like to welcome everybody here today. I'd also echo the words of my colleague across the way there. Bruce and Boomer will be really missed here on Prince Edward Island and I, too, wish them all the best.

I'd like to thank the ladies here from hospice – that are representing hospice here today. We have Ellen Davis-Ward, Laurie-Ann McCardle, Linda Callard, and Lorna Jenkins. I thank you all for being here today and you'll be subject to a member's

statement a little later. Thank you for being here.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Gallant: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I, too, would like to welcome everyone to the gallery and a special welcome to a constituent of mine and friend of mine Dick Arsenault – nice to see you here today.

I'd also like to congratulate the Arsenault's Fish Mart Western Red Wings. They've won one, and lost one in the Don Johnson Memorial Cup and I wish them all the best in the upcoming games.

Also, I'd like to wish Bruce and Boomer all the best and thank them for their years of service and I'm sure it'll be a wonderful evening tonight.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Murphy: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Pleasure to rise and welcome all the folks in the public gallery, as well as all the good people of Alberton-Roseville and right across the province that are watching at home. I'd like to say a special hello to my mom who watches faithfully every day.

And while I'm on my feet, I'd also like to thank the member from Belfast-Murray River for the invitation to go across the first run in the car ferry, but I have to decline. I will say I did meet with the community organizations from Belfast and I would like to set up a meeting with the Task Force to across on the ferry and we would certainly invite the member from Belfast-Murray River to join us at that time.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Myers: (Indistinct)

Speaker: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I wanted to rise –

Mr. Murphy: – a meeting with the Task Force to go across on the ferry and we invite that the Member from Belfast-Murray River to join us at that time.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Myers: (Indistinct)

Speaker: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I wanted to rise today and, of course, welcome everyone in the gallery and everyone who is watching from District 18, Rustico-Emerald, especially the tourism operators who are getting ready for another – which everything points at it being a big season. Let's hope that Ontario doesn't draw some of our tourists away, but I think we'll do just fine.

I wanted to give a shout-out to the people in the Stanley Bridge area and Cavendish, especially the Resort Municipality and businesses like the Gables, for the work they are doing to improve the high-speed Internet in their communities. They have done a great job.

I'm going to host a high-speed Internet community conversation on Monday, May 8th, at 7:00 p.m. in Stanley Bridge at the Sterling Women's Institute hall. I wanted to invite all of the MLAs here today across the entire floor to come out, if you want to, to hear about more of what's happening there; how high-speed Internet is being provided, and some of the approaches that that community is taking and also hear some of the stories about the lack of high-speed Internet. I wanted to extend that invitation to everyone here.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

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

It's a pleasure to rise in the House here today and bring greetings, not only to those visiting with us here in the gallery today, but also anyone that may be tuning in on the television or on the Internet. In particular, I'd like to recognize Doreen Wall, as well, who is with us today and she is a wonderful volunteer with the Women's Institute. Thank you for coming in.

The individuals that I know the hon. member across the floor is going to be making his member statement on with regards to Hospice PEI and the tremendous work they do. In particular, one of my constituents, Ellen Ward-Davies, who is a wonderful community-minded individual in Stratford and I'm very much – I appreciate all of the work that she does with Hospice.

In closing, I just want to remind all of the residents of Stratford-Kinlock, ward two, that there is a bye-election this coming Monday, May 1st, and of course it is to replace Dianne Griffin who was elevated to the Senate back just a few months ago. I would encourage all of those individuals that do reside in ward two to get out and exercise their democratic right. We have two individuals vying for this by-election and it's extremely important to vote so please do so.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Henderson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I, too, want to welcome those to the gallery and those watching back home in the great riding of O'Leary-Inverness. I know everybody is getting very active and busy getting their lobster traps ready to roll and their oyster gear out, and potato equipment going.

Also this week is, I'm told, is National Volunteer Recognition Week. I would be remiss if I didn't acknowledge some of the great work that many of the volunteer organizations do when it pertains to healthcare in this province. In your own riding at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, I was down there just recently to acknowledge that the Queen Elizabeth Hospital Auxiliary has just surpassed the \$5 million mark raised in funds for hospital equipment in this province. On top of that, you have all of our hospitals foundations at our six hospitals across the province and all of our auxiliaries and that.

I just want to acknowledge the great work that volunteers do in providing healthcare equipment to the professionals that deliver that equipment.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. MacDonald: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to rise today and welcome everybody in the galleries, especially the ladies from Hospice and palliative care.

Also, I had the opportunity to speak to four Chinese businesses today. Three of them are IT companies and one a bioscience company that are here visiting and prospecting PEI for basically a landing pad through the start-up Visa program. They are very interested.

I also attended BridgeFest this morning in Summerside; 150th Confederation tied into 20 years of the bridge being opened. There are lots of great activities, as the hon. Member from Borden-Kinkora discussed this morning or said this morning, and it's going to be exciting times that weekend.

It's actually the same weekend, I believe; I'm not 100% sure that's it's the 60th anniversary of His Honour Lieutenant Governor Frank and his wife, Dorothy, so lots of competition for people. His Honour was telling me this morning that he's got close to 50 people signed up for the event at his place so it's all good; Eddie Lund, of course.

Most of all, an annual event – West River United Church is having their annual spring breakfast and bake sale this Saturday in Cornwall.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

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

I rise to welcome all our guests in the gallery; a special shout-out to all my constituents who are tuned in today watching, particularly my friends at Champion Court and Lion's Court who are frequent watchers.

I also want to acknowledge a special guest in the gallery today from Hospice. As the former minister of health, I have been very familiar with the early stages of the development of the Provincial Palliative Care facility and we all know it's a beautiful facility. But one thing I have learned is that the facility is beautiful but it's really the care and the compassion that goes on everyday in the facility for loved ones who are at the end of their lives.

Thank you very much for that and nice to have you here today.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Statements by Members

Speaker: The hon. Member from Summerside-Wilmot.

East Prince Senior's Initiative

Mr. Palmer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to acknowledge the great work of the East Prince Senior's Initiative. This group was founded by the Rotary Club of Summerside in 2010.

EPSI's focus is on wellness, life-long learning and productivity of seniors. The board at EPSI has partnered with local area

businesses and the government to provide a great support network for seniors, as well as working in the community, showing how vital seniors are in society.

Last May the group, along with a group of grandparents who are raising their grandchildren, donated 50 books that stocked a new lending library that is situated in Credit Union Place. They have decorated the location and created a small reading library with the goal of making it accessible to everyone.

EPSI has recently moved for their location in Credit Union Place to space in the new inspired learning centre.

The executive director, Gloria Schurman, says the East Prince Senior's Initiative will still be offering the same programs, workshops and services for seniors at the new location and will still work in conjunction with Credit Union Place to host seminars and workshops in the future.

This is a truly a group of community citizen that are always open to trying new things.

So please join me and wish them continued success in the new location.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Hospice PEI

Mr. Dumville: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's an honour for me today to rise and make this statement in regards to Hospice PEI.

I had a friend, Steve, that was on his last journey in his life and the empathy and caring that this organization provides is beyond what you can imagine. They actually brought a smile to his face many days in his last journey.

I rise today to shine a light on the special work done by a group of volunteers, doctors, nurses, and spiritual counselors at Hospice PEI, whose goal it is, to maximize a patient's quality of life at the end of life.

This group of modest humanitarians gives of themselves to provide physical, psychological, social, spiritual and practical support to people with life-threatening illnesses. This same compassionate care and friendship is given to their loved ones, who spend every quality minute at the side of a loved one who is facing imminent death.

This end of life care is not as much about dying as it is about living, and living each day to the fullest; enhancing the comfort, dignity and quality of life as they embark on a very difficult life journey.

If you were to ask a volunteer about being part of this journey with a client or their family, they would tell you that they feel it is a gift to be able to provide comfort to someone in their last hours. They would tell you it is an honor to be able to listen to a good joke and laugh with a patient or relieve a loved one who is in need of a little break to bring them a coffee and a hug.

A large part of their financial stability comes from donations. We all know of someone who has taken part in the *Dancing with the Stars* fundraising event. There is also the upcoming Hike for Hospice coming up in Summerside on May 9th.

I would like the House to acknowledge and thank Hospice PEI and those kind and giving volunteers who provide such a wonderful gift to Islanders and their families in a time of need.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Iceboat Crossings

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

Tomorrow, the community of Cape Traverse will mark 100 years since the end of the ice boat service between PEI and New Brunswick.

The ice boats were PEI's only inter-provincial transportation service in

wintertime for generations, but were officially discontinued on April 28th, 1917. When the first ferry started operation these ice boats were based in Cape Traverse.

The historic raid of Charlottetown in 1775, which ended in the capture of Philips Callbeck, the acting governor of St John's Island and Thomas Wright, the justice of peace and surveyor general were taken to Cambridge, Massachusetts.

However, it was not until five months later when the ice cleared out of the strait that word was received by the rest of the world what had happened.

It was, as a result of these events, the first ice boat crossing from St. John's Island was made in the winter of 1777. This mail and passenger service was from Wood Islands to Pictou, Nova Scotia and this continued for 50 years.

On December 19th, 1827, Neil Campbell and Donald McInniss of Cape Traverse made the crossing, proving it to be a superior route, they were later rewarded with the contract to deliver the Island's mails.

To this day the Cape's ice boat service still holds the record. For 90 years some hardy men from both Cape Traverse, PEI and Cape Tormentine, New Brunswick provided continuous year-round mail service. I encourage all Islanders to join us for a tea party tomorrow and a social from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at Cape Traverse wharf followed by fireworks, again, at the wharf at 8:45 p.m. and also a dance and celebration at the Borden-Carleton Legion starting at 10:00 p.m.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Cathy Cairns

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

Our education system here on the Island is full of smart, dedicated and kind people. Cathy Cairns, administrative assistant at Englewood School is one of them.

Cathy began her journey as an administrative assistant in 1983 at Bluefield High School before joining Englewood school in 1989. Cathy was even a student, actually, at both of those schools attending Englewood School from K-9, and then graduating from Bluefield High School.

She used to be the youngest staff member at Englewood School in Crapaud, and now she admits to being the oldest. Cathy is universally loved and admired by students, staff and parents. On February 15th of this year, Cathy received a PEI Home and School Extra Mile Award.

As the name suggests, these awards are given to staff who go above and beyond their regular duties. The accolades that were given to Cathy at the surprise ceremony when she received the award say everything that needs to be said.

Grade 5 student, Hunter McLean said this: Cathy Cairns is always nice, kind, sweet, caring and so much more. Thank you for having snacks for us just in case we forget ours at home. And also, Hunter says: If we lose a tooth, you give us bags to put them in.

She is the heart and soul of Englewood School said a colleague. She is the glue that holds everything together, said a parent. Principal Randy Reardon says this: Cathy Cairns is the single most important person in this building.

On a personal note, Cathy was one of the first people that we had contact with when our family moved here. Our kids all went to Englewood School. I remember thinking, after I called the school one day, gee, I hope everybody on PEI is as lovely and friendly as that lady.

Please join me in congratulating Cathy Cairns on this well-deserved award.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Responses to Questions Taken as Notice

Questions by Members

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

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I waited for a second there because I thought the minister of transportation was coming with the evaluation of that property, but it didn't happen.

For 129 years Old Home Week has been a Prince Edward Island tradition drawing thousands of visitors from near and far. It's the biggest agricultural fair in Atlantic Canada and the Gold Cup and Saucer is one of the top harness races in North America.

Jeopardy of Old Home Week

Question to the minister of rural development: How is your tired Liberal government allowed things to get in such a state where Old Home Week is in jeopardy of being cancelled for 2017?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

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

I'll take that because it falls under my portfolio with regards to the agriculture piece of it and as well as the Women's Institute piece.

This is the jewel of Prince Edward Island in the middle of the summer. We have the opportunity to bring our cattle; bring our animals into the exhibition; compete against the others; the best on the Island. We also encourage people from other provinces to come and exhibit against us.

The Women's Institute takes crafts, vegetables, flowers in there. This is a jewel and we have to keep it coming.

It's the spring of the year. There is a little bump in the road at the present time. But, as every other bump in the road is fixed, we'll fix this one, too.

We have –

Mr. LaVie: Oh, come on –

Mr. McIsaac: – met on this issue this morning –

Mr. LaVie: – (Indistinct) bumps in the road.

Mr. McIsaac: – and we will smooth this out.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm asking the minister of rural development because it is a rural issue and you had your chance. When you had your chance you basically told them that they were going to have to bend, and that's not going to happen.

A centerpiece of Old Home Week is the Provincial Exhibition, which showcases our proud agricultural traditions and future.

This year's addition is slated to have the largest poultry show in the Maritimes and one of the largest Ayre Shire Shows in Canada with a judge coming from Australia.

Question to the minister of rural development: Do you think cancelling Old Home Week sends a message that your tired Liberal government supports rural Prince Edward Island?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

Mr. McIsaac: Mr. Speaker, we have heard it over and over again since this session started from the other side: the sky is falling.

The sky is not falling. This is the jewel of PEI. We are going to work together and get this going. There is a bump in the road at the present time. It will be fixed up.

We have to have this jewel in the summer. We have to have the Women's Institute involved. We have to have the Ayre Shire (Indistinct) which terrific to see that expanded.

We have a large Holstein show. It's the middle show of the three. We have a spring show in Fredericton; a summer show in Charlottetown; the fall show in Halifax.

It has to happen. It will be happening in Charlottetown. We'll work together and fix this issue.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. LaVie: Should have been fixed before this.

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

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Now, it's funny for the minister to come in here and talk such tough talk when he met with the group himself. The talk was tough, but he was telling him that they were going to have to suck it up.

He wouldn't stand up to Atlantic Lottery Corporation. He wouldn't stand up to Red Shores. He wouldn't stop them from getting bullied around by a government organization.

Funding cut to exhibitions

Question to the minister of agriculture: How can you say you support events like Old Home Week when your tired Liberal government has cut funding to Island exhibitions by more than a third?

More than a third in the last three years?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

Mr. McIsaac: Mr. Speaker, there was no bullying on this side of the House. The only bullying I hear is from the other side over there.

We meet on a regular basis. We put funding into the exhibition association. They decide where the dollars go from one exhibition to the other.

We put extra dollars in last year to keep this thing float. And it was good. We had a great exhibition. We will have another great exhibition this summer.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. LaVie: (Indistinct) for you in a minute.

Mr. Myers: The last three years, 36% cut in the last three years. 36% cut you guys gave them in the last three years.

Question to the minister of agriculture: Do you think exhibitions across the Island are feeling your support when you have cut their funding by 36% in three years?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

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

We actually did put more money in last year. We do put lots of support out there to all the exhibition associations. We will continue to do that because we want to continue to see what the Women's Institute can put forward to there. My wife actually competes in that. I'm sure she would want to see it keep going as well.

We do support that. We support the agricultural industry in many ways. We'll continue to do that. Our agricultural people love coming; showing their Holstein cattle in town, as well as the Ayre Shires.

The other beauty of it is we are bringing agriculture and the rural area to the city so that people there can come and see our Ayre Shires. Come and see our Holsteins. Come and see our beef cattle. The 4-Hers come, as well.

It's a terrific tradition. We get the opportunity to show to each other and to the city folks that hey, this is what's happening in rural PEI and when things are going well in rural PEI, things are going well right across the province.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Well, from a guy who lives in rural PEI I know full well that we have absolutely no support from this tired Liberal government and we've seen it time and time again.

It's funny that the minister has such great vigour on this issue, but he won't stand up to Atlantic Lottery Corporation and all the bigwigs. Like the bigwig over at Red Shores that told them that he makes his living of other people's losses and this doesn't bother him a bit. Funny, eh?

Impact on tourism re: Old Home Week

Question to the minister of tourism: If Old Home Week doesn't go ahead will it have a negative impact on tourism on PEI?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

Mr. McIsaac: Why are we going to that set, Mr. Speaker?

Nothing has been cancelled as of yet. The suggestion is, by the board, that we have to look at something different and we actually met together, some of the ministers, to look at this in a preliminary fashion on what we could do to go forward.

We got the message last night from the board. We met again this morning already. We will work this out. Don't kill the issue before it's dead.

Mr. LaVie: Should have worked it out before now.

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

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Now, I saw the MQO poll yesterday that shows that this Premier has drug you guys down 25% in the last 10 months. You can't tell me that Islanders are feeling your support. You can't tell me that Islanders feel like you guys are behind them, and you can't tell me that the Old Home Week board thinks you guys are behind them.

I met with them last night, as did the member from Stratford. I know the story. I was there. I know what happened. I know what you said. I know what you said. I know what you said; I know how much support they got from you guys.

Question, again, to the minister of tourism: If Old Home Week doesn't go ahead will it be a black eye for the Island tourism industry?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

Mr. McIsaac: Mr. Speaker, again, this is a jewel that we are working on.

We have to keep it going. We are expecting the biggest year ever in tourism. We're expecting another great year in agriculture. We're expecting another great year in fisheries, and we have to have this jewel in place so we can show everyone what exactly is happening in PEI. Don't be so bullyish and negative. This thing is going to work out. Okay? Don't kill the issue right off the bat. Work with us if you have some great ideas.

We're going to make this thing work whether you help us or not, but we would ask you to come on side with us.

Mr. LaVie: (Indistinct)

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

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm not sure that I'm being the bullyish one. I'm not sure that bringing this issue to the House was because of some action of mine. It was the inaction of you is why this is on the floor today. You guys had all kinds of time to (Indistinct) – you want to talk about bullying, talk about the 400 tickets that Old Home Week is being forced to give the Red Shores bunch; talk about how they are trying to cut down a third of the parking lot so they can roll in their big gambling buddies so they can pull up; talk about one of the managers over there saying he makes his living off other people's losses. Come on. Come on, folks. That's not Island talk. That's not the way Islanders talk about Islanders with gambling problems.

Jeopardy of Old Home Week (further)

Question to the minister responsible for harness racing: Where do you stand on the idea of Old Home Week being cancelled?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

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

As minister responsible for harness racing on PEI, I have been absolutely proud and pleased to have been an invited guest to sit at a table of partners regarding Old Home Week since last December. Those meetings have been very productive as they move forward, right from December. There was an agreement document that has been circulating back and forth and was – most of the topics had agreements made and basically we're ready, in my opinion, to reach the ink process.

What happened this morning and last night, I'm very saddened by that because agreements were in the works. Solutions were being found to some issues that they were working through. This is a big year for harness racing in Prince Edward Island, but the World Driver Championship, the World Trotting Conference here, and this will be a successful season of racing during Gold Cup Week, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Again, I'm going to go back to this whole topic and the minister of communities, he has been involved with this and I know he has been involved with them. He was at the meeting and he was actually at the meeting where it was actually suggested that the event gets moved on without all the organizers, without the people who have been volunteering; a volunteer organization that's nearly 130 years old and you didn't stand up for them.

Mr. Mitchell: (Indistinct)

Mr. Myers: No you didn't.

Mr. Mitchell: (Indistinct)

Mr. Myers: You could have stood up for them and you didn't.

Mr. Mitchell: – ask the question then.

Red Shores and Old Home Week Committee

Mr. Myers: Question: Do you support Red Shores bullying the Old Home Week committee?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Mitchell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Let's be clear here. I, like every other Islander in Prince Edward Island, know full well that Old Home Week is a tradition on Prince Edward Island that brings my family and all families home from other provinces to Prince Edward Island, all up through the United States.

This has been a 130-year tradition that we are very proud of in Prince Edward Island and I'm going to tell you, this group has been working collectively to ensure that continues not only for 2017, but for future years.

Agreements were worked on, were discussed and we're very close to become part of fruition. This tradition is very important to Islanders. It's very important to me as minister responsible for one of the partners in it and we will work collectively to try to get everything worked out because this event is important. It's an important year. We have a lot of people coming to Prince Edward Island for what's going to be a fantastic show with the World Driver Championship. This thing will be done and we'll get moving forward.

This tradition is important to all Islanders, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. LaVie: Not saying when or where.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The member from Souris is right. The minister isn't saying where. He isn't saying where. He isn't saying when.

Mr. LaVie: Exactly.

Mr. Myers: He's being quite elusive. Islanders can see through this. I'm going to go to the Premier because you know what? The Premier doesn't mind going over to Old Home Week when he has an opportunity to climb up on top of a horse to get his picture taken. He thinks that Old Home Week is an opportunity for some folksy photo op, but to me Old Home Week is way more than that. Old Home Week has been a part of my family tradition since I was a child too, and it was one of the parts of summer that –

Ms. Biggar: Question.

Mr. Myers: – I always looked forward to as a child.

You had your chance to answer questions yesterday and you bumbled every one of them. Can I have the floor right now?

Mr. LaVie: Never mind your power trip.

Mr. Myers: Or do you have another piece of land you want to sell for \$13,000 an acre?

Mr. LaVie: Never mind the power trip.

Mr. Myers: I'm talking about a serious issue here.

Mr. J. Brown: Power trip, you're on one now.

Mr. Myers: This Premier has the full power to make this go away. This Premier can waltz right into Atlantic Lottery Corporation, which we're a full partner of, and tell them that they have to cooperate, that it's time for them to cooperate and it's time for them to make a deal, and it has to be a long-term deal so we don't have to be put through the ringer; the poor people at Old Home Week who volunteer all of their time don't have to be put through the ringer over and over again.

Government support of Old Home Week

Question to the Premier: If you wanted to make sure Old Home Week stays on the rail, you do have the power to do it. Why won't you use that power?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, this is a collaborative table, as the Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries and the minister responsible for harness racing have indicated.

Old Home Week is a great tradition. I don't know exactly what the hon. member has in mind when he talks about me being on top of a horse, but we did show ponies at the exhibition many years ago and we go and see the crafts and see the baking and the awards and the Women's Institute and the racing, and it's a great time for everybody; Islanders, visitors and everybody to be proud of what we have in all aspects of this great show and it's going to go ahead.

The way it's going to go ahead is in the partnership that has made it work for 130 years and I'm proud to continue to support that and so is our government.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. LaVie: (Indistinct)

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Now, I know that this Premier has his fingers in everything. They're calling him 'fingers' in around government because his fingers in everything.

I'm going to ask the Premier today: Will you come back to this House tomorrow, commit to come back to this House tomorrow, tell us that there is a solution; that Old Home Week won't be cancelled and that there is a long-term agreement so that the good volunteers of Old Home Week don't have to go through this ever again?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, this question tells the whole story; complaining about the way the Premier supposedly runs everything and the other hand saying: Come back with the answer tomorrow.

We got elected on a program to work together and that's exactly what the partners in Old Home Week and with the racing community, and with our government and with the farming community that will be there, and the Women's Institute and everybody is going to be there working together and they'll make the solution, and it will be the greatest year ever for Old Home Week and for racing, and for visitors and for Islanders and I look forward to being the Premier that's proud of how Islanders work together to make that a great show.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Mr. Myers: (Indistinct)

Speaker: The hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid.

Hillsborough Hospital replacement

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The calls to replace Hillsborough Hospital have been many and have been ongoing for years. In fact, this government budgeted \$5 million for it back in 2014. In estimates this week we found out that 2019 would be the earliest we might see an announcement on Hillsborough Hospital.

Question to the minister of health: Is 2019 just going to bring us an announcement or a real facility?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Henderson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

When it comes to issues around the Hillsborough Hospital, as we stated on the floor of the Legislature here doing a five-hour marathon on questioning, we have a committee already in place. That committee is doing a review of what types of services would be delivered there. They are working hard to start to put together plans, and I also would note here, we've have already invested some money that is possibly going to be able to be transferred in security equipment that we are installing there at the moment.

Plans are well underway for 2019 to get some announcements and some work done there.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid.

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The minister's right, we did ask questions for that long because it's important. We're going to keep asking these questions.

Your latest mental health strategy says: There's a need to replace the Hillsborough Hospital, or determine a better way to provide psychiatric services in existing facilities.

Minister, this doesn't sound like a firm commitment. Is there a chance that you won't replace the facility?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Henderson: Mr. Speaker, when it comes to the delivery of psychiatric services for Islanders who have mental issues, we are continuing to work at a whole number of different issues that are involved with that. It's not all about locations in one spot for one types of services. Once again, we are continuing to meet the needs of Islanders when it comes to issues around psychiatric needs that they might have.

Once again, there's a committee in place that has put together the planning stages – and it's very hard for me to presume exactly what those recommendations are going to be when it comes to a location of service, and all of those types of situations there, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid.

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The minister said it today and he said it again in Estimates that they're looking at other places, looking in the community. You speak about community mental health as an alternative. Minister, from your own mental health strategy it says: The average wait time in community mental health for adults triaged as urgent to see a psychiatrist was 75 days and 16 days to see a mental health provider. That's in 2014-2015.

Minister: Community mental health is already overburdened. What are you doing to find a better balance?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. MacEwen: The hon. member would well be aware that, once again, all these different services are services that people would need at certain point in times in their treatment based on the illness and severity of their situation. We have a lot of challenges when it comes to the way we deliver health care services when it comes to mental health. We readily acknowledge that, but it's all those different services – what we deal with in community mental health, what we deal with in psychiatric services, and what we deal with in forensics and some of

those types of issues that we're dealing with – we have to put this all together and we have to make sure that we're meeting the needs of Islanders as we move forward into the future.

Plans are well underway. Monies are already been spent in the delivery of health care services when it comes to issues around the Hillsborough Hospital and we will continue those plans and, once again, committees are there to see how those plans will evolve.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid.

Youth in-patient psychiatric unit

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

In 2014, this government promised a youth in-patient psychiatric unit. I have it right here. It says: Launch the new dedicated youth mental health unit in Charlottetown with 12 beds.

Minister: Why did you break this promise?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Henderson: Mr. Speaker, some of the things that we've done regarding these types of issues is that, once again, the Strength Program that we're dealing with not only is based on addictions, but it's also based on mental health issues.

We have an in-patient unit at QEH that deals with adolescent youth issues and there are beds associated with that. As well as what we have at the Hillsborough Hospital. Once again, these issues – they're evolving. We're working and dealing with the issues as they come forward and I can assure Islanders that they are getting mental health services that are as good as anywhere else in this country.

Mr. Aylward: Oh my god.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid.

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

And then we saw the Treasury Board go and approve \$500,000 for this project, but Health PEI had to drop the idea of the in-

patient unit because there was so little budgeted for it. In fact, at the Standing Committee on Health last year, when asked about the 12 bed in-patient unit, your director said, and I quote: However, we could not secure a reasonable location that was within our budget.

Minister: Why won't you make it a priority?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Henderson: Mr. Speaker, we are always looking at all the issues pertaining to the delivery of health care services. They're all priorities, and we are working towards delivering those types of services and if you look at our mental health strategy, we are focusing on young people, children and that's some of the announcements that we've made recently in conjunction with the department of education.

We're looking at making sure we have access to the right service and treatment and support, that is all in our mental health strategy, and try to make sure we're fostering a good situation around recovery and wellbeing in this province. As the whole system works together in a collaborative approach, we'll deliver health care service in this province when we can and as best we can.

Mr. Aylward: It's already too late.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Reducing carbon emissions/carbon tax

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

In his year-end interview with *The Guardian*, the Premier laid out his vision on a fiscally-neutral carbon tax, combined with measures to reduce the impacts to low-income Islanders as part of an overall plan to reduce emissions. This plan seemed to find a balance between social, economic, and environmental responsibility, while being sensitive to the particular needs of our province. In short, it was something I felt I could get behind.

Now, we seem to be resigned to whatever Ottawa will impose upon us.

A question to the Minister of Finance: Why has government's plan on carbon pricing changed?

Mr. LaVie: Good question. That's a good one.

Chair: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. Roach: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm happy to say that the government's plan on carbon pricing has not changed. We know that the federal government is imposing carbon pricing –

Mr. Myers: It's always (Indistinct)

Mr. Roach: – on all the provinces across the country. Here on Prince Edward Island, we're just being cautious about how we're going to proceed with it. We want to make sure that our strategy aligns with other strategies that are coming out on climate change and energy. We'll be looking at that and following that very closely.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

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

The new carbon pricing approach seems to be a surrender of our gift of jurisdiction. Rather than exert leadership and develop a made in Prince Edward Island plan that meets the specific needs of Islanders, we will wait and see what Ottawa or other impose on us – whether that's a locally appropriate solution or not.

A question to the minister: Wouldn't it be better to take control of our own carbon policy rather than let others dictate it to us?

Chair: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. Roach: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I don't think at any time did we say that we were going to let anyone else – federal or anyone else – dictate to us what our carbon pricing is going to look like.

What we did say was that we were going to be very careful and cautious and prudent about how we're going to move forward with it to make sure that it doesn't unnecessarily harm low to medium-income Islanders and that it is going to go align with the two strategies that I mentioned in my previous answer.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

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

The experience in European countries with long-established carbon prices shows that in order for such a policy to be effective in reducing emissions, it has to be high enough to be impactful – to incentivize people to change their behaviours.

Sweden, for example, has the highest carbon tax in the world – about \$150 a tonne. They've seen substantial emission reductions and stable economic growth.

A question to the minister: Do you think that \$10 per tonne carbon price will have a major impact on the PEI economy?

Chair: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. Roach: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I do note that on a number of occasions the hon. Leader of the Third Party has mentioned countries in Europe. Now he's mentioned one that's got the highest carbon price, and I have no intention, at least while I'm sitting in this chair, of equaling that here on Prince Edward Island.

I do note that the carbon pricing that begins off – it starts off at around \$10 and over time that will increase as, not only Prince Edward Islanders, but as people across the country start to think more about reducing the use of fossil fuels across the country. I don't think we have to come in immediately and implement such a big number and impose that on Prince Edward Islanders.

Mr. R. Brown: Great.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Snowbirds accessing provincial healthcare

Chair: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Lewis Point.

Ms. Casey: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

My question today is for the hon. Minister of Health and Wellness. Minister, it has been brought to my attention that provinces across Canada have different policies pertaining to the length of time their residents can be absent from their provinces and still access provincial health care. Currently, snowbirds for Prince Edward Island can only be away for six months, while our neighbors: New Brunswick it's seven months; Nova Scotia, seven months; and Newfoundland and Labrador it's eight months.

What is Prince Edward Island doing to ensure our residents have the same freedom of travel as other Canadians?

Mr. LaVie: Good question.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct)

Mr. Henderson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The member is correct in identifying that Health PEI does provide health care coverage to Islanders when they leave this province for a six month period. But, I do caution people when they are travelling outside of Canada, the coverage is for emergency and sudden illness types of services.

I would sort of say that it's very important that it be aware for those travelling outside of the country that some of the medical costs are much higher in other locations comparable to Prince Edward Island. We reimburse people at the Island rate in Canadian Dollars.

It's always prudent advice that anyone travelling outside of the province should –

Mr. LaVie: Time limit.

Mr. Henderson: – make sure that they have private insurance just to be sure that everything goes smoothly in their trip –

Mr. LaVie: Seven months.

Mr. Henderson: – as far as the situation goes we are monitoring the situation with other provinces currently, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. LaVie: Seven months.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Henderson: Six.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Lewis Point, your first supplementary.

Health insurance while out-of-province

Ms. Casey: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I know most of the snowbirds that I have spoken to on this issue are fully aware of their rights with regards to insurance while they're out of province.

What they want to know is, most of the majority of the provinces, you can be away for seven months.

Has there been a cost analysis to compare a resident being out of province for an extra month and the cost while they're in the province accessing our health care?

Mr. LaVie: Not another study?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. LaVie: Don't stand up and say study.

Mr. Henderson: Mr. Speaker, although we have been monitoring what other provinces are doing, and the hon. member is correct that there are eight other provinces that have extended the seven months.

At this point in time in the province it's – I wouldn't put it as our highest priority, but we are monitoring the situation and we will be reviewing those things in a period of time.

As far as a specific study? No, we have not done a specific study regarding that.

Mr. LaVie: How long have you been studying it? How long?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Lewis Point, this will be your second supplementary.

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As the minister just stated, that there hasn't been any analysis done or a study done to find out why other provinces allow freedom of travel for their residents.

Minister: Will you undertake to find out why you can do it in other provinces and not in Prince Edward Island?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. LaVie: Sure (Indistinct)

Mr. Henderson: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I have had the honour and a chance to speak with the chairpersons of the Canadian Snowbird Association and representatives from Prince Edward Island on the subject.

Once again, I would say that we will be monitoring this situation, but we do have many challenges in health care delivery in this province –

Mr. LaVie: Oh, I can't imagine.

Mr. Henderson: – and we will monitor the situation. I will talk to my department to see what the possibilities of doing a more in depth analysis would be on the subject, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Tignish-Palmer Road.

A+ Program for Westisle Family of Schools

Mr. Perry: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Yesterday, the Minister of Education, Early Learning and Culture indicated that there was funding in his new budget for the A+ Program for the Westisle Family of Schools.

Can the minister tell us what this will mean for West Prince children and their families?

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

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

I have said numerous times that our department of education, the Public School Branch is extremely committed to a progressive, inclusive educational practice.

Currently, in this province we have 11 alternate education programs to respond to the needs of students and transitioning them back to mainstream education.

We are pleased to announce that we will be implementing an A+ Program. An A+ Program is designed from K-6. Currently, right now we have three; one in Charlottetown and one in Summerside and one in the eastern part of the province.

We are pleased that we will be rolling out an A+ Program for children and families in the K-6 system in the western part of the province.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Tignish-Palmer Road, your first supplementary.

Mr. Perry: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

My question, again, to the same minister: Minister, how much funding is in your budget for this particular project? How will it be used and will it create any new positions?

Mr. R. Brown: Good question.

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

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

As I indicated on the floor yesterday with our budget we'll be investing over \$100,000 to hire a new teacher and a new youth services worker to implement the A+ Program, which will provide supports and transitions for children, who are currently, for whatever reason, are not in the mainstream system.

We are also very pleased that we do have an alternate program at the intermediate level and the high school level in the western part of the province. We have got the three levels of alternate education programs that will be implemented in full swing this September.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Tignish-Palmer Road, your second supplementary.

Mr. Perry: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

When I, or I should say, when we met with the principals during the school review process, the principals of the Westisle Family of Schools, they thought it was a great opportunity to voice what they needed in their schools.

I'm very glad that the minister listened to what they asked for. This is just one of the announcements of several that is going to go back into the Westisle Family of Schools and I want to thank you for you that.

Minister: Is this the first program of its kind of Westisle and the Westisle Family of Schools?

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

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

Certainly, we did listen. We're very proud that the conversations around the alternative education at the elementary level came out loud and clear through the Principals Councils and as well as my colleagues in the western part of the province as well. They were very vocal and were very adamant that they wanted to have those services.

The District Advisory Councils have spoken very loudly and we have responded. This will be the first A+ Program at the K-6 level

at this point in time, but we will continue to support the alternate program at the intermediate and the senior level. We've got a full level from K-12 of alternate education in the western region as of this September, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Seven groups interested in provincial golf courses

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

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

In 2012, this tired Liberal government received seven responses from interested parties over the provincial golf courses.

To the minister of economic development: Will you please name the seven interested groups?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. MacDonald: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

No, I don't have that information on hand. I would have to bring it back.

As is obvious, you're reading the editorial this morning. At least some people are on side in relevance to the good move that we made –

Mr. Myers: Did you write it?

Mr. MacDonald: – in Mill River –

Mr. Myers: Sounds like you wrote it.

Mr. MacDonald: – and I'm sure that's the path we're going down.

I continuously to be supported on the street on this move, it's a good move for the tourism industry. As the minister responsible and all the good things that are going to happen in 2017 and going back four years or going back eight years or whatever it is, is doom and gloom and this government is pushing forward, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

You'll have to forgive Islanders for really wanting to get down to the bottom of this because we see over and over again the decisions made by this government.

Seven interested groups responded to government's golf course EOI in 2012. Seven groups, how many of those seven groups were interested in buying the adjoining Rodd properties?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. MacDonald: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Maybe it's the same groups that applied for Dundarave when that deal was done. I don't know. I would have to bring that back to the House.

This morning, having the opportunity to celebrate 150, the 150th year of Confederation alongside the 20th anniversary of the Confederation Bridge and some of the new festivals and events; lobster fest in Souris; paddling in Victoria; Stompin' Tom in West Prince, again.

Mr. LaVie: (Indistinct)

Mr. MacDonald: Realizing, the West Point Lighthouse, for example, up 250 room nights already.

Mr. Aylward: Wow.

Mr. MacDonald: I surely hope that those people go to Mill River to golf.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Myers: Over all the other private golf courses, of course.

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

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We know this government likes to party. We know that.

Mr. Myers: Oh, yes they do.

Ms. Compton: But we want to do some work around there and we want answers –

Mr. LaVie: Especially, all the partying you're tired looking.

Ms. Compton: Not one of the seven –

Mr. LaVie: Tired looking.

Ms. Compton: – interested groups, including Don McDougall, wanted to purchase attached Rodd properties. They were prepared to work with Rodd's.

Minister: How many of these companies wanted one course? How many wanted a combination of courses? How many wanted all four courses?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. MacDonald: I'm glad the hon. member mentioned Don McDougall, Mr. Speaker.

I think most of us all owe Mr. McDougall a round of applause actually in reference to what he has done for West Prince and what his intentions are for that property.

It's tough. You know this morning I met with four Chinese companies that are interested in bringing their business here. It's tough to prospect when continuously you hear the negative impact of the opposition –

Mr. Myers: Ronnie McKinley's against you, too.

Mr. MacDonald: – and sometimes I feel like I'm in a bouncy castle going from one side to the other because some of the information that provided going back to

2012 or 2008. It's continual doom and gloom.

We have so much good things going on right across this province. I know it's hard to accept in the opposition.

You know what? It's a good time right now to be on PEI, and 2017 is looking very good.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

EOI responses

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. LaVie: He gets it.

Ms. Compton: On this side of the House we wouldn't have to ask these questions if this government would have just followed the rules and would continue to follow the rules, but we see that is not possible; over and over again.

Back to the questions I'm asking here. These seven potential groups were only interested in either one or all of the courses; one or all. Minister: Were these EOI responses geared more towards leasing or buying the courses?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. MacDonald: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We work with many different businesses in this portfolio from one end of the province to the other. In the hon. member's own riding, we worked with Belfast Highland Greens and the campground and making sure that continued on and grew in that community and become very successful under the good guidance of Keir White.

We'll continue to make those investments and we'll make decisions that take the taxpayers off of the hook for longevity, create sustainability in the tourism industry. A hundred and some people met yesterday

in Georgetown. There are some really good initiatives.

In fact, on behalf of government, we had a consultant do a presentation to create that sustainability and we're going to continue to do that because that's what we are over here.

We're about looking forward and we're creating sustainability for the province of PEI.

Mr. LaVie: You're tired.

Mr. MacDonald: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Roach: (Indistinct) work hard.

Mr. LaVie: You're a tired government.

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It really is hard to get any answers and the minister there is all over the pond. I'm not sure what he's responding to now, but I'll bring it back to the questions that I'm asking.

Mr. LaVie: Looking for his lifejacket.

Ms. Compton: Sources tell me that the bulk of the submissions wanted to either lease or purchase – sorry; to lease, not purchase. This would have preserved the asset and this government wouldn't have had to resorted to a fire sale to take Mill River off the budget book.

Mill River deal

Minister: Why did you not bother to cycle back to some of those interested groups before dumping Mill River in this sweetheart deal?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. MacDonald: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

If the hon. member thinks that by leasing a property that there is going to be no capital investments and no money borrowed from government –

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct) gets better.

Mr. MacDonald: – from government for capital investments on a lease, then obviously they likely should have bought the golf course, not leased it.

Going forward, everybody is aware now and no one can come back and say that the golf courses – we'll look at every opportunity we have to get the taxpayers off the hook. We're tired of paying the \$850,000 in one form or another.

Mr. LaVie: I told you you were tired.

Mr. MacDonald: It's continuance to lead by good leadership, it's to take the taxpayers out of these – let the private sector step in like the good deed of Mr. MacDougall; let him run it as a professional. Let him bring his skills to West Prince and let West Prince grow. That's what it's all about; creating opportunity in rural PEI.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Other options for purchase of Mill River

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

There were many options left to this minister, even though he claims he didn't have any; he did have other options. He knows all of this and is refusing to tell us the whole story.

Minister: Why did you fail to leverage all of this interest in those properties and give all interested parties a shot in order to avoid this fiasco of the sweetheart Mill River deal?

Mr. Myers: Good question.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. MacDonald: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Sometimes it's a confused Conservative opposition over there. There were ROIs done. There were RFPs done and I'll go back to the Lord Selkirk Park when we wanted to give the community the actual – the hon. member was against it, leasing it. Now it's leased for or leased against.

Mr. Myers: Or give it away, which is what you did.

Mr. MacDonald: It's again, the bouncy castle, again, is irrelevant in some of these discussions and debate.

We go on fact, and that's exactly what we're doing. We have tabled almost everything that we've had.

Mr. Myers: I'm told you didn't know (Indistinct)

Mr. MacDonald: We're transparent and accountable and we'll continue to be that way as a government.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Myers: I'm told they don't trust (Indistinct)

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

Ms. Biggar: Fantasy land.

Mr. Myers: I'm told they don't trust you with the deal.

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Myers: Fantasy land is another deal.

Ms. Biggar: Fantasy land.

Mr. Myers: Another bad deal of yours.

Speaker: Members, order.

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct) facts.

Mr. LaVie: Where are the facts?

Speaker: The hon. member has the floor and she wants to ask a question.

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I know Belfast is a great –

Mr. LaVie: Table the facts.

Ms. Compton: – community and you keep – everyone across the floor there keeps referring to it. We did take over the golf course. A not-for-profit took over that golf course and we work hard to continue to keep that facility going in our community; a not-for-profit.

I know that more than one party in this group of seven included Mill River in their proposal. The minister of health knows it too, because he ran the EOI. We have the proof and I'll be tabling it later.

Minister: Why do you continue to deny the facts around your sweetheart Mill River deal?

Mr. LaVie: Table the facts.

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

Mr. MacDonald: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Again, obviously the hon. member has a short memory that she didn't want to deal with the Lord Selkirk park at the beginning of our negotiations with this government, so it's funny how things change and how you see that – if you give it a chance, as the editorial said today: Give the opportunity a chance, see what Mr. McDougall can bring. Not only to his business skills, but his mentorship of other businesses in the area – see how many contractors are working up there.

We'll continue to forge ahead with our industries and we'll continue to grow the prosperity of Prince Edward Island, especially in rural PEI. As I stated several times, 60% of my loan portfolio is in rural PEI, \$63 million is invested in tourism product right across the Island from one end of the Island to the other. We give out \$23 million in grants per year.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Belfast-Murray River, this is your final question.

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I will go on record as saying I was not for taking over Lord Selkirk Park at the time. We were losing \$75,000 a year and government was pushing it off to a not-for-profit community group. How were we going to make – not-for-profit – not Don McDougall.

Mr. MacEwen: Did they give you \$10 million?

Mr. Myers: And not a Toronto millionaire.

Ms. Compton: And not a Toronto millionaire.

And thanks to the Island Community Fund that this government destroyed –

Mr. Myers: Listen to the other millionaire over here.

Ms. Compton: – we were able to do it –

Mr. Myers: Millionaire Premier.

Ms. Compton: – and we worked very hard. A not-for-profit who took over a community venture – that's what we did.

Tabling of Mill River contract

Minister: You keep talking over and over again about what a great deal this is. It's a great deal. We hear it over and over again. If it's such a great deal, why won't you table the contract?

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

Mr. MacDonald: That's the first time I heard anyone say the Island Community Fund was a great fund because we've heard from day one that it was no good. So, that's good, thank you.

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct).

Mr. MacDonald: We'll continue to forge ahead. Our tourism industry is gearing up for likely the third-best year ever. There are lots of activities going on. There's

hardworking industry out there and we're going to continue to look at ways to grow prosperity in rural PEI. I hope the opposition can see through this –

Mr. LaVie: Maybe the media can get the contract.

Mr. MacDonald: – the political charge that they continue to pound on this, but more so, I hope Mr. McDougall doesn't refute any investments in the future by going through all this.

Mr. Myers: Hope he doesn't refuse to take another free golf course.

Mr. MacDonald: I hope he continues to come here and invest on Prince Edward Island as many other repatriates have done and we move forward in a positive manner.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Myers: You guys aren't the Blue Jays, I'm sorry.

Matters of Privilege and Recognition of
Guests (II)

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

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

I'd like to recognize Joanne Mutch who came in here to listen to part of this lively Question Period, but the Mutch name is synonymous on PEI with growing high-quality Angus cattle which are shown at many of the exhibitions.

An Hon. Member: Old Home Week.

Mr. McIsaac: Old Home Week as well, but many of the exhibitions right across the province. We're very proud of the cattle that they did produce and glad to have her in the House today.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Statements by Ministers

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Opioids

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, provinces across our country are facing, to varying degrees, an opioid crisis. Opioids are drugs like oxycodone, hydrocodone, morphine, fentanyl, and carfentanyl. When medically prescribed and used properly, opioids can very beneficial for a patient. But everyone knows that illicit use of opioids can be deadly.

We are paying particular attention to the dangers of fentanyl. While we are not seeing an increase in fentanyl deaths in our province, we must be vigilant in efforts to prevent fentanyl deaths in our province. From the information we currently have available, we know there was one death in PEI related to fentanyl in 2015. In British Columbia by contrast, there were over 900 illicit drug overdose deaths in 2016 – and it's in this light that we understand the need for Prince Edward Island to be alert to this issue and that we are getting prepared should opioid overdoses become a public health issue in Prince Edward Island.

The key to success will be collaboration. We must work with health, police and community partners to keep Islanders safe and to prevent the proliferation of fentanyl abuse in Prince Edward Island communities.

A team, led by Chief Public Health Office, together with Health PEI and Justice and Public Safety, has begun work on an action plan to enhance surveillance of opioid use and create more options for harm reduction and response. This team includes representatives from justice, police and corrections, in addition to medical experts.

We will also be talking with our medical first responders, indigenous leaders, advocacy groups, school administrators, and human and family services, to plan for the way forward.

I'm pleased to inform the House that Naloxone is now available in all of our ambulances. The RCMP across Canada have been fully equipped with kits and training. All frontline RCMP officers in Prince Edward Island have access to Naloxone kits and are trained.

The Department of Justice and Public Safety is distributing Naloxone kits to other Prince Edward Island police services this week, and police officers are currently taking part in training. Police partners are working on crime prevention and public education on the risks of illicit drug use.

We continue our work within our health system to prevent and treat addictions. There are programs and services available to help those addicted to opioids, including access to methadone and other medications needed for recovery.

Investments in recent years have significantly improved access to opiate replacement therapy and supports for individuals going through treatment. Suboxone has been added to the provincial formulary, so that those Islanders seeking opioid replacement therapy now have enhanced options.

There are currently 872 Islanders accessing opiate replacement therapy and there are little-to-no wait times for opiate replacement therapy at clinics across Prince Edward Island.

Protecting Islanders from the risks of illicit opioid use is of critical importance and all partners are coming together to plan and act to prevent a crisis from occurring in Prince Edward Island.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

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

Opiates and addictions and mental health are something that I've been speaking about since pretty much day one when I was fortunate to get elected for Stratford-Kinlock and come into this House, and I know several members in this Legislative Assembly, I've had in-depth personal conversations with in regards to this issue. Whenever we can do something to help the people suffering from such an aggressive addiction, I think it is an important thing.

The Premier speaks about a program putting in place to study and look at the opiate addictions here on Prince Edward Island. I'm happy to hear that, but at the same time, sadly, it's much, much too late. We should have been addressing this many years ago.

With regards to Naloxone, we are certainly trailing all the other provinces in Canada with regards to how we're implementing the availability of Naloxone. Yes, okay, we're going to have it in our ambulances, our police officers are going to have it; but what this Premier fails to understand is probably at least 70% – if not higher – of the calls by first responders are actually the volunteer fire departments. That's simply a fact.

There's no talk about training for first responders for our fire departments. There's no talk about equipping the fire departments with the Naloxone kits. Fundamentally, that's where we need to get to. We need to make sure that the first responders that quite often are on the scenes first are trained and have the access to save lives before it's too late.

The Premier also talked about Suboxone. Suboxone has been a topic here in the Legislature for probably close to four years. I remember talking to Dr. Don Ling who started the methadone program here on PEI. Dr. Ling at that time – again, four years ago – was talking about Suboxone then, and he was asking, pleading from this government –

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Mr. Aylward: – for a \$50,000 grant to start a trial for Suboxone. It took pleading in this Legislative Assembly for this government to finally do something and listen to Dr. Ling and bring Suboxone to the province. I am happy to hear it's being added to the formulary now as well.

The Premier also talks about the methadone program, which I won't dispute. It has been a great program. There are some shortcomings, however. There's not a great program in place for monitoring those individuals that are on methadone or accessing methadone.

I know for a fact, and anybody that's involved in this situation knows for a fact,

that many people that are accessing methadone are actually still using. They're using street drugs. So we need programs in place, we need support programs in place, we need recovery in place, that are going to help these individuals once and for all.

Last but not least, I want to let the Premier know that fentanyl is here. Fentanyl is here on PEI and we need to make sure that we are doing everything within our power to ensure that we don't become another British Columbia, another Alberta, or another Ontario. Because right now we're in the month of April we've already lost too many Islanders, young Islanders, to addictions, and I'm fearful for the trend that's coming.

We know it's a trend that's coming. We know the wave is coming across Canada and it's going to get here to Prince Edward Island. So we need to ensure that our first responders have access to Naloxone. We need to ensure we have a proper education program in place. We need to make sure that we have the resources on the streets. We need to ensure that we have a rapid mobile response team on the streets.

There's so much that the Premier's saying we're doing, but unfortunately there is so much that yet we're not doing.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and thank you for the statement, Mr. Premier.

The use and addiction of opioids like morphine and heroin – and more recently the synthetics that have been mentioned, fentanyl and its derivative carfentanyl – have had a devastating impact on society. They're highly addictive, they're readily available, and they are increasingly potent, and their presence certainly presents a real danger to people and communities everywhere.

Fentanyl, particularly, is causing large numbers of accidental deaths, 900 as the Premier mentioned last year in British

Columbia, and it's 50 times stronger than morphine. But the derivative of fentanyl, carfentanyl, is 10,000 times stronger than morphine, and one grain the size of a poppy seed is lethal. It's now being considered as a chemical weapon, actually. Some people think that carfentanyl should be considered as a chemical weapon. It's that lethal.

But there is hope here. I'm very glad that Naloxone is being made more readily available. I share the concerns for the first responders who bear some awful responsibilities and don't always have the supports that they require, physical and emotional. I certainly share those concerns; but there is hope, because there are newer equally, if not more effective, approaches to treating pain than we have had in the past, including pharmacological aspects of that which don't carry with them the same perils of addiction and overdose as opioids do.

But I think we also have to ask why so many people are reaching to drugs to escape the reality of their lives. Why is there an absence of hope? Why are so many young people, in particular, escaping from the reality of their lives?

I think that governments have a responsibility in order to help create hope for young Islanders so that we are passing on to them a better province than we are currently.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Immunization

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Henderson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Vaccinating our children is one of the most important things we can do to help protect them from serious diseases; however, immunization goes well beyond childhood. At every age, vaccination provides the longest lasting, most effective protection against disease.

In Prince Edward Island, we are dedicated to improving vaccination rates and further protecting our residents. Our department is

taking major steps toward enhancements of the uptake of vaccination programs through two new initiatives which will commence in the fall of 2017: a universal influenza immunization program and an initiative focused on enhancing adult immunization.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Henderson: The enhancing adult immunization initiative is aimed at increasing adult vaccination rates by enhancing health care practitioners' capacity to identify under-immunized adults and effectively provide community immunization options, as well as a targeted communications strategy to promote adult immunization.

The new universal influenza immunization program will also start in the fall where every Islander of every age will be eligible to receive a free flu vaccine at the location of their choice.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Henderson: This initiative will eliminate the cost as a barrier to influenza immunization uptake and approximately one-third of Islanders currently get a yearly flu shot. The goal of the new program is to have at least half of the Island population vaccinated against influenza.

Immunization protects families, communities and vulnerable Islanders and our government is taking action to help prevent illness and protect the health of Islanders.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

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

I think this is a wonderful announcement. I thank the minister and I thank this government for making this announcement.

We all know that influenza can be very rough on our senior population, the more we

can do to keep our senior population healthy the better. Again, I'd like to congratulate you on this wonderful announcement.

Just in closing, I'd also like to remind you that we would like to also see the shingles vaccination offered for seniors, as well.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

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

I, too, welcome this announcement and thank the minister for that.

I love science and I'm a big fan of evidence-based decision-making, but somehow vaccinations, above all, have sort of created a culture of skepticism about their safety and their efficacy. With the re-emergence of diseases such as polio and measles around the world, we have to once again look at the human and the economic cost of not vaccinating.

The scientific evidence is overwhelming that vaccines are safe and that they are useful, and that side effects are extremely rare.

Of course, flu is rarely a fatal disease; it can be a debilitating illness for sure. I'm very glad that access to Islanders is being expanded by this government and this is a great announcement.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

East Coast Music Awards

Mr. Currie: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise to recognize the talented Islanders nominated for the 29th East Coast Music Awards that kicked off yesterday in Saint John, New Brunswick. Tonight is the award show.

I would like to take a moment to recognize our Island nominees. Dylan Menzie, Lennie Gallant, Paper Lions, We the Rescued, Atlantic String Machine, Sean Kemp from Atlantic String Machine, Lonely Kid, War Horses, Gordie MacKeeman and His Rhythm Boys, Ten Strings and a Goat Skin and the East Pointers, who also recently brought home a Juno Award for Traditional Roots Album of the Year.

In addition to music, we have Island producer, Jon Matthews nominated for three awards. The Cavendish Beach Music Festival and the PEI Mutual Festival of Small Halls are nominated for Event of the Year.

Finally, Barbershop Sessions, filmed at Island-owned business, The Humble Barber, is nominated for Media Outlet of the Year.

We have an incredibly vibrant music industry relative to our small size as a province. I'm positive that we have more successful musicians per capita than in most places.

The ECMAs are an opportunity for Island talent to be discovered on a national and international stage.

Over 1,000 music industry professionals will attend from across Canada, the United States, France, Germany, Australia and the United Kingdom.

Conferences are also being held over the weekend; an opportunity to gain skills; build business and make long-lasting relationships.

The ECMAs will bring in an estimated \$3.1 million to Saint John this year. As minister of culture, I am happy to say that Prince Edward Island will host the ECMAs in May 2019.

Good luck to all Island nominees and have a rockin' time at the ECMAs.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Of course, it is fantastic news the ECMAs will be back on the Island next year. I, too, want to wish the best of luck to all the many Island musicians who are nominees for this year's ECMAs.

Sometimes, as politicians, we like to stand up in the House and associate ourselves with the so many successful people on this Island who have done so much hard work to be, just like the minister said; successful on a national and an international level.

There are several from my district, District 18, Rustico-Emerald, that have done just that. One thing, when I'm talking with them, they say to me: It's a tough life as a self-employed musician on PEI.

There is some help out there, learning how to run your music as a business. But these are exactly the types of people that fall into that category I talked about so often. They're self-employed individuals, who are exporting their service, many times off-Island and I would love to see this government offer a tax credit for musicians, along with other self-employed people. These are people that live, typically, they can live anywhere on the Island; rural areas, a lot of them do.

I wanted to give a shout-out as well to a couple of venues in my district, some of them that have been ECMA winners; Harmony House Theatre. There is an example of a privately-owned and operated business that hasn't gotten a drop of government funding that is out there and competing against lots of theatres that are getting government funding and they're not eligible because they are privately-run. I wanted to – kudos to them because it's our private industry, it's our entrepreneurs that are feeding back into our economy and making this happen.

Another one, is brand new, I believe coming up on their second year, is The Eagle Nest in North Rustico. They are specifically targeted as a grassroots organization for musicians. The Eagle Nest has a program where corporations can come in and sponsor, or just even self-employed businesses in the area, so does Harmony House.

These are good entrepreneurs who are working with the business community without government money to expand our economy, support our musicians and make Island musicians the success that they are provincially, nationally and internationally.

If government could come up with tax credits so that these successful musicians who are bringing this money into our Island and spreading the fame – I think PEI is as much Canada's music Island as it is Canada's Food Island. I think that's a moniker we should take on.

I would like to see these hardworking Islanders, who are doing so much, benefit from tax credits so they can keep more of the money that they've earned and help them continue to grow.

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 started my last response by saying: I love science. But I also, of course, love music. Like the hon. member who just responded, I'm actively involved in the music community here on Prince Edward Island.

Music has that incredibly unique ability to reach down inside us and stir those emotions that make us most human; and very special.

I also, before I get onto the body of my response, I was at The Eagle Nest for the first time a couple of weeks ago with Andrew Sark and they were serving some lovely Island beers from Moth Lane and from Barnone. There was no music when I was there, but I was there too early, but certainly a great venue and they're doing some wonderful things up there –

Mr. Trivers: You'll have to go in there sometime.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Yeah, for sure.

For such a tiny place, Prince Edward Island is – we make a huge contribution to arts and culture, not only across this province, but

across this country and internationally around the world.

That's perhaps, true more than in any other aspect of culture. It's perhaps more true when it comes to music and the depth and the breadth of the talent that we have here of spectacularly good music on PEI. It just never fails to delight me.

I certainly want to join in with everybody else in wishing the nominees at this year's ECMAs the best of luck.

I'm looking forward to having the ECMAs back here in the province in the near future.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Presenting and Receiving Petitions

Tabling of Documents

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

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

By leave of the House, I beg leave to table the expression of interest document I referred to in Question Period and I move, seconded by the Honourable Member from Souris-Elmira, 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

Private Members Bill

Speaker: The hon. Member from Summerside-Wilmot.

Mr. Palmer: Pursuant to notice given, I beg leave to introduce a bill to be intituled *Rewards Point Protection Act* and I move, seconded by the Honourable Member from Charlottetown-Brighton, that the same be now received and read a first time.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk Assistant (R. Reddin): Bill No. 105, *Rewards Point Protection Act*, read a first time.

Speaker: Hon. Member, could you give us a brief explanation of what this bill is – what it means?

Mr. Palmer: It's an act to protect consumers and retailers against reward points from expiring due to the passage of time.

Speaker: Thank you.

Motions Other Than Government

Speaker: The hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque.

Mr. MacKay: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Opposition would like to call Motion No. 28 to the floor.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk Assistant and Clerk of Committees: Motion No. 28.

The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock moves, seconded by the hon. Member from Georgetown-St. Peters, the following motion:

WHEREAS the Hillsborough Hospital has been identified as an antiquated and outdated facility with some question as to its ability to meet current building code standards;

AND WHEREAS the former Minister of Health and Wellness indicated that this facility needs to be replaced;

AND WHEREAS \$5-million has been allocated for a capital expenditure in 2019;

AND WHEREAS a project of this magnitude will require extensive planning in terms of a clearly defined role for the new facility and the building requirements necessary to meet its mandate and role;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that this Legislative Assembly encourage government to engage the expertise and planners necessary to begin the lengthy

process of developing a comprehensive plan for a new facility, in concert with the various stakeholders to ensure a new facility will meet the needs of all Islanders with mental health issues now and well into the future;

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Assembly encourage government to begin this planning process now to ensure that the actual construction of this facility and the issuing of tenders may be ready to commence in 2019.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

Mr. Aylward: I wonder if I could request the podium, please.

Speaker: Yes you may and you may receive it.

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

Mr. Trivers: Ask and you shall receive.

Mr. Aylward: Best Speaker I've had this term.

Thank you very much, Olivia.

Mr. Speaker, I guess I'm ready if you are.

Speaker: Go ahead, hon. member.

Mr. Aylward: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm pleased to rise today and address the need for replacement for the aged and antiquated Hillsborough Hospital.

This motion was put on the order paper back in the spring of 2016, but it still very relevant and pertinent today because we want to ensure that a new facility will be available to Prince Edward Islanders as soon as possible.

According to the Hillsborough Hospital website, this facility provides services to patients with acute and chronic mental illness, psychogeriatric conditions, sustained and enduring mental illness, intellectual disabilities with concurrent mental illness, and psychiatric symptoms complicated by addictions.

As the provincial inpatient psychiatric facility, it offers specialized services which include: assessment and treatment, behavioural management and modification, rehabilitation, life skills, psychiatric clinical assessments, and psychogeriatric services. Programs are offered with the support of social workers, occupational therapists and workers, psychologists, registered nurses, licensed practical nurses, resident care workers, pastoral care, and volunteers.

Given the long list of important services this facility provides, there is no question there is a need for a facility like the Hillsborough Hospital and I'm sure that many of the staff and patients are anxiously awaiting construction of its replacement.

A Capital Budget amount of \$5 million was set aside in 2014 for the hospital. It was my understanding at that time that work on this facility would get underway by 2019. I thought given the current crisis in our mental health system and the replacement of the facility would have been a priority.

Since Unit 9 in the QEH is already overcrowded and our youth facilities are not able to meet growing demands for patient beds, perhaps our new hospital may be able to accommodate some of these patients. But, it's rather difficult to conceive what the province has in mind, because, once again, there is no transparency and openness, so no one really has a clue whether the hospital will be replaced or not.

The minister has been asked many times about the replacement of this facility, but his answers are always quite vague and unhelpful. I would assume that since the replacement was first budgeted in 2014, and it is now three years later, some work surely must have been done. I will admit that I'm concerned that the \$5 million has not been found in recent capital budgets.

Again we have asked 'why?', but the questions are always answered with hints of impending announcements, but nothing ever gets announced.

Mr. Speaker, as you're no doubt aware, in the past, an Auditor General's Report looked at the facility. A coroner's inquest contained recommendations for the hospital, and

government reports have talked about the need to update the facility and replace it.

The province spent \$500,000 in upgrades to improve safety and security for patients and staff, but it has failed, as of yet, to assure us that PEI will be getting a new facility.

The minister, when announcing the \$500,000 upgrade, stated that these upgrades were being announced to ensure the facility could be operational while work was being done on a master plan for mental health programming and infrastructure. But, it has been suggested that this funding was simply to ensure that the hospital would pass its accreditation at the time.

There is much planning that needs to be done to ensure that this facility will be state-of-the-art, not only in terms of facilities, but in its inpatient treatment and programs. We would have anticipated that government had its designs and consultative work done so work can begin on construction within the year, but apparently this is not the case.

From debate in the estimates earlier this week, it would appear that the shovels will not be in the ground for some time – perhaps years, and more likely, never. This is totally unacceptable.

The minister seems to suggest this week that it will be another three years before we see any real, physical movement on replacing it. I just don't understand how that could happen when \$5 million was put into the Capital Budget in 2014. I don't understand how such a facility that is critical to the mental health of our province could fall off the radar. I would have thought that there would have been some urgency in getting the hospital replaced, but perhaps we shouldn't be surprised.

This government's record on following through on its promises and commitments is nothing short of dismal. The former minister of health, in well attended press conferences, promised a youth inpatient psychiatric unit in Charlottetown, yet Health PEI was forced to drop the idea after Treasury Board only approved \$500,000 for the project. Five-hundred thousand dollars, is that what this government calls commitment?

We have Islanders who have suicidal tendencies being turned away at emergency rooms. We have sexual assault victims who are calling help lines and getting answering machines. This government has failed to live up to its commitment to Islanders in just about every aspect of mental health services.

I have serious concerns that a plan for a new Hillsborough Hospital is no longer a plan. I was especially concerned when I read the Mental Health and Addictions Strategy and found out it barely mentions this facility other than to state: There is need to replace it or determine a better way to provide psychiatric services in existing facilities.

Finding a better way to provide psychiatric services in existing facilities when we know the existing facilities are already overtaxed, and we're short beds.

I'm not sure what that means, but it sounds like this government is hesitating, like it is creating a later excuse to say no to a replacement facility. We've got a better cheaper way of doing nothing.

I am asking this House to support our motion. I believe we need to get the shovels in the ground now. Three years will only see further deterioration of our mental health services to Islanders.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We all know that for a number of years ago this government put a sign in the ground prior to an election and took a bunch of politicians out in front of it and got their picture taken. Then, the sign sat there and it faded. It eventually, I don't even know if it's still there or if it got taken down. I'm sure it's probably been taken by now.

It seems to have become the Liberal way. The Liberal way is let's put up a sign at election time. Let's make a promise. Putting a sign in the ground saying: future home of, seems to be a way to lure votes.

Remember the time they did it up in Souris there right prior to the election, they were going to build a new high school; they put a sign in the ground. Prior to the last election they put a sign in the ground for the Riverview Manor after promising it since 2007.

I think it's high time that government gets moving and plans to start constructing this facility immediately. There are a lot of things that have changed since this building has been built. There is a lot of opportunity to really attack the mental health crisis we have here on Prince Edward Island with an adequate facility that has a multi-faceted approach that can deal with many parts of the issues, today's issues.

I know that the federal government seemed to have made a commitment to mental health in their new health accord where they appeared to have focused a lot more heavily on what was – or how money needed to be spent in order to get the appropriate measures on the floor.

I think that this government here has a great opportunity because we, for years, heard them and their tale of woe about Harper and how they weren't able to work with Harper and they finally have Liberals in Ottawa. There is real opportunity for them to prove to all Islanders that this bunch over here actually has pull in Ottawa.

I'm not sure why government is dragging their heels. I'm not sure why government doesn't feel like mental health issues on Prince Edward Island are important, but the Hillsborough Hospital is important.

It's an old, antiquated building. It needs to be dealt with immediately.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I will support this motion.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Henderson: Can I have the podium, too, please, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Yes, you may have the podium, hon. minister.

Mr. Henderson: Mr. Speaker, this is a good opportunity, as Minister of Health and Wellness, to have a discussion regarding – a motion regarding mental health delivery of services and the Hillsborough Hospital in this province.

As a minister, I can assure this House that we have been working diligently as a department on this particular issue, and we will continue to work on this issue.

Mental health issues are major challenges that can afflict any individual, any family, without notice. Many Island families have suffered from mental health illnesses that either went unchecked, or undiagnosed for a period of time.

I think it's incumbent for us as a department and as Health PEI and as a Legislature to do what we can to address those issues.

I had the opportunity to have a discussion last night with my father who has been around this Legislature for many a year. He had mentioned that these were types of issues that he was dealing with when he was on this floor back in the 1970s.

We are aware that these issues are there. Many governments, many jurisdictions are doing what they can to try to address and alleviate the issues, but we are of the understanding that these issues are complex. They're ever changing; and sometimes, the cause is that society brings to bear on issues.

We just saw it. You take the situation yesterday it was on the news where the lady in Ontario was on the top of a crane and hanging there. One could only wonder there would have to be some mental challenge that would drive a person to do those types of things.

Anyhow, I'm very pleased that the opposition did bring this motion forward. Really, it's an endorsement of what we've been doing as a government when it comes to dealing with the Hillsborough Hospital and mental health illnesses in this province.

I certainly commend them for providing that recognition for what we are doing as a government—

Mr. Aylward: Do you want me to read my —

Mr. Henderson: — The Hillsborough Hospital is a 69-bed psychiatric hospital that provides specialized care and long-term treatment and rehabilitation for individuals facing acute or enduring mental illness, cognitive disabilities, or psycho-geriatric conditions.

After becoming minister, I had the opportunity to go down and tour that facility. It certainly is an eye-opening experience as a minister to find out that there have been individuals that have been there for extremely long periods of time, like 70 years, I guess, in some cases.

The Hillsborough Hospital, it has been around in this province for a long time. In fact, as you go in the facility and you go into the cafeteria area — I'm sure since the facility is in your riding, I'm sure you're well aware there is a board there that talks about the history of the Hillsborough Hospital over the years, and pictures and wording that would be somewhat unlikely to be heard today. Those are the types of things. There are sections of that particular hospital that are only 30-years-old; there are other sections of that hospital that are over 90 years of age.

I would really make sure that the Legislature and the House understands it is not the age of a building. We have lots of facilities that are structurally sound. We have lots of places in this world —

Mr. LaVie: You tore all the schools down.

Mr. Henderson: — you go over to Europe and you see facilities —

Mr. LaVie: You tore all the school down.

Mr. Henderson: — and buildings that are probably 2 or 3 or 400-years-old and they are still productive buildings in their area. I'm just identifying that that is not the facility.

The services that people get at the Hillsborough Hospital, it's really, it's all about the people. It's the professionals that work there day in day out, deal with the ever-increasing challenges and complexity

of their patients. It's not always about the bricks and mortar and the location of a building and things of that nature.

Although, we still acknowledge as a government that we want to modernize the facility and we want to bring that facility up to more modern standards and needs.

Certainly, the mental health landscape is changing. Demand is definitely increasing and the needs are becoming much more complex. Those, I think, or lots of that is a derivative of society, societal changes. The issues that younger people and Islanders are facing today when it comes to issues are way more complex.

You can deal with – the social media issues, are far different. Those things didn't exist 25 or 30 years ago. It's just a whole societal change.

But I do take offence to some comments that the hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock had identified; that people are turned away at our emergency rooms. I can assure Islanders in this House that that is not the case.

Anyone that arrives at our emergency room is always seen. They are always – it may not be immediate, but they will always be seen. They will be always triaged, and from that particular case it will be determined by those professionals, our hard-working, diligent healthcare providers will make a decision on what's the most appropriate care for an individual and some cases it may be that they can go home. Maybe they will be discharged or identified under the care of a family member. They will be given instructions on how to deal with a certain situation. There are all kinds of services that would be provided for an individual and it's not my role as the minister, nor as ourselves as MLAs, to determine what the appropriate level of care is. That should be left to the professionals.

I know the hon. Member from Georgetown-St. Peters talked about signs and I acknowledge that we do put signs up as government when a project is announced and commences to be unfolded, but I do recall seeing many signs up under previous governments for many years. I can think of one sign – I'm not even sure if it's still up.

It's in the riding of Alberton-Roseville about a hospital for the Bloomfield area. I still haven't seen one exist there and that government tended to make many announcements on that. I don't want to point fingers, but I don't think we need to try to highlight things that are any different than any other jurisdiction.

I think it's important, that as a government, that we review the role of our provincial psychiatric hospital and in-patient units. We have in-patient units at the Prince County Hospital, the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and it's forming an integrated provincial mental healthcare program. I think that's the key component that I think we have to make here, is that it's not always about one facility providing all services. We need to try to make sure that we're delivering services to Islanders as close to home as they possibly can. We need to make sure that we're identifying the appropriate level of care that an individual might need when it comes to mental illness and we have to try and deliver that in an efficient and as professional a manner as we possibly can.

When you deal with mental health issues, you never know how far you have to go and how complex an issue might be. You try certain things. I'm sure the healthcare professionals are out there to identify what things might have to be provided and they try it, and then they see how that works. Mental illness and the complexities of the brain, and the behavioural components of how a brain works, is far more different than if it's an appendectomy or a sore toe. You have to be able to understand that mental illness and mental health is not about trying to peer inside a physical component of a brain or a head and trying to determine if there is something just not working right. It's much more difficult than that.

Technology is advancing. We're seeing many different changes in what can be provided in psycho-analyses and determinants of improvement of health, but I think it's important that all of our services across Prince Edward Island all intertwine and they all know exactly where people should go in this province to get the right level of care based on the case that's at hand.

In-patient mental health services are very complex and we deal with a very wide variety of patients with a wide array of needs. Some people might just need some counselling. Some people might need admittance to a location. Some people may have to be there for long periods of time. Some people may never leave those facilities.

In 2014, Health PEI commissioned their review of the Hillsborough Hospital program. While the recommendations are specific to the role of the hospital within health services, the limitations of the building itself was acknowledged as a challenge to improving programming services. A safety and security review of Hillsborough Hospital was commissioned in 2016. The review was carried out in partnership with the Department of Justice and Public Safety, with the engagement of an external security consultant. In response to that, there were a couple of recommendations that were given and those recommendations would improve the safety and the security within the facility, not only for the patients, but also for the staff and visitors that go there.

Our government is acting upon those priorities of that particular review. In fact, this past fall we announced a \$600,000 capital investment for the security upgrades and we expect completion this spring. Part of the rationale behind that is we already have the plans in place to build a new facility. We wanted to try to do investments that were needed immediately, but also those particular technologies and pieces of equipment can also be removed. They are not – it's not a structural component of it that's attached to a foundation that can't be removed. It can be taken and put into another, newer facility should we go in that direction.

I want to ensure this House that until the new facility is built, construction commences; the care and safety and standards will be met at that location.

I think it's important to note that when I was on the floor with my estimates, that that facility is an accredited facility. I think everybody in this House is aware that the province will be going through another accreditation review. I have met with the

chair of Health PEI board yesterday and they are working quite hard on preparation for that accreditation review. In fact, one of the staff out there, Rick Adams, his sole duty now is to prepare our Health PEI facilities and put together an infrastructure committee that can try to identify the potential challenges that might exist and to try to address those as we prepare before that review. I think that's important to do.

If I want to add one other component to that; in our thoroughness as we try to prepare for an accreditation, one of our board members, Kay Lewis, was a former accreditor with the Canadian health accreditation standards for healthcare facilities. We've got some good people that are looking at these situations. It is a very rigorous evaluation and I want to make sure that we're doing everything we can.

Do I know what an outcome is going to be at that – but I can assure this House that as a department, we are doing and looking and exploring all possible avenues for some of the challenges that will be faced when an accreditation is occurring and we're confident that we'll get a passing grade and whatever notes that might be added to that, that we could address those within a reasonable period of time.

I want to speak a little bit more to the professionalism and the care that is provided at this facility. These are individuals that understand the challenges that mental health has on this Island. Under the leadership team out there, Dr. Heather Keizer and Verna Ryan, they're well-trained individuals. They have a great understanding of the complexities of mental health in this province and they are motivating and encouraging staff and making sure that staff is in a safe workplace and environment. I can't enough about the people that work there at all aspects of mental health of those individuals. The care provided by all the medical and support employees at Hillsborough Hospital – they are truly professionals and they are able to deliver the highest levels of care under challenging circumstances.

As a government, I can say here that we are committed to replacing the Hillsborough Hospital and we've already committed \$5

million in the Capital Budget for 2019 and, already, planning is underway.

I had mentioned earlier when I had Denise Lewis Fleming on the floor with my estimates that there are already people meeting on a regular basis to determine what the needs are going to be.

In addition to the Health PEI Capital Budget for this year also included funding to commence the planning process, we are investing \$250,000 this year to carry out master planning for the new facility. Like I mentioned earlier, primary planning is ongoing at the moment and we have a number of people on that committee besides Denise Lewis Fleming, but that's headed up by Dr. Heather Keizer, Verna Ryan, other staff associated with transportation, infrastructure and energy and other people with our mental health and addictions unit.

They meet on a regular basis and they are looking at what the needs would be and all components of health care as it pertains to mental health issues. We're trying to get some preliminary feelings on how many beds might be needed for the future, what size beds, how it would be configured, things of that nature. That is preparing for then the next step, which is going to be at the level of master planning that will include bringing in more engineering, more components of meeting the needs and how that would look.

I think it's very important that this House realizes, you just don't go and you start bring backhoes and excavators in and start digging holes. You have to know what you're doing. You have to have a sense that – making sure that the needs are going to be met and that we know where the needs are going to be required in the future.

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct)

Mr. Henderson: We are seeking, very soon, to issue a tender for an RFP for a consultant to help us do that master planning. Following that, we will begin the functional planning which will include: site visits to other facilities and making sure that we are doing our due diligence in constructing a facility that's going to be of the most modern standards and that it will meet the

needs for Islanders who require mental health services well into the future.

If the current facility is 90-years-old, I'm sure 90 years ago the same process occurred there – that construction of a planned facility that met those needs was thought out and they did, obviously, a pretty good job because they've got a facility that's still productive after 90 years.

The mental health patient population requires acute psychiatric care, behaviour modification and secure treatment, rehabilitation, and transitional discharge support. The Hillsborough Hospital's role as PEI's main psychiatric facility, means it plays a central role in the Island mental health system and the continuum of care.

This provincial facility requires planning that reflects significant trends currently facing the system, including an increase in the number of forensic patients and requirement for a secure assessment in long-term care units, the need for a crisis response and emergency intake, the need for day treatment for adults, a step-living approach starting with highly structured living environments and capacity to address integration back to the community.

As a minister, I'm informed on a regular basis of complexities of problems and issues that may be affecting our staff and our department. When I talk to Dr. Keizer; and Verna Ryan; and Dr. Michael Mayne, the CEO of Health PEI, we find that individuals are coming in – sometimes they're much larger and bigger as physical individuals than before. It takes, sometimes, more people to restrain or more security. We deal with some severe addiction issues that may have altered the state of common reasoning of an individual when it comes to their issue. But yet these individuals may not have broken the law, they may just have a particular mental breakdown or meltdown and we have to do what we can to try to – not only provide and deliver services that are effective that are going to require some solution to the individual's challenge – but we have to also be cognizant of the safety and security of our staff and other patients.

These are extremely complex issues. We also have issues that happen from a forensic perspective. Sometimes the courts may order

an individual as having some mental incapacities and they may have to be assigned to a facility like Hillsborough Hospital. Many of our more violent and more high-risk patients are referred over to the forensic unit in Dartmouth. We've already had challenges that were provided by us from the Nova Scotia government. The courts are seemingly referring more people to those types of services and we're obligated to provide that and Nova Scotia has said that they're not as interested in taking Island patients anymore. That has created another complexity that we didn't necessarily expect and we have to try to respond to that as a minister and as a government.

But, it describes the challenges that we have to endure at that facility. We have other facilities that are out there that provide services besides the Hillsborough Hospital, but anyway –

Earlier this year, a designated medical director for the Hillsborough Hospital position was filled and Dr. Heather Keizer is filling that role. I think the interesting part and something that I've tried to do as a minister – I think it's very important that we have a good combination of understanding that our directors and our decision-makers within our departments, also, understand how it is on the frontline. That's why we've made a number of decisions – whether it's our medical director, Dr. Andre Celliers for hospitals west, or whether it's Dr. Tom Dorran for hospitals east, or Dr. Heather Keizer when it comes to our mental health patients. They all still go do shifts on the floor. I think that's extremely important to know that they have a good grasp of how our frontline workers are also dealing with these types of challenges.

When Dr. Heather Keizer happens to sit on our primary planning committee, we're getting good feedback – exactly what's required – right on the floor of the Hillsborough Hospital. That's very advantageous to us when it comes to the planning that we may have to provide when we do get consultants and things of that nature, to make those things reality.

What I'm trying to say here is that this motion – Motion No. 28, that the opposition is bringing forward – it's hard not to support

that because we are already doing and working on all of those particular issues. We have been reviewing the program at Hillsborough Hospital, we've reviewed the safety and security of the facility, we are making changes to improve the current facility and we are committed to building a new facility which will meet the needs of vulnerable Islanders and the need of mental health supports in this province.

I think that's always important to note, that we acknowledge what the opposition is saying and we are working hard on those deliverables. I think that's always good to know that we are committed to building a new facility and it will meet the needs of vulnerable Islanders.

When it comes to mental health, and as minister responsible for health and wellness, I can assure this House that mental health – our government has made significant advancements to the delivery of those services here in this province. We understand the integral links between mental health and addictions and some of the challenges that society is facing today. We've responded in many ways to incorporate issues around telepsychiatry and I do know the opposition kind of panned that – they felt that that wasn't an appropriate course of action.

But what that does – we've got health care facilities all across this province, in Montague, O'Leary, Alberton, they all deliver and are wanting telehealth services. We had Ray Brow – I met with him on an occasion and he is a big advocate of telehealth services.

When it comes to issues around psychiatry, telehealth is a proven technology. You're not breaking skin or you're not doing a mind melt here or something on an individual, you're having a discussion. With today's technology, the clarity and the ability to communicate – like we see it all the time on Skype – but we can emulate those types of deliverables and we can get access to some of the most professional individuals in the country to deliver some of those services.

When that individual with a particular challenge is having a communication with somebody through the telehealth network or telepsychiatry network, that individual is

getting the utmost of expertise when it comes to their particular issue and that can be communicated to an individual here in Prince Edward Island – another health care professional. That’s about the collaboration that we can have and we can access the resources anywhere in Canada – sometimes anywhere in the world. We’re doing it with a number of our technology and diagnostic imaging. Those images now can be in the utmost of clarity. We can send those images anywhere, just a click of a button. We can get the most credible expertise in the country to review something, send information back. It’s no different in tele-psychiatry.

I was feeling that the opposition didn’t quite understand the modernizations of services that are provided and the access. Yes, we would love to have every position in Prince Edward Island filled when it comes to the healthcare professionals that we have. We have, I think, 16 different positions that we’re trying to fill in healthcare delivery in this province and we have a great staff in recruiting and retention. I believe we do have a psychiatric vacancy at the moment in one of our psychiatrists, but the individual is on a maternity leave and we just weren’t able to attract a locum.

We will do and we will make sure that Islanders are getting the best level of care that we can possibly deliver in this province. Part of that might be the use of technology, which is like items like tele-psychiatry.

The other alternatives are that you’re either going to overwork some of the existing staff we have, or you’re not going to be able to provide the deliverables of services that Islanders expect. From that perspective, I don’t think it’s a bad thing that we’re trying to provide Islanders with as quick a service as we possibly can. I think it needs to be noted in this House that we have opportunities.

The other issue is that we have now with Dr. Rhonda Matters, we have a behavioural support team and that behavioural support team works with young adolescences to identify issues and they have helped numbers of families and individuals out.

We also have a process where we’ve worked with Dalhousie University over in Halifax,

where we have access to some tele-health services through the phone, where we have students that are in psychiatry that are training to become psychiatrists and they’re willing to provide some services on some phone call support. When an individual has a moment that might be of concern or risk, they can call a number and they can talk to somebody that has some basic background in psychiatric issues.

We’re trying to do all we can in deliverables. I think of the Strength Program and there are the integral issues that are pertained around mental health and addictions. The Strength Program, I had the opportunity to tour that in Summerside. There are a number of beds up there that individuals, young people, that are having their challenges with integrating into society.

Anyway – based on that, we’re doing a lot of good things when it comes to the delivery of mental health services in this province.

With that, I just want to make sure that everybody is clear in the House some of the challenges that are faced as minister, and I will be supporting our motion because that is exactly what we are doing in this province, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. R. Brown: Here we go.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Currie: Buckle in.

Mr. LaVie: Here we go.

Mr. R. Brown: Here we go (Indistinct)

Mr. LaVie: Now we’ll (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: (Indistinct)

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

I rise with great pleasure to support this motion and I want to – before I get started, I want to commend all of the staff that work on the frontlines providing mental health services, not only in the Hillsborough Hospital, which is our largest acute psychiatric facility, but all staff in our healthcare system that provide treatments and supports because, it is certainly a very challenging area to be working in.

I want to speak as the former health minister. I have seen the growth and the changes over the last 10 years, as the minister, in an area of healthcare delivery that has grown, that has seen government put extensive focus and attention to where we were 10 years ago.

I remember when I first was elected in 2007, there was an ongoing debate. I think it was back in 2006 and I know there were members – the Member from Charlottetown-Victoria Park was very vocal on the need for youth addiction services at that time. Shortly after coming in, if we're looking back over the last 10 years, we've seen significant investment and growth.

I want to talk a little bit about Hillsborough and during my time as the health minister I was very vocal and made very public statements, that it's time and I'm very proud of the work that's currently going on in the planning and the Capital Budget investments that are in the Capital Budget plan to make this a reality.

But, one thing that's really important – during my time as the health minister we had the chance during these discussions to go out and to spend time in in-patient, out-patient psychiatric hospitals in this country. Facilities, one in Downtown Toronto that was very community-minded, it had a level of beds that was designated for in-patient acute psychiatric, but they also had programs, out-patient services where individuals would be coming in and out for treatment. I was quite impressed with the programming, but also the model that they were implementing. I was very supportive at that time that we emulate and we look at best practice, and we look at a facility to meet the needs of the changing face of psychiatry and service delivery in our province.

Hillsborough Hospital is a facility that has served this province well and it's an older facility. It's a 69-bed psychiatric hospital that provides a range of services to Islanders and their needs.

If you look at where our government has gone over the last 10 years you see significant policy initiatives, particularly with the investment when we first came in. We did a round of conversations. We implemented the Strength Program. The Strength Program, in its early existence, was a day program for youth. That evolved and became a facility that was a program that is now in Summerside which is a 24/7 facility for youth. It's a facility for youth and addictions, but a lot of times when we're dealing with addictions there are cross references to a mental health issue for people that are struggling with addictions. That facility is doing tremendous work.

After that, we worked very closely with the heads of psychiatry and the operational people in the department of health and the next investment and the work that we did was the day program, which is a mental health program for youth 13 to 18. The name of that program is INSIGHT and that program now is currently sitting in the same location in the Strength building, which is now moved to Summerside, to be the 24/7 residential facility.

We've seen some significant investment, and the minister of health did a very good overview of the services and I think it's important that –

Mr. LaVie: You did the work.

Mr. Currie: – I'm speaking that we support this motion to respond to the changing needs of Islanders living with mental health services, but look at doing it right.

I'm very pleased and proud as a government that we are moving in that direction and as I said, very supportive of this motion.

The other thing that's really important is that our government is also paying attention to the importance of education and intervention. You've heard me talk about an individual by the name of Stan Kutcher, who has been on the Island, who has been working with educational leadership to look

at the whole discussion around mental health literacy and getting young Islanders to really understand what mental health is. The work that he is doing in other provinces, particularly in the Province of Nova Scotia recently working with their government, to really do a good job of education and raising awareness to what mental health is.

I'm very pleased and proud that over the last week we made some significant announcements. I'm very pleased we have government departments, we have the department of health, the department of education; we have the department of justice and we have the Department of Family and Human Services.

What we're seeing is school support teams. School support teams will be supporting children. From K-12 we're going to be introducing two programs, one in the Westisle family and one in the Montague family. We will be rolling out that initiative, which is an integrated approach to service delivery and with a real focus on mental health supports.

That investment will be over \$7 million over three years. That's an exciting initiative. We will be working with government departments; we'll be working very closely with health to make sure that we do our part in education; that we work with teachers; that we work with families; that we work with children. And we continue to build on positive healthy school cultures.

That's where it starts. I often talk about in the Legislature about the importance of education, but the importance of what school culture means. School cultures are about healthy places for children to be educated, but they're also healthy places for children to interact. They're also positive places for students to be engaged, not only as learners, but to be given opportunities in extracurricular activities; whether it be in sports; whether it be in areas of interest around music; whether it be areas of interest around innovation and technology, our schools are doing much more than teaching reading and math. They're teaching children 21st Century competencies. They're teaching our children to be global citizens as they go through the K-12 system.

I think that one of the things that is a significant priority by our department and by our government, is that we continue to talk about social-emotional well-being. One of our three pillars in our department: one, obviously, is student achievement; two, is obviously public engagement. We've seen the results of the announcements that we make in here through the district advisory councils and the feedback from the Principals Councils.

One of the pillars is we talk about social-emotional well-being and we talk about the importance of teaching children the tools to make sure that they live healthy lives and to make sure that they make good choices. That's all part of the journey to make sure that our youth develop skills and coping skills and resiliency to make sure that they grow up to be healthy individuals and basically avoid issues that – or falling into situations where they become dependent; where they become reliant on alcohol. These are all issues that are very important in the bigger picture.

I want to commend our minister of health. I want to talk and thank his department and his Deputy Minister, Mike Mayne – sorry, the CEO of Health PEI, who was my deputy minister, who I think, has done an outstanding job during his time in providing leadership, not only in the department, but also, on the operational side in Health PEI.

If anyone thinks in this Legislative Assembly that that work is easy, well, I can say first hand that I had three tours of duty as the health minister for this province. I engaged with health ministers in the region and in the country and internationally.

It's a very challenging portfolio. It's a portfolio that touches the lives of all Islanders. I certainly want to commend our minister for his leadership and the work that he's doing.

I also want to stand here to say that I'm in full support of this motion. I will be doing everything I can at the tables that I sit at to continue to push the agenda and support, that what we're doing as our government, to make sure that we look at a new model of in-patient/out-patient psychiatric services –

Mr. R. Brown: He put the money (Indistinct)

Mr. Currie: – for all Islanders, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. R. Brown: Good work.

Speaker: Are there any other hon. members that would like to speak to this motion –

Mr. LaVie: (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: I (Indistinct)

Speaker: Order, order!

An Hon. Member: Sorry.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Third Party, I believe, would like to speak to this motion.

Mr. R. Brown: Pee-wee Herman.

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

It's a pleasure to rise this afternoon in support of this motion.

I'm very interested and intrigued by modern mental health services and the way we have approached mental health over the years has evolved. We're now, the modern approach to mental health is a pragmatic balance between community and hospital care. We are still going to need facilities like the Hillsborough Hospital, in what you might call, a modern-stepped care mental health system.

If you look at the history of mental health through the years there are three, sort of, distinct periods. One would have been the rise of the asylum, the mental asylum from the dark days. Then, we have the decline of that. Now, we're into the third period of approaches to mental health care. That's the reform of mental health care services and that's where we are today.

The aim of modern mental health care services is to provide, both community-based and hospital-based care for patients

that are appropriate to their specific needs; an individualized-care approach.

That is true, whether you're dealing with an acute problem, a psychosis or a suicidal problem or somebody in depression, or the longer term mental health problems that afflict many people. Some are curable some are not, sadly.

The goals of modern mental health care services for those, which are curable is to get people well and to keep them that way. And, also too, to do other things to comply with international conventions on human rights and it's just a much more humane approach to mental health than we have had in the past.

We understand, also, much better how to keep people well once they are well. It requires providing them with access to good counseling, group therapy, perhaps, regular exercise, diet, life coaching. All of these things are critical elements of providing people who need them with services in order to stay well, once they overcome whatever the initial crisis is.

But again, we are going to need, for some cases, hospital facilities. There is no doubt that the Hillsborough Hospital as it exists now is past its best buy date. We all know that. Nobody in here is going to argue against that.

So it's a question of what we are going to create. Are we going to create a facility that reflects the modern approach to mental health; a place that is less like a prison and an institution and more like a health spa where people can – where the healing can actually begin because the environment in which you live, whether that be in good mental health or when you're struggling, is a critical element of being well.

We need, I believe, to build a facility that is not just going to replace the Hillsborough Hospital in terms of bricks and mortar, but we have to change the way the facility will be run. We'll have to make it a place where healing can begin; a place of kindness and compassion and an environment that promotes well-being, a place that is airy and light and is natural. Again, less like a prison, more like a health spa.

An Hon. Member: Hear! Hear!

Dr. Bevan-Baker: I guess that's really all I have to say.

Islanders speak in whispered tones about the Hillsborough Hospital and that's a shame. It would be lovely to have a facility of which we could sing the praises.

The only thing in the motion that I would – I don't really have an issue with it, but the motion calls for the construction to begin in 2019; I see no reason why we can't move that up a year. We're early in 2017 here. I see no reason why we shouldn't expedite that and I would encourage the minister to get this done as soon as we possibly can.

Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

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

One of John F. Kennedy's last bill before he went to Dallas was the reform of the mental health services in the United States of America. What the president, at the time, said: We can't be institutionalizing. And as the Leader of the Third Party said: Treat our mentally handicapped people as prisoners in an institution.

From that piece of legislation; his last piece of legislation he signed, that started a process of de-institutionalizing many of the people who had had to suffer for years in these institutions.

It is time to modernize and to revise our way we treat our mentally challenged people in our institutions.

I agree. The facility is still an institution. It is a – I might get in trouble – but it still looks like a prison. That is no way to be healing our people that have a problem.

At one time, growing up, and knowing the facility and living close to the facility – it was over 100 people in that facility – a lot of people lived there. They were crammed into rooms and everything like that. We, in Canada, instituted the same policy that the

President Kennedy wanted instituted was – get them out of the institutions.

We see a number of community facilities in Charlottetown now, especially in my district, that are doing a tremendous service in reintegrating people back into the community. We have a number of facilities through our province that are doing that. I want to commend all the people that work in these facilities – in group homes, shops, bake shops, and everything like that – because it allows interaction with the community. Interaction with the community is a big part of healing. Sitting in a room for 24 hours a day or being allowed out of a little room every once in a while is no way to cure that – or to assist in this area.

A lot of things have been done in this area over the last number of the years and successive legislators have worked on this project. I know in the last session we had a committee that toured the Island and a lot of good advice and recommendations came out of that. We met with a lot of parents with a lot of concerns and it's time that the facility be upgraded. It's time that we modernize it. It's time that we, as the Leader of the Third Party said, it's time to open it up – to take away the prison-like atmosphere and make it into a healing facility. You can't do it in the current building. You cannot reconfigure the current building to do that. It has to come down – a new one has to be built, a modernized one that allows the community in a lot more easily – families to meet a lot more easily.

I remember with the addictions centre across the river – when the new one was being built – I've seen a lot of the facilities in the past where people with addictions – alcoholic addictions – had to be put – and matter of fact, at one time I think Hillsborough Hospital was used as a facility for addictions – the approach there.

I think it's time and the planning process is going on. We can see that the minister's working on it; the government is working on it. I like the resolution because as we know, there are three branches of government, there's the justice, there's the executive and, there's the legislative. So, basically what this motion is saying – that the Legislative Assembly, which is the second branch of government – or a main branch of

government, I'd say, is supporting the work of the provincial executive, the Cabinet, the government in its efforts in modernizing the institution.

So, I will be supporting the motion. I know some people that work at the Hillsborough Hospital and have worked at the Hillsborough Hospital – I want to say to them thank you very much. With the facility that you have, they do a tremendous job. They work extremely hard in an extremely hard environment, I would say. We all know it's not a facility that is up to standards. Now, I know it gets accredited, but it's still not a building up to standards in my mind.

I want to really thank the nurses, the staff, the kitchen staff, the groundskeepers and everything because – I live close by it, I walk the area sometimes – they keep it immaculate. It is the best it can be with the infrastructure they have, but it's time for government and it's time for society, and it's time for Prince Edward Island to move on and build a new facility.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

Mr. LaVie: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm happy to rise today to speak about our motion that urges government to follow through on its commitment for the replacement of the Hillsborough Hospital.

Our caucus believes that a replacement for the Hillsborough Hospital is critical to the care and rehabilitation of patients in our province who are suffering from chronic and acute mental health issues. I would note that the hospital is currently this province's principal hospital, but it is over 100 years old. It is inadequate in its role and serves its need to be revamped, reviewed and updated.

The Hillsborough Hospital at one time had 200 beds. According to the website, the number has dwindled to 69 beds; 200 to 69 beds under the watchful eye of this government. That's dramatic, especially

today we know lots of people going through mental health issues.

The downsizing of the hospital was part of a plan to have more patients cared for in facilities in the community, but as we know, the plan has primarily resulted in the crisis we have today. Islanders with mental health problems are often bounced back and forth between various programs and facilities due to the lack of beds.

I belong to a program myself, for the past 14 years – it's the AA program. In my last 14 years I've seen significant change, just in my 14 years. I see more and more young people coming into the program, which is good. I'm glad to see them come to the program because when you see young people coming in, it helps my sobriety because I'm also helping them. I hear their issues. I hear them speak from the heart. I hear the cries for help. I try to help these young kids to get over the hurdle so they can get on with their future. But, what I hear mostly is the lack of resources they have.

Sometimes I hear about these kids going for help – they can't get it – sent back home. It's difficult on the parents – very difficult on families what these children are going through. I hear it firsthand – firsthand for the last 14 years.

I'm here five and a half years now. I sat on the health committee and we had parents come into us and they spoke to the standing committee – right from the bottom of their hearts – these parents spoke. Mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters, we heard them and we're still talking about it today. We're still talking mental health today.

In my five and a half years here, I've lost a lot of friends – taking their own lives. I can honestly say in the last five and a half years in my own district, I'm sure if I count, I can honestly say is up to nine or 10 that took their own lives. That's not counting the ones that survived; that's just my district.

We hear from people right across this province. It's time to stop thinking and look after the people that are crying for help because it's out there. We have to do more for these people. They are crying for help. I have had family members that took their own lives. I had family members that

attempted it. I know where these people are coming from. Some of these people, they never took a drug. They never took a drink of alcohol. They never smoked. I have one friend that never even said a swear word. But, it was the frame of mind he was in and that was crying for help. We let him fall through the cracks and he never made it.

I often think about my uncle that took his own life. It was quite some time ago. I was only 12 at the time. I remember as if it was today because as a 12-year-old, you don't expect to see that kind of stuff. After he took his own life – he lived with my grandparents; my grandparents only had two boys; my father and my uncle, and after he took his own life I moved in with my grandparents to see if I could fill that gap that they were going to have because they always had him with them and all of a sudden he was gone. I moved in with them and I slept in the same room.

I think it was in 1974 when their house burnt. I was no longer with them, until my grandfather died – actually, they got a trailer which I own today. I wanted to keep it in the family, the property and the trailer. When my grandfather died I moved in with my grandmother so she wouldn't be alone. I didn't leave home. I wasn't kicked out of home. It was my choice to live with my grandmother to fill that gap that she had because she was hurting inside.

The smiley face of a friendly chap, or the friendly person, is the ones we've got to be careful of; the happy-go-lucky. We've got to be careful. What we have to do, we have to be nice to everyone, everyone, because we don't know what that individual is going through. I had friends, happy-go-lucky, and that's why it was such a shock to hear they took their own life. He was happy-go-lucky. He went to work. He was talking to you that day. I saw him that morning. He was jolly. That's why we've got to be nice to everyone, because we don't know what's going on inside their minds. That's exactly the way it was with my own.

During one of the storms, and it was a heavy storm; my driveway wasn't ploughed. The streets were barely ploughed because the storm was snowing that heavy. I was watching – my wife watching a hockey game and I wanted to watch the national

news so I went in and I lay down in the bedroom and she made a roar at me. She says: Does any of the RCMP have a pair of skates in your building? I sharpen skates. I said: No, I don't think so. She says: Well, there is an RCMP walking up the driveway in the snow storm. My heart just went to my knees. Because at 11:00 p.m. at night or 11:30 p.m. at night, when you see mounties coming to your doors, and the members over here will know, that's not a good feeling.

Generally, if there are two of them they will travel in pairs to break any bad news if there is. The first question I asked her: Is there one or is there two? She says: There was one. I got up and my heart was just dragging. I didn't want to answer that door, and she wouldn't answer it because we didn't want to hear if there was any bad news. I had to open the door. The gentleman was knocking on it. It was bad news; it's going to be bad news. That's the kind of feeling you get when you have a member of your family that is sick. You never know when and we never know when that call will come.

When I opened the door the mountie said: Good evening. I didn't say too much. He says: Is your wife home? I said: Yes, she is. My wife came out to the kitchen. He says: Do you know that the Town of Souris got a water break? I said: Holy God, man oh man, you had us both scared. I said: Can you not pick up the phone and tell my wife that there was a water break? You had to walk up my driveway in a snow storm and scare the both of us? I'm sorry, he apologized. Because as first responders, we have a little idea of how it works and what happens when there was a family member lost, and it's a terrible thing that the RCMP have to do.

I have done it myself in the past, and it's not very nice feeling to go to anyone's house. It's even worse when these RCMP officers – or whoever has to do it – has to go to somebody's house to tell someone they took their own life. I believe, in my books, it's worse because it's always there: What if? They start blaming themselves: What if I did this? What if I had of went with them? It's the 'what ifs'.

I have a little history in mental health with my own family. I have a little idea what these parents are going through. I feel for

them. When they sit at the end of the table and speak to the committee, my heart is just breaking for them because they're just going day by day.

As representatives of Prince Edward Island we have got to make sure the help is there.

I just had a real good friend lost his daughter and my heart goes out to that family. She was 22-years-old with a five-month-old baby. The Tuesday before that she was eight hours to see a psychiatrist.

I saw this young girl the morning of. Exactly what I was saying earlier. It's the silence. The waves the smiles. You just think, there is nothing wrong, but we never know what is going on in somebody's mind. It's anyone you meet on the street, anywhere at all.

I've learned a lot in my own program. Patience was a big one. My wife will say: I have no patience. You should have seen me before.

The big thing that I did learn: was don't hold it inside. Find someone you can trust, a best friend, mother, father, brother, sister, daughter, find somebody that you can trust. That you really trust and talk.

The big thing you can do is talk. When you are silent it's in your head. You don't want those feelings rolling around inside your head. You want to get them out. I learned that on my own firsthand in my program.

I dealt with – I held in issues for 10 years. Ten years. When I finally spilled my guts; when I finally let it out and found somebody that I could talk to, boy, did my life turn around.

You know I'm proud of who I was and where I was because it made me the person I am today. I'm proud of my past. It put me where I am today, very proud of that.

To anybody, talk, no difference who it is; your friend, family member, priest, police officer, nurse, doctor, anyone you can trust. It has got to come out.

Certainly, this situation has not worked in the best interest of patients in our province. The former minister of health stated many times that he was committed to replacing

Hillsborough Hospital with a new facility. He even promised to try to push up that timeline, but unfortunately, he did not maintain his portfolio after the last election.

If the minister was that committed to the replacement of the facility, I would think that he saw how important it was, the improvement of mental health treatment in our province, and I expect he will support our motion –

An Hon. Member: Call the hour.

Speaker: The hour has been called.

Mr. LaVie: Mr. Speaker, thank you.

Speaker: Hon. members, this House will recess until 7:00 p.m. this evening.

The Legislature recessed until 7:00 p.m.

Matters of Privilege and Recognition of
Guests (III)

Speaker: You may be seated.

The hon. Premier, for recognition.

Premier MacLauchlan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker for the opportunity to welcome a group of eight people who are here, who make up the backbone of my district operation, District 9, second fastest growing district in the province; Billy Doyle, Gary Watts, who is the president; Preston Weeks, Reg Affleck, Jean Tingley, Emmett Doyle and Bobby Boyle and Barry Craswell. We have lot of fun together. They represent about a third to a quarter of the total group that gets together when we really get some things done.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: We'll also give way to the hon. Minister of Communities, Land and Environment for recognition.

Mr. Mitchell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I, too, would certainly like to welcome everybody into the gallery, especially the District 9 executive folks that are in the room tonight. I know I'll probably see a lot

of those faces again tomorrow night at a sold-out dinner event in Sherwood. It's great to have them here tonight, and I'll see them again tomorrow night.

I also want to recognize a couple of other fine gentlemen in the room, in the gallery tonight. With us tonight is Joshua Collins. Joshua is the vice-president of the engineers of PEI. Also, in the back row, Sam Sanderson, a good friend of mine. Sam is executive director of the Construction Association of PEI. It's great to have you both in the room, in the Legislature here tonight.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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 1st order of the day be now read.

Speaker: Shall it carry?

Carried.

Clerk Assistant and Clerk of Committees: 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 call on the hon. Member from Charlottetown-Lewis Point to Chair the Committee of the Whole House.

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

Hon. members, we are now going to look at the estimates for Executive Council. They're found on page 64.

Premier, do you have a stranger you would like to bring to the floor?

Premier MacLauchlan: Yes, I have, Madam Chair.

Thank you.

Chair: Permission to bring a stranger to the floor?

Some Hon. Members: Granted.

Chair: Thank you.

Good evening. Could you introduce yourself and your title for the record?

Karen Stanley Manager: Karen Stanley, Finance Manager, Executive Council.

Chair: Welcome, Karen.

Premier MacLauchlan: Madam Chair, just as we're transitioning through, may I have a further opportunity to recognize a guest, which –

Chair: Absolutely.

Premier MacLauchlan: – is Emma, Karen's daughter, who is in grade 8 at Stonepark, and is here to see how – what her mother does.

Chair: Excellent, welcome.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Chair: Would you like to give an overview of the department, first, Premier?

Premier MacLauchlan: Thank you, Madam Chair.

We have a document that we can distribute. It's pretty schematic about the department, and then, some of the related operations being, Intergovernmental Affairs, Aboriginal Affairs, and Acadian and Francophone affairs.

Executive Council is the team that leads the public service through the Clerk and is the surround piece on the Premier's office and as hon. members will see as they look at the estimates over a period of time, we're

running a pretty frugal operation when it comes to the actual outlays.

Actually, it reflects what I might call the intimate nature of the small number of departments running the entire government.

Thank you.

Chair: Thank you, Premier.

Do you have handouts you would like to table?

Karen Stanley Manager: Yes. That is the complete package and then this is one of each.

Chair: Perfect. Give those to the Clerk.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Maybe to save time while they're being passed out: What is actually contained in the handouts?

Premier MacLauchlan: The first document will be the staff list. The entire team, including salary ranges. The second is the professional services through Executive Council, as well as the related operations Aboriginal, Acadian, Francophone Affairs. The third is the out-of-province travel. The fourth is Executive Council, as well as the related operations.

One thing to note, Madam Chair, in the salary line in Executive Council, this is where you would find the stipends or the supplement that is paid to Cabinet Ministers.

Chair: Leader of the Opposition, before we get into questions, would you like me just to read the title and the total?

An Hon. Member: Okay, sure.

Chair: Okay, thank you.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you.

Can you, Premier, can you give us a brief summary of what's going on in Intergovernmental Affairs Secretariat; the Aboriginal Affairs Secretariat; and also the

Acadian and Francophone Affairs Secretariat?

Premier MacLauchlan: Intergovernmental relations, for starters, with the federal-provincial-territorial level – various matters, at least two in-person meetings annually. There are then regional meetings of premiers. This year –

Leader of the Opposition: Is there anything interesting going on in those three?

Premier MacLauchlan: Yes, in fact, we had a conference call on Tuesday of this week with the Prime Minister about trade relations with the United States.

Leader of the Opposition: Yes.

Premier MacLauchlan: Of which he was reporting on softwood lumber and dairy, for example. There are things that are of the moment.

The Paris Accord and the subsequent developments that would have been done through that work.

At the regional level, the leading element or the leading initiative would be the Atlantic Growth Strategy and that's the four provinces and the federal government. When we extend beyond the borders of Canada, the biggest current initiative would be our role this year as host of the New England governors and eastern Canadian premiers, who turns out to be the part of the total operation that involves the most out-of-province activity. It's actually a time when I feel that we're getting some things done and that Prince Edward Island has a part that (Indistinct) something more than our size.

In Aboriginal Affairs, this is a time when there's a lot of anticipation and serious intent and endeavour to follow on the truth and reconciliation commission. The ongoing work to pick up on the serious issues raised around missing and murdered (Indistinct) and the work that we have discussed here in Question Period around land and resources with First Nations.

Overall, with the whole area of Aboriginal Affairs, there's a scale of an operation that is not reflected directly in the numbers in this part of the estimates. That is to say the

number here is just under 700,000; total relationship with the Mi'kmaq First Nations in the province would be more like 6 million when you take into account justice programs, health programs, infrastructure, employment, economic development.

Leader of the Opposition: Yes.

Premier MacLauchlan: It's a robust area; lots of relationships in Francophone and Acadian affairs. Again, there are many relationships within the province and beyond. We have an accord with Quebec, a five-year accord that we signed this year. That's not a lot of money. It's, I think, now on the order of \$50,000 a year, but it's a chance to do some things together and the numbers are bigger than that when you get to our relations normally through Heritage Canada in terms of their support for language development or language programs, most of which have a constitutional underpinning.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Chair, thank you.

You can total carry if you want, the total Executive Council and the Premier's Office budget.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Question.

Chair: Thank you.

Oh, sorry.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: (Indistinct) sorry. I didn't realize we had moved (Indistinct)

Chair: Sorry.

The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you, Chair.

I'm just interested as to why the Premier needs his own staff to provide the program and policy advice, which is part of the description of the Premier's Office, when I imagine the Executive Council Office, does exactly the same thing.

Premier MacLauchlan: Yeah, you'll find – if you went to other departments – for

example, my Department of Justice and Public Safety, there will be people who are policy people.

In fact, I would say, Leader of the Third Party, that this is one of the tell tales of good public service; is the amount of personnel and I might even say, up-and-coming personnel, who have a policy function. Frankly, it's something that in the relatively short time since we have been in government we have endeavored to – and identify a greater capacity and a capacity to cooperate across departments.

That's where the Premier's role in this becomes part of the overall policy kind of bandwidth; I'll call it, of government.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you.

I assume my next question is regarding liaising with the public and the media, and again, I imagine the communications and public engagement division would do that, but I presume the same explanation exists there.

Premier MacLauchlan: Yes, that's true and in fact, in that case many of the staff of the communications team throughout government actually have their employment home and their departmental home through Executive Council –

Karen Stanley Manager: Through communications.

Premier MacLauchlan: Through Communications PEI, which then comes together through a deputy and a director of communications who report to me. An overall comment on our communications outlay; it has in fact, tightened up over the 24-plus months since we've had the government.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you, Chair.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: I'm fine, thank you, Chair.

Chair: Hon. members, would you like me to read each section or should we carry the budget?

Some Hon. Members: Carry the budget.

Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Trivers: (Indistinct) Executive Council?

Chair: Yes.

Mr. Trivers: (Indistinct)

Chair: Point well taken, hon. member.

Shall the Executive Council budget carry?
Carried.

Chair: Thank you.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: I'm sorry, Chair. Can I have one question?

Chair: Absolutely.

The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you.

It's to do with the legal services and the Aboriginal Affairs Secretariat. I see we have a handout here which outlines the professional services; several firms, not Island names that I recognize anyway, Francis Isaac and the Cassels Brock & Blackwell; are they to do with the e-gaming file? Is that Tom Isaac that I'm –

Premier MacLauchlan: That is Tom Isaac, but that would be more to do with land.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Okay, so none of those expenses are to do with the e-gaming file?

Premier MacLauchlan: No. They would not, no.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Would they be in justice? Is that where we would fine them?

Premier MacLauchlan: Those – look, it's kind of going back a ways, but I can't tell you precisely. I think it was in economic development and tourism, that relationship – but in any case, it's well before my time. But, what I can say with the professional

services that we see here, it is the capacity to advise on the intergovernmental relationship, including federal government, and then on issues related to land.

As I indicated in a Question Period exchange, one of the pieces that is currently being developed is a discussion that would see an expanded view of what is called the framework agreement that exists among the Confederacy, in effect the chiefs, the federal government and the province.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you.

Again, I didn't realize we were going to pass the whole Executive Council Office budget –

Chair: Sure, yeah.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: – in a (Indistinct) like that, so I was a bit taken by surprise there.

In the French languages section, I'm just interested if there are funds in there budgeted to replace the French services complaints officer who resigned.

Premier MacLauchlan: Yes, Madam Chair.

The resources are there and an appointment of that position is imminent.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Oh, great. Good to know (Indistinct)

Thank you, Chair.

Chair: Shall we now carry the Executive Council budget?

Some Hon. Members: Carried.

Chair: Carried. Thank you.

Hon. members, permission to bring a stranger on the floor?

Some Hon. Members: Granted.

Chair: Hon. members, we're on page 108.

Mr. R. Brown: (Indistinct) read the total.

Leader of the Opposition: We can go section (Indistinct)

Chair: Good evening, could you please introduce yourself and your title for the record?

George Mason Director: George Mason, Director of Finance and Corporate Services.

Chair: Great. Welcome, George.

Premier, do you have an opening statement?

Premier MacLauchlan: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Justice and public safety is one of those departments that people might not generally think of as a frontline department. Of our total operating budget, more than 80% goes to frontline services.

For example: corrections, a very big part of our operation; emergency service; courts; victim services; family supports; public safety including the fire marshal, the 911 office; and then it also includes, as we will see, some of the funding and relations with third parties or community partners.

For example, there's \$775,000 that goes to support the work of emergency responders through the 911 call system, the PICS radios, and this year, there's an increase of \$50,000 for the on growing grant to the PEI Firefighter's Association to support the provincial hazmat team. The biggest single number in this department, not surprisingly, is the contract with the RCMP to provide province-wide policing services – except for the three municipalities where there are municipal police services.

Chair: Great. Thank you, Premier.

Do you have handouts?

Premier MacLauchlan: Yes, we have.

Chair: We have some handouts that will be circulated.

Premier MacLauchlan: So, there's one single package here, members, and they're stapled sort of in order.

Chair: Is it your wish that I just read the department title and total?

Leader of the Opposition: That's right.

Chair: You're good with that? Thanks.

Minister's/Deputy Minister's Office

Total Minister's/Deputy Minister's Office: 330,000.

Any questions?

Leader of the Opposition: No.

Some Hon. Members: Carried.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you.

I'd just like to go back to the revenue section on the previous page because there's no other opportunity to talk about that. I see that the forecast revenues for JPS in the section before Family and Court Services are over \$7 million higher than they were originally budgeted? I'm just wondering – how did that happen?

Premier MacLauchlan: The funding that comes from the federal government relative to the big rainfall that we had on December 11th, 2014, there's typically a lag in the flow of those funds and they flow through justice and public safety.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Oh.

Premier MacLauchlan: It's a subset of the emergency measures relationship –

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Okay.

Premier MacLauchlan: – and we were lucky to get it within less than three years – typically it's 5 or more.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Yeah.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: I think I remembered seeing that in TIE, but that's good news to hear. Do you know when the national security regulator is going to be in place?

Premier MacLauchlan: I was just told the expenditures are in TIE (Indistinct).

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Okay. That's why I'm confused.

Premier MacLauchlan: It's a good setup.

I can give you the latest projection – it's been a moving target. The latest projection is third quarter of 2018-2019, so very roughly end of calendar year 2018. I wouldn't be held to that – it's one of those things that involves a number of pieces that are well beyond the jurisdiction of Prince Edward Island to set the timetable.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: When it is in place, do you have a sense of how much annual revenue is going to be lost to the province when that happens?

Premier MacLauchlan: The fees that – revenues that would flow to the province this year – 2017-2018 – would be on the order of 8 to 9 million. There was a payment from the federal government to the province that was booked in the 2015-2016 or the previous year – it might even have been in the 2014-2015 year of \$35 million. That was the offset.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you.

Is there a plan in place to make up for those lost revenues going forward?

Premier MacLauchlan: To see to it, in the first part, that the workload shifts to the collaborative model and to bill, in part, where we are providing service, but it's not a dollar for dollar recovery. The big plan was the \$35 million.

George Mason Director: It'll be part of the global budgeting process.

Premier MacLauchlan: It'll be part of our global budgeting process. The point is that we'll be doing our best to ensure that work that has been done solely by the province is done through that shared capacity of the collaborative model.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Okay. I'm fine. Thank you, Chair.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Opposition: did you have a question on this section?

Leader of the Opposition: I heard a rumor brought to my attention – possibly there could be a change to the fine revenue that goes to municipalities or RCMP policed areas as a result of the *Municipalities Act*. Is there anything in the department of justice – you know that? Are you guys any move to move to like a 40/20 split or a 40/60 split or something like that?

Premier MacLauchlan: Justice collects the fines –

Leader of the Opposition: That's right.

Premier MacLauchlan: – but there's nothing determined. I would say it's under review, but I wouldn't say there's any (Indistinct).

Leader of the Opposition: So that it is under review to split that would go to a municipality? Is that what you're saying?

Premier MacLauchlan: I think these are more in the domain of the overall financial relationship between the province and the municipalities, but there's nothing particular to justice –

Leader of the Opposition: I'll clarify this then, Premier.

Right now, Summerside, the city of Kensington and Charlottetown, whatever fines they right of a provincial nature, the victim's surcharge goes to the province. The whole amount of the fine, we'll say the fine is \$100, that \$100 would go to the municipality. So, the question would be: Is there any move – are you telling me you're going to review that possibly a percentage of that \$100 could go to the province?

Premier MacLauchlan: It's my understanding that the fine – the payment – is to the province.

Leader of the Opposition: That's right and then the province cuts a cheque at the end of the month – it's a remittance statement

listing all the fines and that goes to the municipality.

Premier MacLauchlan: And that is a grant – or that goes to the municipality for their policing.

Leader of the Opposition: That's right. Is that under review?

Mr. Roach: (Indistinct).

Chair: The hon. Minister of Finance has an intervention.

Mr. Roach: Thank you, Chair.

Chair, it's my understanding that for the municipalities, they actually got a pretty good deal on the fines.

Leader of the Opposition: They get 100%.

Mr. Roach: Yeah. They get 100% whether the fine is collected or not, so all they do is –

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct).

Mr. Roach: Just let me finish.

Chair: Could you come through the Chair?

Mr. Roach: It's my understanding that for the municipal services, that if they write a number of tickets, that as they come through, the province remits that total and if the fines aren't paid, it's then up to the province to go and collect those fines so that the money will eventually come back to the province on the fines.

Premier MacLauchlan: When I said 'it's under review', what I was really saying is that the fullness of the transfer relationship – I'll call it – between the province and the municipalities is currently under discussion, and under discussion to a degree that has a high degree of consensus between the municipalities and the provinces and the upshot would be a five-year agreement starting in 2018-2019. So, that's very close and my sense of the exchanges I've had with municipal governments – going back to my days on the federation – is that they have greater confidence in the way this is being approached than they've had in probably a decade.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: I know right now if a Charlottetown member writes a ticket it gets processed through the court system. If the guy charged pays the fine, the surcharge is kept by the province, the province cuts a cheque, that \$100 goes back to Charlottetown city. If buddy fails to pay the fine, it's outstanding. If he pays it in six months, then that amount money would come back to the municipality.

On the RCMP side of things, across the whole province, it just stays in provincial coffers. Yes, the provincial government does administer it, yes they do accept the cheques with a guilty plea and they do remit the money; but I'm still, I have to – so we're saying that possibly 2018, 2019, that system could change?

Chair: Minister of Finance.

Mr. Roach: Thank you.

I think it's kind of a good opportunity to have that question right now because everything that was in place before is being looked at. The staff within my department have been working for months and months. In fact, since I took this portfolio, they've been working with the municipalities.

They have had developed an incredibly good working relationship, and a formula was developed – originally by government staff, and then it was shared with all the municipalities and then the municipalities had an opportunity to put their foot forward in terms of the formulary and they've come to, what I would call, almost 100% agreement on how all of that is going to take place.

It's my understanding that they are, like, this far away, and there's just a bit of conversation that's going and they're very, very close and all of these matters will be settled to the satisfaction, in fact, of the municipalities, because the municipalities have a huge piece in what that formula's going to look like and that's something that they've been striving for and wanted for a long time and were extremely happy to be that close in delivering that.

Chair: Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Fox: I can understand that, Minister, but I was getting some phone calls from municipal governments wondering if the fine part was part of it also, and that's fine. It is. That's good enough.

Premier MacLauchlan: If I may just –

Chair: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: – Madam Chair, on the point that the Leader of the Opposition made about the RCMP police jurisdictions, in the municipalities such as Cornwall or Stratford where the RCMP provides the policing, the fines there go to the municipalities.

Leader of the Opposition: That's right, that's right, because they're under a different contract.

Premier MacLauchlan: Yeah.

Leader of the Opposition: That's right.

Chair: Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Can you tell me if – is fine revenue into the province on the provincial side of the RCMP for provincial roads, is that up or down?

George Mason Director: I think it's down. I'd have to look in the front pages of the book to be sure, but I believe it's down a bit.

Leader of the Opposition: Yeah, okay. Thank you.

Chair: Thank you.

Shall the section carry? Carried.

Corporate Services

Total Corporate Services: 989,000.

Shall the section carry? Carried.

Vital Statistics

Total Vital Statistics: 319,000.

Shall the section carry? Carried.

Total Corporate, Insurance and Financial Services: 1,308,000.

Mr. Trivers: Chair, question?

Chair: Shall the total carry?

Sorry, the hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald has a question.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Chair.

I'm not sure if this is the right spot to ask this, but you can go on to the corporate registry and you can look up companies incorporated on Prince Edward Island. At one point you could actually search by director name to see which companies they sit on. I believe that that was changed a number of years ago. Now you need to search by company and then you can look up the director, but you can't go the other way around.

I was wondering if there's any plans to make it easier to search the corporate registry so you can just search by a person's name and then just see what companies they sit on the board of directors for, and that sort of thing.

Premier MacLauchlan: That database, indeed the platform, is currently undergoing a significant revamp Madam Chair, and I think that work is just about completed. So the director's names would –

George Mason Director: – be complete this year.

Premier MacLauchlan: This year, they'd be complete. The directors' names will be there, the shareholders won't.

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Will it be possible to search by a director's name and find out all of the companies they sit on the board of directors for, or will you still have to go through company by company, look at the board of directors and see who sits on company by company?

George Mason Director: I don't believe so, but I'm not positive.

Premier MacLauchlan: You don't think you would be able to do that?

George Mason Director: I don't think so.

Premier MacLauchlan: The comment is we don't think it's going to be possible to search by director name, but I can't be absolutely certain of that.

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: I just wanted to comment. I think that would be a great feature to have. In fact, this is exactly the sort of data I would like to see provided as open data, free for the public to use.

Chair: Thank you.

Shall the total carry? Carried.

Legal and Policy Services

Justice Policy

Total Justice Policy: 1,210,700.

Question from the hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you, Chair.

So I'm looking at the salary line here from the budget estimates, the forecast last year, and it's down about 24%. I'm wondering if those are positions left unfilled, or – I also notice that this year we don't go back up to the same estimate as we had for last year, so is there a permanent position being cut here?

George Mason Director: (Indistinct)

Premier MacLauchlan: The short answer to the question of the hon. Leader of the Third Party, is that the director position has been vacant and it's currently, there's currently a recruitment that should be filled shortly.

If you look across the department, we're in a continuous process of what we call vacancy management – which doesn't mean we're eliminating positions, but when we've got maternity leaves or we've got someone that we have still got a recruitment underway and the current total number of positions out of the 300-plus that are unfilled would be 15.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Okay.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you, Chair.

FOIPP falls in this department, so I'm wondering whether the requests this year are up or down from the previous year.

Premier MacLauchlan: Up significantly.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Up significantly.

Premier MacLauchlan: Yes.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: So is there – do you have adequate resources in that department to meet those demands in a timely manner?

Premier MacLauchlan: We haven't added resources, but we should be fully staffed. In fact, I think the team has worked diligently to improve its response time.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: So despite the large spike in requests, has the wait time been pretty consistent or has it gone down or –

Mr. R. Brown: (Indistinct) annual report.

Premier MacLauchlan: There is an annual report, and I actually have it in some of my other briefing books but (Indistinct) roughly and I can bring it back. You would find that the number of requests has gone from, let's say, 200 annually to 300, something in that range? The response time has – I can't give you the precise numbers, but it hasn't gotten worse.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Okay.

Thank you, Chair.

Chair: Thank you.

Shall the section carry? Carried.

Legal Services and Legislative Counsel

Total Legal Services and Legislative Counsel: 2,161,000.

We have a question from the Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thanks, Chair.

Legislative Counsel. Should that almost not be possibly moved over to the legislative office? What I'm wondering if, is there possibly room for a conflict there because if Legislative Counsel is drafting bills for opposition and government, they actually work for government, they actually work for the Premier, right? So I'm wondering is there any concern, or how other provinces do it with that.

Premier MacLauchlan: I don't believe it's unusual for Legislative Counsel to be part of the Attorney General or department of justice in a departmental sense.

In terms of the professionalism, and I know that's not what you're questioning, but in the interactions that I've had with Legislative Counsel they do work independently or autonomously in a professional sense. Indeed, there have been opportunities as recent as this week when we see that they do serve all members of the House.

Ultimately, the duty or the fiduciary or professional responsibility of Legislative Counsel is to, I might call it the rule of law, or for that matter to the integrity of what this House adopts. In what I have seen, that's exactly how they approach it.

Leader of the Opposition: Okay, thank you.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you.

I'm looking at the professional services line in this and there are some pretty wild swings there. It went from an estimate of \$51,000 to over \$100,000 in the forecast and now we're down to \$14,000 estimated for this year.

I'm just wondering why that's such a volatile figure?

Premier MacLauchlan: The answer, and thank you for spotting that, is the – what that mainly reflects is the Criminal Code Review Board has been reflected in that line in 2016-2017. Now, it has been moved to public safety.

The CCRB is no longer reflected, so that's why the \$14,000 is so much less than what we actually spent in 2016-2017, or provided for in the past year.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you.

I asked a question in Question Period a little while ago about the procurement of private legal services. I'm just wondering, given that this is the department that does provide legal advice to government, whether there would be – whether you would consider moving all professional legal services outside of government, the cost, within the professional services right here, so it would be much more open and transparent. We could see exactly how much we're spending on legal services outside government.

Premier MacLauchlan: Madam Chair.

As I indicated in that Question Period exchange, this is something that we would be prepared to consider. Indeed, appreciated the Nova Scotia – was it the Nova Scotia policy?

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Yeah.

Premier MacLauchlan: That would be something that would come into effect with appropriate consideration and whatever the pros and cons might be for a further budget year.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you, Premier.

Chair: Shall the section carry? Carried.

Total Legal and Policy Services: 3,371,700.

Shall the total carry? Carried.

Public Safety and Policing

Public Safety

Total Public Safety: 21,185,000.

Question from the hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Back about a month-and-a-half ago, Chair, thank you. The hon. Minister Ralph Goodale announced that

he was awarding all the RCMP a 2% raise retroactive for 2015. I believe it was a two-point-something-percent raise for 2016, and then also a raise for 2017.

My understanding, reading the press brief from him, that onus is on the provinces to pay that for those past years.

Is that increase in this Budget because I don't see it?

Premier MacLauchlan: The answer is: Yes, it is here. It was provided for in the previous years that you have referenced.

This year that increment, three-year cumulative is correct to phrase it that way, would be upwards of three-quarters of a million dollars, but not \$800,000. It is reflected here in the line that reads: \$17 million.

Leader of the Opposition: Okay. Question.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: With that, I think it was on CBC New Brunswick. They reported that RCMP in New Brunswick, or pardon me, the province was going to also see an increase of 5% to general policing in the Province of New Brunswick for the RCMP contract, and some of the municipalities were also going to see an increase in that area also. Actually, the numbers they used, I think, was between 3% and 12%. New Brunswick was like 5%.

Did we receive also a 5% increase in RCMP costs in 2017-2018?

Premier MacLauchlan: No. The number would – that number under professional services under public safety is – is that entirely the RCMP contract?

George Mason Director: No, it's almost all.

Premier MacLauchlan: It's largely – it's almost all of that number, the \$17 million is the RCMP –

Leader of the Opposition: That's right.

Premier MacLauchlan: – and the increase that you see there is almost exactly the under \$800,000 –

Leader of the Opposition: That includes the –

Premier MacLauchlan: – that is the –

Leader of the Opposition: – increase of what – okay.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Chair.

Is there – what is the province considering assisting the RCMP and the local municipality police departments with roadside screening devices that will detect drugs? That's going to be a huge cost to municipality governments and also the RCMP, of course, in the province.

I'm wondering if there is any – has there been any request, or have you thought about providing these additional tools to the police departments to help deal with drug detection on the highways?

Premier MacLauchlan: Madam Chair, the short answer as far as this year's Estimates would be that the actual policing in that area would be more related to 2018-2019 with the legalization of marijuana anticipated July 1st, 2018.

I realize there is a more general question being raised, and the short answer is that there hasn't been a request for a particular technology. In fact, I think there is probably a fair debate, a fair amount of debate about what actually works.

Some people say it may get back to some of the things like putting your finger on your nose, which that would be low-tech.

Leader of the Opposition: Yeah, okay. One more.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Can you tell us where we stand in the province for arming our officers with carbines – has been – is

going through the trial in Nova Scotia, are we – anything going on with that?

Premier MacLauchlan: Are you talking about RCMP officers?

Leader of the Opposition: RCMP for the province and the municipalities. Was there any funding assistance there from the government? How did that ever go?

Premier MacLauchlan: I think they – so, we have every year been providing the necessary firearms for the RCMP and we're told that they're in pretty good shape and I think that's probably reflected in the materials, supplies and services.

It's in the \$16 million.

Leader of the Opposition: Okay, carry that section.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you.

I'd like to talk a little bit about the community safety and police services model review. The first recommendation on that was: That the minister should determine the most appropriate policing model considering the relative benefits and direct an implementation plan.

I'm wondering if you anticipate any budget savings with the new model.

Premier MacLauchlan: Highly unlikely.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Okay. I thought you might say that.

Premier MacLauchlan: Just to expand on it because I wouldn't put the new model as in with a definitive article in front of it in the sense that we are in a process that we anticipate will be a 12 to 18 month process that will be organic in the sense that the approach is to work with the existing services and then to find ways to have more collaborative or more standardized and integrated work together through specialized teams or through policing standards, more so than moving to a single force or a single model.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: You sort of anticipated my next question, which was: When do you anticipate the new model to be in place?

Premier MacLauchlan: The final report of the consultants was received and tabled in the Legislature earlier this week or late last week. There are two working groups that have been kind of waiting to get at it. I expect that it will be within the 18-month period that we'll have some much higher degree of definition.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you, Chair.

Chair: The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

Mr. LaVie: Thank you, Chair.

Premier, you and I discussed this –

Premier MacLauchlan: You changed your tie.

Mr. LaVie: What?

Premier MacLauchlan: You changed your tie.

Mr. LaVie: I changed my tie. You never know what you're going to see, Premier.

You and I had this discussion a couple of times, now, on government paying fire taxes on government property.

Do you have any answers on that issue?

Premier MacLauchlan: I don't have – I'll try.

I don't have an answer. It's a more complicated matter, but I would certainly be prepared to – and it's not tied up in the estimates that are presented here, but it's something that I would undertake to get some information or to do a scan on and bring it back.

Mr. LaVie: Thank you.

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. LaVie: No.

Chair: Sorry, the hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

Mr. LaVie: Thank you, Chair.

Chair: He's next.

Mr. LaVie: Premier, when you're doing your research can you find out if some communities you do pay, the government does pay, and if some communities you don't pay?

Premier MacLauchlan: (Indistinct)

Mr. LaVie: I'm hearing across the Island that some communities pay and some don't pay.

Premier MacLauchlan: That's something that would be very useful to be clear of, yes.

Mr. LaVie: Okay.

Chair: The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

Mr. LaVie: Thank you, Chair.

Premier, some department when they get a fire call they can talk directly to dispatch and some fire departments, like my own which I'm through a phone line at my department; it all comes through the phone line and if the phone line is down my system is down. We don't get calls, and it's expensive to get a bank in a dispatch.

Is there any help with fire departments like myself that go through a phone line which is not dependable and there's no backup system for us? It has happened in the past three times now.

Unidentified Voice: Yes (Indistinct)

Premier MacLauchlan: Madam Chair, I may be mistaken in this, but I have actually see a fire chief in our own department use the PICS radio with the multichannel capability and am I mistaken that the dispatch is included in that PICS interconnection or interoperability?

Chair: The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

Mr. LaVie: Thank you, Chair.

The PICS is included – what the PICS is set up for is mutual aid with Island EMS. It's only – if it's a call in our own district we don't use the PICS system and there is a lot of time our own system – like if we are called into a St. Peters district, Central Kings district, we haven't got enough radio communications. We haven't got reception on our radio system if we go into certain parts of, say, St. Peters if we're doing mutual aid we lose contact.

Premier MacLauchlan: Let me take this back and while it's not a matter related directly to the outlay in the estimates, it obviously gets to the effectiveness or efficacy of the system so it's of concern and I'll bring this back to officials in public safety or in the emergency measures to see if there's something more that can be done.

Just on the side, which again is nothing to do with our department, but I was contacted by the Ham radio operators, including some that operate in your area, to say that if everything fell apart they could divide a platform so that we could have communications.

In fact, I think when things fell apart in Fort MacMurray, for example, there were people here in Prince Edward Island on Ham radios who were maintaining communications.

Mr. LaVie: Yes.

Premier MacLauchlan: I know that's not the answer to your problem as the fire chief, but it's interesting to reflect on how something that's been around for a while can still be handy.

Chair: The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

Mr. LaVie: Thank you, Chair.

Just one more; probably more of a comment than anything is see – I'll speak about my department because I know it and some departments are under the same. We have two radio systems in our fire fall. We have our own radio system for our own district and then we have the PICS radio system for mutual aid and we just had the PICS radio system, if you get it advanced to the next stage and do away instead of carrying two systems – like we've got two different

radios in our trucks and when the PICS system came in we just got one radio and one handheld radio, and to buy another radio is anywhere from \$3,500 to \$5,000 to buy another radio.

So, if you could look – you know?

Premier MacLauchlan: The province – and this was in our 2016-2017 budget – had an outlay of 3.4 million, as I recall, for the total acquisition of the PICS radios and that included what I would call two, a pair, for each of the fire services and fire departments, and also to pay – I believe to pay to the annual operating cost.

Mr. LaVie: Yes.

Premier MacLauchlan: Madam Chair, is the suggestion that there be one additional or further radios? Is that the inquiry?

Chair: The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

Mr. LaVie: Thank you, Chair.

Where you got your PICS radio from, if you had an old PICS radio in your truck they would replace that radio, but if you didn't have a PICS radio in the truck you never got a new one. You had to have one, an old one, in order to get a new PICS radio. Understand? If I didn't have any old PICS radio in any of my trucks, I never got any radios.

Premier MacLauchlan: This may be something (Indistinct)

Mr. LaVie: So what we can do, Premier, is we can talk more about it.

Premier MacLauchlan: Great.

Chair: Shall the section carry? Carried.

Top of page 110.

Investigation and Enforcement

Total Investigation and Enforcement:
642,000.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: I have one question, Chair, thank you.

Minister, have the conservation officers in the province been instructed to write highway traffic tickets on the highways?

George Mason Director: (Indistinct)

Ms. Biggar: (Indistinct)

Premier MacLauchlan: If the question is instructed, they certainly haven't been given any instructions by me as minister, or to my knowledge they haven't been given any instructions beyond what they –

Leader of the Opposition: (Indistinct) trained.

Pardon me, minister?

Premier MacLauchlan: There hasn't been anything done at the level of the department to change their mandate.

Leader of the Opposition: So there has been no direction down for them to actually write highway traffic (Indistinct) ticket?

Thank you.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you.

My question is surrounding the investigation into the two fish kills which happened last year and we're still waiting on a final report. I'm wondering whether the delay in that final report reflects a lack of staffing in that department.

Premier MacLauchlan: Are they not in CLE, the people who did that (Indistinct) investigation?

George Mason Director: (Indistinct)

Premier MacLauchlan: The team that does that follow-up investigation is now in CLE?

Chair: The hon. Minister of Communities, Land and Environment.

Mr. Mitchell: (Indistinct) report of an incident of that nature, it would be COs that would attend with staff from CLE, but the

other support – the ag officers would also go along too, but the initial investigation would be done by the Cos – whoever is to show up. It normally would be Wade Mackinnon.

Premier MacLauchlan: I think the short answer is this is not about a shortage of resources and I won't pretend that, as minister, I have an active report on the file. It wouldn't be appropriate for me to do so, but it's my understanding from what we see in the public media that it's more to do with the evidence.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you, Chair.

Chair: Shall the section carry? Carried.

Provincial Coroner Services

Total Provincial Coroner Services: 580,000.

The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you.

I see, again, the professional services have gone up quite substantially from the estimate of last year; about 20%; can you explain why that's the case?

George Mason Director: (Indistinct)

Premier MacLauchlan: The coroners are mainly paid on, you might call it piece work. So this would depend on the amount of activity. I think they do, for example, I'm surprised how many autopsies they do in a year. It's 300-plus.

If there is an inquest that will sort of increase the amount that's required for professional services.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Are we anticipating 18% more deaths on PEI this year that will require an autopsy?

I'm surprised it would go up by that much in one year.

Premier MacLauchlan: It's not the kind of thing I should be speaking about just without having it right in front of me, but I'm pretty sure there is an inquest that will take place in 2017-2018, a death had already

taken place, I'm pretty sure that that will be the case.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: So even a single instance like that can inflate the budget quite substantially.

Premier MacLauchlan: It certainly changes the amount of time that's involved.

If there is a more – the other thing that we will see here and in other places, such as when we discuss the RCMP, is whatever the year-over-year increases there are in the rate of pay.

If you look across our whole budget you'll see that in most of these categories we're doing a pretty good job of staying with the amount that was allocated last year, or even below. In this area, where it's mainly doctors, we have to kind of go with the flow.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you, Chair.

Chair: Shall the section carry? Carried.

Total Public Safety and Policing:
22,407,000.

Shall the total carry? Carried.
Legal Aid

Total Legal Aid: 1,841, 800.

Shall the section carry?

Some Hon. Members: Carried.

We have a question from the hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Chair.

I have a constituent who had issues where they had to engage Legal Aid and they went to court and they lost their case. It was a judge's decision based on credibility of the defendant versus, I guess, the accuser.

They wanted to file an appeal. Legal Aid said they would not go forward with the appeal. They seemed to have a pretty good case for it, but they weren't able to afford to do it on their own.

Whereas, of course, if they had the financial means they would have been able to. Not, knowing a lot about this area, I was wondering if that is normal and if there are any provisions for people without financial means to actually move forward with an appeal if they – it seems unfair: because they're poor they can't appeal.

I understand that. You might have everybody appealing then, if everybody had access to it, but I wonder if there is any wiggle room there at all?

Premier MacLauchlan: Madam Chair, Legal Aid is an area where you're constantly managing with the available resources relative to the need and relative to the merits of the case. Up until this year there has not been an increase in the transfer for Legal Aid from the federal government since 2004. The province has been taking an increasing share of that financial burden.

In the type of circumstance, I'm not, of course, commenting on a particular case, it's inevitable that the Legal Aid director and team would have to make an assessment of the likely merits of an appeal. And, having given that they were involved the first time through their professional judgment would definitely be part of the decision.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you.

Chair: Shall the section carry? Carried.

Total Legal Aid 1,841,800.

Shall the total carry? Carried.

Crown Attorneys

Total Crown Attorneys: 1,346,000.

Question from the hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: One quick question: Minister, I'm hearing some stories of charges being laid that should not be laid. Simply charging a company for operating a motor vehicle and operating a company for driving a piece of equipment.

I'm wondering, can we instruct somebody to look into the Crown Attorney's Office and

see what's going on in there, if this is actually a case or not?

Like you can't charge a company for operating a motor vehicle, but yet there are charges being laid.

Premier MacLauchlan: Madam –

Leader of the Opposition: If you could just take that and –

Premier MacLauchlan: Madam Chair, I'm happy to – I hear the point. I certainly don't want to leave the impression that our Crown prosecutors would be laying charges for any purpose other than the expectation that there would be a conviction –

Leader of the Opposition: We'll have a sidebar –

Premier MacLauchlan: Okay.

Chair: We have a question from the hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque.

Mr. MacKay: Just one quick question, Chair.

Premier: Has there been any contact with the RCMP through your department here on the e-gaming?

Premier MacLauchlan: No.

Mr. MacKay: Thank you.

Chair: Shall the section carry? Carried.

Total Crown Attorneys: 1,346,000.

Shall the total carry? Carried.

Community and Correctional Services

Division Management

Total Division Management: 903,000.

Question from the hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you.

My question is in the salaries line where it has gone up by over \$100,000. I'm just wondering what that is to cover.

Premier MacLauchlan: It's a combination of wage increases, and we've created a new intern position that would be to develop supervisory experience.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: A single intern position?

Premier MacLauchlan: That position plus – the salary, plus the increases.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Okay, thank you, Chair.

Chair: Shall the section carry? Carried.

Adult Correctional Centres

Total Adult Correctional Centres: 8,988,000.

Shall the section carry? Carried.

Probation Services

Total Probation Services: 1,367,000.

Shall the section carry? Carried.

Youth Justice Services

Total Youth Justice Services: 1,350,000.

Shall the section carry? Carried.

Summerside Youth Centre

Total Summerside Youth Centre: 2,921,000.

Question from the hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Again, it's on the salaries line. I see there is a decrease in salaries here. I'm wondering if there is a position being cut?

Premier MacLauchlan: It's a combination of two things, Madam Chair. One, we've actually seen a reduction in occupancy. Good news. And too, because of the collocation of the facilities there can be a pooling of the staff in the youth justice piece – and the Summerside Youth Centre. You'll see that there has been a slight increase in the former and a decrease in the latter.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Okay, great.

Chair: Shall the section carry? Carried.

Victim Services

Total Victim Services: 980,000.

The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you.

In professional services here I see we've gone from very little to up to \$70,000. I'm just wondering why you're anticipating that this year.

Premier MacLauchlan: We, in a number of areas, we have federal-provincial agreements that ideally will bring some funding with them. In this case there is a new family information liaison unit.

It's an increased number in provincial spending, but there's also federal funding that comes in through the federal-provincial agreement.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: I also noticed that last year \$35,000 worth of grants were left unspent. Can you explain why that's the case?

Chair: Hon. Member, can you repeat the question?

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Yes. In the grants line of the Victim's Services division – last year the budget estimate was for \$100,000 of grants to be spent, but we only spent 65. So I'm wondering why the underspend of 35,000?

Premier MacLauchlan: I'm told there a – it's demand sensitive, I'm going to call it, and we're – it's not that anyone was cut to it, otherwise they'd been standing there expecting that 35,000, it has to do with (Indistinct) and I may be able to expand on the answer that I gave about the increase in the professional services – it is a federal-provincial funding arrangement and, specifically, it is to do with the work that will be done to support families of murdered and missing indigenous women and girls.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Okay. Thank you, Premier.

Thanks, Chair.

Chair: Shall the section carry? Carried.

Clinical Services

Total Clinical Services: 863,000.

Shall the section carry? Carried.

Total Community and Correctional Services:
17,372,000.

Shall the total carry? Carried.

Family and Court Services

Office of the Public Trustee and Public
Guardian

Total Office of the Public Trustee and
Public Guardian: 441,000.

Shall the section carry? Carried.

Family Law

Total Family Law: 1,444,000.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Question?

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: This has to do with the professional services line, again it's gone down substantially and I'm just wondering what the \$130,000 in anticipated drop in professional services is due to.

Premier MacLauchlan: The main explanation, Madam Chair, is that in 2016-2017 the children's lawyer was included under professional services and with the hiring of that children's lawyer being imminent that will be under salaries in 2017-2018, so you'll see that the numbers net out.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you.

Am I right in saying that the children's lawyer has already been hired? Has the woman already been –

Premier MacLauchlan: She hasn't started work.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Okay. All right. So her salary doesn't appear anywhere in – no. Okay.

Premier MacLauchlan: Soon.

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

George Mason Director: Her salary's there.

Premier MacLauchlan: The salaries are here, yes.

Chair: Shall the section carry? Carried.

Court and Sheriff Services

Total Court and Sheriff Services: 3,882,300.

The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you.

Again, it's on professional services and this time it's an increase of a fairly substantial amount; 200% over what it was last year.

Premier MacLauchlan: So, this is another of the federal-provincial agreements – this one under the Canadian Victims Bill of Rights and it's an additional \$215,000 in federal funding for a needs assessment of a system that will keep track of things in that area.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: I'm sorry. I didn't quite get that, Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: It's a needs assessment for a court records system –

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Oh, court records. I missed that (Indistinct)

Premier MacLauchlan: – and it provided better support from the federal government.

Chair: Shall the section carry? Carried.

Provincial Court Judges

Total Provincial Court Judges: 982,000.

The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Again, the professional services which were only 4,000 last year are now 104 and I'm wondering again – is this another provincial-federal agreement? I'm seeing a pattern.

Premier MacLauchlan: The Provincial Court Judges will have their national conference in Prince Edward Island in, I believe, it's August. And the 100,000 is sort of fronting them some money, most of which we hope to recover through registration fees.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Okay. Thank you, Premier.

Chair: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton.

Mr. J. Brown: Thank you, Chair.

Minister, I'm just curious – the travel and training for the judges, wondering if you can provide kind of an overview of what's contained in that line item.

Premier MacLauchlan: There are national programs, members would be aware, for judicial professional development. I'm not exactly aware if any of our current provincial court judges are studying French, but they may well be.

Chair: They are (Indistinct)

Premier MacLauchlan: Those would be examples and when people are away for – especially if it's language training for a couple of weeks at a time or a week at a time – it can add up to these kind of numbers.

Mr. J. Brown: Thank you.

George Mason Director: It's completely federally funded.

Premier MacLauchlan: I'm told it's completely federally funded.

Chair: All right. Perfect.

Shall the section carry? Carried.

Total Family and Court Services: 6,749,300.

Shall the total carry? Carried.

Total Justice and Public Safety: 54,725,800.

Shall the total carry? Carried.

Premier MacLauchlan: Thank you, Madame Chair.

Chair: I'm going to get you to read something.

Thank you, George. Thank you, Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: 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.

Thank you.

Premier MacLauchlan: You do the next part.

Chair: Yes.

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.

The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

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

Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. Minister of Communities, Land and Environment, that the 13th order of the day be now read.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk Assistant and Clerk of Committees: Order No. 13, *Building Codes Act*, Bill No.69, ordered for second reading.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

Mr. McIsaac: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of

Communities, Land and Environment, that the said bill be now read a second time.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk Assistant and Clerk of Committees: *Building Codes Act*, Bill No. 69, read a second time.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

Mr. McIsaac: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Communities, Land and Environment, 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.

I will ask the hon. Member from Summerside-Wilmot; would you come and chair the bill?

Chair (Palmer): The House is now in a Committee of the Whole House to take into consideration a bill to be intitled *Building Codes Act*. Is it the pleasure of the committee that the bill be now read clause by clause?

Some Hon. Members: No.

Chair: Overview?

Mr. Trivers: An overview I'd say and then —

An Hon. Member: Generic questions.

Chair: Okay.

Mr. Trivers: — questions about the bill as we go along.

Chair: Okay, sure.

Mr. Mitchell: That's great.

Could I get permission to bring a staff member on the floor?

Mr. Trivers: Yes.

Mr. LaVie: Oh, yes.

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct)

An Hon. Member: It's the brains.

Mr. LaVie: This is where we get the answers.

Mr. Mitchell: She has the answers. She has the answers.

Mr. Trivers: Mind if I just say something (Indistinct)

Chair: Yeah, sure, go ahead.

Mr. Trivers: I just wanted to thank the minister for bringing this bill to the floor. I know this is a bill that multiple governments have worked on, tried to bring for decades, and so thank you very much. I know there's some key players in the gallery today that you had already pointed out. Thank you for your work as well, and all of the hardworking people who are in the construction industry really on Prince Edward Island. This bill is going to mean a lot, I think, to our Island, both in construction as well as on the environmental side, so thank you minister.

Mr. Mitchell: And thank you hon. member for that, and yes, it is indeed great to have Sam and Joshua in the room tonight, certainly part of the stakeholder consultations of this document that lays before the table; and I see Nick MacGregor who is in the room, in the gallery as well, has a vested interest as well.

So it's great to see you here, and to your point, yes, it's been years in the making so it's a very good document and we can begin with any open questions or discussion or whatever you like, however (Indistinct) —

Chair: Before we do that, Minister, could you introduce yourself for the record please?

Glenda MacKinnon-Peters Manager: Certainly. Glenda MacKinnon-Peters, I'm Manager of Inspection Services with Communities, Land and Environment.

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Yes, so the questions that I have kind of go through the document in order. Do you mind if I just start, just name

the section and go there? Is that agreeable to the hon. Leader of the Third Party?

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Yeah, I have questions (Indistinct) as well, so if –

Mr. Trivers: All right.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: I'd like to jump in, if you skip over a section where I have some questions (Indistinct)

Mr. Trivers: Oh, okay, great.

Mr. Mitchell: That'd be fine.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Yeah.

Mr. Trivers: The first question is on section 2, subsection (2). This talks about regulations which will set out any exceptions to the application of the code. Of course, as we've talked about on past bills, whenever we see a clause like this where the (Indistinct) regulations or a specified provision of either of them do not apply – or sorry, I'm not reading it right.

Yeah, so I just wanted to understand that clause and how the regulations or a specified provision of them may not actually apply –

Mr. Mitchell: Sure.

Mr. Trivers: – and why that clause would be in there.

Mr. Mitchell: Great, and the purpose of that particular clause is for those instances of, you know, backyard sheds, residential sheds that did not have to meet the code or a code.

Mr. Trivers: Okay.

Mr. Mitchell: It also would be – like, for a typical bait shed on a wharf, a smaller construction building used to store their gear. As well, it's also a provision for farm buildings. Currently farm buildings, the code that, the national farm building code, it's an antiquated code in its own right, so therefore we're allowing that exemption for farm buildings; and at some point in time down the road, if that code becomes new, we'll look at it then; but for now, farm buildings will be exempted from barns and things of that nature.

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: And will inspectors sort of be given leeway to use their own judgment within the regulations for those – not the farm buildings, but for the other types that – I mean, farm buildings are completely exempt.

Glenda MacKinnon-Peters Manager: (Indistinct)

Mr. Mitchell: Yeah, they will be of minimum size. Anything below that, they don't (Indistinct) –

Mr. Trivers: They won't even look at –

Mr. Mitchell: Yeah. You just –

Mr. Trivers: – just go ahead and do it.

Mr. Mitchell: Yeah.

Mr. Trivers: Okay, thank you.

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: The next one was section 3, and this one talks about a reference to conflicts between the legislation and other acts and regulations. It's a little unclear as to why that would be in there again, but is it referring to the Life Safety Code could take precedence over the regulations of this act? Is that what's going on here?

Mr. Mitchell: Yeah. What it's saying is the act will take precedence over the regulations.

Mr. Trivers: So this act, the national building code act, would take precedence over the regulations and it doesn't involve any other acts.

Mr. Mitchell: This *Building Code Act* does enable the national building code act.

Mr. Trivers: Okay then. I guess the key phrase we're looking at was "another enactment." I wondered if that covered other acts.

Mr. Mitchell: (Indistinct)

Glenda MacKinnon-Peters Manager:
Yeah, this (Indistinct)

Mr. Mitchell: Yeah. If there is others in place, this will supersede. This will be the minimum.

Mr. Trivers: Okay, that answered my question.

Next one was on section 4, subsection (3) here. This appears to allow the province to administer the act on behalf of municipalities, which I think is a really great thing; because of course, there are concerns potentially. If the municipalities would have to administer the act, then they would have to hire the resources to make sure they had the resources to do that.

I guess I just wanted some clarification that that is the case: municipalities, if they want to, can let the province take on that role and not have to incur the expense involved.

Mr. Mitchell: Well, certainly some municipalities as they exist today are relatively small. They don't have the ability, and the province takes care of those today. Large municipalities look after their own and there's a reason why they do, and certainly we would institute the minimum standard for any municipality.

If they choose to strengthen it or add to it, they have the ability and rights to do that; but for the smaller municipalities that exist out across the province, the relationship doesn't need to – it can stay the way it is today. The province will take care of those issues.

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Would it be fair to say that for the smaller municipalities that exist today, you would take on the responsibility of administering the act, but once the new municipalities are in place that will adhere to the new municipalities act, the larger ones, you will expect them to take on that responsibility.

Mr. Mitchell: That would be probably an aspect that they certainly would like to look at themselves, to plan and build their own communities. Existing larger municipalities

do that now, so there'd be every reason to assume other new municipalities that form larger entities would want that to be part of the work that they do.

Mr. Trivers: That clarifies it for me.

Chair: The hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid.

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you, Chair.

I'd like to echo the Member from Rustico-Emerald's comments about the building code. I know your brains there, Glenda – welcome, Glenda – would be a very big proponent of this, and Josh in the gallery here today from the engineering association, too. We've all heard the lobbying for a long time, so it's great to see.

I've got a general question and a specific question, if that's okay minister.

Mr. Mitchell: Sure.

Mr. MacEwen: My general question is: In know we reviewed across the country the building codes and stuff; what have we done in this act to, say, go above and beyond what other jurisdictions have done?

Mr. Mitchell: This act doesn't go above and beyond. What it does do, though, is we're the last jurisdiction in Canada –

Mr. MacEwen: Right.

Mr. Mitchell: – to adopt the National Building Code. The National Building Code is exactly what it says. It's a national building code, sets minimum standards to improve safety structurally, energy efficiency enhancements, things of that nature, but we're not indicating that we're going above and beyond what ever other jurisdiction is. We aren't. We're just – actually, we're catching up to where everybody else is.

Chair: The hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid.

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you, Chair.

Thank you, Minister. Is there anything niche-like where we put a stamp on this, or

is that because we're not even in the game, we're just playing catch-up?

Mr. Mitchell: Yeah, I guess we want to implement the minimum code and then kind of establish things. If there is a unique feature to it, we're suggesting that as we move forward here there will be a two-year allowance for the residential before they're fully covered under this. You know, commercial buildings, because of the safety nature –

Mr. MacEwen: Yeah.

Mr. Mitchell: – you know, that we have to address immediately, that will be moving forward; but there is kind of a two-year transition period for residential, so that may be considered to be a bit unique maybe.

Mr. MacEwen: That's fair. Chair?

Chair: The hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid.

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you, Chair.

Minister, are you okay if I skip to section 9?

Mr. Mitchell: I'm perfectly fine with (Indistinct)

Mr. MacEwen: Oh, you're good?

Mr. LaVie: (Indistinct)

Dr. Bevan-Baker: (Indistinct) come back.

Mr. MacEwen: Is that okay?

Mr. LaVie: He's got brains with him there (Indistinct)

Mr. Mitchell: We're good to go all night.

Mr. MacEwen: Great, minister.

Section 9 deals with the building inspectors. Do we have enough qualified people for building inspectors if this comes in?

Mr. Mitchell: Well, the intention of this – the way the new act would go with those building officials, which you have heard me reference before, there would be intent that that would be kind of a private-sector entity that would take on that role. The building

inspectors that we have are very busy and they will continue to do their parts of it, but some of this will be contractual out between the homeowner or the developer and an outside of government entity that would look after and be trained and versed on all of those things that are covered under the National Building Code to do those inspections and to help those home builders to achieve those goals.

Chair: The hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid.

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you, Chair.

Is there any upgrading that the building inspectors need to do?

Mr. Mitchell: Is there anything that the building inspectors will need to do?

Mr. MacEwen: Upgrading wise, like license wise.

Mr. Mitchell: I expect there probably will. I'll let Glenda address that. I'm sure she's got that on hand.

Glenda MacKinnon-Peters Manager: Currently, the existing building officials in the province – because of their knowledge and the extent of the time that they have been doing their jobs, the act allows them to be grandfathered in. If there was a new building official working within, say, Charlottetown or Summerside, and they haven't gotten the experience required within the act, then they would have to, within five years, be upgraded to that level that's going to be required in the regulations.

The training is a very extensive program and it takes significant amount of time to go through that, so that's why we're having that allowance.

Mr. Mitchell: That tweaked something for me there to reference, I guess. The municipalities, they probably will have their own building officials because they are working on a particular standard so it wouldn't necessarily be a private entity in those – they have them on staff. So, in particular, the larger, I'll say the Summerside, Charlottetown, Stratford, they might look at their own officials (Indistinct)

Mr. MacEwen: Fort Augustus?

Mr. Mitchell: Fort Augustus, maybe, too.

Mr. MacEwen: Municipalities.

Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Glenda. Thank you, minister.

Chair: The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

Mr. LaVie: Thank you, Chair.

Getting back – minister, getting back to exceptions; is there a square footage before these exceptions are put in place?

Mr. Mitchell: That actually has not been defined. That would be something that the detail would set in regulation, but there definitely will be a minimum square footage that will be dealt with, yes.

Mr. LaVie: Will farm buildings fall under that?

Mr. Mitchell: Farm building won't – they got a clean exemption for the time being until the farm building code, itself, is revisited. I think it's 1995 that code was last updated, so it's pretty old and it wouldn't really – it needs to be revisited too, so the square footage of a farm building won't come into play at all at any level.

Chair: The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

Mr. LaVie: Thank you, Chair.

Across the country, are farm buildings exempt?

Mr. Mitchell: That's a good question.

Glenda MacKinnon-Peters Manager: In a number of jurisdictions they are, yeah.

Chair: The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

Mr. LaVie: Thank you, Chair.

What about boat buildings?

Mr. Mitchell: Boat buildings, I guess would be the same exemptions (Indistinct)

Glenda MacKinnon-Peters Manager: (Indistinct)

Mr. Mitchell: They are the same exemption as an agricultural building.

Mr. LaVie: Okay, same exemptions?

Mr. Mitchell: Farming and fishing, similar industries right?

Mr. LaVie: Yeah, you never said farming and fishing. You just said (Indistinct)

Chair: The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

Mr. LaVie: Thank you, Chair.

What about renovations on an older house?

Mr. Mitchell: The renovation portion would have to follow the new code. I'm sure you watched on TV some of those shows that do that and that would be the same. If you watch them, the new parts would have to come up to the new codes. If they were going – depending on the size that it's going back in, it may end up being fully under the new code if they are doing a bigger renovation or if some of the other parts will be the main weight carrier, things like that. New renovations will be privy to following the National Building Code.

Chair: The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

Mr. LaVie: Thank you, Chair.

So just a section of an older house has to be under code?

Mr. Mitchell: Yes. The total part of the new one, but there would be a percentage figure of –

Mr. LaVie: Oh.

Mr. Mitchell: – how much you're going to deal with. That would be in the regulation, but that's no different than any other jurisdiction and it's about structural safety and all of those things to protect the homeowners.

Chair: The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

Mr. LaVie: You're talking like, probably if you renovate 50% of the house, the whole house has got to come up to code?

Mr. Mitchell: If that's the percentage that's decided, but it hasn't been decided yet. Regulations – there would be stakeholder input under that too.

Chair: The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

Mr. LaVie: Thank you, Chair.

Minister, last night they had a meeting for the administrators across Prince Edward Island in Charlottetown here. Did you attend that meeting?

Mr. Mitchell: Last night they had a – repeat what it was.

Mr. LaVie: Last night the building code had a meeting last night for their administrators across Prince Edward Island. Did you attend that meeting?

Mr. Mitchell: No, hon. member. That was actually yesterday day –

Mr. LaVie: Oh, it was yesterday day?

Mr. Mitchell: – I was on the floor of the Legislature.

Mr. LaVie: Okay.

Mr. Mitchell: But staff was there and did a full explanation.

Mr. LaVie: Oh yeah, just wondering if you were there.

Chair: The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

Mr. Mitchell: I was exactly where you were.

Mr. MacEwen: (Indistinct)

Mr. LaVie: Thank you, Chair.

Like the Member from Morell-Mermaid stated earlier, how many building inspectors do we have now on Prince Edward Island?

Glenda MacKinnon-Peters Manager: Well –

Mr. Mitchell: You go ahead.

Glenda MacKinnon-Peters Manager: – Summerside, Charlottetown and Stratford all have building officials. I believe Charlottetown may have three, but Summerside only has one and Stratford has one.

Mr. LaVie: So the province doesn't have any?

Glenda MacKinnon-Peters Manager: We have a chief building standards officer that's going to act as a building official and that position was advertised and interviewed. The position hasn't been filled yet, but we're in that process right now.

Chair: The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

Mr. LaVie: Thank you, Chair.

Mr. Mitchell: Hon. member, inspections weren't in the past done under – with no code in (Indistinct)

Mr. LaVie: Yes.

Chair: The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

Mr. LaVie: So we're going to need more inspectors now, right?

Mr. Mitchell: We're going to need inspections done, yes, and there will have to be a number of certified building officials trained and ready to go to work in Prince Edward Island. Yes.

Chair: The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

Mr. LaVie: Is that in the budget book?

Mr. Mitchell: No. The chief position is, yeah. (Indistinct) overall – as I said to the earlier member, there will be a certain amount of work done from the public sector

and that's where a bulk of these building officers will be employed. It's not a government – they won't be employees of government.

Chair: The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

Mr. LaVie: Minister, how many permits are issued – building permits are issued on PEI per year?

Mr. Mitchell: That's an excellent question and one I don't really have –

Mr. LaVie: I ask pretty good questions.

Mr. Mitchell: – on the tip of my tongue here so I'll have to –

Mr. LaVie: My questions are usually (Indistinct)

Mr. Currie: You're the next leader.

Mr. LaVie: Pardon?

Mr. Currie: You're the next leader (Indistinct)

Mr. Mitchell: Three-fifty, hon. member, is the number you were looking for.

Chair: The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

Mr. LaVie: Thank you, Chair.

Minister, do you predict there will be an increase in building permits when this new code comes in? One more and I'm done.

Mr. Mitchell: Building – construction on Prince Edward Island has been a pretty standard number of the last number of years so I would assume that would be a normal case.

Chair: The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

Mr. LaVie: Last question.

Chair: Yes.

Mr. LaVie: Minister, when will this building code come into effect?

Mr. Mitchell: Well, the building code, like any other piece of legislation, will come into effect when the regulations are completed. If we're fortunate enough to get this through the debate here tonight maybe and then on to third reading, work on the regulations; we'll continue. I expect it will take six, eight months, somewhere in that vicinity, to get regulations done and then that will come into place.

Keeping in mind, though, as I mentioned there is a two-year transition period for residential homes and builders to get up to full speed with the new act and allow that to occur. Also, keep in mind that 40% of the construction that occurs on Prince Edward Island now is already in those municipalities or areas that are covered under their own – under the building code. It's not a big change for a lot of the builders. They build in those municipalities, and they build outside of those municipalities. A lot of them will be up to speed pretty good.

Mr. LaVie: Thank you, Chair.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: That's a hard act to follow.

Mr. Mitchell: It is.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Firstly, I want to start by thanking Glenda and Jim and yourself, minister, for briefing us on this last week, very useful and I'm delighted that this act is coming to the floor. It has been a long time coming. I'm sure Josh and Sam and many other people in the industry are equally pleased. I wanted to start out by saying that.

I have no major concerns. I do have a number of questions just to clarify things.

Chair, I'm going to go back to section 4 again, section 4 subsection (3), which was the agreement with the municipalities. I know you consulted with the FPEIM, but do they – did they have any particular concerns that they brought forward to you in those consultations? Or are they reflected (Indistinct)

Mr. Mitchell: No, actually the municipalities have never brought any particular concerns to me, but maybe out of

that meeting yesterday, there were some things that Glenda can point out that occurred.

Glenda MacKinnon-Peters Manager: No. They're very supportive of this clause. They're comfortable with the fact that inspection services are ready, administrators a lot of their development permits. It will continue to be, in some sense, very seamless because we'll go from the development permit into the building permit process for those smaller municipalities.

The municipalities that are already issuing their own development permits under their own official plan and bylaws. They can opt-in by signing the agreements with the minister for us to administer them. Or they can decide to do it on their own. They just have to make that decision on what they want to do.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: On that particular point, Glenda, if an municipality decides to opt out of that agreement with the minister, with the department, are they allowed to implement a weaker building code than the National –

Mr. Mitchell: This is–

Dr. Bevan-Baker: No, so the absolute minimum –

Mr. Mitchell: – the standard minimum.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Okay.

Mr. Mitchell: If they want to strengthen or go further –

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Sure.

Mr. Mitchell: – they are well able to do that.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Okay, but they cannot build below the building code?

Mr. Mitchell: No.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Okay.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you.

Not all municipalities are members of FPEIM. I'm wondering if you consulted with, especially, the smaller ones, they tend to be the ones that are not members.

Did they have an opportunity to come to you, or did you go to them?

Glenda MacKinnon-Peters Manager: We haven't. A lot of the details are still to be worked out within the regulations. Our plan is to go back to them once we have this through and talk to them about what their options would be and explain that fully.

The process will be in the regulations on how it's going to unfold.

Mr. Mitchell: What you said it true, hon. member. There are some municipalities that don't fall under the federation, but the number is not large, of course, as you know. That opportunity will be given, though to those municipalities.

Bearing in mind, I expect that most of those ones will maintain that relationship with the province.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Okay.

I'm good for that section. I have some more questions on section 5. I don't know if anybody else has –

Mr. Trivers: I've got a quick one for section 4 here.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Yeah.

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Chair.

Section 4, subsection (4) is really talking about forms. Now, it's my understanding that forms can be tricky and that there are some concerns around, potential concerns around them. For example, there are cases right now, for example, in Charlottetown where bylaws require engineers and architects to certify code compliance. When, in fact, they haven't actually participated in the actual constructions enough to make the certifications.

Then, there are other concerns about how professional liability policies available to those professions, like engineers and architects exclude coverage for inspections. Again, that's not contemplated by the certificates.

The concern that was raised to me was that the forms should be really carefully vetted and drafted so that they can be completed and signed by engineers and architects without violating their liability policies and making sure that they participated in the construction enough to really make informed sign-offs.

I just wanted to know: What kind of consultation and input are you looking – are you planning to do there to when developing the forms or maybe, you have already done it, and if you can comment on those concerns at all?

Mr. Mitchell: Okay, I'll take a crack at the best of my ability, and Glenda can step in to my aid whenever I may have gone beyond what I know.

I think what you're asking me, to the best of how I'm breaking in what you're saying is, in the past engineers and architects have played a role in particular of signing-off of documents.

Mr. Trivers: Yes.

Mr. Mitchell: The building officials, when they're fully training them and up to where they should be will have that ability, as well. The engineers and architects will be on the standards council overseeing all that, as well.

It might be a little different. You might have a little different structure of how it is at the end of the day under the new code and the new act. All the entities will be involved. I'll let Glenda go further than that.

Glenda MacKinnon-Peters Manager: Yeah, the forms have been drafted. They were drafted with the Building Standards Council. On that council we have engineers, architects. We have some building officials from Charlottetown and Summerside. We have had feedback and we've looked at the existing forms from Charlottetown and Stratford and Summerside.

The federation of municipalities have taken a lot of those forms to their lawyers. We have been dealing with that whole process.

Currently, within inspection services, we have electricians that have to sign certificates of compliance to say that their work has been done to code. We have plumbers that have to sign certificates of compliance to say.

It'll be the same thing here. The engineers and architects are still going to have to sign those certificates to say that their design has been to code. That's going to continue to play out.

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you.

Do you know if the specific concerns about the professional liability policies excluding coverage for some inspections were looked into? Or cases where the engineers and architects were asked to sign-off even though they didn't participate in the construction?

Do you think those were specifically discussed at that – when the forms were developed?

Glenda MacKinnon-Peters Manager: They're not done.

Mr. Trivers: The draft.

Glenda MacKinnon-Peters Manager: The draft. They're drafts so they still can have comments, but yeah, there is going to be – a professional that designs a building is going to be expected to inspect that building. That is also part of their role. They're going to have to sign-off if they have inspected.

Chair: The hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque.

Mr. MacKay: Thank you, Chair.

Thank you, minister for coming in and giving us a briefing the other day. I certainly support the bill here and it's a long overdue.

One thing I would just like to discuss a bit and if on the offences and penalties. Can you give me a rundown on what that consists of?

Mr. Mitchell: I'll refer those, the penalties to Glenda.

Mr. MacKay: Section 27.1.

Mr. Mitchell: Thank you.

Glenda MacKinnon-Peters Manager:
Thank you.

Mr. Mitchell: The fine structure will be:
(a) to a fine of not less than \$500 and not more than \$10,000; or

(b) to a term of imprisonment of not more than 12 months, or to both a fine and imprisonment."

Is that the section?

Mr. MacKay: Yeah, so the corporation, so that's like a construction company?

Mr. Mitchell: If they were incorporated.

Mr. MacKay: Incorporated, okay.

The individual is just somebody building a home?

Mr. Mitchell: Yes.

Mr. MacKay: Okay.

Chair: The hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque.

Mr. MacKay: Thank you, Chair.

Where did you get those figures from?

Glenda MacKinnon-Peters Manager:
Actually, they're a combination of what is used in Nova Scotia. We also looked at Charlottetown because it already has an existing fee structure. But, basically a lot of that is from Nova Scotia.

Chair: The hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque.

Mr. MacKay: I really don't know maybe it is a good number, \$50,000. But, the way I'm

looking at it right now, if a contractor doesn't follow code he can get a fine of up to \$50,000 yet, we're debating legislation in the House –

Mr. Mitchell: I think, hon. member, it's compliance first.

Mr. MacKay: Right.

Mr. Mitchell: If there is something that is not up to code there would be a request for compliance. There would be time allowances for that. There would be repeat opportunities.

Fining structures are a last-ditch effort. There'll be lots of opportunity for compliance and there is going to be folks that will take some time to figure out on that, so that's not the hammer approach – that's if there's a lot of repeat, repeat, repeat and not coming back to compliance – that's the measure (Indistinct)

Mr. MacKay: Right. Okay. I'm good for now, Chair.

Thank you.

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

Ms. Biggar: Thank you, Chair.

Thank you, Minister for the work that your department's done.

As part of our energy strategy in our consultations, we did go out across Prince Edward Island and at the federal FPT level with energy ministers; this is something that was supported.

I want to acknowledge the contribution that the construction association and engineers of PEI have brought forward in support of this. It's nice to see them here in the House tonight because I know they've lobbied for a lot of years for this.

This, ultimately, will save money on people's homes in the long run through our efficiencyPEI, so tying it all together between energy and environment is good, ultimately, in the end for Islanders. It's great to see this bill finally come to the floor and I support it wholeheartedly.

Mr. Mitchell: Thank you, Minister.

As you know, the energy efficiency portion of the national *Building Codes Act* will have significant impacts on energy usage and the ability of people to reduce their carbon footprints, so thank you for that. I know your department was very supportive of any work that we needed to have done.

Thank you very much.

Chair: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Lewis Point.

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

Minister, I would like to talk about accessibility and this *Building Codes Act*.

We've had some conversations, briefly, about this, and I'm glad to see that the Council of Persons with Disabilities are actually on your building council. But, Charlottetown is a historic city and I know, in this day in age, no public building should be built without it being accessible. I know because we're a heritage city and I know we fall under the *Building Codes Act* now, but can you explain to me, or maybe Glenda can explain: What would happen if an older building that is not accessible now undergoes a renovation? Could you explain to me what accessibility would mean there?

Glenda MacKinnon-Peters Manager: Again, it would come back to the size of the renovation, and if it was significant, then the building would have to be made accessible.

Ms. Casey: Another question; thank you for that.

Another question is from time to time the province builds social housing – housing for people who are vulnerable. I know they designate parts of those buildings, a certain number of units in those buildings, to be designated for those persons with disabilities.

I do know – I'm familiar with one building that we stated that we wanted to make sure that it was set for persons with disabilities. I'm not an architect, but I do know that bathrooms, countertops, cupboards, things like that – to my eye, not being an architect,

are too high because I've been in other homes where sinks are – you can wheel under the sinks and things like that. How do we guarantee going forward? Does this act cover that guarantees that those designated units for persons with disabilities will be guaranteed to meet code?

Glenda MacKinnon-Peters Manager: Well, if the unit is designated to be accessible, it should have all those features in it.

In a lot of municipalities it comes back to what they decide in a bylaw. Some will say an apartment building, if it's 10 units; a certain percentage of that building has to have an accessible unit or two, whatever they decide their number is. It's not going to be spelled out in our act and regulations how many of those units would have to be accessible, but if it is being designed to be an accessible building for people with disabilities, then it will be inspected to that code.

Ms. Casey: Great. That's what I was getting at, that we want to make sure that the codes are met for those units that are designated for persons of disability.

What would happen if a building was being built and we realized that the code wasn't met or the sinks weren't of the standard? I know because the Council of Persons of Disabilities are on your standards council, they would know what the standards are or our architects would know what the standards are. How can we guarantee that they –

Mr. Mitchell: That would be identified under the inspection and asked to come into compliance, as I mentioned earlier.

Ms. Casey: Excellent.

Mr. Mitchell: That would be addressed with the builder or in that case the builder; it could be the owner of the building, as well. That would be asked to come into compliance based on what the act says.

Ms. Casey: So no building should be –

Chair: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Lewis Point.

Ms. Casey: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Most buildings built now should be accessible.

Mr. Mitchell: Absolutely.

Ms. Casey: Thank you.

I appreciate it.

Ms. Biggar: Carry the bill.

Chair: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton.

Mr. J. Brown: Thank you very much, Chair.

Minister, I was contacted by an architect who is a constituent of mine – actually, just this afternoon – and I apologize, I'm having trouble with my device here, but it sent me a letter and I can't open it.

The gist of it was – or as best I can remember it – that he felt that architects would generally have – and I think this is probably along the line of the question from the hon. Members from Rustico-Emerald and Member from Charlottetown-Lewis Point, but basically he felt that architects overall would have less oversight ability and less involvement in the building process as a result of these amendments or this change to follow the National Building Code, which he felt would be an issue in two ways. One: it might not actually lead to an increase, generally, in quality – the way I understood it and I could be misquoting him or misinterpreting and less business going to the architectural firms. I'm just wondering if you can address your thoughts on that.

Mr. Mitchell: Well, the way work is being done now, the architects are involved in various aspects, especially in commercial buildings and that. Having said that, new commercial buildings out in the rest of Prince Edward Island are meeting any particular code; they will be picking up the portion of that work. I see it as an increase probably in work that would be done by architects outside of areas that they're already going in.

As you move forward, some of the square footage dimensions of when an architectural

piece is in there is yet to be determined, so it's really hard to say at this point in time if the comments that you just made are, indeed, true or not at this point. But the way I see it – overall – there's going to be a significant amount of new work in areas that were not addressed before. The square footage amount where architects will be involved is yet to be determined – it'll come out through the regulation piece as well.

Chair: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton.

Mr. J. Brown: Thank you, Chair.

Has there been any consultation with them? Is that the first time you've heard that comment from an architect?

Mr. Mitchell: No. As with the two gentlemen right here – the architects have been a full piece of the work and that comment has been heard before, but this is early stage and it's all about structural safety, about energy efficiency and the architects will have a significant amount of work to do with PEI for a lot of years the way I see it. The process has to work its way through. I think it's fair to say that that's not the first time that that's probably been heard. It's not the first time that I've seen it in an email as well. As things move out and progress, I think they'll understand that there's probably a considerable amount of work (Indistinct)

Mr. J. Brown: Thank you, minister.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you, Chair.

I'd like to go to section 5, if that's all right. Section 5 – I like the transparency of this – the fact that a lot of this information is being made public. I thank you for that.

Section 5, subsection (2)(c) says: It allows the minister to access other documents. I'm just wondering what sort of documents you imagine you might want to publish.

Mr. Mitchell: Section 5?

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Section 5, subsection (2)(c): Any other information or documents considered appropriate by the minister.

I'm just wondering what you had in mind there.

Glenda MacKinnon-Peters Manager: (Indistinct)

Mr. Mitchell: Yeah. As told to me, it's one of those clauses that are recommended for options that you're – or yet to be determined.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: (Indistinct)

Mr. Mitchell: Yeah.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Okay.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thanks.

Subsection 4 of the same section 5, subsection 4: Gives the minister the option to make the registry online.

I'm just wondering why you didn't – why that's a 'may' and not a 'shall', I mean why would you not put it up online?

Mr. Mitchell: Basically, as it exists today development permits are currently online. This is just an addition to that. Hon. member it probably could have have said 'shall.' Typically, when you write things like this, some say 'may' I guess, but there is no good reason why it wasn't 'shall.'

What is there is already there. This would be just a continuation of that.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: I'd like to go onto section 6, I'm sorry, unless anybody has – no?

Section 6 subsection 3, this is where the Cabinet selects a chair. I'm just wondering why the council itself does not select the chair? There is, I think, the appeal board selects its own chair, so I'm just wondering why the Building Standards Council wouldn't be that same thing.

Mr. Mitchell: As was referenced hon. member, this isn't – we didn't reinvent the whole thing. This is how other jurisdictions

would do it. It's just the way structurally it would be.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: I don't think it's a big deal, I just wondered why –

Mr. Roach: Call the hour.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: – in one case the council –

Mr. LaVie: Extend the hour.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: – chose (Indistinct)

Chair: Can we get unanimous consent to extend the hour?

Some Hon. Members: Yes.

Ms. Biggar: Sure.

Chair: Okay, thank you.

The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you.

Section 6 subsection 8: Who do you envision would be the representatives from CLE and TIE? Did you have any particular –

Mr. Mitchell: I think –

Dr. Bevan-Baker: – positions in mind –

Mr. Mitchell: – (Indistinct) probably –

Dr. Bevan-Baker: – for that?

Mr. Mitchell: – be one.

Glenda MacKinnon-Peters Manager: Currently, on the old building standards council there is an architect from TIE that has sat on this committee and I have filled the role the last little while.

Our chief building standards officer, when that position –

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Right –

Glenda MacKinnon-Peters Manager: – is filled.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: – makes sense.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: I'm good to go onto section 7 now, unless anybody has stuff on 6?

Section 7 subsection 2, this just says that: The council's report will be presented to the minister.

I wondered why that shouldn't be made public as well. I think the public would like to know what's going on and what the developments are and, particularly builders, I would imagine would be interested to know what's going on.

Mr. Mitchell: It's a good comment and we will probably be putting it up online.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: That would be great.

Mr. Mitchell: Yeah.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you.

Ms. Biggar: Carry the bill.

An Hon. Member: Carry the bill.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Oh, no, not yet.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you.

I'm going onto section 10 now.

Mr. Trivers: Yeah, I'm good until section 31.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Okay.

You know what? Forget section 10.

Section 13. The phrase is: Any reasonable time. I'm just wondering what you're definition of any reasonable time is.

Mr. Mitchell: I'm sorry, hon. member –

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Section 13, subsection 1.

Glenda MacKinnon-Peters Manager: Because there are other pieces of legislation, like in the tenant's act, we have to make sure that we're not, I guess, overstepping our bounds there.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Yeah.

Glenda MacKinnon-Peters Manager: We have to make sure there is a reasonable amount of time given so it may be like a 24-hour notice or something like that for us to get in and inspect.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: I figured that; people with unusual working hours or either way or something like that. That's fine.

Section 15. How do you define 'safe'?

I mean, I found that a sort of strange thing. I mean safety is an absolute. There is a sliding scale of safety. I'm wondering because someone has to determine when it's safe.

Glenda MacKinnon-Peters Manager: That will come back to what the code requirements are.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Okay.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Section 15 subsection (a). This is about using a not completely, but partially-finished home and living inside it.

For example, some builders might finish the home to drywall and then pass it on to the homeowners at that time. Would they be allowed to live in the house?

Mr. Mitchell: No.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: At that level of completion?

Mr. Mitchell: No, they will have to get an occupancy permit that says the house is suitable, safe, met all codes and permitting and good to be lived in.

That occurs now in municipalities. I had to get on for when I moved into my house 20 years ago.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Does finished mean finished? Like, trim on, last lick of paint? Is it done, done? Is that what you're saying?

Glenda MacKinnon-Peters Manager:

There are some jurisdictions, and this can be further explained in the regulations when we do this piece, but some jurisdictions let there be allowances.

Perhaps, you could move in if your window sills or something weren't on, but you have to have your smoke detectors, your carbon monoxide detectors; any kind of life-safety features would have to be in the home. That's the big piece. The paint wouldn't have to be on the walls.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: There are a lot of people who would probably like to finish the cosmetic part of the house, nothing to do with safety whatsoever, and the house if perfectly livable and it's sealed and all the rest of it.

Would it be possible for them to finish that work by themselves and get permit? I guess that's what I'm getting at?

Mr. Mitchell: You know what? That could be looked at through the regulation process. That's where that will be determined.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Okay, I hope there's a bit of latitude in there.

Mr. Mitchell: If it's reasonable and makes sense, I'm sure that will not be an issue or a problem. I'll do a little investigating on what others do and what the allowances are.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Okay.

I'm good to pass it onto Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Chair.

Speaking to section 31 here, it really goes through and provides indemnity to a wide variety of parties. No action lies for them damages or otherwise. We have the government, the minister of building officials, licensed building inspectors, chief building officials and it goes on. Really, the concern that was raised to me that I'm bringing up now is, who does have accountability in the end. It seems like

almost everybody is being absolved from accountability.

Mr. Mitchell: It would be the developer, the contractor, whoever applies for the permit and inspection pieces.

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: In the end it's the person who applied for the permit that is the one that is accountable.

All of the different parties that have to do with the inspections. They do their best to enforce the act, but in the end they're not accountable for it, the building?

Mr. Mitchell: Yeah.

Mr. Trivers: Which is a reasonable explanation.

Thank you.

One final question.

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: As with some of the other acts, the regulations are very important, extremely important.

I just wanted to know if you have a timeline on when they'd be ready, and are there currently any drafts?

Mr. Mitchell: The regulation piece?

Mr. Trivers: Yeah.

Mr. Mitchell: As I said earlier, I would expect that would be six to eight months, it would be completed. There is some work that has been ongoing. We'll follow that up and continue on and receive other input to see how that should look. I'm assuming eight months, probably, would get us there.

Mr. Trivers: Okay.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you.

I'm going to section 32.

I know that the plan is to have the National Building Code enforced for the spring, I believe, of next year for commercial buildings and then 2020, am I correct? For residential?

I'm wondering if you have the same timeline in place to adopt the National Energy Code. Are they going to go hand-in-hand?

Glenda MacKinnon-Peters Manager: They will go hand-in-hand.

Right now the National Energy Code, it's mostly for commercial buildings. The energy piece for residential is within the National Building Code; it's a section of the National Building Code.

This act will allow us to adopt the National Energy Code for buildings, as well as the National Building Code.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Chair?

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: I'm wondering if you ever gave, and I can't remember if we talked about this when you were in our office or not, but going above and beyond what we have. Germany, for example, has mandated that by 2050 that all of their buildings will be carbon-neutral. I know that the Standing Committee on Infrastructure and Energy has recommended transitioning, on PEI, to 100% renewables by 2050.

So do you have, like, a longer term? I know we're just up to the implementation of this act, but beyond that, it would be kind of nice. Those two things to me would dovetail very nicely.

Glenda MacKinnon-Peters Manager: They do. I sit on a PT committee with other people, other jurisdictions that have building code. Part of our committee work is with the National Research Council, who's the code developers, and they're looking at doing a stretch energy code.

Basically, what that is going to mean is that instead of having the typical five-year cycle where a code is renewed – like right now we

have the 2015 code and the new code isn't expected until 2020.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Yeah.

Glenda MacKinnon-Peters Manager: So what they're looking at is in turn amendments to that code, so that they can get to a net zero home faster. Because if we stay with the five year cycle, it's going to take a much longer time to get there. So we'll be following what the National Research Council does in their code adoption and amendments.

Mr. Mitchell: I think it'd be fair to say that there will always be a continual look at when enhancement or improvements can occur, hon. member. I think that'd be fair to say. You know –

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Yeah.

Mr. Mitchell: – we keep a very close eye on it.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: My final question, Chair, and it's to do with section 32, subsection (2). You've said that you're going to apply the building code to the whole province, but this section says it "may provide that it applies to the entire province or to any part of it." So I'm wondering why that's in there if this applies to the whole province. Why would you want to exempt part of the province? Or am I misreading that, misinterpreting it?

Mr. Mitchell: Yes.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: It's late.

Mr. Mitchell: Basically, it does encompass the whole of the Island –

Dr. Bevan-Baker: I just don't understand why –

Mr. Mitchell: If there's, well if there's a municipality –

Dr. Bevan-Baker: – "any part of it," why's that in there?

Mr. Mitchell: I guess it kind of allows if a municipality wants them to be stronger, they're going above and beyond it? That

would allow, I guess, for that, but it is a province-wide coverage here.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Yeah, okay.

Thank you.

Chair: Minister of Finance.

Mr. Roach: Question. Carry the bill.

An Hon. Member: Carry the bill.

Ms. Biggar: Carry the bill.

An Hon. Member: Carry the bill.

Chair: The hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid.

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you, Chair.

Minister, I had a contractor ask me about the fine. I know the Member from Kensington-Malpeque had asked you about the offences and penalties. "An individual who contravenes a provision of this Act..." is that an individual that would be building?

Mr. Mitchell: An individual that is not an incorporated entity.

Mr. MacEwen: Right, so like a carpenter that's –

Mr. Mitchell: Could be a –

Mr. MacEwen: – on his or her own. Okay.

Mr. Mitchell: – a carpenter that's runs his own business but he's not incorporated. Could the homeowner if he's going to do his own –

Mr. MacEwen: Okay, yeah, so you're building on your own or something.

Mr. Mitchell: Yeah.

Chair: The hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid.

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you, Chair.

That person is subject to a fine between \$500 and \$10,000 or "a term of imprisonment" for "not more than 12 months." Is that correct?

Mr. Mitchell: I believe that's how it's worded, yes.

Mr. MacEwen: So why are we – we've had debate on other bills about fines and the archives act and not more than \$10,000 in government that potentially might cost government a lot of money. Why is there a provision here to put someone in jail if they contravene this act?

Mr. Mitchell: It's about public safety. It's about – after that developer leaves the job site; it has to be a significant reason for them to maintain a good structure.

Mr. MacEwen: Okay.

Mr. Mitchell: As I said earlier, that's the last chain of defense. There are all kinds of compliance measures that will come prior to that to ensure that if there's something not being fully completed or done to the letter of the law, there'll be lots of opportunity. Certainly a fine or a jail sentence would be the very last option.

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct)

Mr. Mitchell: I don't expect that that will probably be used. I don't know if any of those are ever used or not.

Mr. LaVie: Come on, you don't have to put them in jail.

Chair: The hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid.

Mr. Mitchell: That's right, we don't have to put them in jail.

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you, Chair.

Mr. Roach: (Indistinct) Ontario.

Mr. MacEwen: And yes, it might be –

Mr. LaVie: We're not Ontario.

Mr. MacEwen: – a last –

Mr. Mitchell: Oh yes, that's right, there was an instance, as I did through the – there was an –

Mr. LaVie: We're not Ontario.

Mr. Mitchell: – instance where there was a jail –

Mr. LaVie: We're not Ontario.

Mr. Mitchell: – sentence.

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you, Chair, and Minister.

Mr. Roach: (Indistinct)

Mr. MacEwen: Yes, I realize that absolutely punishment by jail would probably be a very last resource, and I guess when I walk into somebody's home I want to know that I'm somewhat safe by the building code, I'm perplexed why it's in this act and not other acts that we're debating. So is this, would that be the – previously you said this was similar to Nova Scotia we based this off, right?

Glenda MacKinnon-Peters Manager: It is, yes.

Mr. MacEwen: Is that pretty similar right across the country?

Glenda MacKinnon-Peters Manager: (Indistinct)

Mr. MacEwen: No, I'm not –

Glenda MacKinnon-Peters Manager: – yeah, it is, but –

Mr. MacEwen: Minister? Minister. You saying I'm trying to tie it to the *Archives and Records Act*?

Ms. Biggar: Yes.

Mr. MacEwen: That's exactly what I'm trying to do, thank you.

Ms. Biggar: I know. (Indistinct)

Chair: The hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid.

Ms. Biggar: Figured that out.

Mr. MacEwen: Sorry.

Mr. R. Brown: (Indistinct) smart.

Mr. Mitchell: Hon. member, this only applies to this act in particular.

Mr. MacEwen: No, I asked about across the country. So we base this off of Nova Scotia? Is it similar across other provinces?

Glenda MacKinnon-Peters Manager: It is, yeah.

Mr. MacEwen: Is it – so when I say similar, is it between 500 and 10,000 and 12 months jail for individuals and up to \$50,000 for corporations?

Glenda MacKinnon-Peters Manager: In some jurisdictions it's higher.

Mr. MacEwen: Yeah? Like –

Mr. Mitchell: If you would like a total breakdown of every jurisdiction, we'd be willing – certainly be happy (Indistinct) –

Mr. MacEwen: I would much appreciate that.

Thank you, Minister. Thank you, Glenda.

Chair: Shall the bill carry? Carried.

Mr. Mitchell: I move the title.

Chair: *Building Codes Act.*

Shall it carry? Carried.

Mr. Mitchell: I move the enacting clause.

Chair: Be it enacted by the Lieutenant Governor and the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Prince Edward Island as follows.

Shall it carry? Carried.

Mr. Mitchell: Before I read the final part of the bill, want to let everybody know on the floor of the Legislature that I really appreciate the full support that this bill was granted. It has been a number of years in the making and industry is in the gallery tonight. I think they're very pleased that we've had full cooperation on the floor of the House.

Thank you very much, everybody.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mitchell: Mr. Chair, I move the Speaker take the chair and the Chair report the bill agreed to without amendment.

Chair: Shall it carry? Carried.

Mr. Speaker, as Chair of a Committee of the Whole House, having had under consideration a bill to be intituled *Building Codes Act*, I beg leave to report that the committee has gone through the said bill and has agreed to same without amendment. I move that the report of the committee be adopted.

Matters of Privilege and Recognition of
Guest (IV)

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Before I call for the question, I just wanted to – we have a young lady in the visitor's gallery: Abby Miller. She is a sister of our Page, Paige Miller. Today is her 14th birthday.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Roach: Happy birthday.

Mr. R. Brown: You'll be able to vote soon.

An Hon. Member: Not soon enough.

Mr. Roach: Not for you.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

Mr. McIsaac: I move, seconded by the hon. Member from West Royalty-Springvale, that this House adjourn until tomorrow, April 28th, at 10:00 a.m.

Speaker: Shall it carry?

Carried.

Have a good evening.

The Legislature adjourned until tomorrow, Friday, at 10:00 a.m.