

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY



Speaker: Hon. Francis (Buck) Watts

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MATTERS OF PRIVILEGE AND RECOGNITION OF GUESTS	3434
STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS	3440
TIGNISH-PALMER ROAD (Stanislaus Francis Perry)	3440
CHARLOTTETOWN-LEWIS POINT (She Leads)	3441
LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION (National Day of Mourning)	3442
ORAL QUESTIONS	3442
LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION (Release of Email Accounts Publicly)	3442
LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION (Releasing of Deletion Orders)	3443
LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION (Release of Email Accounts Publicly-further)	3443
LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION (Priority of Liberal Government)	3444
KENSINGTON-MALPEQUE (Proxy Request of Account)	3445
KENSINGTON-MALPEQUE (List of Email Account Removals)	3446
KENSINGTON-MALPEQUE (Referral From Finance Dept. to RCMP)	3446
KENSINGTON-MALPEQUE (Date of Contact from RCMP)	3447
KENSINGTON-MALPEQUE (Direct Contact re: Finance Minister and RCMP)	3447
KENSINGTON-MALPEQUE (RCMP National Anti-corruption Unit)	3448
KENSINGTON-MALPEQUE (Finance Minister's Emails on E-gaming)	3449
LEADER OF THE THIRD PARTY (French Language Services Act)	3450
LEADER OF THE THIRD PARTY (Complaints Officer for French Language Services)	3450
WEST ROYALTY-SPRINGVALE (Programs for Seniors Accepting Applications)	3451
WEST ROYALTY-SPRINGVALE (Programs for Seniors)	3452
SUMMERSIDE-WILMOT (Vacant Summerset Manor)	3452
RUSTICO-EMERALD (Universal Basic Income Pilot Project)	3453
RUSTICO-EMERALD (Ontario Basic Income Pilot Program and PEI)	3455
RUSTICO-EMERALD (Tabling of Mill River Contract-further)	3456
STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS	3457
PREMIER (Iceboat Ferry Service Anniversary)	3457
WORKFORCE AND ADVANCED LEARNING (National Day of Mourning)	3457
AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES (Setting Day 2017 Spring Lobster Season)	3460

HEALTH AND WELLNESS (Supporting Aboriginal Athletes)	3461
ORDERS OF THE DAY (GOVERNMENT)	3462
ESTIMATES	3462
TRANSPORTATION, INFRASTRUCTURE AND ENERGY	3462
TABLING OF DOCUMENTS.....	3470
ADJOURNED.....	3487

The Legislature sat at 10:00 a.m.

Matters of Privilege and Recognition of
Guests

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Good morning everyone and welcome to the end of our fourth week of this sitting, and to a stretch of weather that is changing this province almost, I think, you could run a video and see how it's turning green.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: It sure is.

Ms. Biggar: (Indistinct)

Premier MacLauchlan: Yeah. I set you up for that. I knew you would. I knew you'd go.

An Hon. Member: Touché.

Premier MacLauchlan: Welcome, of course, to our visitors in the gallery and those watching on television and online. A special welcome to MP Lisa Raitt, and Darrell Foley who is with her. I know she'll be welcomed more fully; fellow Maritimer and expressed an interest in how things would go in QP here relative to federal parliament. I think that recognition of guests, especially on a Friday, as particular institution that we should be proud of.

Krista Murphy and her son Matthew are here from Searletown, and there will be more said about the work that Matthew and others are doing around the history of the iceboats.

I see Sandy MacKay, I'll mention that, and Wayne MacMillan; great supports of the political process in this province, and, of course, many others here and at home.

A special greeting, of course, to those in my district. There is a lot of going on in our district tomorrow with setting day on the north side, and looking forward to getting out. I don't have any particular say in where they put the traps, but it's always an education.

The firefighters of the North Shore Fire Department will have their annual awards

banquet tomorrow night. I'll be glad to take part in that and recognize the great work of Fire Chief Jason Blackman and the team of the North Shore department.

Another great event tomorrow will be the semi-annual get together of the Association of Health Care Auxiliaries for the province. All of the auxiliaries now have an organization. The president is, indeed, a friend, and a constituent, Dorothy Johnston, who has been involved for many years.

As we come to the end of National Volunteer Week, this is a great way to put some scope or scale to the extent of volunteerism in this province. The people who work and who make up those auxiliaries of the hospital facilities in our province, in 2016, contributed 19,000 volunteer hours to our province. That's a very big number when you start thinking of everybody that works together and contributes, many of them, over decades for that cause.

It would be in order, of course, to recognize that this weekend will be the beginning of Reading Town Prince Edward Island week. That has become, in short order, a very big occasion. One when we can celebrate, and patronize our bookstores and our writers and all who are involved in ensuring that we have great things to read.

Two other events; one, this is the Day of Mourning for those who have lost their lives in the course of their work. It's a very meaningful day. More will be said about that. It's a very touching opportunity to come together and recognize, and recognize together with the families who are left what is it to do everything we can in the name of workplace safety.

Finally, on Sunday I will be the closing of the exhibit at the Confederation Centre that recognizes the work that was started with the Ark in the mid-1970s. That exhibit, Living lightly on the earth – the closing will be accompanied by a symposium and a way of remembering and recognizing as we have the advantages of a province that is committed to renewable energy and to environmental stewardship that this started now, a good four decades ago and indeed, earlier than that.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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

Welcome everybody on this Friday.
Welcome everybody in the gallery.

I'm honoured to recognize in the gallery today a very special woman: Sue Turner. Sue has been a loyal and trusted employee of the Legislative Assembly for 32 years.

She first came to government in July of 1985 and her former Progressive Conservative premier, Jim Lee, and to serve our MLA in government and opposition since then. Today, like Boomer and Bruce, Sue is retiring. I'm actually sad over that. We wish her all the best and we will miss her greatly. I know Sue's been a great help to me over the last year and a half – she keeps my schedule straight – and it's much appreciated.

I'd also like to recognize in the gallery another special woman. Lisa Raitt – Member of Parliament for Milton, Ontario and former minister of natural resources, minister of labour, minister of transport is honouring us with a visit today, also. Lisa currently serves as the finance critic for the official opposition and she is a candidate for the leadership of the federal Conservative Party. Lisa was born and raised, as the Premier said, in Cape Breton, so I feel that she has a lot in common with her Island friends here in PEI. She is married to Bruce Wood and the mother of two boys.

Lisa, it's great to see you here today and I hope you enjoy our beautiful province which is also starting to warm up after rather very dreary winter. You must have brought the warmth with you.

I'd also like to say hello to the gentleman standing in front of – beside him – or sitting beside him: Darrell Foley – he's actually from my hometown. Good to see you, Darrell.

I'd also like to say hello to John MacLean and his daughter – a constituent of mine: Krista Murphy and her son Matthew and also, they'll be doing something with the iceboats. Today, also, is the start of the ice boat celebrations in Cape Traverse and they'll start this afternoon and run up into the late night tonight and I'll be back and forth between them.

Also, the Premier touched on it about auxiliaries and this weekend, actually, is the start of the Canadian Coastguard Auxiliary training session starting in Summerside, which I'm a member of and also the member from Souris-Elmira is. So, I wish all of them getting back on the train; ready for the boaters will be a success.

I'd also like to wish success to two of my members from Morell-Mermaid and Souris-Elmira on them preparing to get the boats in the water and loaded up right for tomorrow, opening day.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

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

I'd like to welcome everybody to the gallery and I, too, would like to make special mention of Lisa Raitt, who is with us today – a good friend of my dear friend, Elizabeth May. Welcome to the cozy confines of the PEI Legislature.

I'd also like to recognize Peter Meggs and Darragh Mogan who are here for their regular Friday morning outing to the Legislature and also, John MacLean and his daughter.

Thank you so much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Biggar: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Good morning to everyone. Welcome, everyone that's watching at home and for those of you in the gallery. It's also especially nice to see a lot of young people in the gallery today. As minister of status of women, I, certainly, would also like to welcome MP Lisa Raitt as a fellow woman parliamentarian. It's always great to have more women together, working together. I wanted to mention that as well.

Also, there's a travel advisory out. You probably heard it on the radio. The Cornwall Trans Canada Highway extension project will be starting on May 1st – the phase 2A. It's great to see one of our Cornwall councillors with us – Mr. Meggs in the audience today. For those of you who want to know the details – the advisory is out there – it's posted online. We will have a little bit of inconvenience to the travelling public, but we expect that project to finish up around the end of July.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's great to be back in the House again today; welcome everyone in the gallery. Lisa Raitt, it's great to have you here. I'm also the finance critic so I feel your pain.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Ms. Biggar: (Indistinct) on this side.

Ms. Compton: I know you're also a strong advocate of the ferry, as I am as well, and I push the government daily about the ferry. I look forward to the Gail Shea roast this evening. I know you'll be there, I will as well. Also, everyone else joining in the gallery – Dennis Halliday, who is the president for our district.

Also, a very exciting day in District 4. The fishermen are out. I met a couple at Cooper's today. They're getting ready loading the boats today and I know they're looking forward to a great season.

Lastly, but not least – Sue Turner, welcome to the gallery. Congratulations on your retirement. She's a girl from Wood Islands, so I've known her my whole life and she spent the last 32 years trying to keep Tories in line, so she's had a big job.

An Hon. Member: She sure has.

Ms. Compton: Anyway, enjoy your retirement, Sue, and I hope everyone has a great weekend.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Casey: Good morning, Mr. Speaker.

I, too, would like to welcome all of those visiting the gallery. It's especially nice to see the students who have joined us today.

Like everyone else I, too, would like to welcome fellow Cape Bretoner, fellow Xaverian: MP Lisa Raitt. It's always great to see Cape Breton women leading the way. And to those watching from Charlottetown-Lewis Point, I wish them a great weekend.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Perry: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's an honour to rise today and welcome everyone to the gallery. Lisa Raitt, MP, welcome to our Legislature. Sue Turner, congratulations on 32 years of dedicated work. I know her work – I'm familiar with it – she's a hard-working and devoted lady and I wish you all the best on your retirement. Joanne, probably one of the best bread makers I know; Iris and Ernie, from the west, welcome here today; and to everyone else in the gallery and also to those who are watching at home, especially those in District 27 Tignish-Palmer Road.

It's busy in the harbours, especially the Tignish harbour and the Seacow pond. The

crab fishermen are out, the lobster fishermen are loading their boats today, and setting day is tomorrow. The hon. Minister of Family and Human Services is going to truck up to Tignish tomorrow and meet me on the wharf to wish them all a safe journey out to sea. I do wish all our fishermen a very safe and prosperous year.

I also have to mention a very special happy birthday – tomorrow the 29th – to my aunt, Rachel Miller. Rachel will be 95 years young. Rachel is officially known to our family as Nanny Ray. She's always been there for us and she's probably one of the most beautiful ladies, inside and out. I wish her the very best for many more happy birthdays to come.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

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

I'd like to welcome everyone to the gallery. Lisa Raitt – that's the second federal MP we've had in the House this week, which is great, and Sandy MacKay and so many others. Sandy is big involved with our organic industry so I have to point him out for sure.

Two people I really want to point out: Leo and Wade Czank, from out in my riding. Leo's off from school today so he thought he'd come in here and learn what he can here. Hopefully he will learn something.

The cropping season – it's been mentioned – there'll be a lot of green, but there's going to be a lot of red, too. We have to get the soil worked up and it's happening right now and the Island is turning red. But, it's the beautiful colours over the run of the summer that actually make the Island so beautiful – that and the fishing boats out in the water and things. Agriculture and fishery actually drives our tourism, so we take credit for all of those.

This weekend, also, is the end of Burger Love, so your last chance to get a good burger or three or four or 84 – there are 84 options. And the first of the week, we're going to start Love our Lobster, which

everyone will be partaking in again, for sure, I know.

A big shout-out to all my District 5 members, whether they're here or whether they're watching on TV. So, have a great weekend and get another burger and then get ready for another lobster.

I want to wish safe travels out on the water for the hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid who will be setting tomorrow, as well as Souris Elmira, and I don't know, Mr. Speaker, if you're helping the young fellows set or not, but safety to all those on the water.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Dumville: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'd like to welcome everybody here today, and especially Lisa. It's good to have a good Cape Bretoner looking after those people in Ottawa. We've got Iris here from O'Leary and she's helping them out upstairs, so it's good to see Iris. I'd also like to say hello to everybody out in West Royalty-Springvale and, especially, Elsie Barrett who's 95 years young today. I hope she's having a wonderful day.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Murphy: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's a pleasure to rise and welcome all the folks in the public gallery. It's good to see some students here today, as well.

I'd also like to welcome Ms. Raitt and one of my good constituents and great supporters, Mr. Ernie Hudson, good to see him here today.

I'd also like to say hello to my daughter Lila and son Drew and wife Karen, who are home watching on the TV, and to all other

people in Alberton-Roseville, as well right across the Province of Prince Edward Island.

I'd like to also take this moment to wish all the fishermen in the province a safe and successful year as they are out on the water tomorrow.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Good morning, Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise today and to welcome everyone watching from District 18 Rustico-Emerald and to say, hello, especially to the fishermen, who are, of course, loading their boats and getting ready for setting day.

I, too, want to wish the Member from Morell-Mermaid and Member from Souris-Elmira best of luck as they head out on the water, as well as all the fishermen.

I wanted to welcome everyone to the gallery here today. It's really a packed gallery. I wanted to echo what the other hon. members have said: It's great to see so many kids in the gallery. I want to recognize one of our Pages, who just can't stay away on her day off, Lindsay Sanderson is back in here.

I mean, I noticed over here, as well, there is Dennis Halliday. It's good to see you, as well. Then, of course, we do – Peter Meggs, and so Ernie Hudson, Iris Phillips, and Joanne Callaghan. It's good to see you here.

Of course, Sue Turner, who as everyone has mentioned, is retiring today after 32 years. She happens to be my constituent. This is great because I think she has always been a favourite, but she's definitely now my favourite constituent, and congratulations.

Sandy MacKay, apologies for that. Sandy's my constituent, as well.

Mr. Myers: Second favourite.

Mr. Trivers: Second favourite perhaps.

I wanted to mention Sandy because he is definitely heavily involved in the political process and in the agriculture and a great

proponent of community-supported agriculture. He runs a CSA, so if anyone is still looking to get signed up for a CSA, Sandy would be a good one to do it.

I wanted to recognize John MacLean, and recognize that today, as the Premier has said, and others, is the National Day of Mourning. John, he is a great proponent for Workers Compensation and of course, that directly ties into the Day of Mourning where workers are killed on the job. John has brought up a number of issues. I look forward to discussing Workers Compensation at standing committee. Thank you, John, for that.

Last, and not least, I did want to recognize, as well, Lisa Raitt and Darrell Foley. Lisa, of course, is the MP for Milton. It's great to have you here. Not only an MP, but a federal Conservative leadership candidate, and potentially, the next prime minister of Canada right there in the corner. I wanted to recognize you and thank you for being here today.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I don't feel like there is anybody left to introduce in the gallery here today, but I'll give it a go.

I, too, want to welcome Lisa Raitt here, who is a federal Conservative candidate. It's great to see you here. I know you have your job cut out for you in Ottawa these days. I feel your pain, like the member next to me here; holding Liberals in line is a tough job and –

Mr. R. Brown: Oh.

Mr. Myers: – as former MLA Mike Currie once said: Liberal times are tough times.

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct)

Mr. Myers: No, and he wasn't wrong.

It's great to see some of the staff from the third floor here today and I welcome them all here. Of course this is, as many hon. members have said, this is Sue's last day. I want to congratulate Sue on all her years, and hope for the best in her retirement. Sue, as well, to me has been very good. She has looked after me quite well. She has her finger on the pulse. She knows what's going on. She manages to keep an office full of politicians moving in the right direction. Sue, also, I know a couple of years ago, the party put out of the history of the PC Party. Sue was probably quite capable of writing the real history of the PC Party from her experiences, I would say.

I'd like to welcome John MacLean and his daughter here, as well. I see in behind me here, all the way from Newport, Peter Campbell. He's here with Wade and Leo that the minister of agriculture talked about. Peter would be a constituent of mine, down in the Launching Loop. I know he is actively involved in politics. I don't believe he's a Tory yet. Anyway, I won't hold that against him. I've known Peter for a number of years and he has been a great friend to my family over the years.

Also, I'd like to welcome Dennis Halliday who is a semi-regular here. Dennis' son, Andrew, works in our office. He is one of the few staff members that didn't come down to watch the proceedings today. I assume he's upstairs working really hard on the next topic for the Tory party here.

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 that are watching back home in the great riding of O'Leary-Inverness.

Certainly, I want to acknowledge a few Aboriginal athletes that are in the gallery here today. I'll be doing a minister's statement on them a little later one.

John MacLean, I've met him on occasion regarding issues around healthcare and Workers Compensation.

I also want to give a good support to the lobster fishers of O'Leary-Inverness. They'll be setting their gear out of Hardy's Channel. It's the only north side port I have in my riding. I'm not sure I'll be as ambitious as the minister of child and family services, and be up watching them out, but I'll be there when they come back in when they have the lobsters and a good catch. They're usually in a lot better spirits when they come back in with their lobsters than they are going out. There is a little bit of anticipation there.

I would acknowledge MP Lisa Raitt. I know you might have noticed that my riding is O'Leary-Inverness and now that there is no O'Leary candidate and I know there is a very few small amounts of candidates – or supporters of the Conservative Party up in my riding, but there would be few –

An Hon. Member: Oh, no.

Mr. Henderson: – and I'm sure that some of them would be looking at supporting some of the other 13 candidates that are out there and maybe you have a good chance of getting some of them. All the best in your endeavour.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Mundy: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It gives me great pleasure to rise again today in the Legislature and welcome all those in the gallery. It's such a joy when we're sitting on this side of the rail to see so many people that come and are interested in what we actually do here. I thank you all for coming.

Also, to my constituents in District 22 who are watching at home. Thank you for tuning in and your support each and every day.

I'm actually rising today to give a shout-out to a group and an AGM that I attended last weekend. But it has taken me a week to be

able to get up and get through the acknowledgment without becoming very emotional.

Last Saturday, I attended the AGM for the Federation of Foster Families on Prince Edward Island, and to meet these wonderful big-hearted people that open their homes each and every day to Island children who have had been taken from their homes because of the risk of parental harm. To see what these families have done and do for these Island children each and every day, I owe them a debt of gratitude. We all owe them a debt of gratitude. I just wanted to give them a big shout-out and thank them for all of the wonderful work that they do.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: Did I miss anybody?

The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

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

It's a pleasure for me to rise today, as well, and to send greetings out to many of my constituents who may be tuned in today from Stratford-Kinlock just across the beautiful Hillsborough River on the other side.

I'd also like to welcome Lisa Raitt here to our gallery today. I look forward to having a conversation with you this evening. I know you're attending a wonderful event in Summerside. It's certainly chalked up to be a fun event, as well to honour a great lady, Gail Shea.

I'd also like to, of course, recognize Sue Turner who is in the gallery today and many of the hon. members on this side the Assembly have talked about Sue. I have known Sue for a long time. Excuse me. I'm going to miss her, but friends don't go away. Co-workers retire, but friends never go away, so thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: Okay, nobody else?

Mr. Roach: Not everybody (Indistinct)

Speaker: Before I ask for member's statements I think I would be kind of remiss if I didn't jump into the fray myself, here.

I want to welcome everybody to the gallery today. Certainly, in particular, Lisa Raitt. It's great to see you here, Lisa.

We do have two people who are employed and it is their last day of employment. Sue Turner, of course. Sue, I want to congratulate you on your many years of duty and also to Keith Hogg. Keith Hogg is a young UPEI student who was interning with the Legislative Assembly of Prince Edward Island. This is Keith's last day too, so we wish him well in his journey in life.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: Also, being a former fishermen for a few years, I just want to wish all the fishermen on PEI a happy, safe journey and safety is a big thing, of course, in the fishery and becoming more prevalent all the time.

In conversation yesterday with the hon. Member from Souris-Elmira, he was telling me he was talking safety too, and of course the trap limit in the early season is 300. He was telling me that he makes four trips, 75 traps in a trip, and the reason he does that is for safety reasons. That was good to hear him say that because I know when I fished for a number of years and I took chances that I shouldn't have. Nothing ever happened; piled high – sky high, way too high. Now even my own son who has taken over the enterprise and he's got a fairly good size boat, but he does three trips because of safety, so anyway.

Statements by Members

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

Stanislaus Perry

Mr. Perry: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise today in the house to pay tribute to my ancestor, Stanislaus Francis Perry, and reflect on the part he played in the history here in the Legislative Assembly. Mr. Speaker, to your left, is picture that graces the walls of our Assembly and as you can see, there might be a slight resemblance.

He was born Stanislas-Francois Poirier, but anglicized his name when he returned to Tignish after attending St. Andrew's College in Charlottetown, as did his uncle Sylvain Perry, who was the first Acadian priest ordained on PEI.

Stanislaus was one of the first Acadians to receive a first-class teaching certificate. He was the first Acadian elected to the Legislative Assembly of PEI and the first Acadian elected to the House of Commons. His political lifespan stretched for over 44 years. His grandson, Angus MacDonald, became the premier of Nova Scotia and another grandson, Joseph Bernard, served as Lieutenant Governor of Prince Edward Island.

Stanislaus taught school and was named justice of the peace in 1851; he was also a commissioner of small debt and acknowledgement of deeds. In 1854, he left teaching and began farming to support his wife, Margaret, and their 10 children. That same year he entered politics. He was a representative in the Legislative Assembly from 1854 to 1887. He held the position of Speaker in the house from 1873 to 1874. He was a Member of Parliament from 1887 to his death in 1898.

In 1873, Stanislaus sent a letter to the Queen requesting PEI join the Dominion of Canada. I felt it most appropriate during this year of reflection to recognize that there are many of our fore-fathers that helped to shape our government during the time of Confederation.

I would like the house to acknowledge the many accomplishments of Stanislaus Perry and his role in our history.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

She Leads conference

Ms. Casey: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

This weekend, Island women –

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Speaker: Order, members!

Ms. Casey: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

This weekend, Island women with a passion for sport will have a chance to learn from accomplished women who have made their mark in coaching and athletics. The She Leads conference will bring together six award-winning female coaches and athletes from across the Maritimes.

The conference, happening tomorrow, April 29th, at the Holiday Inn Express in Charlottetown, will allow attendees to hear the personal stories of notable sportswomen and to engage the in close-up conversations.

The conference this weekend will feature: Judy Hale, a two-time biathlon coach of the year; Prince Edward Island's own Swim Canada President Sandi Lowther; former national triathlon race director Cheryl Tanton; Edie Rogers, a physiotherapist and high-performance para-coach; Coach and marketing expert, former UPEI Athlete, and member of the UPEI Advisory Board, Heather Howatt, and I must note my firstline centre with the Charlottetown Hockey Mamas, and Nova Scotia's Ann Dodge, a former Olympic kayaker who is now a kinesiology professor at Acadia University.

This event will allow attendees the chance to meet in small groups with each of these athletes and leaders. Women who attend will have a chance to engage experiences and ideas to speak frankly and to examine the joys and challenges of a life in sport.

We all know women who take part in sports can benefit physically and mentally. Properly approached sport can lead to lifelong friendships, feelings of achievement. Sport often produces female leaders in business, academia and politics.

Whether a woman is an athlete, a supporter, a coach or organizer, she will be able to benefit from the example and insight of these remarkable female athletes and role models.

I wish the best to the organizers and participants for a successful She Leads conference.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

National Day of Mourning

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

Today marks the National Day of Mourning. An observance is a day of mourning for workers killed, injured or made ill by their jobs.

The declaration of April 28th as the day of mourning began here in Canada. In 1984, unions in Sudbury, Ontario, adopted the day as one to be publicly acknowledge workplace injuries, illnesses and deaths. The Canadian Labour Congress officially declared it a day of remembrance.

The date of April 28th was chosen to reflect the anniversary of the day Ontario passed the Workers Compensation Act in 1914. On April 28th, 1991, Canada recognized its first day of mourning for those who were killed or injured in the workplace. Over 100 other countries have also adopted this day of observance.

I wanted to take the time to remember those who were needlessly killed in the workplace, especially to families here on PEI who have lost loved ones.

We all strive to improve safety in the workplace and to help those who have been injured so they can enjoy life comfortably.

Memorial services will be held across Canada and I encourage all to attend if they can.

Flag raising ceremonies will also take place here across the province today. I hope Islanders can take the time to remember Islanders injured or killed in the workplace.

Let's take this day as a reminder to promote better safety in the workplace so all Islanders can return home safely at the end of their day.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Responses to Questions Taken as Notice

Questions by Members

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Release of email accounts publicly

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

Will the Premier explain why the email accounts for deletion forms for Chris LeClair and Melissa MacEachern have not been publicly released by his government?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, I could go back and look into that and see if there is a particular reason.

It was my understanding that this matter had been fully investigated or looked into by the Auditor General and then in subsequent exchanges between the Auditor General and the Public Accounts Committee that that information was all made available.

But if there is a particular piece of paper or form that would be of public interest, I would be prepared to look at what might be done to make that available.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Mr. Speaker, the Premier continues to deflect this issue.

Chris LeClair's email account was deleted on October 19th, 2011. That was by request by the former premier Robert Ghiz.

Melissa MacEachern's accounts were requested by Neil Stewart on October 21st, 2013.

Question to the Premier: Why has your tired Liberal government continued to fail to come clean on the e-gaming scandal?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, as all members of this House will know, this matter was turned over to the Auditor General on the ninth day after I became Premier.

It's something that was deemed to be of public interest. It was thoroughly investigated. More than 10,000 documents, almost 60 interviews and quite a bit of time devoted to it –

Mr. Trivers: No witnesses.

Premier MacLauchlan: – by the Auditor General –

An Hon. Member: None of the –

Premier MacLauchlan: – in this House –

An Hon. Member: – witnesses we asked for.

Premier MacLauchlan: – in committee.

That matter has been fully dealt with, with 15 recommendations, which have been addressed and continue to be addressed as a priority by our government.

I'm confident that this matter is one that has been dealt with fully and responsibly.

Mr. Myers: Except for the lawsuit.

Premier MacLauchlan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Releasing of deletion orders

Leader of the Opposition: Mr. Speaker, at Christmastime, the Premier boasted about his thought of releasing all deletion orders for government dating back to 2007.

Question to the Premier: Why have you failed to follow through on your boast?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: I'm not sure if that would be the language that I'd use or of any other reasonable person would use regarding my comments. It was in response to a question. I'm pretty sure that within minutes, or within some short period of time, there was press release from the Leader of the Opposition saying that wasn't what they were asking for.

In any event, the Auditor General did meet with the Public Accounts Committee and did address the issues that were of concern to the committee and to members of this House.

It is my understanding that the question of the people who had been – who were in the focus of the work of the Auditor General regarding e-gaming that they questions regarding their email accounts have been answered.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Release of email accounts publicly (further)

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

I gave the Premier until the end of February and then I decided to FOIPP them.

The response I got last month was it was going to cost my office \$1,000 to get these deletion forms.

Question to the Premier: Why are you throwing up more roadblocks to release the deletion forms for Chris LeClair and Melissa MacEachern?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member would know when a

FOIPP request comes forward it's not something that would be in the knowledge of myself, as Premier, or as minister. This is dealt with according to a process –

Mr. Myers: (Indistinct) going to cost (Indistinct)

Premier MacLauchlan: – I wouldn't actually have any reason to know what that response was under the FOIPP –

Mr. Myers: Perhaps we understand (Indistinct)

Premier MacLauchlan: – request.

I have said and we've said from the time the Auditor General started her work, that there would be full cooperation and there has been full cooperation –

Mr. Trivers: Except for the witnesses (Indistinct)

Premier MacLauchlan: – with the Auditor General –

Mr. Trivers: (Indistinct) the witnesses.

Premier MacLauchlan: – in her work. The people are well aware of –

Mr. Myers: If your poll numbers were a ski –

Premier MacLauchlan: – what was found –

Mr. Myers: – hill it'd be double (Indistinct)

Premier MacLauchlan: – by that report and that this government has acted on all 15 of those recommendations.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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

Somebody came up with the cost of \$1,000.

This Premier hates answering questions and he hates independent oversight. No one has been held accountable for this tired Liberal government's e-gaming scandal.

This Premier and his government continue to block the release of information, obstruct the calling of witnesses and protect their friends and their insiders. They have never wanted the truth to get out.

Priority of Liberal government

Question to the Premier: Why are the self-serving interests of the Liberal Party the top priority of this tired Liberal government?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, I am very happy that we've got an invigorated government that brought in a balanced budget that is moving forward –

An Hon. Member: Fake balance.

Premier MacLauchlan: – with actions that are putting this province on the map and leading this –

An Hon. Member: Virtually fake balance.

Premier MacLauchlan: – region and doing well for Prince Edward Islanders and Prince Edward Islanders know they are doing well. They appreciate the kind of government they're getting. We're happy about that.

At the same time, as we're committed to openness and transparency and have acted on that on many fronts, including, by asking for and respecting the work of the Auditor General –

Mr. Myers: You won't make Old Home Week, the knives are out.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Myers: You won't make Old Home Week, the knives are out.

Speaker: Order, members.

The hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque.

Mr. MacKay: Mr. Speaker, we asked in Question Period, we have asked in standing committee. We have asked time and time again.

On February 1st, 2017, I also requested at the Public Accounts a copy of the proxy request for Melissa MacEachern's account.

Proxy request of account

Premier: Why have you not released this document?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

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

As minister responsible for the Provincial Archives and Records Office, very pleased to be able to respond.

The Auditor General in her work has done a good job of identifying issues around lack of electronic records management system in the province. This is not something that just sort of arrived. This has been a result of the evolution of how governments do business in respect to electronics, emails from paperwork; the limited ability for the office to enforce through lack of compliance; lack of policies and procedures; lack of resources to enforce compliance.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque.

Mr. MacKay: Mr. Speaker, three full months ago on February 1st, 2017, I requested at Public Accounts – the system entry log for the deletion of Melissa MacEachern's account and the system entry log for the account deletion of Chris LeClair.

Premier: Why have you not released these documents?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Currie: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I've been fortunate opportunity to be part of this Assembly for over 10 years and, fortunately, as a cabinet minister and am very familiar with the work of the Auditor General. I must say that I have tremendous respect for the mandate that she is required to deliver to government and, we take the work and the recommendations from her report which was led by my colleague, the Minister of Finance, and was pleased, prior to Christmas, to present a three-year records information management strategy – not only to address the issues that she identified, but to bring records management into the 21st century here in the Province of Prince Edward Island.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque.

Mr. MacKay: Mr. Speaker, three full months ago, on February 1st, 2017, I requested at Public Accounts a list of the workstation ID numbers for every device used by Chris LeClair and Melissa MacEachern and the current, physical location of all these devices used by Chris LeClair and Melissa MacEachern.

Premier, be a leader. Step up here. Why have you not released these documents?

Mr. Myers: Good question.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, as the hon. members will know, I don't sit on Public Accounts. Public Accounts has – whatever discussions take place –

Mr. Myers: You fingerprints are in there, though.

Premier MacLauchlan: – whatever discussions take place there – it would be my expectation, and it may not be one that is shared by the hon. member opposite – but it'd be my expectation, that if the Public Accounts Committee has something they

would like the Premier to share with them, there is a normal process – which is that the Chair – and I’ve seen these letters: Chair, Co-Chair, or Vice Chair of the Committee, would write to me. To my mind, that’s how it would be brought to the attention of the Premier. If there’s a letter and for some reason it hasn’t been drawn to my attention, I’d be happy to go and get to work and see what I can do.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Myers: Send me a letter. If you want transparency, send me a letter.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque.

Mr. Myers: (Indistinct)

List of email account removals

Mr. MacKay: Mr. Speaker, three full months ago on February 1st, 2017, I requested at Public Accounts a list of the email account removals that occurred under the Premier’s office from 2009-2016 – the date they were requested and the date they were carried out.

Premier: Why has this not been released?

Mr. Myers: Good question.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Myers: Are you part of the coup to take him down? (Indistinct).

Mr. Currie: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

I do want to acknowledge the work and the leadership from the director responsible for Provincial Archives and Records.

I am not responsible for IT Shared Services, but the creation of the three-year records management strategy – which we presented in this House, which clearly defines a new direction in respect to the investments, the infrastructure, the policies and procedures –

to make sure that we are moving the management of records and are working very closely with IT Shared Services to make sure that we have the ability, the resources and the legislative capacity, which we have brought to the floor for second reading.

I look forward to more debate on this and I look forward to continuing to modernizing our records management system, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque.

Referral from Finance dept. to RCMP

Mr. MacKay: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance admitted in committee that he was contacted by an RCMP officer who wanted to speak to IT staff over emails. The minister also admitted he referred the officer to someone in his department. He was asked that day and refused to answer, so I’ll ask him again today.

Minister: Who in your department did you refer the RCMP to?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. Roach: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I do, certainly, recall the question and I recall the day that I received the phone call from the RCMP officer and he simply wanted to track down someone within the IT services who could provide information on how things flowed from within the department. I provided that contact information to the RCMP officer.

Mr. Speaker, it was as simple as that.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque.

Date of contact from RCMP

Mr. MacKay: Mr. Speaker, for some reason the minister does not want to tell us who exactly in his department he referred the RCMP to.

Minister: The AG's report was given to the RCMP in October. What date were you contacted, minister, by the RCMP member?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. Roach: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Great question. I do recall the day that the hon. Leader of the Third Party received a copy of the Auditor General's Report, made his way up to the RCMP headquarters on University Avenue – and I doubt he had the time to read it – but, in any event, he made that public and that's where it is. I have no idea what's taken place since. I haven't heard from anybody since.

With respect to the member of my staff, head of the Treasury Board secretariat is also the director for IT Shared Services, Dan Campbell, and he simply responded to that call, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque.

Direct contact re: Finance minister and RCMP

Mr. MacKay: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Minister: Why did the RCMP contact you directly, rather than communicating with government through the office of the Crown Attorney or the Justice Department?

Mr. Myers: Good question.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. Roach: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I certainly want to apologize. It wasn't the hon. Leader of the Third Party, it was the leader of the NDP and I apologize for that.

I think it's pretty clear why the RCMP would come to my department, that's where IT Shared Services is. That's where it's located, so it'd make perfect sense for the officer – whatever he's looking into – to go to the source. That makes complete sense to me, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

I apologize.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque.

Mr. MacKay: Mr. Speaker, we all know the minister is a former RCMP officer. Last night the Premier told this House that the Justice Department has had no contact with the RCMP covering e-gaming.

A question for the Attorney General: When were you and your department made aware that the minister spoke with the RCMP?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. Roach: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We can look around this room and there's lots of people had former jobs. I think it would be simply inappropriate for anyone in this government to have – certainly, as an elected member – to have contact with the RCMP in any way, shape, or form. The call that was made to my department – and to me, as minister of that department – was very simple: Who's in charge of IT services? The name was provided and that was the end of it. The call was as simple as that – nothing more, nothing less, no conspiracies.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque.

Mr. MacKay: Once again, Premier. Be a leader. Stand up. Answer these questions.

Mr. Speaker, last night the Premier told us in the House that the Justice Department had no contact with the RCMP concerning e-gaming.

Will the Premier and Attorney General explain why the hon. Minister of Finance is fielding inquiries from the RCMP instead?

Mr. Myers: Good question.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. Roach: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I believe that it certainly would be inappropriate for any minister or any MLA to have that kind of direct contact with an investigator in any way, shape, or form. It's just that simple.

IT Shared Services falls within my department. It's just pure common sense that the officer applied to make the call to the department where that service is lodged and where it is – perfect common sense, no conspiracy again.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque.

Mr. MacKay: Mr. Speaker, once again – Premier, I want the questions answered from you. If I wanted the finance minister, I would have went to the finance minister.

Last night the Premier told this House that the justice department has had no contact with the RCMP concerning e-gaming. Will the Premier and Attorney General explain why the finance minister is fielding queries from the RCMP instead?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, this whole line of questioning is obviously based

on a misapprehension or a, perhaps, an intention to confuse the relationship –

Mr. Myers: Oh. Who's intending to confuse?

Premier MacLauchlan: – and the role of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. What is being asked about here is an investigation or a pursuit of matters that the RCMP have been asked to look into. They are doing that in their normal policing function. There's no reason in the world why they would come to the minister of justice or the Attorney General to get any kind of contact or permission or let me know what they're doing. It would be quite the contrary. It would be inappropriate and I think that was really the nature of the question and the short answer in 'oh no' last night when this was asked in estimates.

I do deal with the RCMP on policy matters, such as the unfounded cases and I have met with the commanding officer on that; the opioid matter that was addressed here yesterday. I met with the commanding officer the day the schools were closed with the bomb scare last fall. That's the role of the minister of justice or the Attorney General, but if the RCMP is conducting an investigation or they are following up on something that's been brought to their attention, the last person they would be going to would be the minister of justice.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Myers: (Indistinct) just they wouldn't go to you.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque.

RCMP national anti-corruption unit

Mr. MacKay: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Premier, now that I've got you on your feet here we go again. In 2013, the RCMP launched a new national anti-corruption unit focused on sensitive investigations involving senior government officials.

Will the Attorney General and Premier explain why he has not referred the e-

gaming scandal to this national independent investigative unit?

Mr. Myers: Good question.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Myers: You're hiding.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

An Hon. Member: The boss has left.

Mr. Roach: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Myers: (Indistinct) Old Home Week (Indistinct)

Mr. Roach: I guess I'll just have to refresh the opposition on a couple of notes here because they seem to have forgotten that the Auditor General spent many hours, thousands and thousands of hours, her and her staff. They investigated this file. When it came to the final part of her audit, she brought in Legal Counsel. She discussed with Legal Counsel and had them look to see if there was anything criminal here.

The Auditor General is on record. She was on television with it. It was the day that she made her announcement –

Mr. Myers: She sent a letter to the Premier (Indistinct)

Mr. Roach: – and said there was no criminal activity in this whatsoever. The only criminal activity that came to light was when the leader of the NDP Party grabbed a hold of a copy of it and ran up to the RCMP and said: Here, look at this; I think there's something criminal.

I'll put my faith in the Auditor General and the Legal Counsel that she had come in to give her advice on that. Clearly, no criminal action took place or no criminal matter took place in this file.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: the hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque.

Finance minister's emails on e-gaming

Mr. MacKay: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Will the finance minister table in this House next week all of his properly kept email records on e-gaming?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. Roach: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Any and all emails that I have, have already been files and the Auditor General has them.

Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Myers: (Indistinct)

Speaker: The hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque.

Mr. MacKay: Mr. Speaker, the minister pulled his best sergeant (Indistinct) routine at the Public Accounts Committee since he claims to have never been briefed and since he claims to know nothing. Surely, it will not be hard to find a few emails and table them.

Minister: Will you table next week your emails regarding the e-gaming file?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Myers: (Indistinct)

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. Roach: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I find this very interesting that they're finally getting around asking those questions because we had the standing committee. Every one of these individuals had an opportunity with the Auditor General –

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Mr. Roach: – in front of them right there, to ask the Auditor General directly in the standing committee about it. All of my emails were released, the very few that there were.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Myers: You didn't know anything about it. They didn't tell you. They kept it a secret from you. Makes sense, actually.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

French Language Services Act

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

In 2013, this government passed the *French Language Services Act* which designates services to be available here on Prince Edward Island in French. There also seemed to be a commitment to expand that list of services beyond just the French libraries, road signs and 511. But, neither the act nor the regulations have been updated since it was passed.

A question to the minister of Acadian and Francophone Affairs: Does government have any plans to expand the number of designated services in the French Language Services Act and its regulations?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank the hon. member for the question.

In the report that was tabled in this House just before the middle of December, it was indicated that there are areas that are envisage to further effort and a further commitment in the provision of French language services and I'm pretty sure they total six – they are in the order of four to six, but then it becomes a question of the priorities within those areas. Indeed, work is being done to proceed on those priorities as identified in that report.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

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

The outgoing French language services complaints officer who resigned, of course, in protest due to the minister's inaction on

expanding the language services said to CBC last December that he had presented government with a list of what he called, low-hanging fruit, that could be easily implemented.

A question to the minister: How many of these recommendations have indeed been implemented?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, the commitment that was made in that report and then that has been pursued in meetings with the community leadership, *La Société Saint-Thomas-d'Aquin*, is leading that effort.

We also have an advisory committee on French language services and the work is being done between the community organizations and leaders and the Department of Acadian and Francophone Affairs to identify a plan of action to –

Mr. Trivers: Less talk and more action.

Premier MacLauchlan: – indeed implement, in a priority order, those services as identified in the annual report.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Complaints officer for French language services

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you.

I would interpret that, that none of these recommendations have yet been implemented. The complaints officer plays a key role in the proper functioning of this act, serving, in effect, as a link between the public and government. The Premier told us yesterday during budget estimates that a new appointment is imminent. Though, I can hardly see the point in that if the officer's advice continues to be ignored.

Question to the minister: Do you plan to act on the advice you receive from your new complaints officer?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, we have many contacts with and organizational relationships with the Acadian and Francophone community and one of the primary ways in which that relationship is worked out and where priorities are identified, is with the advisory committee, *comité consultatif*, with the Acadian community and is a very capable group there that has been meeting on a regular basis. To then pursue the precise point that is being asked, the designation of services for inclusion or addition to those currently being served under the *French Language Services Act*, is a formal process that is pursued once the groundwork has been laid.

The work is being done. The work is being done to identify the areas where additional services would formally –

Mr. Trivers: (Indistinct)

Premier MacLauchlan: – be recognized and offered under that legislation. In the process of getting there, there is a tremendous amount of work that is done in terms of actual French language service offered to the community by government with upwards of 200 public servants with bilingual capacity and the designation of those services is anticipated and will take place through a plan of action that is worked out together with the community. That will be done.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Programs for seniors accepting applications

Mr. Dumville: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

My question is for the Minister of Family and Human Services. The Seniors Safe @

Home Program and the Seniors Home Repair Program are now accepting applications. These programs provide support to Island seniors to maintain their independence and help with necessary renovations to their homes.

Would the Minister of Family and Human Services please explain to the House how seniors can apply for these programs and what the qualifications are?

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

Ms. Mundy: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Government is very pleased to be able to provide these valuable programs to Island seniors. The Seniors Safe @ Home Program provides a grant of up to \$5,000 for a senior who is wanting to make modifications to their home. It will make it easier and accessible for them to remain in their home.

The Seniors Home Repair Program offers a grant up to \$2,000 for seniors, who are wanting to make modifications to their home or repairs to their home such as, repair a roof or a new furnace.

All the seniors have to be is under 60-years-old. One program, it's under \$35,000 is their net income and the Seniors Safe @ Home it's under \$50,000 net income.

More information can be found on our website, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from West Royalty-Springvale, your first supplementary.

Programs for seniors

Mr. Dumville: Minister, thank you for that information.

I think I can speak for most, if not all of the hon. members of this House, when I say that we all had questions from our constituents regarding these valuable programs and how people receive funding.

Will the minister please provide an explanation about how individuals are selected for these programs and what the screening process is?

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

Ms. Mundy: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

To clarify, I think I said under 60, they have to be over 60, that's a senior. If it was under 60 I'd be a senior right now, which wouldn't be too bad.

Both of these programs are based on eligibility and it is based on annual income, net annual income.

If the applicants meet the program criteria the applications will be process as they are received. Basically, the programs are open year round.

When the funds are exhausted we do keep the applications and those applications would be then, in turn, process the next year, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from West Royalty-Springvale, your second supplementary.

Mr. Dumville: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Would the minister have any stats on how many seniors this program has assisted and helped them to stay in their homes and not have to rely on long-term or community care?

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

Ms. Mundy: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

That's a great question. The Seniors Safe @ Home Program began in February, 2015, and more than 330 seniors have been assisted through the grants, totalling approximately \$870,000.

The Seniors Home Repair Program was reinstated by our government in 2007. Since

that time, more than 2,800 seniors have been assisted to a tune of \$3.1 million.

Again, I am pleased that we do have funding in the budget again this year for both of those valuable programs, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Summerside-Wilmot.

Vacant Summerset Manor

Mr. Palmer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

My question is for the Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy. The Summerset Manor in my district has been vacant since 2012.

I have had many inquiries from residents in Summerside regarding the province's intention for this building.

Can the minister inform the House of the status of this vacant building?

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

Ms. Biggar: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Certainly, it's no secret that the Summerset Manor has been vacant, as you say, since 2012. We are very interested in disposing of that property. It has been deemed surplus. We did put another RFP out earlier on. We did not have any responses to that particular RFP. We are still interested, certainly, in what may come forward.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Palmer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

My understanding is that some private developers and another group have shown interest in the building, and discussions have been ongoing with the City of Summerside and their interest in the property.

Has the department had any recent inquiries into the purchase of this building?

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

Ms. Biggar: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I know that the Member from Summerside-Wilmot has been very engaged in lobbying and speaking with interested developers, as has my staff at our department, so working hand-in-hand. Certainly, the City of –

Mr. Trivers: Looking for a sweetheart –

Ms. Biggar: – Summerside –

Mr. Trivers: – deal.

Ms. Biggar: – have expressed interest. We are moving forward. We are waiting to hear back from some of those interested parties.

We are certainly open to working with all interested developers in the private sector as to the best use of moving forward on that, that would benefit the community.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Palmer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Minister, and a most important question: Is your department current open to any possible interest from other developers?

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

Ms. Biggar: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We have had some discussions with several, actually, interested developers, which I know, again, the Member from Summerside-Wilmot has been engaged with, as well.

We're waiting to hear back from one of those at the moment. We, also, are in discussions with another one. We are certainly open to working with the private

sector on what use we may have which will benefit all of the community.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Universal basic income pilot project

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

In December, this Legislature unanimously approved Motion No. 83 in support of moving forward on a universal basic income project for Prince Edward Island.

When the minister gave a progress update on this file earlier in this session, it said that: Work on this idea had stalled because Ottawa wouldn't pay for the pilot project.

Question to the Minister of Family and Human Services: Can you show me where in Motion No. 83 it said that federal money was required to move ahead on a universal basic income pilot?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Mundy: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

This government has said over and over again that we are very interested in the idea of a basic income guarantee pilot project.

Actually, after I was appointed in January, one of the first calls I made, within a month, was to my federal counterpart Mr. Duclos to have a conversation about just that.

I'm very aware of basic income guarantee. I read about it from many years. We would need federal input. We would need federal partnership in moving forward on a basic income guarantee pilot project, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Mr. Speaker, the minister is not even using the proper terminology –

Mr. R. Brown: Oh.

An Hon. Member: It's Friday.

Mr. Trivers: – this is a universal basic income, not a basic income –

Ms. Mundy: (Indistinct) guarantee, sorry.

Mr. Trivers: – guarantee.

Motion No. 83 talked about building a partnership with Ottawa, but didn't mention a requirement of new federal dollars to proceed with work on a pilot.

As part of the update the minister tabled a letter sent to the federal government in mid-February on this issue.

A question for the minister: If a universal basic income pilot was a front-burner priority for this tired Liberal government, why did it take almost three months to send the feds a letter on it?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

An Hon. Member: Good question.

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

Ms. Mundy: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Basic income guarantee is a term. There is actually a group on Prince Edward Island that I have personally met with. They are the campaign for basic income guarantee for PEI, or as an acronym: CBIGPEI.

In my conversations with them, they have also agreed, as has the hon. Leader of the Third Party, that federal investment would be necessary in order for a pilot project to move forward, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

An Hon. Member: Leader of the Opposition (Indistinct)

Mr. Myers: Where is Trudeau?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Myers: Where is Trudeau (Indistinct) disappeared (Indistinct) here that day.

Speaker: Order! The hon. member has the floor.

The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Mr. Speaker, this tired Liberal government basically shelved the idea of a basic income project when Ottawa wouldn't pay for it even though the federal government did offer support through data.

Ontario got the same response from the feds, but accepted the research and data support for the pilot they've just launched.

Mr. Myers: Oh.

Mr. Trivers: Question to the Minister of Family and Human Services: If the federal government offered the same support to both provinces why is Ontario showing more leadership on a basic income pilot than this tired Liberal government?

Mr. Myers: Good question.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Myers: Kathleen Wynne is less popular than you, if that's possible. It is apparently, possible.

Speaker: Hon. members, I think I'd like to have the hon. minister have a chance to answer the question.

The hon. Minister of Family and Human Services.

Ms. Mundy: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Tired Liberal government. We hear that over and over –

Mr. Myers: Because it's true.

Ms. Mundy: – but as you know –

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct) pretty good, actually.

Ms. Mundy: – in this current Budget, my department got an increase of \$6.6 million –

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Mundy: That reflects –

An Hon. Member: Keep bringing it.

Ms. Mundy: – our commitment to Islanders.

For the government to call us a tired Liberal government – we've been in power for two years. Saying that we're tired is contrary to what we are –

An Hon. Member: Ready to go.

Ms. Mundy: We are energized, we are optimistic, and we're just getting started.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct).

Ms. Biggar: Recycled questions over there.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct).

Mr. J. Brown: Going back to motions from last year.

Speaker: Members, let's have a little bit of order. I know it's Friday, but let's be realistic here, okay?

The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Ontario basic income pilot program and PEI

Mr. Trivers: This Liberal government is not only tired, they're slow, they're long-winded and they prefer talk over action.

Ontario has recently launched a targeted three-year pilot project on basic income with the federal government supplying technical support.

Minister of Family and Human Services: What discussions have taken place between the province and the Ontario government on their basic income pilot?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Mundy: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Actually, when I was in Ottawa in January, I spoke to both of my counterparts in the Ontario government and got a great deal of information about their Ontario pilot project. If I'm not mistaken, Ontario has a population of about 12 million and they've targeted at about 4,000 people, because that's all they could afford because it is a very expensive project to undertake. I will continue to have conversations with my colleagues in Ontario, but in the meantime, we will continue moving forward. After this Budget, I will be very proud to say that I have completed seven of my 11 platform commitments that go towards helping Islanders who need it most, Mr. Speaker, when they need it most.

Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Myers: Stay down.

An Hon. Member: Stay down.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Mr. Speaker, the Ontario pilot is a big research opportunity, it's true. As part of the pilot, the data will be evaluated by an independent, third-party research group. Since this slow, tired, long-winded, Liberal government isn't keen to pursue a made-in-PEI pilot, there may be useful lessons to learn from the Ontario basic income pilot.

A question to the Premier: Will you reach out to the Ontario government about having independent observers from the Island – Islanders – monitor the progress of the Ontario pilot for lessons that could be applied to a future PEI basic income pilot here?

An Hon. Member: Hear, hear!

An Hon. Member: Yes.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you.

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, as the minister has indicated, we made a very significant additional investment in

responding to the needs of Islanders whom we can help and where we are acting with comfort allowance, with home renovations, with programs that are being enhanced. We're very proud of that and, of course, we are always following what's going on elsewhere and it doesn't mean because it's going on elsewhere that it's necessarily better.

We are happy and proud of the Budget we brought forward, of the policy work that's being done, and, of course, we are very keen to work with our community partners and with other governments to learn anything we can about how we can serve Prince Edward Islanders with needs and we are doing that, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald, this is your final question.

Tabling of Mill River contract (further)

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I did not hear a commitment to reach out to Ontario and try and engage Islanders – put them in contact with that pilot project to make sure that we're involved so we can have a basic income pilot here in the future.

A question to the minister of tourism: Will you table a copy of the Mill River contract so Islanders can decide for themselves whether taxpayers got a good deal.

Mr. Myers: Good question.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Roach: Tired, tired repeat questions.

An Hon. Member: Confused questions.

Mr. J. Brown: Back to the front of the binder.

Speaker: Okay.

Mr. Myers: We don't need binders like you, big guy.

Speaker: I guess this is Saturday night. It must be Saturday night in a bar somewhere, is it?

An Hon. Member: The Prince Edward Room.

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

Mr. MacDonald: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I think the opposition got their binders mixed up because I think I heard this question from three other people.

Mr. Myers: Well, answer it.

Mr. MacDonald: You know it's interesting that we continue to go down this road. They know the procedures relevance to third parties and they are looking for a headline, but –

Mr. Trivers: (Indistinct)

Mr. MacDonald: – we all know that the majority of the people out there understand this deal. We've put everything on the table –

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Mr. MacDonald: They came in here yesterday and they talked about going back to 2012 and this deal and that deal and why didn't we do this, when one company is looking for a 10-year lease for \$1 of taxpayers' money with no development plan –

Mr. Myers: You just love Toronto millionaires, that's it.

Mr. Mitchell: He's supporting West Prince.

Mr. MacDonald: Unbelievable, Mr. Speaker, some of the comments –

Mr. Myers: (Indistinct)

Mr. MacDonald: – and the innuendos. You know what? We deal with fact. I feel like I'm in the House with Donald Trump at times. But you know what? That's all good.

Mr. Myers: You love Toronto millionaires.

Mr. MacDonald: We're good, and we'll keep forging ahead because our economy is in a great place (Indistinct)

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Matters of Privilege and Recognition of
Guests (II)

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

I would like to welcome to the gallery good friends of mine, (Indistinct) and James Larson and also their daughter, Jessica. They come from a great family, hard working down in the cove in Augustine Cove in the cattle and the potatoes and thank you very much for attending today.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Statements by Ministers

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

**100th Anniversary of Iceboat Services in
Cape Traverse**

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, picking up directly on the recognition, today, April 28th, is an important anniversary here on Prince Edward Island as it marks 100 years since the last day of the Cape's iceboat service between Cape Tormentine, Prince Edward Island, and Cape Traverse, New Brunswick. This service acted as a critical lifeline between the Island and the rest of Canada and the world for 90 years, bringing mail to passengers and goods across the ice on the Northumberland Strait.

On December 19th, 1827, Neil Campbell and Donald McInnes of Cape Traverse made the first crossing and were soon awarded the contract to carry the mail across the Strait in the winter months. The boats used for the Cape's iceboat service were designed for passage across water and ice and were small dinghies with added steel plates and runners built into the hull.

The sailors on these vessels worked in tedious conditions, raving frigid water, ice, snow and the winds and the tides, of course, of the Northumberland Strait. They rode, pulled and pushed their cumbersome boats

to deliver their passengers and mail every day. Passages were not without tragedy.

One crossing in January 1885 witnessed the passengers and crew stranded in the middle of the Strait on the ice flow overnight. The party reached land the next day with one suffering from frostbite and another passing away shortly after arriving on dry land. Another incident witnessed boatman, Lemuel Dawson, slipping under the ice and being carried to his death by the strong currents.

Today, there is a small monument in Cape Traverse to commemorate the iceboat service. In 1967, a group of Islanders recreated an iceboat crossing on the 50th anniversary of the services end. They took 10 hours to reach the New Brunswick side. In fact, we had a member of our Caucus tell us that he took part in that. We may have to do some investigation on that.

To mark the 100th anniversary, the Cape Traverse iceboat committee has an evening of events planned. Danny Howatt has spearheaded this committee and owns the property where the iceboats sailed from Prince Edward Island. This celebration includes a tea party and social to be held at Danny's home, as well as fireworks. In addition, Matthew Murphy and Jessica Larson, grade 8 students at Amherst Cove Consolidated School, are with us today and in the lobby later will recite *The Iceboat Crew*, a poem written about the disastrous 1885 crossing of the iceboats.

This episode in our province's history stands as a testament to the ambition and fortitude of Islanders and Atlantic Canadians. It shows why Prince Edward Island, then and now, is a place of dreamers and doers, and workers and risk-takers who know how to work hard to reach their goals. We're happy to welcome, of course, the Murphys and the Larsons here today and look forward to that presentation.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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

I'm going to pretty short on this. Welcome Matthew and Jessica, what you're going to do in a little bit. The iceboat was an important part of our history in PEI and it's something I have been working with is a group of local people up there and we're getting the memorial site reconstructed, and Holland College right now is also – they are working on doing a brand new replica of the original iceboat. They hope to have that done next year, which is going to be great for the area.

I think that whole history of what Cape Traverse provided to it –

Leader of the Opposition: – getting the memorial site reconstructed and Holland College right now is also – they are working on doing a brand new replica of the original iceboat. They hope to have that done next year, which is going to be great for the area. I think that whole history of what Cape Traverse provided to us in that iceboat crossing is something of a marvel when you think about it; what they actually accomplished back and forth across the Strait in hard times, and the people that endeavored to make sure that we had a dependable service. You've got to give them credit for that and it's a testament to the people of PEI and what they have provided this country as a link to the country.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

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

In human terms 100 years seems like forever, but in geological terms 100 years is the blink of an eye. In the 100 years that have passed since the last boats travelled, we've gone from, when it comes to delivering messages, to this grueling and treacherous delivery by iceboat to the far less hazardous and slightly quicker methods of email and Twitter.

There are some traditions for which we pine nostalgically and we perhaps wish were still

part of our culture, but with all due respect to the incredible people who did risk their lives during this, I think that when it comes to delivering messages and whether you were a crew on that boat or whether you were taking your seat – because they were used as passenger boats as well – if you were taking your cold, wet, windy seat on there, I think probably remembering this and celebrating it is better done in the annals of history. But I absolutely pay great respect to those who provided this service when it was the only way we could maintain contact with the mainland.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

National Day of Mourning

Mr. Gallant: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Today is the Day of Mourning to honour the memory of workers who have been injured or killed on the job. On this day, and throughout the year, Islanders are encouraged to remember those who we've have lost through a tragedy in the workplace.

Each work death or injury impacts loved ones, family, friends and coworkers, changing all of their lives forever. I also recognize and thank all Islanders who provide care and support for an injured worker. It is also a time to raise awareness of workplace safety. We must renew our commitment to improving health and safety in the workplace. We must work together to prevent future injuries, illness and deaths.

Government has been working to support training for employees, for employers and workers on safety in the workplace. Through our partnerships with the Federation of Labour and the Workers Compensation Board, we continue to enhance legislation and benefits for the Island's workforce. We are committed to continuing work in this area.

Today, there are many ceremonies to remember workers killed or injured on the job. These include a flag raising outside

Province House today at 12:00 p.m., and one at the Confederation Centre at 7:00 p.m. I encourage everyone to attend.

To all the families and friends of workers killed in the workplace in Prince Edward Island and across Canada, please accept my sincere condolences. I know that all the recognition in the world will not bring your loved ones home. But, I hope the acknowledgement of the sacrifices that have been made by you and your family will help in the healing process.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

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

April 28th being the Day of Mourning is a very important date to be recognized, but it's also very important to think about safety in the workplace every day. We think about the construction of the Confederation Bridge back a number of years ago and some of the lives that were lost on that construction project.

I think also about when I was actually working out at the university. The Premier was there at the time as well and we had an unfortunate accident during the construction of the new business building. I actually know the widow of the gentleman that died there as well, but there have been great strides made over the years in safety within the workplace. You think about some of the projects that Island men and women have worked on over the years with regards to the construction of – well, you just look over at St. Dunstan's Basilica and you think about when that building was constructed back so many years ago and the technology and the scaffolding they had then compared to what we have now.

It's great that we are looking out for our workers and we do have a safer working place now.

I'd also like to bring to light another issue within the workplace that we have been hearing about lately and that's bullying in

the workplace. We've recently heard about a court decision that has awarded the case to the family of an individual that was working here for an NGO. This unfortunate incident did surround bullying in the workplace, which ultimately caused this gentleman's death. It is incumbent upon, I believe, everybody in every workplace to stand up for your fellow co-workers, whether it is related to bullying or if you're on the job site and you see something that's not safe, just everyday remind them of proper safety and respect in the workplace.

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 like the (Indistinct) position of the previous ministerial statement on the iceboats and the fact that we are here today on April the 28th remembering those workers who died on the job and clearly the workplace has become much safer over the decades, and we should all be very thankful for that.

When I think back to so many of the jobs, whether you were a coal miner, building houses, bridges, farming and fishing even; all of these Island occupations – there was a great death toll in them in the past and that has largely stopped and that is something that we should feel thankful for and be grateful to.

With your permission, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to read the final stanza of a Milton Acorn poem, a poem about a gentleman that Milton clearly had met in one of many jobs that he held in his life. The poem is called *Callum In Memory of a Novice Miner*. It strikes me from the earlier stanzas that Callum was not an Islander. He was a foreign worker and anyway, this is how Milton finishes the poem:

Look anywhere
at buildings bumping on clouds,
at spider-grill bridges
you'll see no plaque or stone for men killed there
doing the same thing
but on the late shift

the drill I'm bucking bangs his name in code
Callum
tho where his Island is I'll never know.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

Setting Day

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

As our Island's fishers gear up for the 2017 spring lobster season, there is a lot of optimism in the air. Thus far, the weather has been ideal for fishers allowing them to get onto the wharf early and get their gear ready.

The implementation of a lobster levy has allowed the fishers and on-shore sector to work together to drive the demand for lobster products. In 2016, the levy collected was \$600,000. Trade agreements such as CETA will eliminate tariffs on our seafood products and help bring more Island seafood products, like lobster, to the European Union which is Canada's second largest trading partner and the world's largest seafood market.

Last year's good landings and high prices, along with a strong demand for Island lobster, meant an approximate landed value of \$193 million. Not to mention the wide range of value-added products exported worldwide by the on-shore sector. In total, the Island's lobster fishery was valued at approximately \$386 million in 2016.

While attending the Boston Seafood Show I had the opportunity to speak with many of our fishers, processors and buyers, and there was certainly a lot of positivity and excitement about this year's season.

With more than 1,000 licensed fishers in the province and a further 2,000 jobs in the processing sector, the lobster industry is a major employer in Prince Edward Island, in particular, in our rural communities. The success of our fishing industry is felt in our communities and right across the province,

and is the major reason Prince Edward Island is known as Canada's Food Island.

Our government will continue to support the efforts of our lobster industry and work with them to grow the sector.

One of the ways in which we do that is through creative campaigns, such as Love our Lobster, which kicks off next week, and Best of Sea which will come in June. This year we have some exciting new components to these promotions that we will reveal soon.

Mr. Speaker, as you know, it is truly a beautiful sight to see our harbours full of boats and our fishers setting out in the early morning.

As the season is about to begin, we are hopeful that this year will bring good landings and fair prices.

I'd like to pay tribute to everyone involved in the lobster industry, including fishers, processors, and plant workers. Let this season be safe and prosperous for all!

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque.

Mr. MacKay: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I want to take this opportunity and rise on the minister's statement. Tomorrow is certainly a big day for all Island fishermen. I grew up in a fishing family, three generations, and about four years ago my father sold and had finally retired after 42 years.

But I remember the first, the morning fishing. You get up – you set the alarm clock for about 4:30 a.m., you're nervous just like before a ball game or a sporting event. I used to get that nervous first day of fishing season. I was with my father ever day, Setting Day, for 20 years, and it was a big thing in our family.

In our community, there was probably 75 local fishermen, and all the families and friends would go out to the beach to watch

all the boats go. It's a tradition every year now. It's gone up to about – last year there was 200 people on a beach in French River watching the boats go out.

It's certainly a big day tomorrow. There's going to be a lot of nervousness for the fishermen. Hopefully they have a successful year, a prosperous year. When the fishing economy is good, Prince Edward Island is good.

Also, I'd like to take the opportunity while I'm on my feet: Tomorrow, after the family and friends and the public go down to the beach, there's a group of men and women in the community that – what they do, it's a fundraiser. It's called Stargazers, and they donate to different organizations.

They always put on a breakfast and a barbecue throughout the day, the burgers and French fries and so forth, and all the money donated that day goes to a donation of their choice, so hopefully everybody can attend that tomorrow.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

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

Unlike the Cape Traverse iceboats, this is an active, ongoing Island tradition that I hope we are still celebrating 100 years from today: Setting Day, a wonderful day in the life and traditions of Prince Edward Island. I join the House in wishing all of our fishers a safe, a successful and a prosperous season.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Supporting Aboriginal Athletes

Mr. Henderson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As you're well aware, physical activity is a great way to build healthy citizens and communities. Sports teach our young people respect, teamwork, the value of training and hard work, to play by the rules, and how to win and lose with dignity.

Sport provides an amazing opportunity to grow and learn. Today I rise to celebrate with 38 Islanders who will represent our province this summer at an international sporting event – the North American Indigenous Games.

As a province we are pleased to have a long history of supporting our provincial sports organizations, including the Aboriginal Sport Circle, which helps athletes grow and develop.

Our provincial delegation for the North American Indigenous Games comprises of 38 Islanders, including 28 athletes, eight coaches, managers and support staff, and two mission staff.

In the gallery today I'd like to welcome some of the individuals who are here today and will be representing Prince Edward Island: Craig MacDougall, Keegan MacDougall, Kierra MacDougall, Mackenzie Thomas, Alyssa Bernard, Brandon Bernard, Roberta Jay, Nicole Jay, Gary Evans, Gerarda Snook Spencer, Allie Collings, Damion Collings, Cody Spencer, Tammy MacDonald, Deana Beaton and Richard Lush. Thank you for joining us here today.

The games will take place this July in Toronto, and Team PEI will be participating in archery, athletics, badminton, rifle shooting and swimming.

The games provide Indigenous youth an opportunity to showcase their athletic abilities and celebrate their heritage through numerous cultural events.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, success in sport is not all about winning. Success in sport is about feeling the opportunity to be part of a team, creating physical benefits for yourself, and learning many different skills and challenging your personal best.

I want to wish Team PEI all the best in their competition, and we'll be cheering for you all here at home in Prince Edward Island.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

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

I applaud the minister on recognizing this very important event that's going to be taking place, and to know that we have 38 Islanders participating in the North American Indigenous Games, it's a wonderful thing.

Sport and physical activity is so important to every Islander, so I applaud these tremendous athletes. I wish you the best in your athletic endeavors, and I know that you'll make the Island proud and I can't wait to hear about all the hardware that you're going to come back with as you stand on the podiums.

I know you've probably already spoken to the minister, but quite often constituents will reach out to their MLA and ask for things such as PEI flags or pins or various things like that that you can trade with the other athletes, so please ensure that you're stocked up before you go and again, I wish you all the best.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

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

Of course, like everybody in the House, I have immense admiration for professional elite athletes who dedicate their lives, whatever sport it is, but I'm actually far more enthusiastic about ordinary human beings who just try their best and work hard to do well.

I think, as the previous member stated, active living is just so important, not just for

our physical health, but for our mental wellbeing as well. That level of activity to maintain your health is good, not only for us individually, but for our community and our province.

I wish all of our Aboriginal athletes the best of luck, but above all – and I, like the hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock, I hope you come back with a chest full of hardware as well – but above all, I hope that you have fun and that you strive to be and to do your best.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Presenting and Receiving Petitions

Tabling of Documents

Reports by Committees

Introduction of Government Bills

Government Motions

Orders of the Day (Government)

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

Mr. McIsaac: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy, that the 1st order of the day be now read.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

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

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

Mr. McIsaac: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy and the Status of Women, 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'll ask the hon. Member from Charlottetown-Lewis Point to come and Chair the Committee of the Whole House.

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

Hon. members, we're on page 126, Department of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy.

Permission to bring a stranger to the floor?

Mr. Aylward: Granted.

Chair: The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

Mr. Aylward: Thank you very much, Chair.

As the stranger comes to the floor, I was just wondering if we could request any handouts in advance –

Chair: I'm sure she's going to bring them with her when she gets here.

Mr. Aylward: I have a question. Just so that we have a moment or two just to review those before we get into the questions.

Chair: Thank you. We'll let her –

Mr. Aylward: Thank you, Chair.

Chair: – have a chance to get set-up.

Ms. Biggar: While she is getting ready and those are distributed, what I'll do is, is read off, I guess, what sections that we have provided materials for. That will give a chance for everyone to get them.

I'll just let her set-up, as well.

While we are getting organized, hon. members, what you will receive handouts for is corporate services; infrastructure; Highway Safety; land and environment; highway maintenance operations; the provincial highway maintenance operations; the mechanical operations; Confederation Trail maintenance; public works and planning; administration; direct building maintenance; accommodations; planning and building construction.

Under Capital Projects divisions you will receive information for; traffic operations; capital projects administration; design; bridge maintenance; materials testing lab.

Under Access PEI you will also receive that. Energy and Mines. We will also be providing information on the Interministerial Women's Secretariat.

Members, we have a budget of \$133,852,800. We will be providing – and all the materials I just named off are now at the Clerk's table.

Chair: Thank you.

Welcome, and could you introduce yourself and your title for the record?

Wendy MacDonald Director: Sure, it's Wendy MacDonald, I'm the Director of Finance and Human Resources for the department of transportation.

Chair: Welcome, Wendy.

Wendy MacDonald Director: Thank you.

Chair: Hon. members, the documents are being circulated. We are on page 126.

Is it the wish that I just read the title and the total?

Mr. Aylward: No, we'd like to go line-by-line, Chair, please.

Chair: Okay. Thank you.

Corporate Services

“Appropriations provided for the operation of the Minister's and the Deputy Minister's offices and support staff. Appropriations also provided for the departmental centralized planning, administrative and records management functions. In addition, appropriations provided for Island Waste Management Corporation.” Administration: 47,900; Equipment: 500; Materials, Supplies and Services: 11,900; Professional Services: 900; Salaries: 704,100; Travel and Training: 24,600; Grants: 875,000.

Total Corporate Services: 1,664,900.

Total Corporate Services: 1,644,900.

Hon. members, I'll now just remind you now that we're reading section by section that you have your questions directed to the section that was just read.

I have a question from the hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you, Chair.

Before I go onto a question on this section, we won't have another opportunity to ask questions about the revenue section, which is on the proceeding page.

I see revenues are up considerably from last year, \$37 million up to \$52 million.

I would just like to know what that money is – where it's coming from and what it's earmarked for.

Ms. Biggar: The \$52,000 – or the –

Dr. Bevan-Baker: \$52 million.

Ms. Biggar: – \$52 million you're referring to?

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Yeah.

Ms. Biggar: We actually increased our infrastructure budget by 19% for this season so that represents money that's coming through infrastructure.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Where is that money coming from? Is that federal transfers?

Ms. Biggar: Yes, that would be federal. What we get – it comes in through our department, yes.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Just so I'm clear: The entire \$52 million if federal transfer?

Wendy MacDonald Director: No.

Ms. Biggar: No, that's our – like we have to do it 50-50.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Yes, but the \$52 million that I see there is revenue. Is that entire amount –

Ms. Biggar: Yeah.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: – is that all federal transfers?

Ms. Biggar: I'll get Wendy to explain how that breakdown goes.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you.

Wendy MacDonald Director: In the \$52 million you'll see part of that, in the \$52 million, part of it is the increase in the infrastructure funding, as well as the licensing through Highway Safety is in there. Any of their registrations –

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Okay.

Wendy MacDonald Director: – and all that infrastructure. The increase between the two is actually the increase in the infrastructure funding cost share with federal government.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you.

I'll go back to the –

Ms. Biggar: Corporate Services.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you.

It's to do with the grants. What do the grants here pay for and how much of that goes to Island Waste Management?

Ms. Biggar: That is the Island Waste Watch management commission that we fund them for.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: The entire \$875,000 goes –

Ms. Biggar: Yes.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: – to IWC?

Ms. Biggar: Yes.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thanks, Chair.

Chair: The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

Mr. Aylward: Thank you, Chair.

I'm just wondering, so with the grant that goes to Island Waste Management. What responsibility does your department have for the overall operation of Island Waste Management?

Ms. Biggar: Our deputy minister sits on the board of Island Waste Watch management so we have a presence at the table.

Chair: The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

Mr. Aylward: Thank you, Chair.

Something that I've been wondering about for quite a while now is, when we as Islanders put our green bins out or our black bins out or blue bags and cardboard and things like that for collection, I think the introduction of Waste Watch on PEI was a fabulous thing –

Ms. Biggar: We're actually leading the country.

Mr. Aylward: I guess I look at the efficiencies.

In Stratford, alone, I take my bins out to the end of my driveway and I look across the street and my neighbours have theirs out there. So the trucks have to go around and loop and then come back and do both sides of the road.

I'm just wondering has there ever been any discussion with Island Waste Management to look at efficiencies.

Perhaps, on green bin day, the green bins would all go to one side of the road, but on black bins day the bins would go to the opposite of the road so that the trucks don't have to make so many trips throughout a community or down a highway

I think it would also add to some safety issues, as well.

Ms. Biggar: That's certainly something that we'll take to the board as part of discussion.

Mr. Aylward: Thank you, Chair.

That's all I had for that section.

Chair: Shall the section carry? Carried.

Shall the total carry?

Total Corporate Services.

Some Hon. Members: Carried.

Speaker: Thank you.

Infrastructure

Infrastructure

“Appropriations provided for the delivery of various Canada-Prince Edward Island infrastructure programs.” Administration: 58,700; Equipment: 4,000; Materials, Supplies and Services: 7,000; Professional Services: 395,000; Salaries: 499,400; Travel and Training: 15,200; Grants: 43,431,800.

Total Infrastructure: 44,411,100.

Total Infrastructure: 44,411,100.

We have a question from the hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Two things, first Chair.

If you want to go from this point forward reading just the title –

Mr. Aylward: Actually, we had asked to go line by line.

Leader of the Opposition: Okay.

With that where do we, when they increased the amount of roads that come under capital funding, minister, how much, when you did the count, they renegotiated, how much more did that add to the transfer from basically, provincial responsibility of 100% to capital of 50?

Ms. Biggar: Can you say that again, please?

Leader of the Opposition: Remember when you said some of the collector roads were –

Ms. Biggar: Yes.

Leader of the Opposition: – the counts were brought up. Any idea how many that – kilometres that shifted over?

Ms. Biggar: Off the top of my head, hold on, here, I'll see what we can find in here.

I don't think I have that right there, but it did certainly open up a major part of the infrastructure of our highways.

We have something like 1,800 – I don't have all of that particular number. I can bring that back.

Leader of the Opposition: Yeah, if you wouldn't mind bringing that back.

Ms. Biggar: It does certainly open up another major portion of our infrastructure to allow that. It was, originally, as you know, 10,000 cars per day and the agreement that we were able to negotiate brought that down to 1,000 cars per day on an annual average because, certainly, during summer months, you have some that are more than the 1,000, but it's averaged out.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Any thoughts, minister, of how were dealing with some of our infrastructure for climate change coming up. I have had some talks with some different road crews and stuff. They were questioning – like right now, I think we're using 16 inch culverts. Are we giving any thought to, maybe, increasing them in some places to 24 inch culverts because of some of these heavy rains we're getting? Is there any thought or talk going on in that?

Ms. Biggar: Well, we're certainly always aware of the damage that occurs and the cost that is incurred because of that increasingly climate change events that we have, which is why when we are planning, we do plan ahead in our projects to allow for that and look at our culverts and other – bridges and raising the height of bridges and all this. It's all part of our planning.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you.

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Chair.

In the infrastructure area here, one of the things that we put forward as the official opposition is we would like to see

government have an infrastructure summit to set the priorities and really make it open and transparent as to what, actually, is going to happen there and what the money's going to be spent on. Also, I'm having trouble finding the grant handout for infrastructure. Is that in the handouts?

Chair: Yes, it is.

Mr. Trivers: Is it part of these documents?

Ms. Biggar: They were handed to you in order – or we handed them in order of how they came in the book. I'm not sure how you have them organized on your desk, but when we compile them, we put them together.

You have them now? Do you have them?

Mr. Trivers: So these aren't all the grants for this section or are they broken up – this one says Building Canada Communities Component.

Wendy MacDonald Director: Yes.

Ms. Biggar: Yeah.

Mr. Trivers: So, that's part of the infrastructure section we're looking at here.

Ms. Biggar: Yes, but in response to your remark about collaborating with communities on infrastructure, we are working through our infrastructure secretariat who work with municipalities in doing their asset management plans. We're having discussions with them as we put out our infrastructure projects. We are assisting them with doing their asset management plans – looking forward.

We are collaborating with those municipalities right across Prince Edward Island on meeting and working together with them on their infrastructure needs. So, that has been an ongoing collaboration and continues to be.

Chair: Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Chair.

In Hunter River, as you know, that's a really busy intersection and Route 2 is a corridor highway, really, between Summerside and Charlottetown in many ways. I was

wondering if part of your infrastructure planning, you're considering any way to alleviate that situation. Maybe there would be a Hunter River bypass for example, something like that.

Ms. Biggar: That is under capital projects, which is not in this, but what I can tell you in terms of safety, there's nothing in this in regard to any plans for that type of a project, hon. member, because this is the operating day-to-day of the department. What you're referring to would be in capital planning. Knowing that intersection, if you note that there was major construction there a number of years ago and as part of that, from each direction that you're coming there has been turning lanes installed to increase the safety when you are approaching and making turns on that intersection. Again, that would be in capital budget discussions.

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Is that not part of what you would include in an infrastructure summit – discussions like that?

Ms. Biggar: Again, hon. member, we do meet regularly with our municipal partners and those are all part of our planning going forward on what their infrastructure needs are.

Mr. Trivers: That's all for now.

Chair: Thank you.

Hon. members, before we carry on, I'm going to give the floor to the hon. Minister of Health and Wellness for recognition.

Matters of Privilege and Recognition of
Guests (III)

Mr. Henderson: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I have the opportunity to welcome a couple of guests to the gallery. We have Sandy Stewart and Stephen Stewart and they are co-owners of a major company in the riding of O'Leary-Inverness called HF Stewart. They do some fantastic work in manufacturing many various products, from bulk boxes for potato handling equipment to farm machinery. I believe they've even shipped equipment as far away as the

Ukraine. So, they're a major employer in my riding and great to welcome them down here to the Legislature.

I will also mention that Stephen is an avid Boston Bruins fan so I want to recognize that here as well. Unfortunately, his brother Sandy happens to be the polar opposite and he's a Habs fan I regret that, but –

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Henderson: Anyway, they're great employers and I welcome them here to the provincial gallery.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: Shall the section carry?

The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you.

I'm looking at the grant section here and I'm wondering – I'm also struggling to get through all of the handouts here and I think I have the right one in front of me now – is there a breakdown of the grants in this handout?

Wendy MacDonald Director: The grants handout that you have with you is the one that – or would it be the grants that we have just paid out in the past year –

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Okay, but not –

Wendy MacDonald Director: – but not what's coming up this current year.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Okay.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: A question about the professional services which has gone up, enormously, from \$53,000 to \$395,000. Can you explain why that is?

Wendy MacDonald Director: Sure. When we're doing these water and wastewater projects in partnership with the federal government, everything is audited. We have to make sure that everything that's going forward to Ottawa is in an audit, so that is –

the added is for outcome reporting for both the existing and additional programs to finalize our asset management system with the provinces and municipalities. I mentioned we're assisting there. We are working on that and the required audits for those cost-share agreements because of the additional infrastructure money that we have invested there for those services that we need to put more into that.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: I appreciate the explanation. I get that – exactly.

Thank you, Minister.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you, Chair.

A question on the grants to T3 Transit; \$800,000 this year. I'm just wondering if you have any sense as to whether – and I realize subsidizing public transit systems is necessary everywhere – but I presume that that \$852,000 is for the expansion that was announced here a week or two ago?

Ms. Biggar: Yes. I'm just trying to find my paper in my book on that. Okay B8.

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct).

Ms. Biggar: So, that was the upgrade to the busses that we did. They got 10 new busses and we just did another announcement here recently, but that's for Coming Forward. What's in here – what you're probably looking at – is what we invested last year. So, it's a great investment. It's certainly allowing T3 transit to be more efficient, first of all, and to provide more services to their customers. We also assist them with the county line – that county line – we also make investments in that, but that one you were talking about, particularly, is the new investments in busses.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you and I agree, minister, it's a great partnership. In order for a public transit system to work well, it has to be convenient – there has to be a level of service there that makes it user-friendly and the new busses are fantastic – what a really great upgrade on what we had before.

But I'm wondering, given that there's a lot of public money going into this, do we have a business plan from the T3 owners as to if they ever expect to break even – where we're going to be in three years, five years, 10 years?

Ms. Biggar: Well, certainly our role in it is to partner – as a shared partner with the money that the federal government puts in. I know that the particular bus business has – they've made significant investments as well, but I think we know the reality is – in a lot of transit systems – there's always challenges and making sure that we –

I will commend the owners of the T3 system for the initiative they've taken to do more promotion. They're wrapping their buses. They're doing a lot more to promote the service within Cornwall, Charlottetown, Stratford area, certainly. I do commend them for the work that they are doing.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you.

As we all know, we're not sure of the details of the carbon pricing that's coming forward.

I'm wondering whether you, as minister responsible for public transportation, whether you will be lobbying for any of the funds that will come from a carbon tax, which we know, whether we get to see the –

Leader of the Opposition: No carbon tax.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: – make it happen or not, or whether it's somebody else who provides the details of how we're going to do it.

Are you going to be lobbying for some of that money to expand public transportation services?

Ms. Biggar: We're always in discussions with our federal partners as to how their new green infrastructure fund is going to be able to make more investments in what we are doing on Prince Edward Island. Whether it's transportation or whether it's through our efficiency and our energy.

We are always continuing those discussions.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you, Chair.

Chair: The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

Mr. Aylward: Thanks, Chair.

Like the Leader of the Third Party, my first questions are around the grants. I do understand that the handout we have reflects the estimated or the forecast for 2016-2017, but yet we're going up by about \$20 million in grants for 2017-2018.

I'm just wondering, Chair, could we get clarification on exactly why we're almost doubling that budget line?

Ms. Biggar: I have got to get back here. I have, as you can imagine, a lot of information.

Sorry. I'm getting into that. Grants, again. There we are.

You want to know what we're investing that in?

Mr. Trivers: Yeah.

Ms. Biggar: The breakdown?

Mr. Trivers: What's the plan?

Ms. Biggar: It's all –

Mr. Aylward: If there is one.

Ms. Biggar: – clean water and waste water. Last year, we approved 20 projects. Eleven of those were completed or they are still ongoing.

This year, there are additional projects under clean water and waste water that will be rolling out. So that all represents – there is money forecast for that, in our budget, as well.

Chair: The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

Mr. Aylward: Thank you, Chair.

I'm just wondering how much of that \$43,431,800 would be allocated towards the sewage issue that we're – the ongoing issue that we have in Stratford.

Ms. Biggar: That is ongoing discussions hon. member, as to how it all ties together with Stratford and the rest of the municipalities across Prince Edward Island. Once those decisions are finalized with Stratford then we'll have a final announcement of what is going to be in that budget for that.

Chair: The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

Mr. Aylward: Thank you, Chair. The Premier is on record, and I'm in support of a standalone sewage control plant not being constructed in Stratford, when we have one 2.4 kilometres away in Charlottetown. He was quite adamant in his public interviews with regards to; it's not going to be built, that it will be done jointly between Charlottetown.

What I would like to see, obviously, is a regional utility. Not one that is just operated by Charlottetown and dictated by Charlottetown, the rates and so on and so forth. But if that's the case and that's the direction that this government wants to go, then, surely, there is already a set amount of money set aside within the \$43 million.

I guess what I'm asking is: How much of that \$43 million has been earmarked for that project?

Ms. Biggar: Thank you, member.

Until Stratford decides that they wish, obviously, to move ahead, I think it was estimated as part of the discussions that it would approximately \$8 million to do that type of a project.

Mr. Aylward: Chair, I'm sorry. I couldn't hear with a chair sliding on the floor. I missed that answer.

Chair: Could you repeat the answer?

Ms. Biggar: Sure.

As I had noted, things are still under discussion with Stratford. They have not made a final commitment what they wish to do to move forward. But in our estimates, in having those discussions on what that type of a project would cost, it would be in the range of around \$8 million.

Mr. Aylward: Thank you, Chair.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Yes. I'm wondering about (Indistinct) back that professional fees there, that professional service. You said that was for audit to prepare those records for Ottawa.

Ms. Biggar: Yes.

Leader of the Opposition: Did that go out to tender?

Ms. Biggar: We haven't done that, yet. We haven't finalized those audits – this is what the budget –

Leader of the Opposition: Okay, so but you will be going out to tender to prepare those documents and statements.

Wendy MacDonald Director: The majority of the federal agreements require us to tender, publicly tender our RFP for these services.

Leader of the Opposition: Okay, thank you.

Ms. Biggar: We would be, yes.

Chair: Shall the section carry? Carried.

Shall the total infrastructure carry? Carried.

Hon. members, I am going to give the floor to the hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries for tabling.

Tabling of Documents

Mr. McIsaac: Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

I had two answers to questions during my estimates that I wanted to table. One was on the loan amount under the Farmland Financing Program, and one under the Budget for the Queen Bee Replacement Project that I promised to take back and I think that fulfills my commitment.

Chair: Great.

Thank you.

Mr. McIsaac: I know the Member from Morell-Mermaid will be very pleased with that.

Mr. MacEwen: (Indistinct) only minister to do that so far.

Chair: Thank you, minister, if you could just pass it to the Clerk that would be great.

Thank you.

Chair: Hon. members we are at the top of page 127.

Highway Safety

Registration, Safety and Scales

“Appropriations provided for the administration and enforcement of the *Highway Traffic Act*, the highway weight regulations under the *Roads Act* and the promotion of safety on the highways.”
Administration: 59,000; Equipment: 18,700; Materials, Supplies and Services: 266,100; Professional Services: 33,500; Salaries: 2,432,400; Travel and Training: 50,600.

Total Registration, Safety and Scales: 2,860,300.

Total Highway Safety: 2,860,300.

Question from the hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Just a quick question. Chair, back in the fall, I think it was, minister, we were talking about disability parking and how, remember how people were having problems finding disability parking?

Ms. Biggar: Yeah.

Leader of the Opposition: You said you'd take it back to the department and possibly look at getting the Highway Safety guys that are in the trucks check these parking lots. Did you ever make any headway on that?

Ms. Biggar: As I mentioned, we would be reviewing that. We were very happy to see that legislation pass.

Leader of the Opposition: Yeah.

Ms. Biggar: Our Highway Safety officers actually can't ticket.

Leader of the Opposition: Yes.

Ms. Biggar: That's something that we, as part of their enforcement, if it's within their jurisdiction, certainly, if it's in the cities or –

Leader of the Opposition: Yeah, that's understandable –

Ms. Biggar: – they don't have the jurisdiction.

We certainly will be having – continue those discussions.

Leader of the Opposition: Technically, they would have jurisdiction in the city, but they wouldn't impeach on somebody else's property –

Ms. Biggar: Correct.

Leader of the Opposition: Yeah, but I'm thinking with the rural areas.

Ms. Biggar: Yes.

Leader of the Opposition: That's great.

Thank you.

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Chair.

Speeding is a huge issue in District 18, Rustico-Emerald, and I'd imagine many other places on the Island, especially going through communities.

Ms. Biggar: Yeah.

Mr. Trivers: In my district I have got lots of different communities; Rustico, North Rustico, Breadalbane, Wheatley River, Hunter River, Stanley Bridge, New London. Almost every one of them, Emerald, they say, people are going through, they're not obeying the speed limit.

I mean I've talked to your department many times about this on behalf of the various different communities. I do understand that speed is often a subject of the slope of the

road and how naturally it is to travel at that speed and all these sorts of things.

One thing that we have talked about with the department and I know we have traded emails, too, minister, is use of the speed radar signs.

Basically, they tell you what your speed is. In particular the ones that if you are going over the speed limit they have the lights that flash at you.

Those have proven to be, at least, somewhat effective in slowing down vehicles. The problem is, of course, there are not many of them.

I know for municipalities, you basically said: You're on your own. You have got to find money in your budget to buy those and put them in. That would have been covered under the infrastructure section here, more money allocated to that.

In the unincorporated communities, I would really love to see those installed. Frankly, in almost every community just because it is such a huge problem.

I was wondering if you have any plans for that, or if you've allocated any money to make that happen.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Chair: Members, I don't mind you taking your conversation outside the chamber so we can hear the questions and the answer. Thank you.

Minister?

Ms. Biggar: Thank you.

In regard to funding under infrastructure in here itself, that's not something that would qualify to be 50% funded, first of all. So no, there's no allocation within this particular budget; but when I referred to you, we do work closely with a lot of communities that do have issues with speeding. We have, at different times, installed larger signs for a period of time to alert people to the fact.

Obviously, we are concerned about speeding in any part. Some of the communities that are municipal governments have taken

initiatives. If I look at Kensington or Miscouche, those communities have taken initiative to install those flashing smaller signs when entering their community.

We will continue to assist where we can, to put those flashing warning signs out for a period of time. I think if you look at it, it would be quite cost prohibitive to install those in every community right across PEI. I would encourage any resident to, if it's an ongoing issue, to engage with highway safety.

We have done that on the main highway, as you know. We had issues with speeding where the bus zones were. (Indistinct) We set up speed checks which we were able to have a lot of people ticketed for that, so – we can make arrangements if it's an ongoing issue in a particular area to have highway safety come in or deal with the RCMP.

I would encourage people, if it's an ongoing problem, to call the RCMP first of all if it's not in a municipality that has their own police force because ultimately the RCMP do have the authority to enforce the speed limits.

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, and just for the record, really it is an ongoing concern in all the communities that I mentioned, even within the district, and I think we really need to show leadership on this issue, put safety first, and make this happen. We need to take action to allocate money. Sharing the signs isn't going to work; temporary signs aren't going to work.

I think you should even consider, as we've discussed in the past, things like photo radar because the RCMP can't be everywhere all the time either. I would just urge you to consider that, and it's unfortunate that we're not seeing any of that in this budget. Just consider it for the future.

Thank you.

Ms. Biggar: Thank you.

Chair: The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

Mr. Aylward: Thank you, Chair.

Chair, I was just going to suggest if we would like to move along to just reading the section, the reason I had asked originally to go line by line is I just wanted a little bit of time to go through my handouts so I could better prepare, and I feel I'm at that point now.

Chair: Great.

Mr. Aylward: Thank you, Chair.

Chair: Thank you.

Shall the section carry? Carried.

Total Highway Safety.

Shall the total carry? Carried.

Land and Environment

Total Land and Environment: 2,581,900.

Shall the section carry? Carried.

Total Land and Environment: 2,581,900.

Shall the total carry? Carried.

Highway Maintenance Administration

Total Highway Maintenance Administration: 3,259,600.

Shall the section carry? Carried.

Leader of the Opposition: One quick question: Where does recap fall under these?

Ms. Biggar: It would be in that section, hon. member.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Wendy MacDonald Director: (Indistinct)

Mr. MacKay: In that one?

Leader of the Opposition: In that section there?

Ms. Biggar: Oh, sorry.

Wendy MacDonald Director: (Indistinct) capital budget.

Ms. Biggar: Capital budget.

Mr. Roach: It's not in this budget.

Wendy MacDonald Director: It's – this is –

Mr. Roach: (Indistinct)

Ms. Biggar: This is operating budget.

Leader of the Opposition: Oh, so it isn't – okay.

Ms. Biggar: No, sorry. I was thinking of (Indistinct) –

Chair: Shall the section carry? Carried.

Ms. Biggar: Sorry.

Chair: Provincial Highway Maintenance Operations

Total Provincial Highway Maintenance Operations: 30,412,900.

Some Hon. Members: Question.

Chair: We have a question from the hon. Leader of the Third Party.

I'm wondering why the materials, supplies and services is over budget by nearly \$3 million.

Ms. Biggar: Okay, just let me get to that, hon. member. Just a moment.

That there section includes culvert replacement, sand, salt. We did have an increased salt usage this fiscal year due to the – you know, we had a different kind of winter, so there was increased salt and sand usage.

With that, too, we had increased winter maintenance contracts as well, and fuel adjustments are all part of that as well; and during summer maintenance, it was busier than normal with roadside maintenance, so it all contribute to an over-spend in that section.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you.

Of course, I understand that by its nature that the cost of snow clearing and things like that is going to vary from one year to another.

Ms. Biggar: Yeah, so those are contracted services, so that they fall under professional services. Like, if we contract someone to do our salt or sand or plowing or – so that all falls in that section.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: So a contracted service, do you mean by that that you agree on a price before the season and –

Ms. Biggar: No, we put tender out for that kind of a service, and so it's part of our –

Dr. Bevan-Baker: So if you put a contract out and you accept a contract and there's a cost overrun, presumably the person who has the contract is responsible for that cost overrun.

Ms. Biggar: Well, if we require more services, then we may have to contract or some other additional services depending on the requirements of that particular maintenance or work that we need.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you.

Having many, many Islanders contract out snow removal to companies, and some people will pay by the number of times that they have to have snow removed, and others will purchase a contract at the beginning of the season; and when you purchase a contract, regardless of how many times the person comes to clear your driveway, they're not going to charge you more because it's a contract, so I'm just a bit confused as to why, if we're issuing contracts how come we're \$3 million over budget?

Ms. Biggar: Again, it includes buying extra salt. Like, we have to – that includes our salt that we buy as well, not just – we put a tender out for salt, so that's included in there.

We had to buy extra salt, the sand; those are all contracted out as well. We would put

tenders out to get our salt and sand and all those pieces so then we may have to go back out and buy more sand or salt, so – that's all included –

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Okay.

Ms. Biggar: – in there as well.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: I get that. That extra, you're telling me, is in supplies rather than services.

Ms. Biggar: Correct.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Okay, now I've got you.

A final question on this section, Chair, please?

Given that – I mean, I don't know what the figures were for the previous winter, but two winters ago we had that really tough winter.

Ms. Biggar: Yes.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: And I imagine that that figure was a lot higher than budgeted that year as well.

Ms. Biggar: That's why we had a special warrant that year.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Sure.

So where last winter – the winter in between was a fairly average winter, I guess. This winter, I see the costs are up three million. We're back down again this winter.

So is there any sense that, as our weather becomes more volatile and the winters that we've experienced in the past may not resemble the winters that we're going to get in the future, that that budget line may actually have to be increased?

Ms. Biggar: We'll track it year over year, and if it continues to be within a certain amount, then yes, we will have to start budgeting at a higher amount.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Okay.

Thank you. Thank you, Chair.

Chair: Leader of the Opposition.

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct)

Leader of the Opposition: Yeah, that's right.

Why would recap be in capital and not in ordinary highway maintenance operations?

Ms. Biggar: Highway maintenance is like patching as opposed to the recap side of it.

Leader of the Opposition: Okay.

Ms. Biggar: It's budgeted under capital.

Leader of the Opposition: Okay. So with that, could we not know possibly in the fall after capital, then, what the rough allotments would be for recap? That –

Ms. Biggar: It's hard to do that until we get the final projections of what the aggregate's going to be, because that fluctuates with oil prices –

Leader of the Opposition: Yeah, I understand.

Ms. Biggar: – and so, you know –

Leader of the Opposition: Okay.

Ms. Biggar: We budget, but then we really – we have a certain budget, it's not just by kilometers, so we put a budget out and based on what those – the liquid asphalt is and all that aggregate that goes together to make our asphalt, then we can make a final determination closer to the spring as to how that will –

Leader of the Opposition: Okay, that sounds reasonable.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: I got a question for you. I've noticed over the number of years that the amount of budget for recap really hasn't increased any. It's been pretty consistently over and over. So with that, one thing I am noticing is the amount of either long patch or patching that we're doing on secondary, tertiary rural roads is increasing. I'm wondering: Are we getting to a point where the roads are deteriorating more than

the present recap budget is allowing for each year because that amount of kilometres is still basically staying the same but our long patch and our patching is going up. Should we not at some point try to look at going the other way?

Ms. Biggar: Well, hon. member, something that's going to make a difference in our road construction or our road maintenance is going to be that collector area –

Leader of the Opposition: Yes. That's right.

Ms. Biggar: – because as you know, if you had a secondary road where it was high traffic area for farming, but it didn't meet that threshold, we weren't able to do – that had to come out of your regular recap, but now, under our new collector agreement, that will help keep – start building that up now and be able to address those concerns. So, by having this new agreement, it will assist.

Leader of the Opposition: So it will – okay, that's great.

Thank you.

Chair: The hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque.

Mr. MacKay: Thank you, Chair.

Just a quick question, minister, on the maintenance: We've seen over the last month and a half, now that the frost has come out of the ground, a lot more potholes than probably most years. Is there enough allocated to make sure that most of them roads will get fixed up in every district?

Ms. Biggar: I think what you'll see now that our maintenance crews are coming back up to full crews for the summer, they're getting out there. We actually have a new system that we use – it's a mobile unit that will patch those areas up a lot faster and they stay in place because, as you know, in the spring you'll see a pothole fixed and if there's water in there then, first thing you know, it's out again. But we have a new system that we're using to patch those and to be able to do that on a mobile unit, as opposed to getting the big truck and – we're able to do it more efficiently.

Mr. MacKay: Okay.

Thank you, Chair.

Chair: The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

Mr. Aylward: Thank you, Chair.

Just on the snow removal: What I've been seeing and what I've been hearing as well for the last couple of years and what I've also experienced in my own vehicle is the composition of the material – it seems to be being spread on the highways – it seems like it's a heavier or coarser material because – experiencing a lot of windshields being chipped and broken and cracked as compared to a couple of years ago – that wasn't as prevalent. Is there different material being used now to sand the roads?

Ms. Biggar: The material that we use meets the specs that we put out there. It's not coarser. What we are doing now is actually reducing the amount of – for environmental purposes and for efficiency purposes – we're able to mix that with more of a brine on the highways. At times it may freeze on the road or, for whatever reason, there may be certain areas that – if we're talking about salt – you may be talking about sand. I'm not sure specifically what you're talking about, but we have started with a new process of using a brine mix on our highways, which, it is more effective with the type of weather we're experiencing now.

We can predict with our satellite and our system that we have – an hour-by-hour system – that will predict, actually, when we're about to have a drop and we can get that out and put the brine on the road to prepare for that more in advance.

At times, there may be situations where, for whatever reason, if it's sand, there might be a clump or whatever. Also, with our sand, starting to use the brine in it so that when you have ice on a road and it's mixed and it's blowing, that sand just blows off. Now we're mixing the brine with it so it sticks to the ice. So, we're using different technology, different types of processes, but ultimately, we're doing as much as we can to reduce that type of issue.

Chair: The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

Mr. Aylward: Thank you, Chair.

I understand salt, I understand brine and I understand sand –

Ms. Biggar: Great.

Mr. Aylward: – but, none of those three items would crack and chip windshields to the degree that we're seeing on our roads the last couple of years. Have the specs changed with regards to the material? Because you said you contracted out to specific specs. Have the specs changed in the last couple of years, that either your own department or contracted snow removal companies are putting a heavier and a courser material on the roads, and thus causing these small rocks and pebbles to come up and break windshields?

Ms. Biggar: We have not reduced the standard for our specs.

Mr. Aylward: Have you changed your standards for your specs?

Ms. Biggar: No, I just said we have not.

Mr. Aylward: No. You said you haven't reduced them. I asked 'have you changed them'?

Ms. Biggar: No.

Chair: The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

Mr. Aylward: Thank you, Chair.

No, that's okay. I've just got to get out to Good Guys Auto Glass this afternoon.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you.

I want to ask a few questions that are similar to one of the ones that was asked earlier. You talked earlier about the strange winter we had and the freeze/thaw and not only did that lead to problems with snow maintenance and icing, but to the roads themselves.

I know in my district, there are several roads that are much worse this year – Highway 19 near Afton in Fairview, and the Appin Road for example, and Highway 13, which, it seems to me, just comparing it to previous years, are going to take a lot more work and, therefore, money to repair. Do you have reports back from anybody in your staff that there's going to be more repair required this spring than typical?

Ms. Biggar: As our road crews go out and our supervisors in the districts – they're always on the roads – so we are aware of the higher needs area. We monitor those during the winter, not just in the spring. They're always out there year-round, our road supervisor – Gordie Lund's in your area there – and I know they're very engaged with the residents in the area. As we're all very cognizant of that, as you say, freeze and thaw, freeze and thaw, but we will continue to monitor those situations and to work to alleviate them. There are certain areas that, for whatever reason, are broke up this year, but they're out there and they've been out there. I know a number have – we're gauging and looking at what has occurred.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you, Chair.

What sort of time do you anticipate some of those larger areas which require heavier equipment getting out there, when are you going to start repairs on the roads?

Ms. Biggar: Well, we tender out our work for our paving, so we'll be getting those tenders out once the Budget's through. The asphalt plants usually come online mid-May, the third week of May and then once we get out, we'll be able to start. So it's usually into June before we actually start recapping type of stuff, but they're out there now starting to look at those areas and alleviated what they can with patching or a short/long patch area with, as I mentioned, the new machine that we have. They're out there.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you.

I know you have a facility on your website in your department for Islanders to notify

you directly of problems. How's that working?

Ms. Biggar: Well, normally people generally just call us.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Okay.

Ms. Biggar: Quite frankly, that seems to be the most – and I get a lot of emails and I forward them on to my department, Darren Chaisson, I always forward them on, but I would encourage people to go online. We're talking about construction. We have a new construction map which we developed this year which is going to keep people informed and on that map, as well, you can see where our collector roads are.

We have a great mapping system within our department that we have been able to use innovatively so I encourage people to go online and find out where that is.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you, Chair.

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Chair.

First of all, I just wanted to interject on that point. In fact, with the introduction of the new website, the form where you could submit road problems has disappeared.

Ms. Biggar: Yes.

Mr. Trivers: It is no longer there. Now it's just an email or a phone number.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: (Indistinct)

Mr. Trivers: Maybe that's what you were alluding to.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Yes, that's exactly (Indistinct)

Ms. Biggar: Yes.

Mr. Trivers: Really, I think I would love to see that form back up there. I would love to see a formal tracking system so that I can go in and say: How many requests has this civic address had over the last five years? What are the statuses of the requests (Indistinct) so that's my rant there, but Chair, really what I

wanted to talk about was I had asked for gravel because, of course, the goal – my goal is to use roads to actually spur on economic development because more people are moving to the district, which is a good thing, and we're trying to repatriate Islanders and get more people to immigrate to PEI.

But, often as you have a clay road which of course is really bad in the fall and the spring and more people move to it. What I would like to see is gravel added to the clay roads to take that first step to convert it to a gravel road. I was trying to get gravel and I was going to try and convert some of my limited recap into gravel, but they said, in fact, that's not the way they prefer to do things because there is so much pavement that has to be maintained, which makes sense.

My question to you is: Have you allocated more money –

An Hon. Member: Question.

Mr. Trivers: – in this budget so that –

Mr. J. Brown: When is the black (Indistinct)

Mr. Trivers: Have you allocated more money in this budget to allow people like me to convert some of our clay roads to gravel so that we can increase the economic development in our areas?

Ms. Biggar: Well, hon. member, we monitor the needs of where the highest traffic occurs first. We are concentrating on our industry areas and the roads that we're updating there through our collector highway program and connecting industry, and those do take priority first. But, we will continue to monitor the clay roads as well.

Mr. Trivers: I would just love to see a plan – oh sorry, Chair.

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: I would just love to see a plan because I'm trying to formulate a plan for my district –

Mr. Aylward: I thought we had a plan.

Mr. Trivers: – and really, basically when I bring up the plan and I ask for recap or I ask for gravel, if I don't get laughed at for asking for so much, I don't have a real sense of how that plan is going into play, so I would really like to see that.

Thank you.

Ms. Biggar: Well, I think you should probably go online and see how much you're going to be getting in your district this year, hon. member.

Mr. R. Brown: She's got the plan.

An Hon. Member: Try bradtrivers.com.

Mr. Trivers: Yeah.

Ms. Biggar: Compared to what some other work (Indistinct)

Mr. Trivers: I'll tell you what. I would love to be engaged in the process.

Thank you.

Mr. R. Brown: Now you are (Indistinct)

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you.

Just a couple of quick things. This new machine you spoke about, minister; who owns that machine?

Ms. Biggar: We do.

Leader of the Opposition: You do?

Ms. Biggar: We do.

Leader of the Opposition: On the brine, it's my understanding only one company is actually putting that transport truck brine stuff on the road.

Ms. Biggar: I would have to go back and check (Indistinct) –

Leader of the Opposition: Can you – I'm interested in who is doing it or is that going out for tender? Because I'm hearing that the time it takes him to leave the whole other end of the Island to drive all the way up

west, that there should be more units placed to do that. So (Indistinct)

Ms. Biggar: Yeah, and the new trucks that we're ordering have capability to have the brine on it as well, so we have moved to that.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you.

Ms. Biggar: You'll see a difference.

Chair: The hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid.

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you, Chair.

Minister, I know it's a capital, but I want to thank you and the engineers in your department on the work around Mount Herbert and the work that's going to be going on this year. It was a great process and a good solution to a problem (Indistinct) and I just also want to thank you for Stephen Yeo and the crew that goes out there, to see how we need the shoulders out there.

It's getting so busy leading up to that intersection and to look at that in the future about the paved shoulders, as the minister of agriculture would know travelling in that area a lot. It is a high-travelled area and I know your department is looking at it in the future.

I just wanted to thank you for looking at those paved shoulders out from Mermaid into Fort Augustus as well.

Ms. Biggar: Thank you. It's nice to have the recognition of what our staff is doing to work to work with communities.

Mr. MacEwen: Good process.

Thank you.

Chair: Shall the section carry? Carried.

Mechanical Operations

Total Mechanical Operations: 11,815,400.

Shall the section carry?

The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you.

Again, I'm assuming this is a weather related thing as well but the materials, supplies and services were also significantly up over last year.

Ms. Biggar: That's to fix the machines – it's ongoing repair.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: More work, more maintenance required.

Ms. Biggar: Yes.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: I figured that.

Thank you.

Chair: Shall the section carry? Carried.

Confederation Trail Maintenance

Total Confederation Trail Maintenance:
1,320,100.

Shall the section carry?

The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you.

This section is to cover maintenance, or at least that's what it says, but is it also to – are there any resources allocated to actually building the trail? Expanding the trail?

Ms. Biggar: No. Not in this, no.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: No?

Ms. Biggar: This is the ongoing maintenance and repairs, year to year, whether it's a bridge or we do have to go in and repair. There's no – to expand the trail – well, it is pretty well tip to tip now but I'm not sure what you mean on that.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Well, I think it's an incredibly valuable asset that we have, particularly for active people who come here looking for cycling holidays and vacations and things like that, but the problem is of course that it is a spine that runs down the middle of the province, and beautiful though it is and we're so lucky to have it from tip to tip, to get to the North Shore, for example,

Rustico-Emerald's district, there is really no safe way to travel.

If you arrive to Hunter River, for example, and you want to go up to Cavendish, Highway 13 is not a safe road on which to cycle.

Ms. Biggar: We are working on that as you are aware, and hon. member I encourage you to go look at our active living map. It highlights all of the widened shoulders across PEI. We have been implementing that widening of the shoulder program as we go forward. I would encourage anyone, and we linked it to the tourism page. We're not just concentrating on the Confederation Trail. We did 23 kilometres of bike trails in Bonshaw park.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Yes.

Ms. Biggar: Twenty three kilometres –

Dr. Bevan-Baker: And they are beautiful.

Ms. Biggar: But, if you look at our active living map, it really is a comprehensive outline of not just provincially-owned trails, but private trails that are there as well. We are engaged with the trail association, different organizations. But, this budget particular is to maintain the Confederation Trail.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you.

My question was heading in that direction, that I'm aware of the great improvements you're doing. I wish there were more, but I'm glad we're getting going on this. Currently, the wider shoulders – it's sort of a patchwork. There's no continuity. With regards to the Confederation Trail, it's a much easier surface to maintain, and less costly I would assume than an asphalt surface.

Is there any thought to expanding that Confederation Trail network to connect, for example, with a national park north, rather than just building widened shoulders on the roads, how about standalone bike paths from the Confederation Trail, which would be much safer?

Ms. Biggar: We do have, connected from Kensington right out to Stanley Bridge; we're connecting as we go is what I can tell you and we are very aware of the requirements and those needs.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you, Chair.

Chair: Shall the section carry? Carried.

Total Highway Maintenance Operations: 46,808,000.

Shall the total carry? Carried.

Public Works and Planning

Public Works Operations – Administration

Total Public Works Operations – Administration: 2,930,700.

The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you.

I'm just wondering in that section whether you are currently maintaining any vacant schools, and if you are what sort of annual costs there is associated with that.

Ms. Biggar: That's not this section.

This is for the main buildings like the Aubin Arsenault Building, the Coles building, Mona Wilson Building, Royalty Centre – the district heating, St. Paul's – you know? That's not in this section.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Where would the costs associated with maintaining decommission buildings? What section would that be under?

Ms. Biggar: I don't think we actually – direct building maintenance, hon. member.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Next section.

Chair: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton.

Mr. J. Brown: I will leave my question until the next section, as well.

Chair: Shall the section carry? Carried.

Direct Building Maintenance

Total Direct Building Maintenance: 7,914,600.

Question from the hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: I'll repeat –

Ms. Biggar: To answer your question, there are no schools under this section. The maintenance of schools is under the department of education. We are not maintaining any empty schools under this section.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Yeah. I'm aware. I think that I have this right, the distinction between maintenance of active schools certainly falls under education –

Ms. Biggar: Correct, but–

Dr. Bevan-Baker: – early learning, but –

Ms. Biggar: There is nothing.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: – decommissioned schools –

Ms. Biggar: Nothing.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: There is none?

Ms. Biggar: No.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Okay, thank you.

Chair: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton.

Mr. J. Brown: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Minister, is the PE Home included in this budget line item in your department now, or is it–

Ms. Biggar: You mean the maintenance of it?

Mr. J. Brown: Yes.

Ms. Biggar: It was on the other section, actually.

An Hon. Member: Oh!

Mr. J. Brown: (Indistinct)

Some Hon. Members: Carry!

Mr. J. Brown: Be that as it is –

Chair: I will allow him –

Some Hon. Members: Oh! Oh!

Ms. Biggar: Oh yeah, it's under here, too.

Mr. J. Brown: Okay, good enough.

I did have two questions.

Chair: It's under both sections, hon. members.

Mr. J. Brown: My questions are: Is there an ongoing cost to maintain it? Then, the second question, which perhaps, would be in under this one; Is there, and I don't know whether this would be a capital or an operational budget item, but the cost to demolish it. Where would that come out of?

Ms. Biggar: The cost to demolish it has to come out of operational. Yes.

Mr. J. Brown: Out of operational. Is that in there, now?

Ms. Biggar: No.

Mr. J. Brown: Or has it been talked about?

Ms. Biggar: There is no budget in there, in this budget to demolish it.

Mr. J. Brown: Okay.

Is the current –

Chair: Hon. members, I'm having a hard time hearing the question.

Mr. J. Brown: The current, the cost to heat it and whatever to heat it right now –

Ms. Biggar: We're not heating it.

Mr. J. Brown: Okay.

Who is heating it?

Ms. Biggar: It's not heated.

Mr. J. Brown: It's not heated at all, now?

Ms. Biggar: No.

Mr. J. Brown: Okay.

Are there any ongoing costs in relation to it?

Ms. Biggar: There are minimal costs. Obviously, to make sure that it's maintained and just, as we go forward, but I'd have to go back and get that information if you want me to breakdown within all of this –

Mr. J. Brown: Yeah, we can talk later.

Ms. Biggar: Yeah.

Mr. J. Brown: Generally, speaking, too, I've had number of different people that have asked me what kind of shape the building is in and whether it could be, in its current status used for, one I get often is housing.

I'm wondering if you can provide some insight on that.

Ms. Biggar: The reason that it's no longer a hospital or a home is because it wasn't up to the standard that would be required for that kind of operation. We have not deemed it to be for housing. We had interest groups, of course, looking at it, but it would not be of the level that, I don't think anybody would want to invest the amount needed to upgrade it to a housing facility.

Mr. J. Brown: Not only is it not in that kind of shape now, it wouldn't make fiscal sense to do it, even?

Ms. Biggar: Certainly, if somebody wants to invest that much money they could do it in terms of the outside shell, but you'd pretty well have to gut the inside.

Mr. J. Brown: Right.

Ms. Biggar: It would be quite exorbitant, I think, to do that kind of a project.

Mr. J. Brown: Thanks, minister.

Chair: Shall the section carry? Carried.

Accommodations

Total Accommodations: 9,290,300.

Shall the section carry? Carried.

Planning and Building Construction

Total Planning and Building Construction:
1,129,500.

Shall the section carry? Carried.

Total Public Works and Planning:
21,265,100.

Shall the total carry? Carried.

The top of page 130.

Capital Project Division

Traffic Operations

Total Traffic Operations: 3,265,900.

Shall the section carry? Carried.

Capital Projects Administration

Total Capital Projects Administration:
2,643,200.

Shall the section carry? Carried.

Design

Total Design: 635,200.

Shall the section carry? Carried.
Bridge Maintenance

Total Bridge Maintenance: 2,425,000.

We have a question from the hon. Member
from Stratford-Kinlock.

Mr. Aylward: Thank you, Chair.

Some issues have been raised as of late with
regards to the Hillsborough Bridge itself.
When you're driving across it there are
severe ruts in the wheel lanes, to the point
where your vehicle starts to swerve around. I
think it's a safety issue.

Has your department looked at it? Is there
going to be a tender put out to resurface the
Hillsborough Bridge this year?

Or to maybe look at what the reason for the
deterioration is?

Ms. Biggar: Obviously, it's the traffic that
does do that. On any road we see that, as
well. That is something that we will be
working with to monitor and as yet, there
hasn't been a tender, no, put out to do
resurfacing. That's certainly something – as
you know we just did a survey and a
structural review of that whole bridge and
deemed to be safe, so we will continue to
monitor in terms of the resurfacing.

Chair: The hon. Member from Stratford-
Kinlock.

Mr. Aylward: Thanks.

I appreciate that. I would just like you to
take it one step further and take a drive
across the Hillsborough Bridge maybe in the
next couple of days, and just experience it
for yourself.

I do experience it every day. I see that the
Minister of Finance over there was nodding
his head, as well. I feel it's a major safety
issue right now.

Ms. Biggar: Thank you.

Chair: Shall the section carry?

Question from the hon. Leader of the Third
Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you.
I know there were a couple of bridges
repaired in my district last year. I thank you
for that.

Mr. Roach: That's enough.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: No, not done yet,
minister.

Mr. Roach: (Indistinct) bridges.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: I really should have
asked this earlier, but it used to be in each
district you would get seven kilometres of
repaving –

An Hon. Member: What?

Dr. Bevan-Baker: – and then it was reduced to five. I'm going back a ways. I went back –

Ms. Biggar: You must have been.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: And then it was five, then it was three, and now it's two –

Mr. R. Brown: That's the Tories (Indistinct)

Dr. Bevan-Baker: We have, on Prince Edward Island,

Ms. Biggar: Again, that's –

Dr. Bevan-Baker: We have –

Ms. Biggar: – under capital.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: I know, but I want to ask the question.

Ms. Biggar: Sure.

Chair: Order. members!

Ms. Biggar: Sure.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: We have the largest number of roads per – kilometres of road per person of any province already just because of the nature of the geography of our place and the way that people settled here.

So, we have a lot of roads to maintain here. It costs a lot of money and yet we're embarking on spending tens of millions of dollars on a brand new highway.

That money, could, and I realize it's 50-50 sharing here, but would that money not be better spent allocated towards repairing the roads that we already have on the Island?

Ms. Biggar: I'll go back to our new agreement with the collector roads, hon. member. We are now going to be able to cost-share a lot of those in those areas that we never could before.

Until just this past year, we were not able to do 50-50% on some of those collector roads that are in our busy communities.

Now that we have that cost-share amount we'll be able to look at doing more in those areas that didn't qualify before.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: I still look around my district and I see so many kilometres of roads that would benefit from upgrading, from recapping, from repaving. I realize that's an expensive proposition. I get that.

I have a sense that Islanders would much rather see their road money spent, even if it's 50% dollars, even if these are 100% dollars of provincial money, I get the sense that Islanders would much rather see the roads that we currently have maintained properly, rather than spending tens of millions of dollars on a new road that many of us feel that is not necessary.

Ms. Biggar: We are investing approximately \$32 million into the TransCanada Highway Extension, which will service the major stream of traffic that comes and goes from this Island.

With our transportation, we are connecting those communities through our collector highway program, as well. We are working on that particular area to alleviate the heavy traffic through communities on Prince Edward Island; that heavy truck traffic that goes right through, not just Cornwall, but through some of the other areas.

This is an investment in the long-term safety of travel on Prince Edward Island. That was a decision that we made to make that investment.

To be clear, it is not hundreds of millions of dollars. It's \$32 million, our share.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: I said tens of millions.

Ms. Biggar: Okay, thank you, sorry.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: It's all right.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: No, I'm fine.

Thank you.

Chair: Shall the section carry? Carried.

Materials Testing Lab

Total Materials Testing Lab: 863,600.

Shall the section carry? Carried.

Total Capital Project Division: 9,832,900.

Shall the total carry? Carried.

Access PEI

Total Access PEI: 2,751,800.

Shall the section carry?

The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you.

I think the Access PEI offices are great. I think they are a wonderful access point for many services on Prince Edward Island.

All of time, my office, and I'm assuming every other MLA in this room's office, gets calls from constituents who are confused about where to go in government to get whatever.

Has there ever been any thought that it would be good to have a single access point – Access PEI to me would like the logical place for that. Where you would have a bank of people where anybody calling government could call up and say: I'm concerned about, or I want access to, whatever. And that they would be directed from that central hub to something else? In other words, expand the scope of Access PEI?

Ms. Biggar: Our particular staff in Access PEI have, you know, access to the directory of all the departments. If you call there and ask for communities, land and environment, they will direct you right through and link you through to that department.

If you're in Tignish and you call and they need to talk to the office in Charlottetown, they will connect you. They have the directory to link them through. I'm not sure if it's a particular issue that you're referring to?

Dr. Bevan-Baker: No.

Ms. Biggar: But, our staff will connect you to any department that you need to be connected to.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Okay.

Chair: Shall the section carry? Carried.

Total Access PEI: 2,751,800.

Shall the total carry? Carried.

The top of page 132.

Energy and Minerals

Total Energy and Minerals: 1,676,800.

Question from the Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you.

Why were the grants under-spent by \$300,000 last year?

Ms. Biggar: Just let me get into that, hon. member.

They just weren't all used because people didn't apply for them, hon. member.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Really?

Ms. Biggar: Yeah. We didn't have as much uptake.

Normally, as the heat pump program, I think because of the low cost of oil, unfortunately, we did not have as much uptake on our programs, which is why we're changing our focus to get more information out to people.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: I'm really surprised to hear that.

Ms. Biggar: Yeah.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: I thought all of those programs were oversubscribed every year forever.

Ms. Biggar: No.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: That's an interesting answer.

I'm wondering whether – I also see the professional services here went from 84 up to 190. I'm assuming that was the cost to develop the new energy strategy –

Ms. Biggar: Yes.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: – is that correct?

Ms. Biggar: No. Oh, sorry. Let me get – get the details on that for you.

Oh, yes. It was budgeted for it, but that does have to do with the engagement of the consultant for the energy strategy, yes.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Okay.

Ms. Biggar: It was budgeted but –

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Ms. Biggar: – (Indistinct) and through Nova Scotia, EfficiencyOne, we were planning to also engage with them to do some work, but it didn't – we didn't –

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Pan out.

Ms. Biggar: – not yet.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Okay.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: I'm seeing here that the cost for this department is approximately \$1.5 million in order to give out grants of \$700,000. It costs as much to administer the grants as the amount of grants given out is what I'm saying.

I'm wondering if there is room to improve the administrative efficiency, or if there is something else that this government, that this department does other than administer grants?

Ms. Biggar: We certainly, this particular department it includes the, you know, efforts to reduce energy consumption, as well. We are moving that department over into the PEI Energy Corp. as part of the recommendations to better coordinate our programs.

We are making efforts to change how we deliver those services.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: I'm looking at the budget total for this department, which is basically unchanged from last year.

Ms. Biggar: Yeah.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Yet, we have to somehow implement the new energy strategy, or at least start to implement this year. That's a huge job.

I'm wondering where the funding is coming from in order to implement the energy strategy.

Mr. Aylward: Interesting (Indistinct)

Ms. Biggar: A lot of it, well, is already budgeted, as we said, for our different programs and we are continuing to work with our federal partners to see what green programs that they may have, as well, that we can partner on.

We will be certainly looking, depending on how the programs roll-out whether we can certainly partner with the federal government on that, as well.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Okay, that's good.

Thank you, Chair.

Chair: Shall the section carry? Carried.

Total Energy and Minerals: 1,676,800.

Shall the total carry? Carried.

Total Department of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy: 133,852,800.

Shall the total carry? Carried.

Hon. members, we will now move onto page 133.

Interministerial Women's Secretariat

Total Interministerial Women's Secretariat: 438,600.

Total Interministerial Women's Secretariat: 438,600.

Shall the section carry?

We have a question from the Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: So the funding here has not changed at all, not just from this year to the last, but for many years. That covers staffing and, of course, administration, and all of the grants that were allocated.

You see that if salaries go up that's taken out from somewhere else.

Ms. Biggar: Yeah.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Why is the – this is the only direct investment made to women's programming on Prince Edward Island so –

Ms. Biggar: No.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: – I'm wondering why this is not, at least, keeping pace with inflation.

Ms. Biggar: In regard to your comment about the only program being invested in women's programs, I think if you look at the new wellness program through health and the money that comes our family services, I think we have to –

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Sure, this –

Ms. Biggar: – acknowledge that –

Dr. Bevan-Baker: – is directly, what I meant –

Ms. Biggar: Yes. This is to support –

Dr. Bevan-Baker: – this is to specifically –

Ms. Biggar: – the non-profits groups that do work.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Yes.

Ms. Biggar: We are looking to do some cross-governmental support, as well. That we will coordinate. That is something we're looking at as a future initiative, as well.

We are continuing to work with those organizations, and cross-government we work cross-government on a lot of our programs, as well.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: I understand that. I appreciate that and so do the many women's groups who competitively go, vie for these grants.

I'm just wondering why there is no increase and why there has not been any increase for a number of years now.

Ms. Biggar: As we said: We have been looking at budgetary restraint over the last number of years. All of the departments have been funding their salaries within. That is reflective of this, yes.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you, Chair.

Chair: Shall the section carry? Carried.

Shall the total carry? Carried.

Thank you, Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy. Thank you, Wendy.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Biggar: Madam Chair, I move that the Speaker take the chair, and the Chair report progress and beg leave to sit again.

Chair: Shall it carry? Carried.

Mr. 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 Communities, Land and Environment.

Mr. Mitchell: I move, seconded by the hon. Member from West Royalty-Springvale, that this House adjourn until Tuesday, May 2nd, at 2:00 p.m.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Enjoy your weekend.

The Legislature adjourned until Tuesday,
May 2nd, at 2:00 p.m.