

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY



Speaker: Hon. Francis (Buck) Watts

Hansard, Published by Order of the Legislature

Second Session of the Sixty-fifth General Assembly

Wednesday, 3 May 2017

MATTERS OF PRIVILEGE AND RECOGNITION OF GUESTS	3559
STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS	3561
CHARLOTTETOWN-LEWIS POINT (Dianne Young-Lennon Recovery House).....	3561
WEST ROYALTY-SPRINGVALE (Bikes for Books)	3561
RUSTICO-EMERALD (Harmony House-Working On It)	3562
ORAL QUESTIONS	3562
LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION (Phase Two Cornwall Bypass Tender)	3562
LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION (Phase One Cornwall Bypass Tender)	3563
LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION (Posting of Tenders on Government Tender' Page)	3563
LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION (Secrecy of Dollars for Cornwall Bypass).....	3564
BELFAST-MURRAY RIVER (RCMP and Contact with Crown Attorney's)	3564
BELFAST-MURRAY RIVER (Scope Limitation to Auditor General)	3564
BELFAST-MURRAY RIVER (Truth and Liberal Government)	3565
BELFAST-MURRAY RIVER (Covering Up of Senior Executives)	3566
BELFAST-MURRAY RIVER (Avoidance of Investigation into Egaming and Deleted Emails)	3567
STRATFORD-KINLOCK (Awarding of Tender re: Hillsborough Hospital Report)	3567
STRATFORD-KINLOCK (Cost re: Hillsborough Hospital Report)	3568
STRATFORD-KINLOCK (Report Results Not Included in Written Questions)	3568
STRATFORD-KINLOCK (Recommendations Implemented by Corpus Sanchez Report)	3568
STRATFORD-KINLOCK (Safety Net Role of Hillsborough Hospital)	3568
STRATFORD-KINLOCK (Out-patient Treatment Implementation).....	3659
STRATFORD-KINLOCK (Data Tracking for Hillsborough Hospital).....	3659
LEADER OF THE THIRD PARTY (Reversing Decisions to Ban Corporate Donations).....	3570
LEADER OF THE THIRD PARTY (Business Owners and Corporate Donations)	3571
SUMMERSIDE-WILMOT (Attracting People and Jobs to PEI)	3571
SUMMERSIDE-WILMOT (Measuring Job and Economic Growth in Summerside).....	3571
CHARLOTTETOWN-BRIGHTON (Supports Improving Student Well-Being)	3572
CHARLOTTETOWN-BRIGHTON (Schools and Timelines of Programs in Schools).....	3573
RUSTICO-EMERALD (Liberal Party Executive Director)	3573
CHARLOTTETOWN-VICTORIA PARK (Independence of Order of PEI).....	3575

LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION (Tabling of Mill River Contract-further)	3577
STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS	3577
PREMIER (New Anne Series)	3577
VERNON RIVER-STRATFORD (Soil Your Undies)	3579
TABLING OF DOCUMENTS.....	3580
INTRODUCTION OF GOVERNMENT BILLS.....	3581
Bill 75 (Supplementary Appropriation Act 2017).....	3581
ORDERS OF THE DAY (GOVERNMENT)	3581
ESTIMATES	3582
AUDITOR GENERAL	3582
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.....	3583
RURAL AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT.....	3586
COMMUNITIES, LAND AND ENVIRONMENT	3591
ADJOURNED.....	3611

The Legislature sat at 2:00 p.m.

Matters of Privilege and Recognition of
Guests

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Good afternoon everyone, and welcome our guests in the gallery, starting with my sister Brenda, who's visiting from Saskatchewan and keeps a pretty sharp eye – a close eye on things, and is available to offer comment for anyone who would like to get any feedback on how you're doing, myself included.

Eddie Lund, others in the gallery, those watching from home, and to acknowledge as others have done, the many great events that made up Music Monday and all of the contributors and planners and organizers; big events, small events.

I had the opportunity to take part in an evening event at Receiver Coffee that was on the smaller end of the range, but not when it came to the talent. There's a number of great young groups showing off their talents in three different languages, a great indication of the diversity in this province, and I recognize the role of Graeme Zinck as the emcee and how that all went.

Of course, the National Art Centre Orchestra was here on Monday and took part in a number of those events, including their 150th Canada anniversary tour, and we're pleased that they made Prince Edward Island an early stop on that tour.

Tomorrow, I want to recognize all of the young people who are involved, and of course their parents and teachers who helped them out and who work hard to make the event that is the Provincial Heritage Fair, and that will take place next door, the provincial version of it, and various events leading up to this will take place for 186 students in Grades 5-9 next door here at the Confederation Centre of the Arts. There's so much that we can learn in terms of what those exhibitions or those displays and the background the research can tell us, and not least in the enthusiasm and the

communications ability of those young people.

So congratulations to all of them and to their teachers and the organizers, and I'm sure many people will get to enjoy it.

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 don't know actually how to approach this one, but I'd like to say thank you to Janice Fenner, Donna Westerman, Cassandra Noonan. They nominated one of my roads in the district for one of the worst roads in Canada, and it got accepted, the Clark Road. I want to assure them that I will be working with the minister, staff and my budget, whatever I have, and see if we can get this road fixed up, and I wanted to express that to them, that we need all the work on our roads and make sure that they are as safe as we can for the public.

On another note, I attended Victoria Harbour this morning and they were in the process of putting some boats in, getting ready for the upcoming season, and getting some shops and stuff cleaned up and opened up, and it was nice to talk to some of the people down there, Vince Keough, and some others.

On another note, yesterday there was a music festival week that was started in north – Trinity Fellowship Church in Bedeque. Last night, my wife Debbie, she showed me a video that was on Facebook of some kids that did a performance of a chimneysweep musical, and these four kids were all dressed up as chimneysweeps, and they did this musical up there. I want to really give a really good shout-out, because they did a tremendous job; to Savannah Cutcliffe, Sophie Gallant; Jacklyn Newrick; Ellen MacMurdo, and of course the pianist was Bethany Dawson, and they just – if you get a chance to go on Facebook and see that, you should take it. They did an excellent job.

Also, I'm getting some good reports out of Scales Pond on fishing, and with that there is a safety note I think everybody should take note of. One of the local fishermen contacted me this morning, a young guy who went down there fishing and he found a needle on the shore of Scales Pond up there around the international children – or the children's memorial site, and he had come across this actual needle, or course, and the syringe and stuff like that.

I'd ask the public to; do not pick these up, do not touch them. Call somebody in authority, whether it would be a police department or maybe a local fireman or somebody to come, pick up this needle and get it out of there, because we don't want to have somebody get hurt with them.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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 back again. I'd also like to welcome a couple of my children who are here today, Daniel and Alex, the bearded hirsute young man there, and my neighbour from Tignish-Palmer Road wonders whether he's a long-lost third son.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

An Hon. Member: Daddy.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: In the interest of balance, I'd like to thank the minister of transportation. I contacted her, just yesterday, on behalf of Gerald Dixon from the Crapaud Exhibition who were looking for a load of crushed asphalt and I believe that's being delivered today, so thank you, Minister.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

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

I want to welcome everyone to the gallery, and especially Brenda, who's a lifelong friend of my sister – right from high school right on through. To the Bakers, it's great to see you here.

I also want to put a shout-out to District 5, Vernon River-Stratford for all who may be watching. Again, a little note, wish all the best to the farmers and the fishers, but safety, again, on the farm and on the water.

Just a little note of interest on that – there were a pair of students from the Morell High: Ben MacMillan and Jacob MacDonald who won the Worker's Compensation Board video for safety in the workplace. They did a small video on working on the farm and the issues there. They won a \$1,000 prize for first place in that, as well as \$1,000 for their school and now they're going to the national level. If you want to help them out in the fan favourite vote, you can go to young workers video contest and give them a vote up until May the 5th. So, that would be absolutely great. It's great to have young people come out and speak up about their industry – in this case in safety within that industry.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Henderson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I, too, want to welcome those to the gallery and those watching back home in the great riding of O'Leary-Inverness. One of those great watchers back in my riding is now here in the gallery – Harvey Collicutt is here today. Harvey usually makes a general appearance here in the Legislature once a year and he's always a great person to give me a little bit of advice to keep my tie straight or to make me sit up straight and he sometimes gives me some pointers on how to handle the opposition, so I appreciate that.

I also want to say thank you for the nice welcome I had this morning. I had the opportunity to meet with the PEI Nurses

Union this morning. We have about 1,900 nurses in government and I wanted to give a big thank you to them for their service that they provide in delivering professional healthcare to the province. Of those 1,900, I think there are about 1,205 of them that are actually working with the Department of Health and Wellness and Health PEI. They were at Credit Union Place in Summerside this morning.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Murphy: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Pleasure to rise and welcome all the folks in the public gallery, as well as all the good people at home in Alberton-Roseville that may be watching on the computer or the TV and all the people right across the province. It's another beautiful day here on PEI.

I'm going to be attending a very important supper tonight at the Delta and I'm sorry guys over on the other side there, but the tickets are all gone so you'll not be able to attend.

Mr. LaVie: Two for one deal, no wonder they're gone.

Mr. Murphy: And I'd like to wish our fishermen and fisherwomen success and safety as they're out on the water and the farmers are out planting their crops, I also wish them safety and success as well.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Statements by Members

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

Dianne Young-Lennon Recovery House

Ms. Casey: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise in the House today to say well done to Dianne Young who has shown what it is to

persevere and accomplish what you set your mind to.

Dianne is a mother whose son, Lennon Waterman, struggled with addiction and mental health. Sadly, she lost her son to suicide in 2013. She has become a champion for those who suffer from addiction as a way to honour her son.

There is nothing stronger than a mother on a mission. Dianne knows people with other diseases can go to the hospital and get help and she wants the same consideration given to those with mental health and addiction issues.

Dianne did exactly what the slogan for mental health says to do, Diane got loud. She is talking about it and is doing something. Our government has listened and there have been many advances to mental health and addiction services in our province.

Bishop Grecco never forgot the lady who came to him with a proposal three years ago. When the Belcourt Center was being designated as a surplus building and proposed for demolition, the Bishop immediately thought of Dianne's hopes for a place to be known as the Lennon Recovery House.

I invite all my colleagues in the House to wish Dianne Young much success as she moves on to the next stage in developing Lennon Recovery House.

Thank You.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Bikes for Books

Mr. Dumville: Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to speak of a wonderful initiative that is getting school kids reading more. It's called Bikes for Books.

The Prince of Wales Masonic Lodge No. 18 is working with schools to promote reading. This literacy program gets children to read books and with each book that they finish they get a ballot to win a bike.

Now that we have seen an example of some beautiful weather what could be better than a brand new bicycle? The bikes will be presented before school closes for the summer.

Today the students of St. Jean's school will be doing their draw for 14 bikes followed by ice cream for everyone. Principal Tracy Ellsworth said: The ballot jar is overflowing. The kids at Mount Stewart Consolidated have also been busy reading again this year, and will be finding out what lucky kids will be riding 14 new bikes this summer.

Last year, they read a whopping 840 books. I would also like to add that there will be helmets included with each bike.

Reading helps comprehensive skills, enlightens, inspires creativity in the students. This program gives positive enforcement to those students who commit to reading, and will jumpstart a love for books. These goals are attainable for every student who participates.

I would like the House to acknowledge the great work of the Prince of Wales Masonic Lodge No. 18, and also the great work of the kids who have been expanding their minds with books.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Harmony House Fundraiser for Mental Health

Mr. Trivers: Mr. Speaker, Harmony House Theatre, the 2014 ECMA and 2015 Music PEI Venue of the Year, is kicking off its ninth season. Owners Melanie and Kris Taylor have a history of giving back to the community.

Harmony House is pleased to host comedian Patrick Ledwell in partnership with the Canadian Mental Health Association PEI, presenting *Working on It: a night of comedy about life, your work, and mental wellness*.

This fundraising event will happen tomorrow night at 7:30 p.m. will all

proceeds going directly to the Canadian Mental Health Association. Melanie and Kris are donating the theatre free of charge to this great cause.

During the first half of the night, Patrick Ledwell's presentation will travel through some humorous and practical approaches to staying well in your work. For the second half, Ledwell will be joined by his performing partner, Mark Haines and they will be debuting new material for this year's addition of The Island Summer Review.

Harmony House will also be featuring Steven Page this Sunday, May 7th. Page is a former lead singer and primary songwriter for the iconic Canadian band The Barenaked Ladies.

Steven Page is also known for his advocacy on mental health issues. He, himself, has struggled with mental illness, and encourages anyone struggling to seek help and everyone to reach out to friends they think may be struggling.

Locals still talk of when Page performed a legendary impromptu concert and jam session at Harmony House with Island studio engineer Jon Matthews during Mental Health Week a few years ago. Page, PEI and Harmony House definitely have a special relationship.

Mr. Speaker, as this is Mental Health Week, I thought it was important to share these good things that are being done for mental health on PEI.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Responses to Questions Taken As Notice

Questions by Members

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Phase two Cornwall bypass tender

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

On April 4th, a tender closed for the second phase of the Cornwall bypass.

Question to the transportation minister: Who won that tender?

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

Ms. Biggar: Mr. Speaker, we only had one tender.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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

To the minister of transportation: Can you tell me who won the tender and how much was that tender for?

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

Ms. Biggar: Mr. Speaker, I don't have that information with me. I'll have to have a look into it and see what I can bring back.

Mr. Myers: One tender and now you don't know who it was.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: I can't believe, Mr. Speaker, that the size of that project and the minister doesn't know who won the tender.

Phase one Cornwall bypass tender

Question to the minister of transportation: Who won the main tender for the work of the phase one of the Cornwall bypass last year?

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

Ms. Biggar: Mr. Speaker, thank you.

The tender did just close on the Phase 2A so that contract hasn't come through to me as yet to finalize. Certainly, I know that we're just getting things going. I will check into that again.

If memory serves me correct, last year, it was a similar situation where there was only

one construction company tendered. I think it was Island Coastal.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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

We all know that Island Coastal won the contract last year. That should— no reason why that couldn't just come right out.

The reason I ask, is these tenders, last year and the year and this year don't have the winners posted on the government tender's website.

Posting of tenders on government tenders' page

Question to the transportation minister: Why aren't the winners of these tenders also posted online through the government tenders' page?

Mr. Myers: Good question.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Biggar: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

If memory serves me correct, how it goes with tenders; if you are a contractor bidding on a tender you have a certain code that you can go in and you can check to see who were successful on those tenders. Unless you are granted that code as a contractor, those particular, even though they might be in there, you may not see them.

I will certainly go back and see what that process is, and what it is in order to ensure that if someone wants access to that, they can have.

I do know to get tenders off of the website you have to have a code as a contractor in order to do that.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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

I have to wonder if somebody didn't go and delete the codes.

There are tenders for smaller items on the Cornwall bypass where the winning bids are posted. You can find out details about the hundreds of thousands of dollars spent on overhead signs. We're talking about millions of dollars for these Island Coastal tenders.

Secrecy of dollars for Cornwall bypass

Question to the minister of transportation: Can you explain why your tired Liberal government is being so needlessly secret about millions of dollars of public money for the Cornwall bypass?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Biggar: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Again, in terms of tenders, those are all publicly advertised and due diligence done on them.

Anything to do with the TransCanada Highway Extension is all in partnership with the federal government. Everything we do is audited by the federal government. Everything has to be sent there and finalized.

There is nothing secret, contrary to what you would like the public to believe. Hon. members like to twist the words and twist the facts. But I can tell you here, right now here today, everything that we have done on this TransCanada Highway Extension is in line with our responsibilities in partnership with the federal government.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Premier admitted last week that the justice department has had no conversations with the RCMP around the e-gaming scandal.

RCMP contact with Crown Attorneys

Premier: Will you confirm if the RCMP has been in contact with the Crown Attorneys over conflict of interest, breach of trust, insider trading or any other Criminal Code violations related to your government?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Myers: Good question.

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, if there has been any such contact with – between the RCMP and Crown Attorneys I have no knowledge of that. I'm not able to share anything with the House on that matter.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Yesterday in QP we spoke about the unprecedented steps the auditor took to bring her concerns around conflicts of interest and other potential criminal wrongdoing on the e-gaming scandal.

Scope limitation to Auditor General

Premier: Why did your government deliberately limit the auditor's scope?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, the scope given to the Auditor General was, indeed, wide. It was to look into all aspects of those transactions and, indeed, she did. She interviewed almost 60 individuals. Thousands, more than 10,000 documents, and the Auditor General gave a very

thorough report. That included, in the course of her evidence before Public Accounts as I understand it, and in her report, that the Auditor General has no reason to believe that there was any criminal activity.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Myers: She sent you a letter.

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Well the Premier says the Auditor's scope was wide. She wrote an entire appendix outlining her scope and about how it was limited by Cabinet.

Premier: What is your tired Liberal government hiding from the Auditor General and the people of PEI?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Myers: Good question.

Mr. Myers: Didn't you hear his new radio ads? Everyone likes (Indistinct).

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

An Hon. Member: According to the radio.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, the Auditor General was asked to look into all of the events and the scope was indeed wide if you go back to the Order in Council from early March of 2015, and the Auditor General took time. She looked into all of the evidence. She considered these matters. She made 15 recommendations, and government has acted on all 15 of those, and this all relates to activity that would have been concluded by early in the year 2012.

We have said from the outset that this is not the way we do business, and indeed that is evident. We have taken to heart everything the Auditor General has brought forward on this, and indeed we're learning and moving forward.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Belfast-Murray River

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Premier talks about the thousands of documents, and I guess it's quantity versus quality.

She did not get all the documents that she needed or requested, and definitely did not get the whole story.

Premier, will you admit the reason your government limited the Auditor's scope was to avoid evidence from reaching her?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, there was no such intent and no such activity or initiative on the part of government. There were multiple hours, and indeed days, spent together with the Auditor General, and as any issues arose in the course of her work, those were addressed directly.

As the House will recall, even after the Auditor General produced her report and raised some concerns, we acted on government's initiative, together with the cooperation of the Mi'kmaq Confederacy to provide even further documents.

This was a wide open enquiry. It was fully considered on the part of the Auditor General, and it was fully taken to heart by government.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Truth of Liberal government

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Well, there's a whole page in the appendix about scope limitations by this government. The Auditor clearly outlined that her scope was limited. There were literally hundreds

of documents that she never saw, that this government continues to hide away; or maybe they are gone forever.

Premier, why is your tired Liberal government so afraid of the whole truth coming to light?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, I mentioned earlier, and I'll say again, that the Auditor General looked into every aspect of this, into activities that had been really brought to a conclusion by February of 2012, and indeed, if there's anyone who's tired here, I believe it's the opposition in continuing to ask these same questions –

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct).

Mr. Myers: Oh how is he in Ottawa (Indistinct) skipped Question Period yesterday (Indistinct).

Premier MacLauchlan: These same questions that have been answered –

Mr. Myers: You skipped Question Period yesterday (Indistinct) Ottawa.

Premier MacLauchlan: They've been answered by the Auditor General. They've been taken to heart by government, and indeed, we've made it very clear, and you can see it in how the economy of this province is going –

Mr. Myers: How was he in Ottawa?

Premier MacLauchlan: – and how we are going with more and more transparency and openness –

Mr. Myers: Who paid for that?

Premier MacLauchlan: – that this province is going ahead because of the leadership that this government is giving.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Myers: Prove it, because Islanders don't believe it, you won't last (Indistinct) Old Home Week, and you know it.

Ms. Biggar: (Indistinct)

Mr. Myers: Tweet about it.

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

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As much as they try to change the channel, I keep coming back to this because Islanders want answers.

Mr. Aylward: That's right.

Ms. Compton: Mr. Speaker, the Auditor took an entire chapter to spell out apparent conflict of interest situations for both Chris LeClair and Melissa MacEachern. She managed to identify these conflicts despite government destroying all records for both of these employees.

Covering up of senior executives

Premier, why are you covering up corruption and criminal activity by your government's senior executives?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Myers: That's a good question.

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker –

Ms. Biggar: (Indistinct) provided some proof for that.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, those are –

Ms. Biggar: You'd better provide proof for that one.

Premier MacLauchlan: Those are –

Mr. Myers: (Indistinct)

Premier MacLauchlan: Those are strong words, but let me remind –

Mr. Myers: She said LOL afterwards.

Premier MacLauchlan: Let me remind this House and the opposition that within weeks of coming to government in 2015, this government extended conflict of interest requirements and the whole regime to deputy ministers and senior officials, and that's precisely because – as we said – that we are a government that does business a new way, with openness and transparency, and that's exactly what we're giving the people of this province.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

For some reason, I need to keep reminding these guys that the Auditor General is the financial watchdog. She's not a police officer or a criminal investigator.

She was deliberately handcuffed by this government and still managed to find these conflict of interests, even after all records were destroyed.

Avoidance of investigation into egaming and deleted emails

Premier, why are you so desperate to avoid a proper, independent investigation of your egaming scandal and deleted emails disgrace?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, on the question of emails, this House would be well aware that government has come forward with a whole new initiative. It's been considered in estimates. There's legislation before the House. There's been a program outlined with a five-year plan as to how we're going to deal with this and then deal squarely with the public records, the emails in a way that's going to meet the concerns that were raised by the Auditor General. That's another indication of the good government that we're giving this province on a go-forward basis.

And indeed, we have, from the very beginning –

Mr. Myers: You read the poll?

Premier MacLauchlan: We have, from the very beginning, looked at this question that was given to the Auditor General as an opportunity for our government, for this House, for the people, to learn and work together on a go-forward basis that's going to give all of us good government. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

Awarding of tender re: Hillsborough Hospital report

Mr. Aylward: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

On November of 2013, Health PEI commissioned a report on the future role of the Hillsborough Hospital called *Meeting the Inpatient Mental Health & Addictions Care Needs of Islanders*.

Question to the minister of health: Minister, who won the tender for this work?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Henderson: Mr. Speaker I'm not aware of who got that tender. That was a little before my time, but I'd be happy to get that information and bring it back to the hon. member.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

Mr. Aylward: Thank you, Mr. Speaker

Corpus Sanchez, actually, was the firm that won that tender, and the report in 2013 of November.

Corpus Sanchez, in fact, has done a lot of work consulting on Island health care in recent years.

Question to the minister –

Ms. Biggar: Tory government, too.

Cost re: Hillsborough Hospital report

Mr. Aylward: Can you advise how much this report cost Island taxpayers?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Henderson: Mr. Speaker, as – if the hon. member is suggesting that Corpus Sanchez got the tender for that report, I'll have to look that up and find out what the tender costs were, because I haven't – it's just a little bit before my time as minister, and I'll get that back to the hon. member in the immediate future.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

Mr. Aylward: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

This report took place over several months, and in fact a wide range of frontline employees were consulted. Our office actually submitted written questions on the report and the studies commissioned by the health department and its entities.

Strangely, this report was not included in the answer we received back.

Report results not included in written questions

So a question to the minister of health: Why wasn't this report included in the answers to our written questions provided by your department?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Henderson: Mr. Speaker, once again, I have to say that I am not aware what date that actual question was put in, but I'll follow that up with in my department.

But I can say that in the Hillsborough Hospital, we are trying to make sure that that facility is providing the utmost of care and safety standards for the patients that are there, and we do have monies allocated in our Capital Budget for 2019. We've already invested, I think, over \$600,000 in security upgrades, and we'll continue to invest in that facility until it's replaced.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

Mr. Aylward: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

This report on the Hillsborough Hospital by Corpus Sanchez had many recommendations. In fact, there were seven recommendations.

Recommendations implemented by Corpus Sanchez report

Question to the health minister: How many of the recommendations did your government implement from this report on the Hillsborough Hospital that was conducted by Corpus Sanchez?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Henderson: Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member mentioned, that report was done back in 2012. It's 2017 at the moment. I've been minister about a year and a half now. I'd be happy to look over that report and ask the appropriate questions to my department and get the appropriate answers back to hon. member as soon as possible.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

Safety net role of Hillsborough Hospital

Mr. Aylward: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, as the minister stated, he's been the minister now for a year and a half and we know of the serious issues around mental health here on Prince Edward Island, so I would think that the very least this minister could do was get up to speed on his

file over the last year and a half. What have you been doing? Obviously nothing.

One of the big issues flagged is the safety net role Hillsborough Hospital plays for those who struggle to integrate back into our community. One of the recommendations for the Chief Mental Health Officer to set up a working group to fast track proposals to resolve the housing issues that are currently being served by Hillsborough Hospital under the safety net role.

Question to the minister of health: Was this recommendation implemented?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Speaker, the hon. member would know that – I have to say, as the minister of health and wellness, I have some very significant files and they're very large and I'm doing my very best to be as up to speed in those as possible. 2012 – I don't know if I've gone back that far, but I will say that the Hillsborough Hospital, as well as all of the mental health services that we provide Islanders, we certainly are working hard to do the investment. We've made significant changes from adding programs, we've added more services to deal with mental health issues and we continue to work in dealing with people with mental health illness, whether that's on an inpatient basis or a transitional basis as they transfer back into society.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

Out-patient treatment implementation

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

Mr. Speaker, another big issue flagged in this report was around out-patient treatment. The Corpus Sanchez Report recommended establishing a working group with two out-of-province providers – namely East Coast Forensics and Homewood – to determine how joint care planning can be enhanced so that Islanders are better served during

treatment off-Island and, most importantly, follow-up care back here at home.

Question to the minister of health: Was this recommendation implemented?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Henderson: Mr. Speaker, we have had numerous contacts with East Coast Forensics and, once again, we are dealing with some of those issues. East Coast Forensics are also seeing significant inpatient challenges that are awarded through the courts and we are doing our best to try to accommodate the challenges that we're faced with on that. When it comes to issues around Homewood, yes – sometimes Islanders think that services are better found off-Island, but in this case we have found that Homewood has not been providing any different outcomes than what we've been doing internally.

Once again, I think I'll leave that to our chief medical director regarding psychiatry and they determine what's the most appropriate location for a person to receive the appropriate services and get them as expediently as possible.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

Data tracking for Hillsborough Hospital

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

The Corpus Sanchez Report identifies, and it's quite obvious, that there are currently no programs here on Prince Edward Island that even come close or matching Homewood. The difficulty is, when those individuals that are lucky enough to be referred off-Island to this great facility, there are no supports or after care programs here on the Island to support the treatment that they had off-Island. One challenge noted in the study was around records management and data tracking. We've heard in the House over the last weeks about these problems persisting.

Question to the minister of health: What concrete steps are being taken to fix this issue around data tracking for Hillsborough Hospital and the Islanders that facility serves?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Henderson: Mr. Speaker, when any patient is discharged, there is usually a medical plan that goes with that particular patient to reintegrate – whether that's back into society, whether it's back to your home, whatever your situation based on your illness would be. Those medical plans are done up by the professionals within the departments and they look at all the resources that are available to that individual and sometimes those supports can be from family, sometimes it can be supports from other services within our health care system – the list goes on.

Once again, I may not know the details of each individual case plan, but everybody has a case plan when they leave a public institution in the health care system.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Reversing decision to ban corporate donations

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

Last week the Premier informed this House that he reversed his position to ban corporate donations to political parties following advice from the Leader of the Opposition.

A question to the Premier: What arguments did the Leader of the Opposition use to convince you to reverse your original position?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Maybe the Leader of the Opposition would like to answer. But, in any event, it's simply this: that there's a long tradition in this province of people who

support political parties by buying tickets to publically advertised dinners – there's one tonight – and there's a practice, and it's one that's honourable and it's above board, of people writing cheques against their firm or their company when they buy those tickets. It was considered desirable in the traditions of support for the democratic process of this province to continue with that tradition.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

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

A quick scan of the political donations would expose why both the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition would be happy to collude on such a turnaround.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct)

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Corporate donations to both parties are counted in the hundreds of thousands of dollars every year, accounting for the majority of party revenues.

A question to the Premier: Do you have concerns about the political influence that businesses may acquire by donating to political parties?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition is obviously talking about the past and let's recognize that the proposal that's being brought forward would, for the first time in the history of this province, put a cap on the amount that individuals or corporations or unions can donate to a political party. That number that's been suggested is \$3,000 and that would be, actually, at the low end of such caps across this country and that's precisely in the interest of transparency and openness and continued support for the democratic process in this province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Business owners and corporate donations

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

The Premier's current suggestion as he just outlined is that corporations be allowed to contribute as much as individuals are to a maximum of \$3,000 per year. This would allow, by the way, current donations to the party – for the government to accept 80% of the current donations they are getting – virtually makes no difference to the state of affairs.

It reminds me of when property owners could vote in each and every district in which they owned property. Donating to political parties, after all, is like voting with your money and business owners get two votes.

A question to the Premier: Given that all Islanders can already donate as individuals, why should business owners have the ability to make a second donation?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to clarify. This is not on a per-district basis that we've put forward this proposal, it's province-wide and it's \$3,000 and I don't think there's anybody out there who thinks that that's going to open up any floodgates to any kind of influence that an individual or a union or a corporation can have over the work of a government that's running an annual business of \$1.8 billion. This is very simply to continue traditions that have been in place, and indeed, have generated generous support for political parties and for the political process in this province.

I repeat: There's a dinner tonight. It's publically advertised – they all are. Frankly, people are happy to support the political process in this province and we appreciate it.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Summerside-Wilmot.

Attracting people and jobs to PEI

Mr. Palmer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Workforce and Advanced Learning. We know that an available and skilled workforce is critical to attracting economic development. Research says jobs go to where the people are. We know we have an aging workforce here in PEI and we should be working to create new industries.

Minister: What is your department doing to attract people and ultimately jobs on PEI?

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

Mr. Gallant: Mr. Speaker, we are helping all Islanders access training. We're also helping Islanders connect to jobs, and we're helping Island companies that are growing to help them with their labour market needs. When we can't fill this with Islanders, we are trying to bring people back home to help out these local companies.

I'd like to say, I think our efforts are paying off as a result of the news we had earlier this week. We're leading Atlantic Canada in population growth and we have the third highest GDP in Canada.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Casey: Good answer.

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

Measuring job and economic growth in Summerside

Mr. Palmer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We know the Summerside area is a significant economic unit in Prince County. It is important to track economic activities so we can build on our successes. We also know Stats Canada has a lagging report revealing data that is not current as one would like.

Can the minister describe how the department measures job and economic

growth in the province, and in particular, Summerside?

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

Mr. Gallant: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

There are province-wide economic numbers and they are published monthly by workpei.ca, and I'm pleased to report that in March of 2017, there were 8,200 employed persons in Summerside. This represents an increase of 1,200 more employed persons over the year.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Some Hon. Members: Wow.

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

Mr. Palmer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Minister, what are the goals of your department in relation to job growth in Summerside, and how do you measure success?

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

Mr. Gallant: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As I had indicated before, our department works with companies in key sectors and we're working with the aerospace industry and the IT sector in the Summerside area, and right across the province.

Also, in Summerside we are supporting an operating grant at the Holland College. We supported \$2.6 million, also, with our federal counterparts for the campus there to do some renovations to the police academy. We also support training through programs through Skills PEI.

As far as our success and our measurement, we watch this through our job and our population numbers and we keep track of that and when we have our numbers we'll report it to the public.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. R. Brown: (Indistinct) the MLAs from Summerside are doing a great job.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton.

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

Mr. Myers: Here it comes.

Supports improving student well-being

Mr. J. Brown: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Education, Early Learning and Culture.

Mr. Myers: Come on.

Mr. J. Brown: With the provincial budget, came the announcement that Island students will be receiving new supports to improve student well-being and help them overcome challenges in school that impact their performance.

Can the minister elaborate –

Mr. Myers: Elaborate?

Mr. J. Brown: – on how the initiative will help students address the complex needs of our youth in schools?

Mr. Myers: Can he elaborate?

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Myers: Yes, I can elaborate (Indistinct)

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

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

As the minister, I am very grateful for the support of a number of government departments besides our own department of education. Our focus will be services on the ground for children and families in school families across the Province of Prince Edward Island.

The priority of the school teams will be to – as we’ve talked and debated all week – around the whole area of mental health and providing supports and services to children in schools with a range of different professionals, whether it be OTs, counsellors, youth service workers. I’m very pleased and very proud of the initiative by our government.

Mr. R. Brown: Great job.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. J. Brown: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Minister, how much funding has been allocated for this support initiative and how will it be used?

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: (Indistinct)

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

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

We have approximately eight families of schools in the Province of Prince Edward Island. The first two targeted schools will be the Westisle Family of Schools and the Montague Family of Schools, both in rural areas of the province. That investment will be a joint investment; a \$400,000 investment from the department of education and a \$300,000 from the Department of Health and Wellness, to support OTs, occupational therapists, youth service workers, counsellors that will work to support teachers, but most importantly children, for a combined investment of a three-year rollout of over \$5 million.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Schools and timelines of programs in schools

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

Minister, what schools will offer these new supports and what is the timeline of when parents and students expect to see the programs implemented in their schools?

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

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

We will be pleased to begin the rollout this fall in the Westisle Family of Schools and in the Montague Family of Schools, but we will be – the following September we will be targeting the Colonel Gray and the Souris and Morell family; the Bluefield family as well. In year three, we will be targeting Charlottetown Rural and the Kinkora, Kensington and the Three Oaks families.

Very pleased, once again, and extremely grateful for the collaboration of government departments and putting children first by our government, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Liberal Party executive director

Mr. Trivers: Mr. Speaker, can the Premier explain why the Liberal Party website fails to list Charles Curley, who was hired in February, as your party’s new executive director?

Mr. R. Brown: Put it on bradtrivers.com.

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, Mr. Curley commenced his work as executive director of the party on the Tuesday after Easter and I know he has been very busy and I have been impressed with the diligence with which he has taken to his many tasks and I’m sure the website is probably somewhere near the top of the list now.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Mr. Speaker, does the Premier believe hiring the current chair of the Order of PEI Advisory Council as the Liberal Party's new executive director creates an ethical dilemma?

Mr. Myers: Good question.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, the members of the Order of PEI Advisory Council serve without remuneration. They are great citizens. They are chosen for that reason. They have contributed to our community and to our province in many ways and if those qualifications – the same qualifications or the similar commitments to our community that got Mr. Curley appointed or asked to serve as chair of the advisory board or the Order of PEI coincided with his qualifications to serve as the executive director of the Liberal Party, I don't see any reason why any reasonable person would think there would be any conflict between one and the other and he resigned as chair of that advisory committee before accepting his new duties.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Myers: (Indistinct) Order in Council (Indistinct)

Speaker: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Myers: (Indistinct)

Mr. Trivers: Well Mr. Speaker, the Premier says he resigned, but we don't see an Order in Council that would be required to that affect.

Charles Curley has concurrently served this Premier as the chair of the Order of PEI. He is still the chair of the Order of PEI and the

Liberal Party executive director for a number of weeks. Premier: How is this acceptable?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, there there is a letter of resignation from Mr. Curley that I received quite some time ago and there's no problem of any overlap between one responsibility and the other.

Indeed, Cabinet met yesterday and dealt with the changes in the makeup of the Order of Prince Edward Island Advisory Committee and I expect that those decisions will be Gazetted –

Mr. Myers: Cabinet met yesterday while you were in Ottawa?

Premier MacLauchlan: – before the end of the week.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Myers: (Indistinct)

Mr. Trivers: Mr. Speaker, today, right now, the government website lists Mr. Curley as still serving as the chair of the Order of PEI. The Liberal Party deadline was February 15th for executive director applications. We are now in May. Mr. Curley has been in conflict for at least two months.

Mr. Premier: Is this what you meant when you said you would do business differently?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, there is no overlap.

The websites – and I appreciate the hon. member drawing it to our attention. That will be corrected. As I said, Cabinet dealt with that yesterday.

Let me be clear about the work of the Order of PEI Advisory Council. Those nominations are open until the end of March. The new committee, the one that will be unveiled as a result of Cabinet decisions yesterday, we'll deal with those nominations that come in and they will meet sometime in the month of May and it will be long after Mr. Curley will have submitted his resignation for the very reasons that he would not serve in both roles.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Aylward: Took them a while to get your name off of the website –

Mr. Trivers: Mr. Premier –

Mr. Aylward: – (Indistinct) get kicked out of Cabinet.

Mr. Trivers: – for the first time in Island history the Chair of the Order of PEI is a paid staffer for the governing party.

By having the Executive Director of the Liberal Party wear two hats, this Premier has created an untenable, ethical crisis–

Some Hon. Members: Oh! Oh!

Mr. R. Brown: Crisis!

Independence of Order of PEI

Mr. Trivers: Premier: Will you move immediately to fix this problem and restore the independence of the Order of PEI Advisory Council from the Liberal Party?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, let me be very clear that the Order of Prince Edward Island Advisory Council has been an upstanding representation of the volunteer commitment of citizens across this province; two people from each county, one of whom is asked to be chair, and six other members who comprise that Order of PEI

Advisory Council. Indeed, the work of the council is supported by the Office of the Clerk of this Legislature.

I have no concern, whatsoever, nor should Islanders have any concern, and I regret that these issues are being raised in the way they are, that there is any conflict or any concern about the basis on which people are named to and nominated to what they represent for this province when they are named to the Order of Prince Edward Island.

The advisory council is above any question of any concern about conflict. Cabinet has dealt with that. Stay tuned, you'll get the Order in Council on probably, Friday, is it?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Myers: Paid clappers.

Mr. Trivers: Mr. Speaker, last time I checked you couldn't issue an Order in Council retroactively.

The Order of PEI is the highest provincial order that can be bestowed on a citizen of this province. It should be free of politics and the perception of partisanship.

Mr. Roach: And it is.

Mr. Trivers: An Order in Council is required to make changes to make changes to the Order of PEI Advisory Council. To date, Cabinet has issued no Order in Council revoking Mr. Curley's appointment or replacing him with a new chairperson. That's fact.

Premier: When will Islanders see an Order in Council revoking Mr. Curley's appointment?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

An Hon. Member: Some pretty neat claps.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, to be very clear that Order in Council was dealt with by Cabinet yesterday. Islanders will see

it Friday, it may be late Thursday. Those are Gazetted in the normal course.

I do want to go back to the basic point that is being raised here: Islanders should have no concern about the integrity and the upstanding people and the decision-making of the Order of Prince Edward Island Advisory Council.

They give a great service to our province. They select, it's not an easy job, from a lot of nominations from worthy Islanders. It's a great thing for our province to select those people –

Mr. Myers: They gave it –

Premier MacLauchlan: – and to honour them –

Mr. Myers: – you and asked you to be leader –

Premier MacLauchlan: – because in –

Mr. Myers: – the same day.

Premier MacLauchlan: – doing so we honour ourselves –

Mr. Myers: Tell them to (Indistinct)

Premier MacLauchlan: – and we should all, in this House –

Mr. Myers: (Indistinct) they asked you to be leader the –

Premier MacLauchlan: – Mr. Speaker –

Mr. Myers: – same day.

Premier MacLauchlan: – in this House –

Speaker: Go ahead, hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: We should all, in this House, be doing our utmost to uphold the integrity and the reputation of these institutions.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Aylward: (Indistinct) that's what we're trying to do (Indistinct)

Mr. Myers: (Indistinct) I said LOL.

Mr. J. Brown: No, you said the institution was –

Mr. Myers: No (Indistinct)

Speaker: Hon. members –

Mr. J. Brown: I heard you say –

Speaker: Order!

We're getting out of order here. Losing respect when people are answering.

The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald, you have the floor.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Unfortunately, this Premier is bending the rules just like the last premier did with the Order of PEI Advisory Council.

Premier, I mean, surely you, a former member of the Order of PEI Advisory Council yourself, and a former recipient of the Order of PEI, would recognize the inherent danger of politicizing this process the way you have.

Premier: How did you allow this situation to occur?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, when someone resigns from a body, the Order of Prince Edward Island Advisory Council as Mr. Curley did, as I have informed the House, and they shouldn't be surprised. We had two other vacancies from Queens County. No, Mr. Curley's from Queens County. We had one vacancy from Prince County and one from Queens County.

There is an Engage PEI process by which people come forward and express an interest and people are chosen through that process. That takes time. The work of the Order of Prince Edward Island Advisory Council does not really start until the month of May.

In that window of time, and through the open and transparent process of Engage PEI, people have been identified to fill, and have a full complement in order for the Order of PEI Advisory Council to do its work in a timely way and in a respectful way and in a way that has no trace whatsoever of conflict.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: Final question from the hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Tabling of Mill River contract (further)

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

Question to the tourism minister: When will you table the contract for your sweetheart Mill River deal?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. MacDonald: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We've heard this question, I think this is five times from five different members, but that's okay.

Mr. Myers: No answers.

Mr. MacDonald: Because it gives me the opportunity to talk about the tourism industry and how important and vital it is to the economy of Prince Edward Island –

Mr. Palmer: And West Prince.

Mr. MacDonald: Rural PEI plays an integral part of that with \$65 million being invested in the tourism industry as we speak.

It's interesting that you get these questions from the opposition, but if this was happening in one of their ridings it would be a turn tail of events, I'm sure.

We're doing things right. Obviously, workforce and advanced learning talked about the number of jobs created. The hon. member's own riding, if I remember correctly, we got about \$22 million invested

in his riding and over 500 jobs and more to come. I don't hear him applauding that.

I hear criticisms on taking a flagship property in rural PEI; maintaining jobs; maintaining property that needed capital improvements; and working with that community; making sure that tourism with a \$430 million investment and expenditures on Prince Edward Island comes back into hospitals and health care and schools.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Statements by Ministers

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

New Anne Series

Premier MacLauchlan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Over the past number of weeks, people from all over the world have either been introduced, or reintroduced to Prince Edward Island's favourite fictional character, Anne Shirley.

The new CBC series, *Anne*, takes an updated look at the iconic redhead, and I might say, our most celebrated Prince Edward Islander.

This fearless and feminist new production of *Anne* is imagined and written by Moira Walley-Beckett, one of the principal writers of the hit series *Breaking Bad*.

In this production we see an Anne who is more sprightly than we are used to, and even more defiant. Her wit is sharper than ever. One might call her a mightier version of Anne. The reaction to this production of *Anne* has been overwhelmingly positive and audiences are watching in great number.

On seven Sunday evenings this winter, concluding last Sunday, 2.2 million viewers, on average, tuned in every week to watch the CBC broadcast. Also, many viewers caught up with the production on the Internet.

The Sunday broadcasts and the CBC website featured advertisements for Prince Edward Island tourism.

On May 12th, in just over a week, Netflix will begin streaming the production, which will be titled: *Anne with an E*. This will expose 100 million subscribers in 189 countries to Prince Edward Island.

Ms. Biggar: Great.

Premier MacLauchlan: Last night, I attended a reception in Ottawa at the National Arts Centre, along with co-producers Moira Walley-Beckett and Miranda de Pencier, as well as cast members including; AmyBeth McNulty, who plays Anne, Geraldine James, who play Marilla, R.H. Thomson as Matthew, and others involved in the production, a co-production between CBC and Netflix.

It was a wonderful evening and great opportunity to offer our congratulations and thanks to Netflix, CBC and everyone else involved for bringing Anne to a new level of popular viewing.

Lucy Maud Montgomery created a free-speaking, strong-willed, imaginative and unabashed young woman in a world dominated by men. But she also created a sensitive and caring character who wears her heart on her sleeve. Anne never once allowed her gender to be the attribute that defines her. She has become an inspiration for men and women, young and old and a character that we can look up to.

This new series will cultivate a whole new generation of Anne lovers and our province stands to benefit.

The tourism website, the Prince Edward Island tourism website has seen impressive increases in visitation that correspond with the series and we are optimistic that this will result in more visitors to our province. The timing to have, on the order of 100 million people with access of this production on the 12th of May could not be better.

When people come, they will not be disappointed by our province, its natural beauty or our tourism offerings, including the many Anne-related properties that attract tens-of-thousands of visitors each year.

Anne has found her way into much of what makes our province the mighty Island and

we look forward to many more episodes of this impressive new production.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Anne of Green Gables is an icon of Prince Edward Island and it's always good when somebody picks up the opportunity to renew their interest in *Anne of Green Gables*, especially when they're able to bring it to the world through television.

It's funny, I was talking, this morning, and I was saying how, over the years since this government's has been in power they've tried to reinvent the Island as the might isle, the food isle, and all these things that they come up with when what people really want us for is the simplicity that was outlined through *Anne of Green Gables*.

We don't need to be complicated in what we offer. Millions of children grow up reading *Anne of Green Gables* and dream of this wonderful place, Prince Edward Island, that you guys seem to be scared of.

It's something that Islanders all embrace; the beauty of Prince Edward Island; the beauty of the North Shore; the beauty of the quiet small life that we have here is a wonderful thing.

Take note of the Premier speaking about his time watching *Anne of Green Gables* last night while the rest of us worked in the Legislature. For me, the work of the Legislative Assembly is very important.

The *Anne of Green Gables* is happening. It's happening, regardless whether the Premier goes to Ottawa to hang out with the producer or not. The opportunity for *Anne* to be good for our province already exists. I commend the people who were involved in that, who make that happen, and who put that forward.

I urge the Premier to stay in this House and work with us to make PEI better.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

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

I, like the Premier, and I'm sure many others in this House and across the province and, indeed, around the country and world, have been delighted with this new production. It's an absolute gem. It demonstrates, once again, that when you have great literature – and surely *Anne of Green Gables* ranks globally as great literature – you create timeless characters and stories that can be moved from one time and place to another.

Although, of course, the storylines have remained largely unchanged and the characters are still embedded here on Prince Edward Island, it's a different take on the Island that we have all known and loved.

My one disappointment with it is, it doesn't have as many authentic Island backdrops as it should. Much of it was filmed, of course, off-Island and I think that's a real loss to us. They created red soil in – somewhere else, I think it was Ontario, to create the impression that this was all filmed in Anne's land. Of course, it was not.

I think it's a good opportunity for us to revisit what we do, or rather what we don't do, to attract TV and film to come here to Prince Edward Island. There is a real opportunity here with our unique landscape and the talent that we have here in that area to create opportunities for jobs and economic development, particularly in rural Prince Edward Island, by having these sorts of productions shot right here on Prince Edward Island.

Having said that, it's a beautiful thing and I've been enjoying it very much and hope to continue to do so.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

Soil Your Undies

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

I think the Leader of the Third Party there has given me a great segue because I want to talk about our rich red Island soil here.

For Island farmers like Matt, Ben and Michael and John Ramsay of Oyster Cove Farms in Hamilton, soil conservation is a vital and daily part of running a successful farm operation. Healthy soil is essential to plant growth and is the incubator for the foods our bodies need to grow and thrive.

To highlight the importance of soil health and conservation practices the Ramsay's farm is participating in the Soil Conservation Council of Canada's Soil Your Undies campaign.

The hon. Minister of Communities, Land and Environment and myself, joined them today at their farm where we each planted white cotton underwear in the soil. We will return in a few months to see how much they've decomposed. A high level of decomposition indicates a healthy and biologically active soil.

Over the last number of years there have been concentrated efforts by farmers and government to protect our valuable soils through programs that fund the construction of soil conservation structures, such as terraces, berms and grassed waterways.

Additionally, the promotion of beneficial practices such as strip-cropping, winter-cover cropping, residue management and retirement of sensitive land, have all been essential to preventing the erosion of rich topsoil from our farmers' fields.

Our government will continue to actively promote the means of ensuring the ongoing strength of our resource sectors and the promotion of environmental stewardship.

Our balanced Budget in 2017-2018 reflects this commitment by continuing programs such as; the Agriculture Stewardship Program; ALUS; Environmental Farm Plans, and investments in innovative drone technology that allows us to get a better

sense of our land composition in a fraction of the time.

Prince Edward Island's small size allows us to be nimble enough to focus on the things that matter the most, and keep our agriculture industry healthy. This is one of the most important things we can do for our province's economy.

Our Island's agriculture industry are great stewards of the land, and we thank them for their commitment. The combined efforts of our government and industry, in this regard, show, once again, that Islanders are good at working together to accomplish big things.

Mr. R. Brown: Great.

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

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

Mr. LaVie: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Prince Edward Island is known for its great soil right from tip to tip. What great people to look after our soil, are the farmers right here on Prince Edward Island. We have great farmers here on Prince Edward Island. I've talked to farmers right from tip to tip, and they do take care of the soil. They do care about the soil, for sure.

As I've travelled to these farms and a lot of these farms are passed on from generation to generation. It's the younger generation that is farming now, and there is new technology now. It's the way the younger people – and no fault of the older generations, it's just the way it was back in their day. But, the new technology with the new farmers and how they take care of our soil is just – just when you speak to them, it's just what's the word I'm looking for? But, when you speak to them, they're so positive and the outlook and they look into the future; where they're going to be in the future with their soil.

A big congratulations out to the Ramsay farm. They do a tremendous job, and they work hard at it. They're passionate about it; as all farmers are across Prince Edward

Island. A big shout-out to the farmers tip to tip, keep up the good work on our soil.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

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

Healthy plants, and therefore, of course, healthy food all starts with healthy soil. This event on soil conservation has been around for ages and ages. It's just this year it changed its name. It's a good example of how a successful PR campaign can take something mundane, sex it up, and suddenly we're all – we're talking about it in the Legislature of Prince Edward Island.

Soil, of course, is a living organism of microorganisms, earthworms and all sorts of things. In healthy soil, as the minister said: You put a pair of underwear, two months later, you come back and all that should be left is the elastic band, now. I should say that in many of the fields of Prince Edward Island sprayed by Roundup, for example, you go out into that field you will not be able to find an earthworm no matter how hard you look. You could put your undies in a field that's sprayed regularly with Roundup, come back five years later, pick them up put them straight – well you might want to dust them off, but you could put them straight back on because there's nothing living in that at all.

Mr. Roach: (Indistinct)

Mr. Myers: (Indistinct)

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Good farmers grow food, and really good farmers also grow soil. That's something I heard from an organic farmer many years ago: I'm not growing food; I'm also growing soil. We know how important that is here on Prince Edward Island.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Presenting and Receiving Petitions

Tabling of Documents

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

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

Mr. Speaker, by leave of the House, I beg leave to table a document asking for a breakdown of the costs associated with an office of the child advocate and I move, seconded by the Honourable Member from Tignish-Palmer Road, that the said document be now received and do lie on the Table.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, by leave of the House, I beg leave to table an ad for the Liberal Party executive director with the February 15th, 2017, deadline and I move, seconded by the Honourable Member from Stratford-Kinlock, that the said document be now received and do lie on the Table.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Mr. Speaker, by leave of the House, I beg leave to table the May 3rd printout of the Order of PEI Advisory Council information from the PEI provincial government website indicating that Charles Curley is today, the chair and I move, seconded by the Honourable Member from Stratford-Kinlock, that the said document be now received and do lie on the Table.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

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

Mr. Speaker, by leave of the House, I beg leave to table the report I referenced during Question Period that was produced by Corpus Sanchez titled Meeting the In-Patient Mental Health and Addictions Care Needs of Islanders, and this is focused primarily on the Hillsborough Hospital and I move, seconded by the Honourable Member

from Kensington-Malpeque, that the said document be now received and do lie on the Table.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Mr. Aylward: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Reports by Committees

Introduction of Government Bills

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. Roach: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce a bill to be intitled *Supplementary Appropriation Act 2017* and I move, seconded by the hon. Minister of Health and Wellness, that the same be now received and read a first time.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk: *Supplementary Appropriation Act 2017*, Bill No. 75, read a first time.

Speaker: A brief explanation, hon. Minister of Finance?

Mr. Roach: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The schedule attached to this act lists the total amount of the special warrants approved under the authority of the *Financial Administration Act* since the last sitting of this House.

Speaker: Thank you, hon. Minister of Finance.

Do you have another one?

Mr. Roach: No, that's it.

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 Communities, Land and Environment, that the 1st order of the day be now read.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

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

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

Mr. McIsaac: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Communities, Land and Environment, that this House do now resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole House to take into the Grant of Supply to Her Majesty.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Lewis Point to come and Chair the Committee of the Whole.

Chair (Casey): Members, before I bring you into committee, we're going to be doing the Legislative Assembly. We're just waiting for the Speaker to come to the Table. We're on page 148.

The House is now in a Committee of the Whole House to consider the grant of supply to Her Majesty.

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

Some Hon. Members: Granted.

Chair: I have just been advised that we're going to do the Auditor General first and that is on page 143.

Good afternoon. Could you please identify yourself and your title for the record?

Barbara Waite: Barbara Waite; Audit Director; value of money audits.

Chair: Thank you, welcome.

Hon. members, on page 143 – would you like me to read the total and the title, and the total, or would you like me to read it line by line?

Leader of the Opposition: Line by line.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: I think is the exact same budget that we talked about in committee, Speaker?

Mr. Watts: Yes, it is.

Leader of the Opposition: Then I would ask that the budget be accepted.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you.

Just a couple of very quick questions. How does the cost of our Office of the Auditor General compare to other jurisdictions; recognizing we are a different size?

Barbara Waite: I think it's fairly comparable for the Atlantic Provinces. The percentage of our budget compared to the total provincial budget hasn't changed for about 10 years. It's about 0.12% of the total provincial budget.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: A question to you: Do you feel that the Auditor General's office has enough staff and resources to carry out your mandate as you would wish?

Barbara Waite: I believe that that question has been posed to the Auditor General in committee and she has – there are challenges, but this has been discussed with the legislative audit committee.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Final question is to do with the grants. I realize that's a very small number. I'm just wondering what sort of grants the AG's office gives out.

Barbara Waite: It's primarily an operating grant to the Canadian Comprehensive Auditing Foundation which is established for audit and accountability, so these are the individuals that do Public Accounts training and that type of thing.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you.

Thank you, Chair.

Chair: Administration

Total Administration: 2,114,000.

Total Auditor General: 2,114,000.

Shall the total carry? Carried.

Mr. Watts: Thank you.

Thank you, Barb.

Chair: Thank you, Barb.

Members, we'll now continue on to the Legislative Assembly budget and that is on page 148.

Chair: Would you like to bring a stranger to the floor?

Mr. Watts: Yes.

Chair: Permission to bring a stranger to the floor?

Some Hon. Members: Granted.

Chair: Real stranger.

Good afternoon, could you please identify yourself and your title for the record?

Clerk: Thank you, Madam Chair.

It's Charles MacKay, Clerk of the Legislative Assembly.

Chair: Welcome.

Hon. members, would you like me to read the titles and the totals only?

An Hon. Member: Yes.

Chair: Thank you.

Legislative Services

Total Legislative Services: 1,887,400.

Question from the Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you, Chair.

I'm just wondering why the sessional researcher allocations for the caucus offices are found under Legislative Services rather than under their respective caucus offices.

Mr. Watts: I think that's a question that I'll refer to the Clerk.

Clerk: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Yes, those provisions then – that was support provided for the caucus offices through the Legislative Services branch when it was initially established, I would suggest, probably 15 years ago, and the allocation has been provided through that section as opposed to through the caucus office allocations ever since. It's really an accounting matter for how we're accounting for those appropriations.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: I wonder if it would be possible to break out the accounts or the amounts that went to sessional researchers, just so we have a sense of how much that was. That will be possible?

Clerk: We could provide that.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you, stranger.

Chair: Shall it carry? Carried.

Government Members' Office

Total Government Members' Office:
407,700.

Shall the total carry? Carried.

Opposition Members' Office

Total Opposition Members' Office: 465,500.

Shall the total carry? Carried.

Third Party Office

Total Third Party Office: 88,000.

Shall the total carry? Carried.

Total Legislative Services: 2,848,600.

Shall the total carry? Carried.

Do you wish me to continue to read?

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct) please.

Chair: Members

Total Members: 2,373,900.

Shall the total carry? Carried.

Office of the Conflict of Interest
Commissioner

Total Office of the Conflict of Interest
Commissioner: 59,400.

Total Office of the Conflict of Interest
Commissioner: 59,400.

Leader of the Opposition: Question.

Chair: Question from the Leader of the
Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: I was just
wondering how many hours roughly she
would work for a week.

Mr. Watts: How many hours the Conflict of
Interest Commissioner works a week?

Leader of the Opposition: Yeah.

Chair: It's a 'he'.

Mr. Watts: Anyway, it's a 'he', it's John
McQuaid that's the Conflict of Interest
Commissioner, and he works maybe 15-20
hours a week, I would say.

Leader of the Opposition: That's fine.
Thank you.

Chair: Thank you. Shall the section carry?
Carried.

Shall the total carry? Carried.

Office of the Information and Privacy
Commissioner

Total Office of the Information and Privacy
Commissioner: 216,000.

Total Office of the Information and Privacy
Commissioner: 216,000.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Question.

Chair: Question from the Leader of the
Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: I want to first commend
government for increasing the amount in this
section quite considerably from 129,600 last
year to 216,000, and I know that's – there's
been a significant increase in activity here.

I know that there were, I think, 23 reports
outstanding from 2015-2016, and I don't
know whether there are any still outstanding
now or where we stand there. I know
they've done a lot on the backlog, but –

Mr. Watts: Yeah, I think there – yeah, I'm
not sure if there's any still left outstanding,
but I know they've been doing a lot of
catch-up, and they've come forth with a lot
more rulings in the recent time period. I
would say if they're not completely caught
up, they're probably getting close.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you, Chair.

Chair: Shall the section carry? Carried.

Shall the total carry? Carried.

Elections PEI

Elections

Total Elections: 309,800.

Total Elections PEI: 309,800.

Shall the – we have a question from the hon.
Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

Mr. Aylward: Thank you, Chair.

I'm just wondering if you could explain the
significant overrun on the budget for the
fiscal year 2016-2017. I know it's mostly in
the administration line, but I'm just
wondering why we budgeted so off-the-
mark on this.

Mr. Watts: Yes, that was – a lot of that
overrun was actual costs for the 2016
plebiscite on electoral reform, and an
unexpected by-election is included in that
too.

Mr. Aylward: Okay, thank you, Chair.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you.

I'm wondering whether in the Elections PEI
budget if there's anything there set aside to
do preparatory work for the second
plebiscite on electoral reform?

Speaker: I don't – no, I don't think so.

Leader of the Third Party: No, okay, thank you

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: I'm also wondering if there's anything in Elections PEI budget to assist the municipalities in implementing the new election bylaw requirements under the new *Municipal Government Act*.

Mr. Watts: Yeah, it's not through Elections PEI. If there was an extra cost, it would be charged to the municipalities.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Okay.

Thank you, Chair.

Chair: Shall the section carry? Carried.

Total Elections PEI

Shall the total carry? Carried.

Electoral Boundaries Commission

Total Electoral Boundaries Commission:
67,000.

Total Electoral Boundaries Commission:
67,000.

Chair: Question from the Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

Mr. Aylward: Thank you very much, Chair.

So this is for the redrawing of all the districts, the 27 districts, and we know that this has to be done – I believe it's after every second election or every 10 years.

Mr. Watts: Every third election.

Mr. Aylward: Every third election?

Mr. Watts: Yes.

Mr. Aylward: So, did we not know that this was going to happen in this fiscal year? Is that why there was no budget allocated towards that?

Mr. Watts: Well, we knew. I think we all – yeah, we were all aware of it, that there was

going to be – this was going to have to be looked at.

Chair: Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

Mr. Aylward: Thank you, Chair.

But there was nothing budgeted in the 2016-2017 estimate?

Mr. Watts: For this time only, it was included under the Legislative Assembly's. The previously ones were always through Executive Council.

Chair: The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

Mr. Aylward: Thank you.

So if I went back to last year's budget, looking at the estimate for this budget estimate for 2016-2017 year, in the 2015-2016 budget it would be in Executive Council?

Speaker: No, there wouldn't. No, see, there wouldn't be need for that fiscal year. It would be like every 10 years, or whatever. But this time we felt it would be more appropriate to be done through the Legislative Assembly instead of through Executive Council.

Chair: Charlie, do you have an intervention?

Clerk: Only to clarify that 10 years ago, when the electoral boundaries commission was conducted the last time, the appropriations were through Executive Council. This time, we included it under the Legislative Assembly appropriations because we felt it was more under that purview, that it was a little more appropriate.

Chair: The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

Mr. Aylward: Thanks, and I appreciate that, and I know in the grand scheme of things it's not a huge amount of money, but as compared to other budgets, of course – I mean 59,700 is a huge amount of money to the average Islander.

But I guess my question is just that there wasn't anything budgeted in 2016-2017, but we are forecasting it to be 59,700.

Mr. Watts: Yeah, it is budgeted through a special warrant.

Mr. Aylward: Okay, all right.

Thank you, Chair.

Chair: Shall the section carry? Carried.

Total Electoral Boundaries Commission

Shall the total carry? Carried.

Total Legislative Assembly: 5,874,700.

Shall the total carry? Carried.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you, Mr. Clerk.

Clerk: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Mr. Watts: Thank you.

Chair: Well done.

Hon. members, we are now welcoming the Minister of Rural and Regional Development to the table. We're on page 120.

Permission to bring a stranger to the floor?

Some Hon. Members: Granted.

Chair: Introduce yourself and your title for the record, please.

Mary Kinsman Director: Mary Kinsman, Director of Finance, Rural and Regional Development.

Chair: Welcome, Mary.

Minister, do you have any handouts for the members?

Mr. Murphy: Yes, I do. I have staff and two handouts here for them.

Chair: Perfect. Thank you.

Members there will be circulating handouts momentarily.

Minister, do you have an opening statement?

Mr. Murphy: Yes, I do.

Chair: Thanks.

Welcome.

Mr. Murphy: Thank you, Chair.

On February 15th, 2017, Premier MacLauchlan put his confidence in me to lead the newly created Department of Rural and Regional Development. The department was created to place an increased focus on government's commitment to rural Prince Edward Island and to help facilitate a new direction for communities and to promote and enhance opportunities in rural PEI and all regions.

We are accomplishing these goals by connecting Islanders with the programs and services they require. Helping communities build capacity and linking employees to potential employers through the employment development agency.

As well, as through our community development program, my department helps fund the rural action centres in Montague, Central Bedeque, Alberton, Souris, and Wellington – as well as the community infrastructure projects across Prince Edward Island.

Since becoming minister, I've also had the opportunity to meet with several communities to hear their ideas for growing our communities and I look forward to meeting with others.

Mr. Myers: Question.

Mr. Murphy: Sure.

Mr. Myers: Oh. No, whenever you're done.

Chair: No. Keep going.

Mr. Murphy: I've been pleased with the level of engagement in every area I visited. Good things are happening in rural PEI and across our province. Businesses such as trout river industries and Aspin Kemp & Associates are thriving. Our agriculture, aquaculture, and fisheries are having great times and tourism is looking very promising

this year. It is important that we continue to identify rural development successes and promote the benefit and assets of rural Prince Edward Island and the development opportunities that exist.

Prince Edward Island has a diverse, integrated economy and our size is a benefit to our success. Our connectedness to one another means that when one region of PEI prospers, our entire province does well. This government recognizes the value of contributions made every day to the province by our primary sectors, the rural business community, and all Islanders.

Going forward, I'll be working across government departments to develop a comprehensive approach to rural and regional development which will include how we can support communities in their efforts to grow their populations and prosper. The communities themselves will play a large role in their success going forward and collaboration will be key to ensure a coordinated approach. I look forward to the work ahead and welcome discussions with all communities.

Thank you, Chair.

Chair: Thank you, Minister.

Is it the wish of the House that I just read the title and the totals?

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct)

Chair: Great, thanks.

I'll read the title and the total and I'll go to the hon. Member from Georgetown-St. Peters.

Rural and Regional Development

Total Rural and Regional Development:
1,904,600.

Total Rural and Regional Development:
1,904,600.

The hon. Member from Georgetown-St. Peters.

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Chair.

My question – I guess it's a touch more broad than your budget and it has to do with rural development in Georgetown's small schools. I know that you met with the group prior to the decision being made. You met with a group from the Georgetown – the bigger committee, which I was a member of at that particular time, and I'm wondering what the appetite is to explore a model in that community for a hub school.

Mr. Murphy: I certainly wouldn't take anything off the table at this time. We're going to look at all the options to try to grow and develop the rural parts of the province.

Mr. Myers: Okay.

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

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Chair.

I guess I have an even broader question than that. During the whole process this winter with the school thing, it kind of came to me that while Georgetown over the years has had a declining population and declining employment inside of Georgetown, there is a really great community spirit there and people in the community that care a lot about it and they're one of the best examples I've seen of a small community. They really stick together. The kids are able to walk on the streets at night. It's really a great kind of feeling.

I'm wondering how we could look at Georgetown – if there's anything that we could put together down there to help them grow into a model community that we could use – not only for Prince Edward Island, but for all of Canada on what rural communities could be; what rural communities should be. Is there a possibility the we could – I'm not saying that either you or I are experts in that type of role, but is there a way we could put together some sort of a project that we could start trying to build a plan and see if we can get, through other departments help in implementing it, and create kind of a model community for what rural communities could be?

Mr. Murphy: Sure, and I did witness the community spirit in Georgetown. It's certainly alive and well; the community down there.

I think we're doing several things now. One thing would be the population strategy. I think it's important that we concentrate on population strategy, especially rural population strategy and engaging the communities and identifying what our aspects are now and using them to the best of our advantage. I think, in the near future, there's going to be some advisory councils appointed and those should help give us the direction of where the communities want to go with development.

Mr. Myers: Okay. Thank you.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

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

It strikes me that your department – it's pretty small. We're looking at about 1% of the budget of just one other department – the Health and Wellness Department. It's really small and it seems to me that it's just a sort of regrouping of pre-existing programs and services that were already there. I'm wondering whether, as your department matures and progresses, whether there will be any new programs or services which will come up under your department.

Mr. Murphy: Well, I certainly hope so. If they want to increase my budget, I'd certainly take that at any time, but I think the main thing here is that it shows the commitment that the government does have to rural Prince Edward Island and that now there's going to be a focus on that. They have a minister that's sitting around the Cabinet table that's making sure that the rural commitment is included in all decisions around the Cabinet table, and I think that's a very important part of this whole process.

Ms. Compton: It's desperation at its best.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you.

So, what's the plan for the new rural secretariat? Can you sort of describe that – how you imagine that working?

Mr. Murphy: I see it as working with all other government departments; cross over.

Right now there might be a bit of silos within government and I think the rural department will be able to work with the communities, land and environment, ag and fish; just about any department. There's not any department in this Legislature, I don't think, that would –

Dr. Bevan-Baker: I agree.

Mr. Murphy: – that would not cross over into rural and urban Prince Edward Island. I think that's a big thing too, is we can't have that divide there where it's urban and rural. We have to work together as one unit for the benefit of rural and urban Prince Edward Island.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you.

A final question on this section and it's to do with the grants. I'm wondering whether the grants that you hand out in your department, are those just for businesses or can communities also apply for those grants?

Mr. Murphy: I'll let Mary answer that one here.

Mary Kinsman Director: The Community Development Program, the funds are available for non-profit organizations also.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Okay and that would include communities?

Mary Kinsman Director: Yes. Let me just double-check on that for you. Incorporated or registered non-profits, organizations, municipal governments.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Okay, great.

Thank you.

Chair: Shall the section carry?

The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you.

My question is along the same lines, and I'm specifically looking at the Rural Economic Development Grants here and the Community Development Program.

I was wondering, I wanted to give you an example of a couple of projects in District 18 Rustico-Emerald, and I wanted you to tell me if they're the sorts of projects that would be eligible. If they are, how you would actually apply.

One of them is the Greenvale School. It's run by the Women's Institute now along Route 2. They need to, basically, scrap and paint because it's getting very shabby. Is that sort of project on that would qualify?

Mr. Murphy: It's possible. There is a limited amount of funding that program. I think it's something like \$320,000 that is available.

What they do is they'll accept the applications and the staff evaluates them. They're more – they try to use that money as strategically as they possibly can for leveraging other money to make projects, bigger projects – the best bang for the \$320,000 that is available.

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: The line I'm looking at has \$485,900 allocated to Community Development Program. It says there were 21 projects underway in 2016-2017.

Can you provide a breakdown of those 21 projects? That would give me a good example of –

Mr. Murphy: That includes –

Mr. Trivers: – the type of projects that are –

Mr. Murphy: – Rural Action Centres (Indistinct) to. That's why –

Mr. Trivers: Oh, I see. That's why you're saying it was only 320 for the actual rural projects.

Can you give me a breakdown of the 21 projects? Then, I can get an idea of the sort of projects in District 18.

Mr. Murphy: Did you want me to just to read them off here?

Mr. Trivers: I'd – there are 20 of them. If you could give us a handout, that would be ideal.

Mr. Murphy: Sure, we can get that for you if you'd like, sure.

Chair: Shall the section carry? Carried.

Total Rural and Regional Development

Shall the total carry? Carried.

Total Department of Rural and Regional Development

Shall that total carry? Carried.

Hon. members, we'll now move onto page 121.

Employment Development Agency

General

Total General: 204,400.

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

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you.

I'm just wondering how many positions that salary line represents.

Mary Kinsman Director: The salary; there are two permanent positions and two part-time positions.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Are these new positions or are they people who have been moved over from another department?

Mary Kinsman Director: They have been moved from the other.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Okay.

Mary Kinsman Director: They have existed in this EDA for a long time.

Chair: Shall the section carry? Carried.

Total Management

Shall the total carry? Carried.

Job Creation and Placement

Community and Business Projects

Total Community and Business Projects:
5,027,100.

Shall the section carry?

The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Chair.

My question really is about the timing of the approval for these individuals. Typically, it waits until after the budget estimates are approved, which we are doing right now.

This has been an ongoing concern. I think the minister is familiar with that; trying to get them earlier on. The earlier the better really, even as early as February would be good as different groups, like watershed groups for example, try and source their employees for the summer.

I was wondering if you're making any progress on improving the timing and getting early approvals for jobs for youth and job creation programs?

Mr. Murphy: Yes, I did talk to the deputy about that. If you do talk to your person, in my area it's Elliot. Is it Elliot (Indistinct)

Mr. Trivers: Yeah.

Mr. Murphy: He can probably help you with that; the approvals being done a little bit earlier if you need somebody that's time sensitive to get it out.

Mr. Trivers: Okay, so just speak with him? Then, he'll work to place the people earlier?

Mr. Murphy: Yeah.

Chair: Are you good, hon. member?

Mr. Trivers: Yes.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you.

I'm just wondering, the total budget for this section is for job creation. I'm just

wondering why it doesn't fall under workforce and advanced learning rather than rural and regional development. Is there a reason why it's here?

Mary Kinsman Director: It's been here, I'm not sure what the difference would be; workforce and advanced learning. We work closely with that department, but it has always been in this agency, or group.

Mr. Murphy: I think that's probably where the most focus is, too, is in rural parts of the province, is where the job creation is most needed.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you, Chair.

Chair: Shall the section carry? Carried.

Total Job Creation and Placement

Shall the total carry? Carried.

Total Employment Development Agency:
5,231,500.

Shall the total carry? Carried.

Thank you, hon. Minister of Rural and Regional Development, thanks, Mary.

Chair: The hon. Minister of Communities, Land and Environment, are you next?

Mr. Mitchell: (Indistinct)

Chair: Thank you.

Hon. members, we will welcome the hon. Minister of Communities, Land and Environment to the table.

We are on page 30.

Permission to bring a stranger to the floor.

Some Hon. Members: Granted.

Chair: We'll wait until he gets settled.

Hon. members do you wish me to just to continue to read the title and the total.

Mr. Trivers: Since the hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock isn't here, we'd like to get the handouts right now.

Chair: We're getting there.

Thank you.

Mr. Mitchell: How about a little –

Mr. Trivers: A little overview?

Mr. Mitchell: Yeah.

Chair: Sure.

Mr. Myers: Give us a lead in.

Chair: Could you – welcome –

Mr. Myers: This could be your speech.

Chair: Could you introduce yourself and your title for the record?

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

Chair: Welcome, George.

Hon. Minister of Communities, Land and Environment, do you have handouts and also do you have an opening statement?

Mr. Mitchell: That would be correct, yes. I'll begin with a very brief opening statement.

The Department of Communities, Land and Environment has been extremely busy over the past year. If you look at the *Municipalities Act*, our water act, the *Building Code Act*, other environmental pieces that we have been doing, and doing it all for very little money as we will see in the budget book.

I'd say let's get at it and see where it gets spent.

Chair: Great, thanks.

Do you have handouts to pass out? I'll take them and –

Mr. Mitchell: Yeah.

Chair: Are they all there?

George Mason Director: They're in a package.

Chair: How many?

George Mason Director: Fifteen.

Chair: Fifteen handouts?

George Mason Director: Fifteen copies, sorry.

Chair: The handouts will be distributed.

We'll start on the top of page 30.

Minister's/Deputy Minister's Office

Total Minister's/Deputy Minister's Office: 377,000.

Shall the section carry?

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

Leader of the Opposition: Yeah, I'm curious. One general question here.

Can you tell us what the status is, minister, on the replacement entity for the SRDC in Summerside and what it is going to mean? Is that going to be an extension of Charlottetown? What that could look like in the future; staffing and resources?

Mr. Mitchell: SRDC would not fall under –

Leader of the Opposition: No, it doesn't fall under yours.

Mr. Mitchell: – my portfolio.

Leader of the Opposition: Okay, thank you.

Chair: Shall the section carry? Carried.

Total Minister's/Deputy Minister's Office

Shall the total carry? Carried.

Municipal Affairs and Provincial Planning

Total Municipal Affairs and Provincial Planning: 1,662,000.

Total Municipal Affairs and Provincial Planning: 1,662,000.

The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Thanks, Chair.

I wanted to know, first of all, how much money you've put in the budget to fund feasibility studies for amalgamation and annexation.

Mr. Mitchell: Currently, we have spent \$140,000 towards that so we will just take it – we don't have any waiting in the queue at the moment, so we'll just deal with it as they come.

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: In the budget, do you anticipate having to do special warrants if there are several projects that require a feasibility study for amalgamation and annexation?

Mr. Mitchell: It's possible. There are other ways that the communities can look at these as well and there are other grants that they do receive, so until such time as some come in, we'll have to deal with them as they come in, but we have none waiting at the moment.

Mr. Trivers: None waiting at the moment?

Chair: Shall the section carry? Carried.

Shall the total carry? Carried.

Forests, Fish and Wildlife

Division Management

Total Division Management: 1,565,000.

Shall the section carry? Carried.

Mr. Trivers: Question.

Chair: Do you have a question? I'm just going to read the total and then I'll let you.

Mr. Trivers: All right.

Chair: Total Forest Fire Protection: 168,000.

The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. LaVie: Question, question.

Mr. Trivers: My question is for the grants for the watershed groups. I know that you have a new funding formula that you're putting in place for the watershed groups and you worked with the PEI Watershed Alliance to develop that. Do the numbers in the grants handout match the new formula?

Mr. Mitchell: They would. Yes.

Mr. Trivers: Are all the watershed groups you've talked to happy with the new formula?

Mr. Mitchell: I was at a meeting just last Saturday with the PEI Watershed Alliance – yours included and the way the discussion went, there are some that have questions on. The way the new grant structure or the way the new funding formula will work for those; it's based on involvement in the community, it's based on projects, it's based on size, it's based on community involvement, and opportunity to leverage within their communities.

A lot of the groups referenced how they're going out and making new connections, networking within the community, in a very new way. There was a particular group that had concerns that I said I would help them to move along with, but this is a new way.

Twenty-one out of 23 groups voted in favour of it, so I'd say a very sound majority are in favour of the new method. Knowing that it's not business as usual, projects have to take on a new look and they have to be looking at other ways to leverage the money as well.

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Chair.

I'm still consulting with the watershed groups in my area about those changes, but my understanding is a lot of them are kind of a size where they're just under the limit where they can get more funding and they're getting the funding equivalent of much, much smaller watershed groups. In fact, most of them have had their funding decreased in my area. And so we see this pot of only \$1.12 million that's being stayed the same and now the allocation has just been

changed and there are a lot of watershed groups receiving less money.

Mr. LaVie: (Indistinct) there's lots of money in the House.

Mr. Mitchell: The actual – what you just said there hon. member is not exactly true.

Mr. Trivers: Okay.

Mr. Mitchell: One of the basic stipulations of our new funding agreement was that nobody went backwards – everybody has stayed where they were previously. Now if they felt that they were going to get incremental numbers going forward, that was never indicated, but they do have great opportunity for leveraging. They do have greater opportunity to grow and take on new projects. So, the bigger you get, the more you get. There's incentive here to do more to get more. It's not just staying the same.

The argument, especially from your group – your group was probably the most vocal, I'll tell you that. To get increases based on inflation of 1% year over year, that's not the new way. It's about doing significant work and growing because of the work you're doing. That's the vision.

Mr. Trivers: My questions are on division management still.

Chair: Yeah, we've passed that section.

Mr. Trivers: I said 'question' and then you carried it anyway, so that's why I'm still asking them.

Chair: I'll allow it. I'll allow it. Go ahead.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you.

My question to you, minister, is – as I've said many times before, \$1.125 million for all the watershed groups in the Island is a very small amount, especially if you look at the generally agreed return of 10 to one on that funding. I just want to know why you're not increasing the funding to watershed groups.

Mr. Mitchell: As I've indicated many, many time to you and to others in the House that 10 years ago watershed groups on Prince Edward Island were getting

\$161,000. Ten years later, nine times more money – that \$1.12 million and as money becomes available, I will do my utmost to ensure that watersheds are looked favourably as we move forward. There's no disputing that this is money well spent for value on Prince Edward Island and I've indicated to all watershed groups – yours included – that if monies do become available, we will look at allocating them in a fair, equitable, just manner and they will get the same opportunities as the other 21 watershed groups that are in favour of this new method moving forward.

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: I just wanted to point out that at all the different public consultations, for example, on the water act, I keep seeing references made to watershed groups and the work that they are going to do to allow the department to be successful. I feel like the Department of Communities, Land and Environment and the province is relying on the watershed groups to do more and more work and I would just like to see funding keep pace with that.

Mr. Mitchell: Well, hon. member, I think every member of every watershed group that I've been introduced to over the last two years are extremely proud to be doing the work they're doing. It's not based on me asking them to do anything. They're doing it on their own accord. They're doing it for their own reasons for their own communities. They're certainly not looking at me to indicate what they do.

During those water act consultations, what I've indicated, and what they've all been willing to do, is look at areas where there are concerns regarding things that are going on – regarding pesticides, nitrates, those types of things – to help identify it, but there is, even since that, I've come to learn there's another method using drones. They actually were presented that on Saturday at their AGM, so I think work will take a whole different look and there'll be a lot of new ways of doing things as we move out over the year.

But, every one of those members in those groups are so proud and I'm so proud of the work they do and they're very pleased to be

parts of that and there's no reason to believe that the funding that they receive will allow them to continue to do that. As soon as more money becomes available, they will have their fair share.

Chair: Thank you, hon. members.

Friendly reminder: We're on Forest Fire Protection.

The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

Mr. LaVie: Thank you, Chair.

Minister, I've asked this question for five and a half years now: With the fires that happened out in Fort Mac – took over Fort Mac, actually – you stated in the House where you'll be replacing your forest fire equipment – trucks, especially.

Have you started that process yet?

Mr. Mitchell: Hon. member, I certainly have to agree with you, you have been relentless in requesting this in the past number of years and as a result of that, yes, last year, based on what we see going on all across Canada – in Nova Scotia, Fort McMurray and other areas of Alberta, and currently right now in Florida, forest fires of large natures are seeming to become the norm.

Was our fleet the best it could be in case something like that happened on Prince Edward Island? It was determined it wasn't, so we've enacted now for a replacement of all those vehicles. There will be a purchase this year of one vehicle and budgeted for \$70,000 in each one of the subsequent years until all vehicles are replaced.

Thank you for continuing to put pressure on us to do that.

Chair: The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

Mr. LaVie: Thank you, Chair.

You say \$70,000 – for a fire truck? \$70,000?

Mr. Mitchell: Yes, hon. member.

The trucks that had been identified that will be used; the first year, as you will see in the budget was a \$100,000 vehicle. That's the truck that carries – tows – the trailer hauling truck part.

The \$70,000 units are the one-tonne units with the 500 gallon capacity. If you do a jurisdictional scan, that's the one they recommend. It gets in. It gets you to get to the work quicker. It gets you out when you need to rather than the three-tonne larger size.

In these scenarios of a very rapid moving forest fire these were determined to be the best vehicles to have in your fleets.

Chair: The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

Mr. LaVie: Thank you, Chair.

These vehicles you're talking about, will they be placed at fire stations across Prince Edward Island?

Mr. Mitchell: Hon. member, I would assume that wherever they were before, as a new one replaces that it will just take on the same place where it will be kept.

Chair: The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

Mr. LaVie: Who determines which trucks are to be replaced?

Mr. Mitchell: I think, over the years, it has just become a tradition, I guess, maybe I should say, whoever they thought they should be and whoever had a place for them to store them.

I know that you have one in your fire service. I believe you even added onto your fire station to accommodate a garage for it, which is great. Others have done the same. There is no reason – it's great to have these spots spread out all across Prince Edward Island because you never can determine where something is going to occur. Between having trucks there and also having your volunteer services that can assist it only makes the best sense to have them spread out this way.

Chair: The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

Mr. LaVie: Thank you, Chair.

We had to build a piece onto the fire hall after 50 or 60 years of having a forestry truck. It was pretty near down to the wire whether we had to let it go or not. Thank god, thank the mayor and the council for putting the money in the budget for us to build a piece on for the forestry truck –

Mr. Mitchell: There's no doubt. There is good foresight there.

Mr. Myers: You were (Indistinct)

Mr. LaVie: No, that was just last summer. Minister, how many trucks do you have?

Mr. Mitchell: Do we have?

Mr. LaVie: Yeah. Firefighting trucks that are stationed in the different stations.

Mr. Mitchell: Currently – I believe there are seven trucks that are stationed out.

Two of them are a little newer that I don't think we have placed in the first round, I don't believe. If you just give me a moment.

There are actually 10 vehicles. Two of them are Bombardiers, which you would be aware of, the multi-wheeled ones.

Mr. LaVie: Yeah.

Mr. Mitchell: So there are eight vehicles. Two of them are a little bit newer –

Mr. LaVie: That's counting the Bombardiers?

Mr. Mitchell: No, that's not counting the Bombardiers.

Mr. LaVie: Oh, that's not counting.

Mr. Mitchell: No.

Currently, we are looking at replacing the first six.

Chair: The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

Mr. LaVie: Thank you, Chair.

It's going to take six years to replace your trucks?

Mr. Mitchell: Yes.

Mr. LaVie: You're only going to do one a year?

Mr. Mitchell: Yes, that's right.

Chair: You're good?

Mr. LaVie: Yeah, I'm good.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Chair.

Minister, would you ever consider investing in the few water buffalos, they're a small tanker that is towed behind a small truck that can get into remote places so they don't have to take the three-tonne in. We do have some small trucks, is my understanding.

Have we ever considered that? Or, maybe that might up the capability of our – in these places where you need to get a trailer in, small quantity of water, 500 gallons or something like that.

Would you ever consider that?

Mr. Mitchell: Certainly, hon. member.

Our inventory is something that is reviewed often. The group of employees that come from all other departments to train for these events, we have a lot of discussion about that. There has been a lot of experience gained from the misfortunes at Fort Mac. We had sent firefighters out there. We sent firefighters to Nova Scotia who, typically, don't get to be part of that or see those things.

To come back with experience gained to bring to these meetings (Indistinct) exactly that; to review your inventory; to see where we fall short; where we're doing well at.

Certainly, we can bring that discussion –

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thanks, Chair.

What I'm thinking there is I realize we can't put forestry trucks across the whole Island, but if we had maybe a few of these trailers that we could put in strategic places in between the trucks, then that would up the capability of the –

Mr. Mitchell: Absolutely, and that might make really good sense as we move out past the first five and into the next two or three.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you.

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

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Chair.

I beg your indulgence it's actually a watershed question. I didn't realize we had passed that.

Actually, it's a comment. I just want to thank you for your work with Belfast. We strive to become the 24th watershed on PEI. I think it's not about time, we do have a meeting tonight, I just wanted to inform you about that, and look forward to, maybe some of that watershed money going our way.

Mr. Mitchell: Thank you for bringing that forward, hon. member. I got to meet Scott on Saturday, very passionate, will do a great job being in your area, there. I'm looking forward – and the alliance is looking forward to working closely with Scott and your group down in Belfast area.

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

Ms. Compton: Again, I know he has gone down this road before back in 2011 and wasn't successful and wasn't receptive and –

Mr. Mitchell: All indicators are we're moving forward.

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Chair.

Chair: Shall the section carry? Carried.

Production Development

Total Production Development: 1,070,000.

Shall the section carry?

We have a question from the hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Just to be clear, we're in production development now?

Chair: We're in production development, hon. member.

Mr. Trivers: I just wanted to know if you're still charging 50 cents for trees.

Mr. Mitchell: We are charging a nominal amount for trees. Like these trees you're talking \$7.50 trees, \$8 trees that we are charging 50 cents.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Do we have any ideas, I think I asked this last year, but did we ever get a handle on how much wood is leaving the Island? I'm going back to my issue of reforestation and the need for replanting.

I'm wondering: Have we ever figured that out? How much actually from the private and government land is actually leaving the Island?

Mr. Mitchell: You know what? I don't have that figure. But I do know that, and you know that, most of the woodland on Prince Edward Island is privately-owned.

Leader of the Opposition: Yeah.

Mr. Mitchell: There hasn't been a significant amount of woods work being done. However, there is a strong move now of woodlot management.

I have been able to be at several meetings in the last two months; a focus on developing management plans. Our departments will assist with those. I think in a nutshell, there hasn't been that much going anywhere and hasn't even been that much being cut here.

I think we're going to see development of that as we move out over the next, I'll say, three to seven years in a fairly significant – there are a lot of woodlots that haven't been maintained that need a fair bit of work;

management work. I think that is going to open up some opportunities.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Chair.

I'll be honest with you. I'm getting really concerned. I'm seeing a tremendous amount of wood being cut; fields being squared-off, hedgerows being taken out and I'm not seeing any reforestation.

I can't stress this; I'm becoming really concerned with the amount of wood that I'm seeing. In the last little while, you go up around my house in that area, it's unbelievable the amount of freestanding wood that is now cut and stacked and piled.

Mr. Mitchell: I guess if it's a hedgerow and they're not an actual member of the woodlot association, it would be hard to track that from our perspective.

I'm sure you could get in your car and drive anywhere on PEI and see hedgerows that have been taken out or perhaps, heaven forbid, are still being taken out.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: I'll end with: I think we really need, your department needs to put a concentrated reforestation plan in effect across this Island.

You cut a tree you need to plant a tree, or you cut one tree you plant two.

There are some great stewards in New Brunswick that learned a long time ago it takes 30 years for a tree to grow back and we've got to start planting more trees than what we're doing.

Mr. Mitchell: One thing that is ongoing related, but maybe in different areas are our Climate Change Secretariat who have developed working groups on the forestry side –

Leader of the Opposition: Well I've got some questions for you there, so –

Mr. Mitchell: I welcome them, actually.

Leader of the Opposition: I'm concerned. I really am.

Mr. Mitchell: And you know what? There is lots on the table right now about how we're reacting to needs of the day regarding climate change, and forestry plays a significant part in that, so there are opportunities.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you.

Chair: Shall the section carry? Carried.

Page 32.

Field Services

Total Field Services: 2,845,000.

Shall the section carry?

Mr. Trivers: Question.

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Chair.

I was wondering, when you're looking at wetlands in public land, and also within assisting private woodlot owners, do you assess buffer zones as part of this section?

Mr. Mitchell: I would say –

George Mason Director: (Indistinct).

Mr. Mitchell: I guess I need a little more clarity on what you mean; if there's a wetland's been established and they're for it to do a subdivision or something of that nature? Is that what you're referring to? (Indistinct).

Mr. Trivers: I'm just interested to know who it is that goes out and looks at our waterways and makes sure that the proper legislated buffer zones are in place.

Mr. Mitchell: Right now, it would be the agriculture officers.

Mr. Trivers: You guys don't do any of that as part of your field services?

Mr. Mitchell: I don't know what you mean by 'you don't do anything'. You mean, if we

get a call that somebody's encroaching on a buffer, who do I send? Is that what you mean?

Mr. Trivers: Yeah, well, no, I mean – so if you're out there, as it says here, in the "sustainable management of 75,000 acres..."

Mr. Mitchell: Buffer zones are established and landowners obey that, same as speeding laws are established. Like, I don't know exactly what you mean by going out.

If I get a call about a possible encroachment on a buffer zone, it would be the agriculture officers that would initially go to determine if that is the case or not.

Mr. Trivers: I was thinking, if they're out on public land and there's a waterway, do they make sure that the proper buffer zones remain in place?

Mr. Mitchell: Okay, so if you're talking about a forest management plan, yes, we do have a section under forestry that goes out and works with the landowner to say: for your management area you can do this within here, but you know you can have tractors out there, but you'd be manual pullouts in there. That's a constant, yes. That's part of their management developments.

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: It's my understanding that at one time, there used to be variable buffer zones along Island waterways, but that then, several years ago – in fact, just the current buffer zone size was brought in as a uniform one that was just required.

And I was wondering if you're considering at all going back to a variable buffer zone based on the terrain and the vegetation and what's being done for the land along the waterway, and especially with the introduction of new technologies; like you talked about drones, for example, to be able to go and efficiently traverse the waterways.

I was wondering if you're leaning that way as part of – for example – just your sustainable management of public land, even.

Mr. Mitchell: I guess, in meetings that I've had with the woodlot owners association, they haven't ever asked me about increasing or reducing the size of the buffer. The discussion has been about how you get in there to pluck out – if something – if you hand-cut something in there, in the past you were not allowed to take a tractor in, you were not allowed to make ruts along the terrain.

But there was a request about saying well, if you take a cherry picker and put it in over the side, would that be reasonable? I think that's reasonable.

So things like that we've been working on. But to say: we want the buffer increased or decreased significantly. I haven't had a lot of that discussion; it was more how you get the material (Indistinct)

Chair: The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

Mr. Aylward: Thank you, Chair.

I don't know; this might be kind of along his line of questioning today.

There was a presentation at one of the standing committees back a while ago where some of the harvesters wanted to be able to get in and access trees, selective cutting in the buffer zones and/or go in to the grass buffer zones and grow trees.

Has there been any discussions around that?

Mr. Mitchell: They have the ability to do that. They just can't take their machines in. They can – if it's outside, in the middle of a forest – they can take in their cutters and do everything. They just can't do that method. And they're aware of that. They can cut – some use ATVs, and do (Indistinct). Some use horses and do their (Indistinct), but they can't take the actual big machinery in, and their graders and things and do that.

Mr. Aylward: So it is happening now.

Mr. Mitchell: Yeah.

Mr. Aylward: Okay, thank you.

Chair: Shall the section carry? Carried.

Resource Inventory and Modeling

Total Resource Inventory and Modeling:
445,000.

Shall the section carry? Carried.

Fish and Wildlife

Total Fish and Wildlife: 1,233,000.

Question from the Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Chair.

Can you give me an update on – have we had any more requests on – coming into the department on the introduction of any more pheasants or wild turkeys or partridge onto the Island?

I met with some hunters' groups there a while back, and they were a little bit concerned they said about the stocks.

And now, I've had a good meeting remember with your – what-do-you-call-it-there – and she assured me that things were in good shape, but some of the guys I've talked to are saying that they're starting to notice the declines in areas.

Can we look at, or have we looked at any more?

Mr. Mitchell: Well, we have those annual meetings, and we just had it, probably three weeks ago, with all the wildlife, the hunters, and the department, and everybody kind of stated it, a union of their trades.

Nobody's referenced to me about bringing in wild turkeys. The partridge and the pheasant folks – the pheasant folks are fairly happy with how things are working for them. The partridge were there, but they didn't indicate decline. Some time they talk about the snowshoe hare decline, depending on if there's a decline in one area this year, it maybe could revise itself next year, so there's a bit of that discussion. But I haven't had anybody mention, reference any significant loss of numbers in partridge or pheasant.

But snowshoe hare is normally the discussion, if you're talking; well we didn't see many this year.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: One more question.

You guys spoke on the phone there awhile back about the opening up of some ice fishery. I remember we had that conversation and (Indistinct) you have the two lakes that you're allowed.

Can you tell me, have you – can we look at that into the future of 2017, of maybe like Scales Pond or Noonans Marsh, and there's some other places, the Bedeque Pond, and there's some other ponds that might be available to that, maybe on a limited trial basis or something like that?

Mr. Mitchell: Yeah, I got to be honest with you, that was pretty well received when I brought it up initially, and it may be one of those things that I should have kept on and it kind of fell away on me. George will write that down for me and we'll move on it, because it was well received and everybody thought that would be a great pilot, especially the two ponds you referenced would be great pilots, both areas. And I think there's strong opportunity.

So I apologize to you for letting that maybe off on the radar a bit.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you very much.

Chair: Shall the section carry? Carried.

Total Forest, Fish, and Wildlife: 7,326,000.

Shall the total carry? Carried.
Climate Change Secretariat

Climate Change Secretariat

Total Climate Change Secretariat: 445,000.

Question from the Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Can you tell me, minister, or give us an update on what actually the Climate Change Secretariat is looking at or what they're doing, I guess?

Mr. Mitchell: The Climate Change Secretariat was established back in October, a former assistant deputy minister, Todd Dupuis, is leading the Climate Change Secretariat. They have put together a five working group by and subsection of that with other cross-section of the department. Working groups from all over, from many different departments; you know, TIE, finance, ag and fish, anybody that's got any kind of a cross connection at all.

Plus, in the subcommittees, they've reached out now to non-governmentals that would have influence on planning that. Currently right now, they received the mitigation piece of the Dunsky report a month or so ago, and they're going through the recommendations that were all developed there. Those recommendations were developed from, again, public consultations and the hon. member was at several of those meetings.

So there's a lot of recommendations that were brought back, so out of the five working groups and then the sub-working groups, we'll determine where do we go, or how to we achieve what we need to do there.

Currently, the federal government has indicated that they would like us to be at a particular place in 2018. It hasn't been determined front end or back end, so this is a group that is meeting regularly; know the vision based on the report from Dunsky, based on being at those meetings themselves and kind of knowing what Islanders are expecting. They're out with lots of work in front of them to do.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you.

One more?

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Would it be possible to ask sometime, maybe in June or July, that I could have a briefing –

Mr. Mitchell: Oh, absolutely.

Leader of the Opposition: – by the secretariat or the climate change? I would like that.

Mr. Mitchell: Yeah, they would be pleased to come in and kind of give a brief – yeah.

Leader of the Opposition: Yeah, give us an overview.

Great. Thank you very much, minister.

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Chair.

My questions are around the role of the climate change secretariat as well, specifically with respect to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and how that applies to the carbon pricing model that the province will have to go with, eventually.

I was wondering: Is their role going to be to lead the way for greenhouse gas emission reduction for the province and to kind of make recommendations and control and advise the Department of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy; advise the Department of Finance et cetera?

For example, on the types of incentives that should be brought in; on the types of laws and regulations that may need to be brought in under the transportation area and these sorts of things?

Mr. Mitchell: What they are doing right now is they are reacting to recommendations. They are developing plans of: How would you implement what the recommendations said; Breaking that all the way down.

As you said, energy is at the table. That's part of their working group, so all of those things are being worked through and including all types of green energy and how they can be a part of – where they would come into play and how we can get there, because that energy piece of that is how we will reduce our overall GHGs very efficiently. That's exactly what they're working on.

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: What is there – are they the ones who are going to give the key input

into what sort of carbon pricing should be implemented?

Mr. Mitchell: I guess right now, as far as carbon pricing goes, what's the mechanism? We all know that there are two methods: Cap and trade and a carbon tax.

Mr. Trivers: He said it, he said it.

Mr. Mitchell: The fair thing is that yes, they're looking at all of those possibilities. They're looking at combinations. They're looking at what's going on regionally and they're looking at other provinces that are: What are they doing?

So yes, everything is on the table to see what makes the most sense; what's the least impact for Islanders, how do you meet your targets, yet at the same time keep, it the least impact. Other jurisdictions, there are five already in Canada that have established methods, so look at what they are doing, looking at what others are thinking about doing and working together with our sister provinces to come up with something that makes as much sense as it can for Islanders.

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: The key thing to me to make sure that the province continues to thrive and there's not a negative impact; like a severe negative impact from carbon pricing is to reduce the greenhouse gas emissions. Without greenhouse gas emission reduction, we're going to be paying – what is it now? \$50 a ton by 2020 and that's going to cost us \$90 million out of our economy, or around there.

These people really have to be the key individuals who are going to drive the carbon pricing, because if they can't up with the proper targets for greenhouse gas emission reduction, then we're going to lose our shirt as a province.

I guess, I'm interested as to what their strategy is and whether they actually have targets as to what they think the province can reach for a greenhouse gas emission reduction and what areas those are going to go into. I'm looking for a schedule or a project plan; when are they going to know that? Are they going to have that in time for

the fall so they can tell the Minister of Finance what he should be looking at in terms of greenhouse gas reductions?

Mr. Mitchell: As I indicated to you, Canada, as a nation, has established targets. Prior to that – prior to Prime Minister Trudeau coming into play, there was no federal target, of course. There had been kind of an east coast governors' target, so everything is being looked at.

Other jurisdictions, as well, have different established targets so this is the time to take your time to do all the work required to come up with the very best plan. To have something ready by this fall, I'd say, probably not. We're looking at coming here with a mitigation strategy based on the recommendations by this fall, yes.

We have other pieces, an adaption piece, that will be coming out following that; probably sometime early next year. All of those things make up the overall, big picture of reduction of our GHGs. As I indicated there, there is some flexibility with the federal government on when you have to have those determined and that could be up to as far as December 2018, so we have time.

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: One of the problems that pervades government organizations is the tendency to have different departments doing their own individual work and working in silos, not working between departments, and we've seen that time and time again. I'm not saying that's a problem just with the PEI government, that's a problem across governments in general.

For example, when the Department of Health and Wellness and the Department of Family and Human Services were separated out in the assessments area, now you have two different assessment departments doing assessments differently and there's a problem with handoffs and all these kinds of things.

My question is: How are you going to engage with the other government departments; this climate change secretariat, how are they going to engage? What's the

plan to make sure that there's not duplication of effort in the important work that they're doing that really, I believe, needs to drive the changes required for any sort of carbon pricing or incentives to make sure that information goes to the other departments and the proper strategies put in place?

Mr. Mitchell: Hon. member, in my 10 years in government I have never seen more collective hub working groups in departments in all facets of government.

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct) true.

Ms. Biggar: It's true.

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct)

Mr. Mitchell: Everybody is involved in –

Ms. Biggar: (Indistinct)

Mr. Mitchell: – hub working groups, no matter whether it's health.

As mentioned earlier, rural development – every facet of crossover has been established and the hub working groups have been developed and I'm telling you, they've got the hammer down doing good work. This is no different with the climate change secretariat.

I would have probably four of my staff that work various of it, that are part of the secretariat. Energy has a significant amount that are with the secretariat. Finance has people with the secretariat. We have established, I'll call it, a hub, but it's the hub secretariat that have a broad ranged vision; that everybody brings their side to the table.

There is going to be no stone unturned here, hon. member, when it comes to: How do we work this forward? Believe me, there is no time in my 10 years, that I have ever seen more collective work between governments in all aspects of provincial work.

Chair: Shall the section carry? Carried.

Total Climate Change Secretariat: 445,000.

Shall the total carry? Carried.

Environment

Environmental Administration

Total Environmental Administration: 550,000.

Shall the section carry? Carried.

Water and Air Monitoring

Total Water and Air Monitoring: 1,092,000.

The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you, Chair.

This is to do with – I asked this on a couple of other ministries –

Mr. Mitchell: I know where you're going, I think.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Yeah.

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct)

Dr. Bevan-Baker: You've got it, thank you.

Is there money set aside for testing of the water on the provincial beaches (Indistinct)

Mr. Mitchell: Actually, hon. member, that falls under the ministry of health. I don't mean to pass the (Indistinct)

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Maybe you would like to offer an intervention?

Mr. Henderson: (Indistinct) five hours and you didn't get that (Indistinct)

Ms. Biggar: Ask him tomorrow.

Mr. Mitchell: When you first asked that question, I wasn't sure that it didn't fall under me. I had to do some questioning on it.

Chair: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness does have an intervention, hon. member.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you, Chair.

Mr. Henderson: Yeah, we would be responsible for testing beaches, that type of

thing. But, it would be really only at the request if we felt there was an issue or a concern and at this point we haven't had any major complaints to say that there's a water quality issue on our beaches.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you.

Just for the record, we're not making any pro-active efforts to make sure that the water on our provincial beaches is indeed safe and clean then. That's fine; I'm just disappointed in that.

Thank you, Chair.

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you.

My question on this one. Water and air monitoring is something that, and we have seen it in the draft of the water act, is probably one of the most important pieces of the strategy to protect our groundwater going forward.

As we know there are lots of different wells that are going to have to continue to be dug in this province. Whether that be wells for individual – water consumption in individuals dwellings or whether it's high-capacity wells for a variety of commercial and industrial uses or for municipality water supplies. Eventually, high-capacity wells for agriculture use, as well.

I was wondering if you feel that you have the staff and the resources needed in this section to adequately monitor water, well and air quality and all the different pieces, but especially water parts so that you can comply with the new water act legislation when it eventually comes in.

Mr. Mitchell: That's a fair question, hon. member. I think that fair answer is: Yes. We work with those that are reporting their levels to us regularly. Certainly, although it falls under the provision of a new water act moving forward, targets for permitting for withdrawal levels will be significantly reduced when the new water act does come into play.

Those, the onus is on the owner of that well to give us the information, where we will periodically audit and make visits to determine that the meter lines up with the reports. This is nothing different than has gone on in the past. It's something that we feel we can have well in hand and established good data on it.

At that same time that data then becomes open and transparent on our online webpage as well.

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: My concern lies with the fact that with new water act in place, in my mind anyhow, the monitoring requirements really should be increased right? There is going to be a difference; more permits that are going to have to be issued. Really, there should be more staff, I would think, in order to meet those requirements. If you're not planning to add more staff, I wonder if really the amount of monitoring that's going to happen is going to increase at all.

If that's the case then, are we really looking after our water the way we should?

Mr. Mitchell: I see where you're going here, hon. member, but certainly our staff is of upmost qualifications to do the work that they do. A significant part of our monitoring during peak seasons are students help us do that.

As technology rolls out there are definitely methods, as you are well aware, of electronically reading these levels of meters or gauges remotely. I do not have any issues with our staffing levels. I do not have any issues with the work that they do in establishing these data marks.

Our water act, although it's triggering permitting earlier, certainly water has been being used on Prince Edward Island for the late however many centuries people have lived here.

The tracking of how that goes is not going to ramp up just because we have a new water act in. It'll be the steady moving forward. Residential aren't part of it. It's business, agriculture, all that stuff. It's not going to, overnight, go spiraling out of control, hon.

member. It'll be the same slow methodical processes it has been over the last number of years.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you.

My question is on the disposal of septage and the plant here in Charlottetown is about to receive, well, not about to, it will, in time, receive the sewage from Stratford and it's already pretty close to capacity.

All of the private operators who bring their sewage and septage into Charlottetown, at a pretty vast expense, are wondering whether it would be the possibility of opening new septage sites in rural Prince Edward Island so that, for a couple of reasons.

To take the pressure off of the municipality one here in Charlottetown, and also provide a more local place where people can take that.

I have a particular operator in my own district who has approached me on a number of times, Philip Clark, you probably know Philip. He's wondering, who does he propose this to? Where does he come – would it be your department?

Mr. Mitchell: Again, hon. member, I don't like to pass the buck, but when it comes to infrastructure for that type – what's going to go on the Charlottetown plant, it does fall under TIE, the infrastructure pieces of that.

Certainly, if contractors feel there are reasons why they should have them at various levels, or places across PEI, I'd listen to them and be supportive if that's the case. New infrastructure would fall under the Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy, if, indeed, something was to be established. I'm not sure if there is anything on her radar for new developments or not.

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

Ms. Biggar: Actually, we will be, and have approved 29 new projects across PEI in water and wastewater infrastructure for this year.

We had 20 last year. There has been a big uptake from the municipalities on the opportunity for cost-sharing dollars with us and the federal government with the new changes that came in, they are now only having to pay 25% of the cost for their upgrades under water and wastewater. It has been a great uptake and it's going to make a big difference right across PEI.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Can I ask the minister if any of those proposed facilities would have the capacity to accept septage from private operators who would take it there, or is this for the municipality itself?

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

Ms. Biggar: Sure, that would be, I know for instance, the City of Summerside has taken wastewater from the landfill site in Summerside. That's an arrangement that would have to be made with the municipalities themselves whether or not they would have that capacity.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party, are these wastewater questions? Because we are in the – they're in the next section.

If we could carry this, the first section and then we'll move onto wastewater. I'll give you right back the floor.

Shall the section carry? Carried.

I just want to make sure when we go to find an answer it's in the section.

Thank you.

Drinking Water and Wastewater Management

Total Drinking Water and Wastewater Management: 385,000.

The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you.

Just to go back to that. I guess Philip's initial question was – and he's not looking at a large infrastructure build here. There are new natural ways of dealing with

wastewater and septage. I think he's just wondering where he goes to get a permit for such a thing.

Mr. Mitchell: I think if he went to inspections on Gordon Drive and initiated the initial conversation there we might be able to have that conversation to see where it could get to. It's the first I have been made aware of it.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Yeah.

Mr. Mitchell: Obviously, it's something I can reference to staff to say: Are there opportunities?

It's probably the travel and stuff that's on his mind, right?

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Yeah, exactly.

Mr. Mitchell: If there is something that makes better sense and it can be arranged, then we'd be open to looking at it.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you.

Mr. Mitchell: He may even have some suggestions on his own.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Oh, he does.

Mr. Mitchell: I'd say, start the conversation and we'll see where we can get.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Great.

Thank you, Chair.

Chair: The hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque.

Mr. MacKay: Thank you, Chair. Minister, just one question we have talked about and I'm looking more for an update.

Has there been any progress on any sort of permit made, for example, like the pond in my district in Spring Valley that didn't need a permit. Has there been any more discussion on having to have permits to do that?

Mr. Mitchell: There has been much discussion on it. As far as the construction of that type of pond and that, there has been some work done. I guess it was kind of a

part and parcel going on the same time as the water act so I'd be looking to do maybe some kind of a release on how we would like to see those.

I'll say, perhaps, over the summer months to determine that. There has been work that has been done and ongoing, which, we hopefully will have to a conclusion to add along with some of the work that going on with the water act, as well.

Mr. MacKay: Thank you, Chair.

Chair: Shall the section carry? Carried.

Microbiology and Chemistry Laboratories

Total Microbiology and Chemistry Laboratories: 776,000.

The hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque.

Mr. MacKay: Thank you, Chair.

Minister, all the water samples now for all of the real estate transactions are done through the province. Is it possible for somebody to get a license to do that on their own? Or does it have to be done provincially through the province itself?

Mr. Mitchell: I don't have a good answer for that. I would have to do some investigating on it. Would you mean a license? We have the facility, of course, so do you mean that someone can go – that's how it used to be in the past, so I don't know the reasoning of –

Mr. MacKay: Sure.

Mr. Mitchell: – changing it – the original change or the initial change.

Chair: The hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque.

Mr. MacKay: Thank you, Chair.

I'll explain just a little bit. For the most part, the province does a phenomenal job of getting it back in time. It usually takes two to three weeks, but on the very odd occasion that a piece of equipment breaks down it could take up to six weeks, which was hurting a lot of transactions that were 30-day

closing. The question was brought to me one time: Can somebody go out and get a license privately and go out and do it on their own, or does it have to go out through the province?

Mr. Mitchell: I can bring that back to you, hon. member, –

Mr. MacKay: Okay, that's great.

Mr. Mitchell: – in formal written answers.

Mr. MacKay: Perfect.

Thank you, Chair.

Chair: Shall the section carry? Carried.

Agricultural Outreach

Total Agricultural Outreach: 355,000.

The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Yes, I was just wondering why the salaries have been cut almost in half.

Mr. Mitchell: When I referenced that some of our staff has gone to climate change secretariat, this would be the section where they came out of so they are now moved from there and over in to climate change secretariat for salaries.

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Of course, the obvious question is: If you lost half of your staff to a new secretariat, do you think you'll still be able to provide proper pesticide management programs?

Mr. Mitchell: I would say yes to that, of course.

Mr. Trivers: That's the obvious answer you would give us, of course, as well.

Mr. Mitchell: Yeah, it's the same people that are doing the same work, so they will still be doing those aspects, along with their climate change responsibility. Some of that work is seasonal, of course so they will be focusing as well on that.

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: What were the people in agricultural outreach that went to the climate change secretariat doing before they went to the climate change secretariat?

Mr. Mitchell: It was climate change work within agricultural outreach section.

Mr. Trivers: Okay.

Mr. Roach: Perfect.

Chair: Shall the section carry? Carried.

Environmental Land Management

Total Environmental Land Management: 761,000.

The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Chair.

This is an issue I have raised before and it keeps being raised to me because I have an incidence of it in my district, but I know in the province there are bodies of water that are essentially owned by private individuals. It's really, I believe, the case in my district is the land underneath the body of water is owned by the private individual and they own also a dam, and control the dam, and they control the water flow, water levels.

I was just wondering if the environmental land management section here has any issues with that and if there are any plans to make any changes in that area.

Mr. Mitchell: I'm obviously quite aware of where you're speaking about. I've been there myself and have talked to the dam owner – sorry about that, I mean the water course owner. I have also had other conversations within the department –

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Mr. Myers: (Indistinct)

Mr. Mitchell: That will be on YouTube?

Basically, what he is doing with controlling of levels, sometimes there is a concern about that and we checked – there is usually a

good reason why. We worked very closely with the owner to determine his levels are appropriate, but there are issues there with silting and things like that that he is working around with the leveling. So, we don't have any programs to deal with that, as he is aware, as you are aware and as other pond owners across Prince Edward Island, or dam owners across Prince Edward Island that would like to have that siltation removed. There is no program in place today so that doesn't come up as an issue.

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Yes.

This is an ongoing issue. We've got the landowner – it's Bagnall's Pond, is the name of the pond. He's doing what he feels is right and doing a good job and the people who have issues feel that some of the things he's doing are not right and he's not doing a good job. These issues remain. There's tension in the community on both sides. I'm not blaming the landowner, I'm not blaming the community, but I just feel like this issue has been around for a long, long time and I just want to know if there are any plans to solve some of the problems so that we're happy on both sides.

Mr. Mitchell: Currently, if the landowner is going to, for whatever reason, adjust the level of the dam; he has to notify the department, which he does. If there's a rain event going to happen two days out, he often will reduce the levels to accommodate for the new rise. Depending on the size of it, he may have to flood it up a bit to get it back up to where it was. I have received calls from concerned citizens, but when I checked – yes, the calls were made. Yes, he indicated as that and yes, he did all the regulations that he needs to.

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: It sounds like the process is being managed –

Mr. Mitchell: It is.

Mr. Trivers: – and the departments involved and the landowner and the dam

owner and operator is working well with the department, which is great.

It seems like maybe some of the other members of the community that are on that waterway – or downstream from the waterway, upstream – are not aware of the communications going on and some of the activities that are being planned. In other words, is there a way that you could – when the water level is going to go up, or when it's going to go down, when the dam's being opened, or being closed – communicate that. Maybe on the website so the community can go just go on, take a look and so they know: Oh, in the next week, we're going to have to let the water out, or next few days, or vice versa.

Mr. R. Brown: Always on the computer.

Ms. Biggar: Everything's fixed by computers.

Mr. Mitchell: The last couple of occasions, it was a call from –

Mr. Aylward: Especially late at night.

Mr. Trivers: Did he say LOL after that?

Mr. Aylward: Lots of love.

Mr. Currie: You're going to get Tweeted tonight.

Chair: Hon. Member, we're –

An Hon. Member: Going to get hammered.

Mr. Aylward: I think she just Trumped you.

Chair: Thanks. Minister, you have the floor.

Mr. Mitchell: The last couple of occurrences, hon. member, it was actually the municipality that (Indistinct) with me to see if everything was in the normal state of terms, so I'm assuming it wasn't the property owners that were – but they were probably contacting the municipality. They can do the same – check to see if things are done and let the residents know as well. It's probably an easier method. At that level, locally, they all know who each other is. If they give the request call to say – and I'm sure that occurs. When I call them back, I'm

sure they're calling the resident that's asking them.

I don't have a – I'll check to see if there's something that –

Mr. Trivers: Yeah, that's all I'm asking.

Mr. Mitchell: – when that individual calls, is there someplace that we can put it on the website, but I don't – I'll see what I can do.

Mr. Trivers: Well, on social media – just say: We just got a call – to be proactive about it and give people a heads up.

Mr. Mitchell: I think it'd be fair to say if there's an indication on *Compass* that there's going to be a fairly significant rainfall, that individual is probably adjusting his dam – as others do too, but aren't, probably, in close proximity to other residents, maybe.

Chair: Shall the section carry? Carried.

Inspection Services

Total Inspection Services: 1,636,000.

Shall the section carry? Carried.

Beverage Container Management

Mr. Trivers: Question on that last section. I know you carried it, but I'm going to ask a question on it anyhow.

Chair: On Inspection Services?

Mr. Trivers: Yeah.

Chair: Okay, hon. members, we're going back to Inspection Services there.

Mr. Roach: Of course.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: I've got questions as well on the beverage –

Chair: Yes. Perfect.

Mr. Trivers: I have a constituent who recently installed his own furnace and wants to connect it to his flue and tried to buy some five-inch Selkirk piping, I believe was what he was trying to buy, and the only place he could get it was at a vendor in

Charlottetown, but they wouldn't sell it to him because he's not a contractor. They said: Only contractors are allowed to install that.

I understand it's probably for insurance reasons. That's good. It's good to keep things safe, make sure you don't put things – but my question is: Why would you make somebody pay the money to get a contractor to install it instead of allowing them to install it themselves and then have someone inspect it afterwards, potentially for a cheaper price?

Mr. Mitchell: I guess when it comes to inspections, I'll use the example of somebody very close to me who has been a plumber for 40 years, but he doesn't have his inspections tags for oil tanks. He's been putting them in forever, but, so now he has to have that person put in his oil tank to do – it's about safety of the public.

I don't know the exact reason of why it has – the certified people, or who they are, even, but it's all about safety. It's all about reduction of issues, such as fire and damage and all of that.

Obviously, the person you're talking to thinks they should be able to install it themselves.

Mr. Trivers: Yeah.

It's not that they – they want to be able to save money because it costs a lot to hire a contractor to do the installation. They think it would be cheaper for them to install it themselves.

I'm wondering if you could just provide an inspection service they pay for instead of requiring the contractor to come in.

Mr. Mitchell: As far as licensing and training of – that is a trade of its own. Surely, you and I can go out and put a septic service in tomorrow, but we're not licensed to do that. There are licensed installers that do that.

It's all part and parcel of why there are inspections and why they are done and why they are policed and why they are inspected and why they are in place.

Mr. Trivers: Let me –

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: – put this another way.

If I am somebody who doesn't have much money, which are a lot of people on the Island because there are so many taxes coming out of their pockets, they don't have much money, right? They're doing the work themselves to try and save a buck. They can't get the pipe by going – they're going to find a way to do it. Whether they find a friend or after market, black market piping, whatever you want to call it.

Then –

Mr. R. Brown: You make it sound like (Indistinct)

Mr. Trivers: I'm just thinking –

Ms. Biggar: We've got to go over to the (Indistinct) shop (Indistinct)

Mr. Trivers: – let's – do they have an intervention, Chair?

Chair: The hon. member has the floor.

Mr. Trivers: I'm just wondering, this is the inspection services section, right?

Mr. Mitchell: Yeah.

Mr. Trivers: How come we wouldn't let private people hire inspection services and then they could do their own work –

Mr. Mitchell: Hon. member –

Mr. Trivers: – I'm just trying to work to a solution.

Mr. Mitchell: – if you can indicate to me a trade that we do that on today; we don't do it for electrical. We don't do it for plumbing. We don't do it for septic.

The examples are on the other side. There are reasons why we do inspections.

Mr. Trivers: Okay.

Mr. Mitchell: A padlock on a door only keeps out the honest person. Obviously,

there is a member of the floor sitting right there that would know that first hand.

Yes, people will do – go outside the norm and install their own electrical, their plumbing and it's hard to control.

Mr. Trivers: Okay.

Mr. Roach: Carry the section.

Chair: Beverage Container Management

Total Beverage Container Management: 5,716,000.

The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you, Chair.

I'm wondering whether the revenue at the very beginning of your section relates to the deposits for beverage containers, is that –

Mr. Mitchell: (Indistinct)

Dr. Bevan-Baker: No?

Where would we find that?

Mr. Mitchell: Yes, that's under finance department.

Mr. R. Brown: That's under page 15. Fees and services, beverage container deposits: \$7.2 million.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you very much, hon. member.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Do we have a sense as to –

Mr. R. Brown: Five million (Indistinct)

Dr. Bevan-Baker: – whether this program is paying for itself, or if it's a cost to government?

Mr. Mitchell: We have a revenue of \$7, 185,000. We have an expenditure of \$5, 548,000. So –

Dr. Bevan-Baker: But it's making money –

Mr. Mitchell: – we are making \$1.6 million. Yeah.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Okay.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: I'm glad to hear that. I'm wondering whether, we all know we that refillable containers are better than recyclable and certainly better than disposable ones.

Any thoughts from your department to reversing the decision you made around refillable glass containers?

Mr. Mitchell: I haven't had any discussion on that.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Okay.

Thank you, Chair.

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct)

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Mitchell: Pop bottles.

Leader of the Opposition: I was watching a documentary the other night, which actually I was quite interested in, minister.

New technology is coming out to help with paving where they're taking plastic from beverage containers and instead of using tar or bunker C. They're using plastic in a pavement application now. They're finding it's actually better for the environment. It's cleaner. It leaves less contamination into the ground from the tar.

Have you looked at that, or have you seen anything about that?

Mr. Mitchell: I'm going to suggest the minister of transportation has probably seen some of those examples.

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

Ms. Biggar: Thank you, Madam Chair.

We have explored that particular technology or that process that has been mentioned, and we are very well aware of it.

It's done in India. It is not conducive to anything that we would be doing here, and it just does not – would not be of any value to install on the roads. We have looked –

An Hon. Member: Call the hour.

Mr. Roach: Carry the section.

Some Hon. Members: Carry the section.

Mr. R. Brown: By the way, LOL.

Ms. Biggar: Lots of love.

Chair: You're good? Great, thank you.

Shall that section carry? Carried.

Total Environment: 11,271,000.

Some Hon. Members: Call the hour.

Chair: Shall the section carry? Carried.

Total Communities, Land and Environment: 21,081,000.

Shall the total carry? Carried.

Mr. Mitchell: 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. R. Brown: We'll be Tweeting out how many are there tonight.

Chair: Mr. Speaker, as Chair of a Committee of the Whole House having under consideration the grant of supply to Her Majesty, I beg leave to report that the committee has made some progress and begs leave to sit again. I move that the report of the committee be adopted.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

Mr. McIsaac: I move, seconded by the hon. Member from West Royalty-Springvale, that this House adjourn until tomorrow, April 4th, at 2:00 p.m.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Have a good evening.

The Legislature adjourned until tomorrow,
Thursday, at 2:00 p.m.