

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

Friday, 5 May 2017

MATTERS OF PRIVILEGE AND RECOGNITION OF GUESTS	3701
STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS	3705
WEST ROYALTY-SPRINGVALE (Walk so Kids Can Talk)	3705
CHARLOTTETOWN-BRIGHTON (Peter Norton)	3705
STRATFORD-KINLOCK (Gold Program Bell Aliant Centre)	3706
ORAL QUESTIONS	3706
STRATFORD-KINLOCK (Resources in Social Assistance System)	3707
STRATFORD-KINLOCK (Supports to Homeless People on PEI)	3707
STRATFORD-KINLOCK (Housing Supports to Islanders with Mental Health Issues)	3707
STRATFORD-KINLOCK (Upcoming Mental Health Strategy)	3708
STRATFORD-KINLOCK (Hub Model/Mental Health)	3708
STRATFORD-KINLOCK (Provincial Housing Strategy)	3708
STRATFORD-KINLOCK (Safety Net Role and Hillsborough Hospital-further)	3709
STRATFORD-KINLOCK (Action Items in Mental Health Strategy)	3710
MORELL-MERMAID (Vacant Psychologist Position in Clinical Services)	3710
MORELL-MERMAID (Resources Available in Justice System for Mental Health)	3711
MORELL-MERMAID (Mental Health and Justice System Cycle)	3711
MORELL-MERMAID (Vacant Psychologist Position in Clinical Services-further)	3711
MORELL-MERMAID (Wage Increase for Early Childhood Educators)	3712
MORELL-MERMAID (New Early Years Centres in Province)	3712
MORELL-MERMAID (Tracking of Waitlists for Early Childhood Education Centres)	3712
MORELL-MERMAID (Lack of Child Care Spaces for Infants)	3713
LEADER OF THE THIRD PARTY (Temporary Foreign Workers and Permanent Residency)	3713
LEADER OF THE THIRD PARTY (Migrant Workers and Access to Public Health Care Services)	3714
CHARLOTTETOWN-BRIGHTON (New Funding Formula for Municipalities)	3714
CHARLOTTETOWN-BRIGHTON (Agreement on Funding for Municipalities)	3715
SUMMERSIDE-WILMOT (Dairy Policies under Fire by President Trump)	3715
SUMMERSIDE-WILMOT (Trump Attack on Canadian Dairy Industry)	3716
RUSTICO-EMERALD (Measures in Government's Internet Strategy)	3717
RUSTICO-EMERALD (Financial Support for Communities and Businesses in Internet Strategy)	3718
RUSTICO-EMERALD (Tourism Industry Engagement with Internet Strategy)	3719

RUSTICO-EMERALD (High-speed Internet access for Businesses in Tourism Sector)	3719
RUSTICO-EMERALD (Dept. of RRD Engagement in High-speed Internet Initiatives)	3720
GEORGETOWN-ST. PETERS (Tabling of Mill River Contract-further).....	3720
STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS	3721
TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE RENEWAL (Chloe Harris – Poetry in Voice Competitor)	3721
AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES (PEI Burger Love 2017 Winner).....	3722
TABLING OF DOCUMENTS.....	3723
REPORTS BY COMMITTEES	3723
COMMUNITIES, LAND AND ENVIRONMENT (Human Rights Commission)	3723
CHARLOTTETOWN-LEWIS POINT	3723
RUSTICO-EMERALD.....	3724
AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES (Second Report – Committee Activities)	3725
TIGNISH-PALMER ROAD	3725
RUSTICO-EMERALD	3726
LEADER OF THE THIRD PARTY	3727
ORDERS OF THE DAY (GOVERNMENT)	3727
ESTIMATES	3727
FAMILY AND HUMAN SERVICES.....	3727
WORKFORCE AND ADVANCED LEARNING.....	3747
ADJOURNED.....	3751

The Legislature sat at 10:00 a.m.

Matters of Privilege and Recognition of
Guests

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

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

Another beautiful day outside. I know we're going to get a bit of rain on the weekend, but a good rain, that's always good.

I want to say to the farmers and the fishers, again, I wish you a safe day out there.

I want to welcome the Adventure Group who is visiting today. It's a group that help everyone reach their full potential. Hopefully, we'll help them with that today to some degree, we're on our best behaviours and things like that. Who knows? Some may even come back and sit in these seats one of these days.

I also want to welcome everybody else in the gallery and also to put a shout-out my people in District 5 Vernon River-Stratford. One lady, especially, Linda Cannon is retiring today from the Department of Workforce and Advanced Learning. She's absolutely a great lady, deserves a retirement and I wish her all the best in the years ahead.

Another big announcement taking place right at this moment in Belfast. I know a couple of people are at that and will likely get a report on that when they return.

I want to wish everyone a very productive day in the Legislature here.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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

All the best this weekend to you.

I would also welcome the Adventure Group here this morning into the gallery, which consists of 10 young people from ages 18-30 both male and female. Today, this morning, we have with us John Horreлт, Roxanne Carter-Thompson, Lynn Glydon, Denise Cheverie, Rae Sheehan and also Alyse Rossiter.

With that there are some youth participants; Katie Rossiter, Justin Richards, Caitlyn Perrot, Hillary Blaisdell, Hannah MacNally, Chandler Wedge, Brook MacIntyre, Amanda MacDonald, Luke Ellis and Chelsie Guthrie.

With that, I would also like to say Congratulations to Craig Avery. He's in my district in District 19. This weekend marked 40 years on the boat. He actually started when he was 14. He fishes out of North Port Harbour so I wish him all the best in the future.

I would also like to say hello to Adam Ross, who is with us today, too.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

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

Pleasure to rise and welcome everybody back on a beautiful day. I particularly want to welcome the Adventure Group. What a lovely idea; reaching your full potential, something we all strive for. I have no idea what kind of adventures you get up to, but I have always thought that life should be an adventure. I certainly found the last two years, that every day in politics is an adventure. I hope you enjoy the escapades in the House, today.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Biggar: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'd certainly like to welcome the group to the gallery today. It's great to have our young people. I do know a little about your group and the work that you do, and I applaud that.

I want to send – I hope our fishers have had a great week on the water. And our farmers that are out there. I know we need a little bit of rain, this weekend, that will help.

I also would like to send out greeting to my mother Pauline Dymont, and the residents at Stewart Memorial manor.

I'd like to take a moment, as well, to acknowledge some sad news from my department. This week, Kevin MacIntosh, a zone foreman in Kings County passed away while carrying out his duties. Kevin was a 35-year veteran civil servant and a mentor to many of his co-workers. He was somebody who didn't hesitate to tackle work.

Kevin MacIntosh: a devoted husband and a father of six. He was noted for his commitment to sports and his involvement in his children's athletics.

In this Legislature, we make a lot of decisions about government's plans and priorities, but it is employees like Kevin McIntosh who carry out government's important work on behalf of all Islanders.

This event has obviously shaken up a lot of our employees, and we have offered counseling to any whom may want it, and I would like to offer my thoughts and prayers to the family and friends of Kevin MacIntosh at this difficult time.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Mundy: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It gives me great pleasure to rise here today and welcome everyone viewing at home, especially those in District 22, Summerside-St. Eleanors.

It gives me great pleasure to acknowledge the Adventure Group here this afternoon – or this morning, as well. Roxanne, Lynn, Denise, Rae, and Alyse are true champions

for youth that are overcoming barriers. My hats off to them, because we all know that – we've all had someone that has had 100% faith in us and has been there to champion our cause and we wouldn't be where we are today without that.

The wonderful work that the Adventure Group does is helping these youth to overcome their barriers and reach their full potential.

My government or our government is very proud to work collaboratively with the Adventure Group in the mutual goal of helping youth to overcome their barriers and reach their full potential, and a few weeks ago I had the absolute pleasure of attending the graduation of 10 youth, and it was so wonderful to see firsthand some of the ways that our collaboration is working and helping our youth to become more productive and reach their full potential and believe in themselves as much as the team at Adventure Group believes in them.

Welcome to you all here today. Keep doing the wonderful work you're doing, and I look forward to the change that these 10 youth are going to make in our world.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

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

It's certainly a pleasure for me to rise, as well, today in the Legislative Assembly and to welcome the Adventure Group. I've known Roxanne for quite a few years, and John, unfortunately, it doesn't appear that he was able to join us today, but John is a good friend of mine and I know a strong volunteer and advocate for your wonderful programs that you have been putting on for many years now and the many lives that you're touched and enhanced, particularly with youth here on PEI.

Roxanne, I'm hoping to be able to be able to pick up the phone early next week and bring you some very good news. I'm working on a little project right now on your behalf as

you're aware, and we're very close, but hopefully we'll get that call in early in the week.

I'd also like to welcome to the gallery today Sue Fraser and Adam Ross, who I think now are here.

In addition, I'd like to bring to everyone's attention a couple of events that are taking place this weekend. This being Mental Health Week and we're encouraging everybody to get loud, there is an event tomorrow morning at 5:00 a.m. and if anyone would like to join me, I'll be at Victoria Park.

This will be the 5k Darkness into Light, and as I said, it's taking place on Saturday, May 6th, at 5:00 a.m. in Victoria Park here in Charlottetown, and it is in support of the Canadian Mental Health Association as a sign of support and to send a message that every day is a new day to move from the darkness into the light for those suffering from self-harm and thoughts of suicide.

There is a registration fee, but all of the registration fees are going directly to the PEI office of the Canadian Mental Health Association.

Another event, also taking place at Victoria Park, will be on Sunday, May 7th, and it is being sponsored by the Charlottetown Kiwanis Club, and it's a walk, and it is in support of Kids Helpline, so it will take place on Sunday, May 7th, and they're asking people to gather at the Kiwanis Dairy Bar at 1:00 p.m. and the event will get going shortly after that.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Casey: Good morning, Mr. Speaker.

It's also a pleasure for me to rise and welcome Roxanne Carter-Thompson and her team and all the Adventure Group to the gallery.

It's nice to see Adam Ross, and my friend Sue Fraser is here in the gallery. Someday

I'd love to see Sue sitting on this side of the House. She's the CEO of the Bell Aliant Centre. She's a Rotarian and a sailor, and she's a great friend. She was a long-time municipal leader in Charlottetown.

I'd like to say hello to all those watching from Charlottetown-Lewis Point this morning. I hope they have a great weekend.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It really is a pleasure to rise today and welcome everyone who might be watching from District 18, Rustico-Emerald, and everyone who's here in the gallery.

It's a great day out there. The fishers are on the water. The farmers are in the fields. The tourism operators are getting ready for a big season. I know when I left home, my son was playing road hockey with his friend. They were getting ready to go and have some fun in the woods. I dropped off my daughter at 4-H fun day here just at the Murphy Centre right across the road. It really is a great day for adventure, and it's good to see the Adventure Group here.

It's going to be a big weekend out in District 18. I know that my band, Party Mix, is headlining the New Glasgow Community Corporation fundraising event for a new boardwalk on Saturday, right at the New Glasgow Fire Department.

As well, I just wanted to remind everyone that you're invited on Monday to Stanley Bridge Hall, the Sterling Women's Institute hall, for a community conversation on high-speed Internet.

I'm wishing everyone a glorious day and a fantastic weekend.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Gallant: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I, too, would like to welcome the Adventure Group to the gallery today and everyone else and it's certainly a lovely day out there.

A shout-out to everyone back in the District of Evangeline-Miscouche and have a wonderful weekend, although it's going to rain, unfortunately.

An Hon. Member: Boomer.

Mr. Gallant: Mr. Speaker, I'd just like to take a moment to congratulate Linda Cannon on her retirement today from my office. Linda was a great help to me when I became minister a couple of months ago, and Linda is another great example of the many outstanding public servants we have in government, and I want to wish her the very best in her retirement today.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. MacDonald: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'd like to rise and also welcome the Adventure Group. I think one of the highlights of the Adventure Group for the participants is the right of passage – exercise or experience? Experience – and it's been – these are the types of groups that have been on Prince Edward Island for a long time. In fact, I think it goes back to the early 1990s at some point when this group started, and it's kind of the unsung organizations and heroes of PEI that help our youth.

The other thing is it is a busy time in the hon. member's riding, and if he feels he'd like to participate in the Malpeque dinner, I'll be speaking at it, so I'd love to have him there and acknowledge him in the crowd, that's for sure.

Also, four years ago I dropped my daughter off at St. Thomas University and she'll be graduating there next week, and four years go by pretty quickly, so I just wanted to shout out to her.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Murphy: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

A pleasure to rise and welcome all the folks in the public gallery as well as all the good people in Alberton-Roseville and right across the province that are home watching.

I'd like to also extend my congratulations to Craig Avery. Craig's a childhood friend of mine and he is still fishing out of Alberton, as well as there is a lot of fishermen that probably have that same pedigree and that same forty-years of service to the sea.

I'd also like to, once again, congratulate the hard work and the staff at the Mill River Experience restaurant on their big win for Burger Love and all the hard work that chef Wilson and his crew have done; and they should be nothing but very proud.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton.

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

I, too, would like to welcome Sue Fraser to the gallery. Sue is in the Hillsborough Rotary Club, which of course has the annual gala royale dinner going on this evening at the Delta. I think there might be still a few tickets left, so if anybody's watching this and would like to attend, check out the Facebook page or the website.

I would also like to recognize my wife, in particular –

Mr. R. Brown: The brains of the operation.

Mr. J. Brown: – but at least one other member's got a spouse that will be at teachers meetings today, and it's getting that time of the year that the teachers are kind of on the home stretch, we might say, and the kids are getting there too, so I'm sure they're looking forward to the end of June and these meetings are part of them kind of keeping it all together and getting ready for the future for themselves and their kids.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

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

I also want to welcome the Adventure Group here. You do a tremendous job. I've been out to your facility a few times, and I want to commend you for the work you do. You do great work.

I also want to recognize Becca Viau, the director of Reading Town PEI. Becca has done a tremendous amount of work in our community encouraging reading. She was one of the ones that put up all the little bookcases all around the city. She does a tremendous job, and she's promoting a book today, *What If*. I can tell you, I must have said 'what if' a thousand times in my life – or more than that: What if I would have done this or done that? So, thank you for coming, Becca, and keep up the great job. You do a wonderful job.

Thank you.

Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

Statements by Members

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

Walk so Kids Can Talk

Mr. Dumville: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I also rise today to bring awareness for the Walk so Kids Can Talk event that is taking place on Sunday May 7th at Victoria Park. Registration is at noon on Sunday and the walk starts at 1:00 p.m.

This fundraising walk will raise money for the Kids Help Phone which has been a source of support for kids over 27 years. No child or young adult should ever feel desperate or alone with their problems. This is why the Kids Help Phone was established. It provides hope and is there to ensure, guide and support young people during very difficult times.

In their first 25 years running, the Kids Help Phone connected kids with professional

counselors more than 7.1 million times. This service is free and anonymous. It helps youth build skills and abilities to improve their emotional health and well-being. They offer counseling options and many other options of online resources.

It takes a village to raise a child and I would encourage the "Island community village" to come out and raise money and walk to show how we will continue to be there as a support system for our youth.

Last year, more than 11,000 people participated in 36 communities and raised more than \$3 million. This money ensures that the kids help line is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. It is available no matter where they are or what time of day and someone is there when they need to talk.

I would encourage everyone to participate or donate so that kids have access to this very valuable service and know there is always someone there in their corner.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton.

Peter Norton volunteer for Heart and Stroke Foundation

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

I rise in the House to acknowledge an amazing supporter and volunteer of the Heart and Stroke Foundation. Peter Norton is the current Board Chair and Nortons Jewellers is the event title sponsor for the Razzle Dazzle Gala each year.

Peter's extraordinary commitment to the foundation saw the event raise \$78,000 for the foundation this year. The event has been an annual event for the past 13 years and has raised a whopping \$700,000 over those years.

These are funds that will enable the people at Heart and Stroke to continue their work to reduce the terrible toll on Islanders from these life threatening conditions. The Heart

and Stroke Foundation's motto is that they work hard to prevent disease, save lives and promote recovery.

Charlotte Comrie, who is CEO of Heart and Stroke PEI and Nova Scotia, feels deep gratitude for all of the effort that Peter puts into the resounding success of the night. Charlotte said: Peter Norton's contribution to Nortons Razzle Dazzle Gala has been the number one reason for its continued success.

Peter's son, Craig Norton, is following in his father's footsteps and is also one of the committee members who volunteer and works behind the scenes to make this night a big hit. This year there were 200 supporters taking part in the night of glitz, glam and dancing and all coming together to raise money for this deserving cause.

I would like the house to acknowledge the efforts of Peter Norton in his work with the Heart and Stroke foundation of Prince Edward Island.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

Gold Program Bell Aliant Centre

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

The Bell Aliant Centre, formerly known as the CARI complex, has recently opened its doors to seniors on Prince Edward Island.

As of this past Monday, Island seniors 80 years of age and older can join the centre's new Gold Club Program at no cost and have unlimited access to fitness programming and resources at the facility.

The Bell Aliant Centre Gold Club Program was inspired by a regular member, Irene Gallant, who received a lifetime membership to the facility when she turned 95. Irene remained an active aqua-fitness participant and a great example of how lifelong physical activity can have a positive impact up until her passing this past fall at the age of 99.

The Bell Aliant Centre presently offers more than 16 aqua-fitness classes each week. Seniors can participate in aqua-fitness classes offered in the leisure pool, where the water is only three feet deep, or they can choose to use buoyancy belts and participate in classes offered in the deeper competition pool. Seniors need not know how to swim in order to participate in any class.

The Bell Aliant Centre is committed to providing programs and services that engage and support residents of the greater Charlottetown area in becoming more active. This program is a wonderful example of the creative approach that facilities and organizations can take to help support our seniors and provide assistance in improving their quality of life.

The Bell Aliant Centre already has 20 individuals in the Gold Club, and rising. This week alone has had dozens of inquiries from seniors who are now going to be joining the Gold Club and take the steps to become more active and live a healthier life. They hope that the Gold Club will reach 100 participants before 2018.

I know this will be a huge success and I wish the staff at the Bell Aliant Centre and the participants all the best in their new program.

Again, I'd like to thank Sue Fraser and Adam Ross for being here today.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Responses to Questions Taken as Notice

Questions by Members

Speaker: The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

Mr. Aylward: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I feel like I'm getting some exercise today with my up and downs.

According to the mental health strategy, 22% of social assistance clients self-identify as having mental health issues.

Resources in social assistance system

Question to the Minister of Family and Human Services: What specific resources are available in the social assistance system to help Islanders with mental health issues get beyond this vicious cycle?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Mundy: Mr. Speaker, the Social Assistance Program and all of our programs in my department are there to help vulnerable Islanders help meet their basic needs.

Mental health strategies, mental health issues, they're all handled through our department of health, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

Supports to homeless people on PEI

Mr. Aylward: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The 2015 report on homelessness found that 38% of homeless people on the Island are between the ages of 16-24, nearly double the national average.

Question to the Minister of Family and Human Services: Does your department provide any mental health supports to this vulnerable population?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Mundy: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We have many partnerships out there with our NGO communities. Anyone who would be seeking mental health support would either be directed to an emergency room or through programs at Canadian Mental Health Association, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

Housing supports to Islanders with mental health issues

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

Again, another question to the Minister of Family and Human Services: What housing supports are currently available for vulnerable young Islanders with mental health issues?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Mundy: I'm sorry, Mr. Speaker, I only heard the last part of the question. Could the hon. member please repeat that question?

Speaker: Go ahead, hon. member.

Mr. Aylward: Certainly, Mr. Speaker.

Again, to the minister: What housing supports are currently available for vulnerable young Islanders with mental health issues?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Mundy: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Again, through our partnership with the NGO, Canadian mental health, they have many programs that have housing options for persons who are suffering mental illness. We would help assist them through, either a rent supplement, or some kind of a program that would help them through social assistance, or through a rent shelter program, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

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

The 2015 report on homelessness found that 47% of homeless people on the Island self-identified as having a mental health issue.

Upcoming mental health strategy

Question again to the Minister of Family and Human Services: How will your upcoming housing strategy align with the mental health strategy to better deal with this vulnerable group?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Trivers: Good question. Break down the silos.

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

Ms. Mundy: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Actually, that is a great question. We are working collaboratively across government and we are breaking down silos. With the provincial housing strategy we will be, also, talking with our colleagues in workforce and advanced learning, in health and wellness, in education, so the provincial housing strategy – and we will be lining it up with the National Housing Strategy.

The provincial housing strategy is going to be looking at the needs of all Islanders: those Islanders that are suffering with mental illnesses, those that have income shortages, as well as those Islanders who just need a little hand.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

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

The Premier and his government keep talking about the Hub model instead of what

we should be talking about, a child advocate.

Hub model/mental health

Again, question to the Minister of Family and Human Services: Where is the hub model that will address this pressing issue of mental health in the health, justice and social services?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Trivers: Good question. Where is the hub?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Henderson: Mr. Speaker, yes, we do have numerous services that we provide for people of all calibers, ages, genres, et cetera when it comes to mental health issues. We do have an arrangement with the Canadian Mental Health Association where we provide them funding to deliver some of the services. I believe they have over 76 workers that are providing mental health supports to Islanders of all ages and genres.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

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

There are many community stakeholders working to try and address these issues daily.

Provincial housing strategy

Question again to the Minister of Family and Human Services: Will these groups have a seat at the table before your long overdue housing strategy is developed so that the voices of these vulnerable Islanders are heard?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Mundy: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We speak, almost daily, with all of our stakeholders, but as for the provincial housing strategy, yes, we will be engaging our stakeholders and getting their input because that is very important. We will also be engaging the federal government. We'll also be talking with our colleagues in other jurisdictions.

This provincial housing strategy, you're right, it has been overdue because since the Campbell years there hasn't been a government out there that has put housing as a priority. Two years ago when this government formed power, we were the first government in how many – in over 60 years that said housing needs to be an important issue. It needs to be a priority. It needs to be front and foremost and it needs to address the concerns of Islanders now and well into the future. That is what this provincial housing strategy will do.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

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

This week we have been discussing a \$22,000 Corpus Sanchez study on the Hillsborough Hospital. That study talked about the challenge of the safety net role played by Hillsborough Hospital for Islanders who struggle to transition back into the community successfully.

Safety net role and Hillsborough Hospital-further

This safety net role is not formally recognized in the Hillsborough Hospital's mandate, despite this situation existing for many years now.

Question to the Minister of Health and Wellness: Why hasn't this been officially recognized as part of the Hillsborough Hospital's mandate?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Henderson: Mr. Speaker, when any patient is discharged or transitioned back into the community, the workforce, their home, whatever it might be, there is usually always a patient-care plan that is put in place and they, the staff, would know the most appropriate location where to transfer somebody. We do have many transition services across the province for individuals.

Also, families play a role in that too, and sometimes they may be transitioned back into the care of the family.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

Mr. Aylward: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

This safety net role persists because it hasn't been formally recognized. Resources and financial supports to perform that safety net role is lacking.

A question again to the minister of health: Is cost containment the reason why the safety net role hasn't been formally recognized in the Hillsborough Hospital's mandate?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Henderson: Mr. Speaker thanks for that question.

I guess the reality is that I'm part of a government that not only is delivering a balanced budget, but it's also increased the health care spending to this portfolio to the tune of 5.8%, and those resources are being disbursed all across the level of services that we provide; all health care needs in this province, whether that's mental health issues or what have you. I'm fully confident that it is not a money issue.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

Action items in mental health strategy

Mr. Aylward: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

One of the reasons for the safety net role cited in the Corpus Sanchez study was the lack of effective community supports.

This further marginalizes Islanders struggling with mental health issues, ultimately driving people to institutional settings in both the health and justice systems.

A question again to the minister of health: What concrete action items are in your mental health strategy to improve community supports for Islanders with mental health issues?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Henderson: Mr. Speaker, when we deliver the issues around mental health and the continuum of care that we administer when we deliver mental health, it isn't always about institutional components; it is about transition; it is about delivering services in many different forms and capacities, so we are very patient-centered when we deliver services to Islanders suffering from mental health issues and that are on the road to recovery from mental health issues, so we really look at the individual patient situation, and we try to deliver the supports and the care for that, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid.

Vacant psychologist position in clinical services

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I have questions about psychology in the justice system today, and I'll ask them to the minister of health.

Minister: How long has the psychologist position under clinical services in the department of justice has been vacant?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Henderson: Mr. Speaker, on that particular question on psychological assessments and the delivery of those, I'd have to get back to the hon. member with more specifics on that.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid.

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's my understanding this position has been empty for months, if not years. This is a pretty major position. I'd like to read part of the description that comes right off the government website this morning.

"The Psychologist, in addition to providing clinical supervision and leadership for the Division's Clinical Services team, will provide a range of assessment, diagnosis, treatment and consultation for adult and youth offenders involved in the criminal justice system."

Does the minister consider this a priority?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Henderson: Mr. Speaker, we certainly understand that psychiatry services are an important part of the delivery of (Indistinct) health care, and I'm sure they're very much a similar component of justice.

We do – I know in our department, we have a complement of 15 psychiatrists, of which there's a couple of vacancies; but the reality is some of these particular professions can be a challenge to recruit for, but we do have an individual that is going to be coming to the Island that will be delivering child psychiatry services in the summer, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid.

Resources available in justice system for mental health

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm talking about psychologists in the correctional centres. Vulnerable Islanders are trapped in a vicious cycle, just struggling to access badly-needed mental health services in and outside our justice system.

Question to the health minister: What specifically resources are available in the justice system to help Islanders with mental health issues get beyond this cycle.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Henderson: Mr. Speaker, because of the importance of that question, and I have to say it's not part of my portfolio, I'd have to take that question under advisement and get back to the hon. member.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid.

Mental health and justice system cycle

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Another question to the health minister: How will the mental health strategy stop this vicious cycle affecting so many vulnerable Islanders who bounce between the health and justice system?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Myers: That's a good question.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Henderson: Thanks, Mr. Speaker.

That's true; there certainly are a lot of cross-components of mental illness and the components of challenges that that can have, and justice does play a bit of a role, and we do have different models, bridge models and

hub models, to consult on a particular client situation.

But, I can say that we certainly are doing a lot of things in our department to try to make sure that we alleviate some of those problems, and some of those issues are some of the investments that we have made in the Insight Program, some of the addiction services for youth that we're dealing with, the Strength Program, we've increased hours of services at McGill Centre, and once again, even with Mount Herbert we're delivering services, and it can go right on into opiate replacement therapies, and the list can go on, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid.

Vacant psychologist position in clinical services (further)

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Those are great initiatives that the minister's talking about, but they're far down the road. We have people that are showing up in our correctional facilities right now that need the help (Indistinct) of a psychologist.

Can we have it come out today that this position is a priority for this government?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Myers: Good question.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Henderson: Mr. Speaker, obviously any time there's a vacancy – and I have innumerable vacancies in our department, whether it's physicians, whether it's nurses, and especially physicians, as such; and psychologists would be no different.

I'm sure the Department of Justice and Public Safety is doing everything it can to recruit these positions, and hopefully we'll have some new recruits just as the school year is ending. There may be new people be able to access those services in the future.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid.

Wage increase for early childhood educators

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I have a question for the minister of education and early childhood education: Minister, when is the next wage increase for the early childhood educators?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

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

The minister of education is speaking with the teachers at the present time. I know in the last round of negotiations, there was discussion on the increase, and I think they're due in October and April of each year as they are increased.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid.

New early years centres in province

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm not so sure that we have a firm timeline on when the next increases are coming for early childhood educators. One year ago, the minister was saying in the paper that further wage increases for early childhood care workers were coming, and he also said that more early year centres would be coming across the province.

Can the minister responsible for early childhood education update us on any new early years centres that are coming in the province?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

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

On the early year centres, as the needs arise and as there's no competition with the private centres, there is the possibility that a new early year centre can open up, but we do not go into competition with the private centre.

When the funding is available, the numbers warranted, then the department looks at opening up a new early years – early childhood centre.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid.

Tracking of waitlists for early childhood education centres

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Minister, are we tracking waitlists for early childhood education centres across PEI?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

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

We have a whole department that looks after the early childhood piece. They look at the numbers. They can look further down the road with regards to the birth and the information with regards to that with new people coming into the province and such, and so they have a very good handle on the numbers for the coming year and a couple of years down the road. They budget for that. They look at the placements for that, because we are very strong in the early year learning piece. We want them in that.

But again, we don't compete with the private centres, and the option is there for the parents if they want to go into an early year centre or a private centre, and it is a very beneficial and important part of the early year's program.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid.

Lack of child care spaces for infants

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's my understanding that child care spaces, especially for infants, are really hard to come by, especially in urban centres in PEI.

Minister, what is your government doing to correct the situation with the lack of infant spaces in early child education?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

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

That is a very important item and a very good question on that. We track that very well as well, because the infant spaces, we need more supports at that age level, and then as they age up we can back off a little bit on the support; but at that level, it is very tough.

But our department does follow those numbers. They look far ahead as well and keep a track on it as well as possible. We are going to continue to budget for that. I know the department of education did get an increase in their funding this year, as did family and human services, as did health, so we work at – those are very, very important issues and items and the health of our children and our very most youngest and most vulnerable, we want to start them off very strongly. That's why we put kindergarten in the system. That's why we put the early years program in place – for the betterment of all our children.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid.

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I asked these questions a year ago as well and at that time, the government said that they're working on new infant-care spaces and that they were going to come and things were going to happen and we haven't seen it yet.

Can the minister commit to making new child/infant spaces in early childhood education a priority for this government?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

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

That is a priority because we introduced the whole program – very much needed, as was kindergarten. Those are programs that our government put in place. We will continue to track that and we have a part of our department – one section of our department looks specifically at the early year piece and we will continue to do that because our government firmly believes in that area.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

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

Last year this government set a goal of having a population of 150,000 Islanders by the 150th anniversary of confederation. It appears that we're not going to reach that target, but it's clear that if we do choose to increase our population, immigration will play a pivotal role in that pursuit.

Temporary Foreign Workers and permanent residency

A question to the Minister of Workforce and Advanced Learning: What is government doing to enable the almost 1,000 workers who are here on Prince Edward Island through the Temporary Foreign Workers

program to seek permanent residency on PEI?

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

Mr. Gallant: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

In answer to the hon. member's question, there always is temporary foreign workers coming to PEI and, as you may be aware, they can stay for 120-180 days. Some of them choose to stay here after a certain amount of time, so there is an appropriate application process that they may apply for. It falls under the federal jurisdiction when they come here so they fall under their rules, but we're doing what we can when they apply and there's the PEI Association for Newcomers Canada and different organizations that help them

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

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

The minister stated to the media a little while ago that government is actually exploring whether there is a need for legislation to protect and retain migrant workers and the way it's done in Manitoba, for example.

A forum on migrant worker issues, which was hosted by the Cooper Institute in March, clearly showed, at least to me, that these issues are real and that they're harming people right now.

Question to the minister: What is the timeline for the study he talked about and what kind of public engagement will it include.

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

Mr. Gallant: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

In answer to the hon. member's question, the newcomers fall under the *Employment Standards Act* and they're protected under that. Anytime they come here, as I said

earlier, there are mechanisms in place and we are looking at that at present and there will be something coming forward in the future.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Migrant workers and access to public health care services

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

Some actions actually may not need to wait for further study at all. Temporary foreign workers pay taxes like all of us in this room. They pay source deductions like everybody in this room, and yet many of them do not have access to basic health care services. Other provinces have structured agreements in order to provide health coverage for all temporary foreign workers from the day that they arrive in Canada.

A question to the minister: Will government take immediate action to ensure that all migrant workers on Prince Edward Island have access to public health care services now?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Henderson: Mr. Speaker, under an arrangement with the federal government, we do work with temporary foreign workers and any temporary foreign worker that has an agreement to work here for over 183 days receives access to health care services in this province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton.

New funding formula for municipalities

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

My question's for the Minister of Finance: Minister, discussions have been ongoing for some time now on a new funding formula for the municipalities across the province.

Would the minister please inform the House as to the status of those discussions?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. Roach: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm pleased to inform the House that we have been in negotiations for some time now and I'm extremely pleased to say that we have reached a funding agreement for 2017-2018, which enables the municipalities to strengthen the delivery of their services to their residents.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank, Summerside, Kensington, Charlottetown, Cornwall, Montague and the Federation of Municipalities that represents all the other communities for the great work that they've done to reach this agreement.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

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

Thank you, Minister. That's great news. Now that a new agreement has been reached, will it mean that there's an increase in funding for the municipalities?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. Roach: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Within the agreement that we have right now for 2017-2018, that means an extra \$2 million for all of those cities and municipalities to work with. What we've done is we've taken, within the funding formula – the new one, we've converted to tax credits for things such as roads and police departments. We look at this as an overall balanced approach to working with all of the municipalities so that they know what's happening going forward and they can set their priorities as we go forward.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Agreement on funding for municipalities

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

Just on that point, I note that the municipalities have been looking for that kind of sustainability in an agreement. I'm wondering if there are plans to negotiate or set in place an agreement for future years.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. Roach: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As I said, those discussions have gone extremely well. The formula is one that the province can work with as well as the municipalities. They're going to continue to work on this and we expect to have – and we look forward to having an agreement by summer that will extend out for five years, so that all the communities and the towns and municipalities will have predictability in their funding.

I know that that was mentioned in the throne speech – in the last throne speech that we had that we were going to do that – and I'm extremely pleased at the way that we've been able to work with all the communities on this. It's been a very positive experience.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Summerside-Wilmot.

Dairy policies under fire by President Trump

Mr. Palmer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

My question is for the Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries: Minister, the Canadian dairy industry and its supply and management system has recently come under attack by the President of the United States. The President claims Canada's dairy policies are the cause of financial loss for dairy farmers in the US. This is an important

issue for Summerside, as it is home to Amalgamated Dairies Limited, which is owned by 175 dairy producers who supply the co-op with its milk.

Minister: Can you explain why our dairy policies have come under fire by President Trump.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

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

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: You have to get a psychiatrist for that.

Mr. McIsaac: Can I explain why our dairy policies have come under fire by President Trump? Well, no. I don't think I can tell you the honest truth. And apparently the Member from Summerside-Wilmot has lost the idea of what a log question is here, too, because certainly not a log.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McIsaac: But anyway, it is a really important question because I don't think President Trump really understands supply management – our system here versus the system they have in the States. In Canada, we try to match supply with demand, so we only produce enough milk to fill the needs of our cheese, our butter, our yogurt, or whatever. Our farmers are not subsidized in any way. They get paid for their milk directly by the consumer based on a cost to production and formula.

We have people go into the farms and they say: What does it cost to produce a litre of milk? And they come up with those figures and they bring it back and that's what the producer is paid. On top of that, there's a cost of production for what it costs to process the milk and that's what the consumer pays in total.

In the States, they can be subsidized up to 30% of the product and then, with that, they want to dump it on the world market. So, they're subsidized, but then they produce so much product – they have no place to sell it – so they have to dump it and they want to

dump it into Canada when our system's working perfectly.

They also use a growth hormone in their product. We do not use that here. We do not want that here, and we want to maintain supply management in Canada.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Trivers: (Indistinct)

Ms. Biggar: He knows his stuff.

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

Trump attack on Canadian dairy industry

Mr. Palmer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The dairy industry is very valuable to the economy of PEI. ADL employs 250 people across the province, and approximately 150 people in the Summerside plant.

Minister: Should Prince Edward Island dairy farmers and Canada's dairy industry be concerned about President Trump's attack on the industry?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

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

The hon. member does bring up a great point there because ADL is a key factor in the dairy industry in PEI. I was very pleased I served on the board of directors there for six years while I was milking cows, and it was absolutely a terrific employer and a terrific benefit and bonus for the dairy producers on Prince Edward Island.

Our Canadian ambassador to the US has written to the governors in New York State, in Wisconsin, to explain to them that we're quite upset by what is happening here. They, in the States, would love to have a supply management system that we have here. They, in turn, are working with the government in the States to explain to them that Canada is not the problem. Over-supply in the States is the problem.

We still are concerned, but Dave MacNaughton, our Canadian ambassador to the federal government, Minister MacAulay as well, is working on this issue very strong. We're still concerned. We will still keep pushing the issue and negotiating very strongly, but I think we need an educational lesson on the dairy industry for the President of the United States of America.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Measures in government's Internet strategy

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's spring 2017 and after years of delays, secrecy and broken promises, this tired Liberal government is still talking about having an Internet strategy. Recently, the minister introduced, really, a flawed and insecure Internet speed test which many Islanders feel is really redundant and this is a question for the minister of economic development.

Other than reinventing the wheel with an Internet speed test, what specific measures are in your tired Liberal government's Internet strategy?

Mr. Myers: Good question.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. MacDonald: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Every time I rise on high-speed Internet in Prince Edward Island, it gives me an opportunity to tell exactly what our government is doing and what it has been doing, and the proactive approach that we've taken with this issue.

Mr. Trivers: (Indistinct)

Mr. Myers: We won't get to see the answers until tomorrow.

Mr. MacDonald: We are working with ISPs. We're working with communities.

Mr. Myers: You're buffering until tomorrow.

Mr. MacDonald: I think if anybody reads *The Guardian*, they're going to see that places like Seawood Estates; our staff has met with Kingston last week, a Kingston community. We're working very diligently on this issue.

What we're trying to do is create a fair marketplace for the taxpayers of Prince Edward Island.

Mr. Myers: (Indistinct)

Mr. MacDonald: We forever hear from the opposition: Get into the issue. Then the next day we hear: Get out of the issue. I don't know if it's a confused Conservative opposition instead of a tired Liberal government, but I think they're more confused than we are tired.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Myers: (Indistinct) be on (Indistinct) YouTube page.

Mr. Trivers: (Indistinct) Live at Five.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We keep hearing a lot of talk from this tired Liberal government: We think we're going to go one way. We think we're going another. We've got a contract. We're not going to release the contract. We are going to release the contract; call our office and we'll get back to you. Wait a minute, just call us. We'll take the information. No wait a minute, we're going to have a speed test.

No wonder people are confused.

An Hon. Member: No FOIPP.

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct)

Mr. Trivers: We're not confused. The people of PEI are confused.

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct)

Ms. Biggar: (Indistinct) confused.

Mr. Trivers: A question to the minister of economic development: When will your tired Liberal government's Internet strategy actually be released to the public?

Mr. Myers: Good question.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Myers: (Indistinct) hear there's an event Monday night somewhere about it.

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

Mr. MacDonald: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

This has been a priority, and for the hon. member getting up; I think I clearly stated in the public about the contract, that it was released, and that went nowhere.

Forward we march on as a government, being proactive, working with ISPs working with communities we have arranged a project to go through policy board. I think the date was April 27th. It has gone to Executive Council where we can start to utilize infrastructure that the government owns. Crown land, schools, hospitals where we start to place towers to alleviate some of these issues.

If the hon. member can continuously stand up and say we're not doing anything, that's completely false, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Biggar: (Indistinct) confused (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: Fake questions.

Speaker: Okay, hon. members, let's have some order.

The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Financial support for communities and businesses in Internet strategy

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The minister says he's taking action, but we're just not seeing it, at least out in my district and across the Island. People are still wondering: Where is my reliable high-speed Internet?

The CRTC has referred to Internet access as a basic right. But after nearly a decade of delays many Islanders are simply tired of waiting. They're just waiting and waiting to get high-speed Internet.

In my district, the Resort Municipality, for example, together with local businesses and residents are showing the leadership lacking from this tired Liberal government and they're taking action.

Mr. R. Brown: That's good.

Mr. Trivers: Yes, it is good.

This is a question to the economic development minister: Will your Internet strategy contain financial support for communities, businesses and residents who partner to develop local solutions for the lack of reliable high-speed Internet access?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. MacDonald: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

At the beginning of the hon. member's statement and then question I almost thought he forgot to Seawood Estates was in his riding.

We're working with Seawood Estates and we're working with other communities right across Prince Edward Island. We've done the same thing in Maximeville. We sent out an RFP in relation to ISPs wanting to provide Internet services in those areas; how we can help.

We promised that there would be monetary funding if it was a request from a community or an organization or a body. Kingston was another one. I think Milton

was another community that is talking about it.

What we're doing is we're creating a fair playing field for the taxpayers of Prince Edward Island. We're ensuring – we're putting ISPs on charge to say: Listen, we need this and we need it now, and we want a better service for Prince Edward Island. That's what this government is all about; protecting the taxpayers of PEI.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Tourism industry engagement with Internet strategy

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

What the people of PEI are looking for is leadership on this issue. They're out in their communities and a lot of these are unincorporated communities. They're looking for this province to step up and lead the way and say: We are going to help you get reliable high-speed Internet. But they're sitting out there and they're waiting in the cold. It's only when leaders within our community are taking initiative to make things happen that things do.

Question for the minister of economic development: How was the tourism industry engaged in the development of this tired Liberal government's Internet strategy?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. MacDonald: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I know in the first question the hon. member mentioned the speed test. We have had over 5,000 people reply to that speed test. We're finding all of the grey areas and we're going to share those grey areas with the public and with the ISPs and we'll move forward.

Working with tourism industry, I don't think anybody is going to argue that the tourism industry is one of the best industries on

Prince Edward Island, as far as I'm concerned, and they contribute \$430 million to expenditures that help pay for services in healthcare and education.

We are going to continue to build in those industries. It is a priority of this government for Internet services. But to run cables across Prince Edward Island is \$200 million. Who is going to pay for that?

We have priorities in healthcare and education that we have to look at, too. Economic development and Internet solution is a priority.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

High-speed Internet access for businesses in tourism sector

Mr. Trivers: Mr. Speaker, my phone is ringing off the hook with tourism operators that are worried they are not going to have reliable high-speed Internet for this upcoming season.

If the minister thinks you need to run cables, \$200 million worth of cables all across PEI to provide high-speed Internet access to Islander then he obviously does not understand the technology that is there.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Trivers: The urgency to develop solutions, shown by groups like the Resort Municipality is very much economics driven. Lack of reliable high-speed Internet is a non-starter for many tourists when they try to make their vacation plans.

Question for the economic development minister: I want to know, what specific measures are there from your tired Liberal government to address the lack of high-speed Internet for communities and businesses in the tourism sector for this upcoming season?

Mr. Myers: Good question.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Myers: Sounds like he's going to run extensive cords all over PEI.

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

Mr. MacDonald: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As I said before, we have met with several communities. We're working with communities. We're providing funding to certain communities to help them achieve better Internet access. We'll continue to do that.

We're offering Crown land. We have – went to policy board about putting towers on schools, on hospitals, on other pieces of infrastructure.

The hon. member realizes this. We have spoken about this several times. He fully understands that government is proactive on this case and will continue to be.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Department of RRD engagement in high-speed Internet initiatives

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm really getting a lot of talk, but not a lot of action from the Minister of Economic Development and Tourism.

I'd like to direct this question to the Minister of Rural and Regional Development. Cynics might think that your department was created to bring you back inside with the Liberal Caucus –

Mr. R. Brown: No!

Mr. Trivers: – and stop the we-the-Wes-movement. Cynics would say that.

I hope your department can make a real difference.

Minister: What are you doing in your department to bring the reliable high-speed

Internet so desperately needed for rural and regional development?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Myers: Good question.

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

Mr. Murphy: Thank you, hon. member.

First of all, I'd like to say, I'd like to think I'm in this position because of my passion for rural Prince Edward Island.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Murphy: Mr. Speaker, what I'm doing the work for – my department is doing the work, working very closely with the capable minister of tourism and economic development.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The final question will come from the hon. Member from Georgetown-St. Peters.

Tabling of Mill River contract (further)

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

For weeks and weeks, as a matter of fact, for years, the opposition has been trying to get information from this government, this tired Liberal government, they like to hide facts from Islanders. They don't want Islanders to know. Like, the member from Morell said yesterday: It took seven years for you to finally come clean on the Bell deal. You hide about – you hiding from Islanders e-gaming, yet today.

Question to the Minister of Economic Development and Tourism: Has Billy Dow given you the permission to release that contract for Mill River, yet?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. MacDonald: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm not sure of the hon. member's math, but I've only been here two years and the contract was released less than two years.

Mr. Myers: Weak. Minister of extension cords.

Mr. MacDonald: As far as the Mill River contract, I think that we have stated clearly in this House the benefits to rural Prince Edward Island and this area, the financial aspect of it, the spin-offs to other businesses, the jobs, having a new property, new investments in that capital project. Integral.

One member talks about tourism industry and how important it is, the other member doesn't seem to care. I get it.

An Hon. Member: He gets it.

Mr. MacDonald: There is a process in place to go through to release contracts with third parties. We are in that process, but I can tell you. If I can release that contract, I'll do the exact same thing I did with the Bell contract. I will release it, and it could be as soon as next week.

An Hon. Member: Oh, there you go.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Myers: We'll release it in 2019. Don't worry.

Statements by Ministers

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

Chloe Harris – Poetry in Voice Competitor

Ms. Biggar: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It takes an extremely gifted person to be able to look at a piece of writing and make it their own. That is especially true when the piece deals with a traumatic experience.

Chloe Harris of Montague is that kind of gifted person. Her talent for memorizing and performing poetry has led her to national prominence. This spring, Chloe was selected, along with 23 other students, to travel to Vancouver, to take part in Poetry in

Voice, a competition with the goal of renewing a love of poetry in young people. In the end, Chloe made it to the top three. There were, initially, 10,000 young Canadians taking part in that competition, so Chloe's achievement is certainly something noteworthy.

Particularly outstanding to me is the fact that one of this Montague High School student's poems was Wolf Lake by Elizabeth Bachinsky. This poem is a chilling picture of violence within a dating relationship. I have to applaud Chloe Harris to address such a serious topic.

Violence is something that too many women experience in our society at the hands of family, boyfriends, and acquaintances. In places and times that should feel safe, some women find themselves at tremendous risk. In her way, through her performance, Chloe Harris has helped to shed some light on a serious topic and to do so in a way that has moved her listeners.

I want to congratulate Chloe Harris and to thank her for using her skills as a speaker to address an important social issue. I would also like to acknowledge Trisha Burrows, Chloe's teacher who accompanied her to Vancouver and I know she is watching today on the livestream. I'm very honoured to recognize Chloe Harris in the gallery today with her father, Gary Harris, and her aunt Michelle Harris-Genge.

Thank you and congratulations.

Ms. Casey: Yeah.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

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

I, of course, would like to pass on my congratulations – my personal congratulations to Chloe. We have a long and rich tradition here on Prince Edward Island in arts and culture, whether that be in theatre, or dance, or music, or visual arts, or in this case, literature – including poetry.

Poetry is occasionally seen as the eccentric, sort of nerdy cousin in the literature family, but for me, there's nothing as compelling as some beautiful poetry which is delivered by a talented author – and that's exactly what Chloe does. In both her words and her delivery, she's absolutely captivating. I watched some video on YouTube earlier today, actually. Chloe's a poet that she writes with an economy of words – there's no flowery prose here, it's just some stark, clean, gripping poetry examining some very complex ideas and feelings and she conveys all that with a maturity way beyond her years.

Congratulations to you, Chloe. It was a pleasure to discover you.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

PEI Burger Love 2017 Winner

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

It started with 84 but now there is only one. The 2017 winner of PEI Burger Love is Chef Stephen Wilson's Beefy Vixen from Mill River Experience and that burger will be on his menu for the coming year.

A total of 184,307 burgers were sold during this year's Burger Love campaign. This equates to over \$2.6 million in burger sales alone during the month of April, and that amount doesn't include side dishes, and it doesn't include beverages. So all told, Burger Love's economic impact is estimated to exceed over \$4 million dollars.

Burger Love has become an Island sensation and is an annual conversation starter. The question is: How many burgers have you had? It's a trending topic every April. This success is a testament to the quality of our Island food product, the hard work of our Island's cattle producers, and the expanding reputation of Prince Edward Island as Canada's Food Island. Islanders continue to support fresh, local ingredients, the creativity of our Island chefs, and the high quality of our Island beef.

Our government's balanced budget – 2017-2018 operating budget, includes continued support for local food promotions and the Island's beef industry which in 2016, had a total farm cash value of \$39 million.

I want to congratulate all restaurants and thank patrons for their continued support of Burger Love. Supporting local producers means Islanders are supporting their local communities and the provincial economy. I would also like to take a moment to recognize Fresh Media, which had a little idea seven years ago, and the cattle producers for seeing its potential.

This year, Burger Love introduced the Give Back Burger. Thirty-six of the 84 restaurants committed to donating \$1 for every burger sold during the month of April to the United Way.

I'm pleased to inform the House that \$63,560 was raised for United Way.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McIsaac: All donations to United Way stay on Prince Edward Island and every dollar raised through the Give Back Burger will fund future programs that increase access to local and affordable food for Islanders.

Burger Love truly is another Island success story that shows that when Islanders work together, big things can happen and I can't wait for next year.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Again, April is always – since Burger Love started – a month that more and more people start to look forward to and it's a great way to come out of the winter months and into the summer months. Eighty-four different burgers is quite an undertaking. I know – I think the first year they had it, I ate them all, but I didn't even attempt it this year because there's no way I could have. It's not only – it's obviously very good for the farmers.

I know there was a time and it wasn't that awful long ago where the beef prices were low, a lot of beef farmers were struggling. They were wondering what was around the next corner and they stuck with it and – Burger Love helped the local economy because the local beef consumption went up and it was certainly good for the farmer. As the beef prices started to swing back for them, I think a lot of them were glad that they had that winter activity – late spring activity to help them get through those tough times.

There is a tremendous amount of work goes into pulling that off and it is impressive. I know that I had the opportunity to go to quite a few different places and I think that, through it all, it never ceases to amaze me the creativity out of some of the kitchens that participated in the Burger Love. I know there were nights – and I think I talked about it here before – there were nights where I had to wait an hour just to get in to a table because the line-up was so big. It's been great for local business. It's great for Islanders. It's something that creates a great buzz in April and, like the minister said; everybody asks how many you've had. Which ones did you have? Which was your favourite? Which is the best one so far? With 84, you get a lot of different answers this year.

I congratulate, too, the chef in Mill River. I, obviously, didn't go up that far to get a burger, but I'm sure that it's great. I think one of the members mentioned here yesterday that maybe the Mill River burger next year will be called Sweetheart Burger. We'll see.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: Thank you, Member from Georgetown-St. Peters.

Mr. Myers: I didn't say it, just repeating it.

Presenting and Receiving Petitions

Tabling of Documents

Speaker: The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

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

Mr. Speaker, by leave of the House, I beg leave to table a document here – actually it's many pages thick and if I can impose upon the House for just a short moment, I'd just like to give a summary of what this document is about. It starts off with: We the people of Prince Edward Island petition the province of PEI to have better resources for people suffering with the disease of addiction and mental health challenges. A mental health mobile crisis unit team to provide intervention and short-term crisis management for children, youth, and adults experiencing mental health or addiction crisis. The team would be professional social workers, law enforcement officers, nurses, youth workers. This team would develop working relationships with the local police, physicians, nurses, and social program officers.

We also petitioned for a mental health and addiction unit at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital – a unit where people would be assessed by trained, experienced mental health physicians and be connected to the appropriate services. It would offer 24/7 services. It does go on to talk about the methadone program and suboxone as well – which we had great debate and discussion here earlier this week about.

This document actually contains hundreds of names of Islanders from tip-to-tip across our province and I am proud to table this today in the Legislative Assembly and ask that the government review this document and take serious consideration, 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.

Reports by Committees

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

Ms. Casey: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

My committee report is going to be delivered in two parts. I would also like to welcome – it's always a pleasure to

welcome, Brenda Picard, the Executive Director, of the Human Rights Commission who has joined us in the gallery today.

As Chair of the Standing Committee on Communities, Land and Environment, I beg leave to introduce the report of the said committee, on the Prince Edward Island Human Rights Commission and I move, seconded by the hon. Leader of the Third Party, that the same be now received and do lie on the Table.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Ms. Casey: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Leader of the Third Party, that the report of the Committee be adopted.

Your committee is pleased to present its report making recommendations regarding appointments to the Prince Edward Island Human Rights Commission.

As a result of its deliberations on this matter, your committee is pleased to recommend to the Legislative Assembly:

1) That Mr. John Rogers be reappointed as the Prince Edward Island Human Rights Commissioner for a term of three years, to expire on May 5, 2020; and be designated the Chairperson.

2) That Ms. Carmen de Pontbriand be reappointed as a Prince Edward Island Human Rights Commissioner for a term of two years, to expire on May 5, 2019.

3) That Ms. Joanne Ings be appointed as a Prince Edward Island Human Rights Commissioner for a term of two years, to expire on May 5, 2019.

4) That Ms. Lori St. Onge be appointed as a Prince Edward Island Human Rights Commissioner for a term of three years, to expire on May 5, 2020.

Your committee would like to take this opportunity to formally thank all individuals who expressed an interest as serving as a commissioner on the Prince Edward Island Human Rights Commission. We applaud their interest in serving their communities.

Your committee would also like to thank the members of the Prince Edward Island

Human Rights Commission for their continued role in upholding human rights in our province.

I would also like to thank outgoing commissioners, Mr. Alcide Bernard and the Honourable Ellen Macdonald for their service on the Commission.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: Before I put the question, the hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald would like to respond to the report.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'd like to thank the Chair from Charlottetown-Lewis Point for presenting this report.

Of course, I want to congratulate the new appointees to the Human Rights Commission. I think they will do a fantastic job. They're very well qualified. Also, I want to thank the members that are leaving their committee for their years of services and the excellent job they've done.

I did want to raise a couple of potential concerns with the process that I have had as a member of the committee. It's my first time going through the process.

One thing I was glad to see, we were able to use social media this time around, really, to try and gather the broadest range of applicants we could, and that was excellent. One thing, it was tough sometimes, when you're just looking at a resume to do the evaluation. I would like to see, at some point, perhaps, interviews with the applicants incorporated into the process. I think that would help in making the determination.

Mr. Speaker, is this the proper time to speak to the report on the activities –

Ms. Casey: (Indistinct)

Mr. Trivers: You haven't done that, yet? All right.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Are there any other hon. members who would like to speak to the report?

Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Lewis Point.

Ms. Casey: Mr. Speaker, as Chair of the Standing Committee on Communities, Land and Environment, I beg leave to introduce the report of the said committee on committee activities and I move, seconded by the hon. Leader of the Third Party, that the same be now received and do lie on the Table.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Ms. Casey: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Leader of the Third Party, that the report of the Committee be adopted.

Your committee is reporting on its activities since last reporting to the Legislative Assembly on December, 2016. Your committee thanks all those individuals and organizations that met with it to provide information and advice in matters of importance relating to the mandate of the Standing Committee on Communities, Land and Environment.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald would like to speak to the report.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Indeed, the Standing Committee on Communities, Land and Environment does a lot of important work. I really believe that we need to do that.

I wanted to thank the Minister of Communities, Land and Environment for coming in to see the committee a couple of times; spending a lot of time on the floor and answering questions.

This is the sort of work the community has to do. I have to admit, I was a little disappointed with the amount the committee was able to accomplish during this last period. We have only had a couple of meetings. We began our FOIPP review and this sort of thing, but I would like to emphasize that we have more

meetings. We try and get more accomplished. There are a lot of important issues out there.

The other things is, I think it's really important, before a report is tabled here in the Legislative Assembly that, indeed, the committee take a really good opportunity to look it all the way through and discuss it. Even if it is just to report on activity with no recommendations.

One thing that a recommendation that possibly, I would like to add to the report was, really had to do with the draft water act that's under review, and indeed the full water act that is to be brought to the floor of this Legislature.

As a member of the committee, I really believe that that water act is an essential piece of legislation for this province. The longer we don't have it enacted, the longer it's going to take to develop the regulations and the more danger, indeed, our water is put in, in this province and we need to get it in there ASAP.

One recommendation I would like to see in the report is just a recommendation to the minister to bring that water act to the floor of the Legislature as soon as possible so that we can debate it, and then hopefully get it enacted.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Are there any other members who would like to speak to the report?

Shall it carry? Carried.

Mr. R. Brown: Great Report. Not your report, but the report (Indistinct)

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

Mr. R. Brown: Here we go.

Mr. Perry: Mr. Speaker, as Chair of the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Fisheries, I beg leave to introduce the report of the said committee and I move, seconded by the hon. Member from West Royalty-Springvale, that the same be now received and do lie on the Table.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Mr. Perry: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Member from West Royalty-Springvale, that the report of the Committee be adopted.

I'll just give a brief summary of it.

Speaker: Go ahead, hon. member.

Mr. Perry: This report is an account of committee activities since last reporting to this Assembly, and the report includes five recommendations.

1) Your committee recommends that an organic-grade regulation be developed under the *Natural Products Marketing Act* so that use of the terms "organic" and "certified organic" in advertising and selling food products in PEI is reserved for producers that have actually obtained organic certification.

2) Your committee is in favour of continued supports for organic agriculture in the next Growing Forward federal-provincial agricultural policy framework.

3) Your committee recommends that the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries continue to assist the PEI Certified Organic Producers Co-operative so that it can provide service and supports to PEI's rapidly developing organic industry.

4) Your committee recommends that Government examine tendering processes and procurement agreements to see how they can be revised to encourage more sourcing of food from local producers.

Mr. R. Brown: Good one. That's a good one.

Mr. Perry: 5) Your committee recommends that Government assist efforts to establish a federally inspected poultry processing facility in PEI.

Your committee thanks the individuals and groups that shared their views on agriculture and fisheries with the committee.

Mr. R. Brown: Great job. Great job (Indistinct)

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald would like to speak to the report.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As a member of the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Fisheries, it really was a pleasure to work with the standing committee, the other members. I think we did make some excellent progress. I'm really pleased with recommendations that came out.

I know that, in particular, organic farming and the use of the term 'organic' and the misuse of the term 'organic' is something that, in District 18 is a big issue. For example, the committee had a constituent Sandy MacKay in to talk about –

Mr. R. Brown: Yes –

Mr. Trivers: – those issues.

Mr. R. Brown: – great guy, Sandy.

Mr. Trivers: And –

Ms. Biggar: Great Liberal.

Mr. Trivers: – it also spills right into the issue of labelling of food within our grocery stores and at our markets so that you know what is organic, what is not organic. What is grown on PEI, what's not grown on PEI.

I also wanted to just speak about the recommendation to even out the tendering process and potentially allow local food producers to tender for more government contracts. This is an issue I've brought up many times in the House, but it's great to see the committee making this recommendation. I think right now, I just need to mention it again, specifically the provincial protein tender that comes out of Health PEI.

It recommends, very specifically, off-Island brands and I don't think they need to be there. Even if you just remove the recommendation and just left it open and say: We don't prefer off-Island brands. Even if you don't say we'd prefer local food, don't say you'd prefer off-Island brands. It's a simple change. I don't know why it wasn't made this year.

The last recommendation, and I want to thank the Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries, too, because he came in and presented to the committee, and did so in a

very open and transparent manner, and some of the recommendations came out of our discussions we had with him.

But one of the things that – a recommendation I really pushed for at the end was really looking at getting a federally-inspected poultry processing facility on PEI. It's something the minister I know is passionate about and is working towards as well.

As the minister said in our meeting, there's millions and millions of dollars worth of poultry that has to go off-Island to be processed. These are what are termed broilers, and they fall under a federal supply management quota, and because we don't have a federally-inspected plant on PEI, these birds have to be shipped off-Island in order to be processed.

In fact, if we want to buy local birds in those cases, you have to ship the bird off-Island, get it processed, and then you have to bring it back onto the Island. I know the Leader of the Third Party would be concerned with the carbon footprint just to ship these birds all over Canada just to have them come back where they started.

I'm not sure of all the challenges with getting a federally-inspected plant here, but to me we're a province, we grow a lot of birds, we eat a lot of poultry here, and I think to keep that money, create those jobs, the economic impact having a poultry processing facility that's federally inspected here in the province is a no-brainer.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: Also speaking to the report, will be the hon. Leader of the Third Party.

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

I welcome this report, and I want to thank all of the fellow members who sit with me on this committee.

I just wanted to make note that of the five recommendations, three of them are to support the burgeoning industry, which is organic farming here on Prince Edward Island, and I think that's a really healthy

thing. I think it's an indication that this government is willing to support the direction in which all of the progressive young farmers are taking in this province.

The other two recommendations were to do with promoting local food. We're still waiting for a local food act, of course, to come in here. But, these recommendations just give weight behind that, and I think it's a great report.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: Any other members like to speak to the report?

Shall it carry? Carried.

Mr. R. Brown: Unanimous.

An Hon. Member: Standing vote.

Mr. R. Brown: No, we don't need one.

Introduction of Government Bills

Government Motions

Orders of the Day (Government)

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

Mr. McIsaac: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. Minister of Family and Human Services, that the 1st order of the day be now read.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

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

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

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

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

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

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

Hon. members, we are with the Department of Family and Human Services, and I would direct you to page 70.

Permission to bring a stranger on the floor?

Some Hon. Member: Granted.

Chair: Thank you. We'll just wait until they get set up.

Mr. Aylward: Chair?

Chair: Hon. member?

Mr. Aylward: Thank you, Chair.

Just before we get going in this Budget, I'm just wondering if there's any handouts, grants and various other line items that –

Chair: There is, and we'll wait for the stranger to get settled and identify.

Thank you.

Mr. Trivers: Chair, if the minister wanted to give an overview, I'd be happy to –

Chair: Thank you. We'll wait until the stranger gets settled, and then we'll get onto that.

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

Lane Pineau Director: Yes, Lane Pineau, Director of Finance for the Department of Family and Human Services.

Chair: Welcome, Lane.

Minister, the floor is yours for an opening statement.

Ms. Mundy: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Hon. members, it is my pleasure to be here today to present the 2017-2018 Budget

Estimates for the Department of Family and Human Services.

Since I joined the department a little more than a year ago, I have grown to truly appreciate the value of these programs and services that we provide to Islanders, and as I continue to be more impressed by the commitment of our dedicated and caring staff members.

My department supports Islanders in need and helps them to be more self-reliant. We do this through programs and services in areas such as Family Violence Prevention, Housing Services, Social Assistance, Child Protection, Disability Support, and Child Care Subsidy.

In many cases, the services are provided in collaboration with other government departments and our community partners.

We have a strong working relationship with nongovernmental organizations across the province. They play a vital role in the delivery of services to individuals with intellectual, physical, housing, and emotional needs.

I've had the pleasure of visiting many of our nongovernmental organization partners and have seen firsthand the amazing work that they do and the positive impact that they have on individuals and families across PEI.

Our government continues to make investments to support Islanders who need it most when they need it most. This is evident with the overall increase of 6.6 million in my department's budget this year to support families and Islanders in need. This shows our government's commitment to assisting those who need it most.

We want every Islander to have the access to the tools they need so they can contribute to society as fully and as possible, and attain greater security for themselves and their families.

My department works to achieve this through various programs and initiatives, and by way of collaboration and integration.

We have a strong working relationship with many partners, such as the federation of foster families, police services, Canadian

Mental Health Association, Habitat for Humanity, John Howard Society, the Early Childhood Development Association, just to name a few.

Everyone on Prince Edward Island deserves a chance to live a full and rewarding life, and we are doing our very best to make that happen.

Thank you.

Chair: Thank you, minister, and have the handouts been circulated? They are?

Thank you.

Hon. members, is it the wish of the House that I just read the title and the total?

An Hon. Member: Yeah, sure.

An Hon. Member: Sure.

Chair: Thank you.

Housing Services.

Total Housing Services: 12,396,500.

Total Housing Services: 12,396,500.

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

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Chair.

Housing, and specifically affordable housing, is a huge issue in my district – District 18, Rustico-Emerald – and I’ve heard that it is throughout the province as well, and I know you have a housing strategy you’re working for the fall.

One of the, sort of, operational items that seems to be causing confusion is the wait list for housing. It seems to be there might be multiple wait lists. For example, one for seniors housing versus one for other affordable housing, and I was wondering if you could just clarify how the wait lists work for housing – depending on age, depending on location, that sort of thing.

Ms. Mundy: The management of the wait lists will be part of the housing strategy as well, but we do separate them into two wait lists. We have one for family housing and

one for seniors housing because there’s different requirements for each. They are all based on need, but for seniors housing they have to be under a certain age, or over a certain age, I should say.

Other than that, there’s an assessment form. As long as they meet the criteria, they’re placed on the list; but in order to obtain an apartment, they have to be highest on the list, and to be highest on the list is totally based on need. So it’s not based on the amount of time that you’ve been on the list. You might have been on the list for three or four years and it’s because your need isn’t great, or isn’t as great as somebody else.

You might be number one on the list today, but somebody could come in who has higher health problems, they could have a lower income, and then they would, based on the assessment criteria, they would be placed somewhere ahead of you; and then whenever a vacancy would become available, then that first person would be first.

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Chair.

This is information, I think, the department really needs to work at getting out to people, because I know there’s a lot of confusion around it as well as there’s a perception of fairness, right? Because someone who may be on the list for four years sees their neighbour who just says: Yeah, I’ve got to move my home. And then they get that open apartment that came available and they’re: What happened, who did they know on the inside, what was the political connection allowed them to get that? As you’ve mentioned, it really has nothing to do with that at all.

I don’t know – as part of your housing strategy – if a communications plan is going to be put in place, but that, to me, to avoid that sort of confusing perception of political meddling is a very important part.

Ms. Mundy: You’re absolutely right, and actually we’ve started it already. Every year we do a review of the – we have to review the clients that are in the housing already just to make sure that their situations haven’t

changed. So when we do the annual review, we are updating people on the requirements of the housings lists. So we are; but we will, communications, you're absolutely right. It's going to be a very, very important part of the provincial housing strategy.

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Chair.

One of the things that I believe when it comes to low income housing is it's more about keeping the operational costs low than it is about making sure you have the capital for the upfront investment.

From what I've been able to determine through federal programs – and I know that's one thing that you're hoping, more federal money will feed into your housing strategy – finding the money to do the initial investment can be a challenge but the money's there. It's really the ongoing operations costs that are a challenge, I think, for the government as well as have the potential to put the government into a deficit situation and continue to add to the debt.

I was wondering if your housing strategy is going to focus on building low income housing that is extremely efficient when it comes to energy usage, and then also putting in place energy generation solutions for that housing so that the operational costs are as low as they possibly can be.

When I say that, I mean, for example, a passive home model so it uses solar heating as well as it has thick doors and heavily insulated windows so that, for example, there's Trout River Homes built a home up in Long River and they heat for a dollar a day, this sort of thing, heat the house with a candle, that idea; but then you couple that with, for example, solar panels, and suddenly you've got something that is very, very low maintenance ongoing.

I wonder if you could comment, and if you have considered that in your housing strategy.

Ms. Mundy: Absolutely, absolutely. We're looking at being very creative with this housing strategy. I said it in the House before. We can't keep applying 20th century

solutions to 21st century issues, so we have to start looking at things differently and that housing strategy, we will be looking at things very differently and very creatively.

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Do you plan to, as you build low income housing – do you plan to have it government-owned, or do you plan to incentivize private contractors and have it privately owned?

Ms. Mundy: Great question, and that's going to be part of the housing strategy as well, being creative; because again, do we want to continue to be landlords? Right now we are the largest landlord on Prince Edward Island. Is that what government wants to be? So that's a question that will be asked in the housing strategy.

Is it something we should be looking at, triple P partnerships? Is it something we should be just letting the developers do and give them money up front and have a 20-year agreement with them that we will have so many units within their buildings at a reduced cost? Those are all things that we will be looking at.

Mr. Trivers: (Indistinct)

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: One thing that people want, especially when you're outside the more urban areas of the province, is people want to stay where they spent their life, particularly with seniors, right? If they grew up and lived in a community for 40, 50, 60 years, they don't then – once they are not able to have their own home, have to move to a senior's facility that's not in the community.

Or even when it comes to low income housing, if their spouse passes away and they can no longer afford to stay in their home, regardless of their age, they don't want to have to be relocated.

I know the housing strategy is going to look at it, because that's a common thing, but people are constantly having to leave the rural communities, like in my district. Those

people are already displaced, and I think it skews the numbers because they're no longer on the waiting list but they may want to actually get back into that area.

Are you planning to have the housing strategy somehow quantify the people that are in an area where they wouldn't prefer to be and they would rather be in a different area?

Ms. Mundy: We understand that – housing being one of the basic needs, okay? Not only –

Mr. Trivers: Right.

Ms. Mundy: – is it an economic driver but it's a very, very important part of our social safety net; but it's also about community as well. Again, this is all part of the creativity and the things we're going to be looking at in the housing strategy.

We don't want to keep having to drive people towards the cities, right? If their supports, if their community supports are in the community that they're in and we take them out of that and we put them into an environment that's totally foreign to them, they're not going to thrive. So, we will be looking at options like that as well.

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: For people who contact me looking to move back to my district, what can I tell them in terms of timing for when they might be able to do that, and how should they make their wishes known to make sure that they indeed, the volume of housing needed in areas, is going to be correct so they can do it? So is this more of a timing – and what actions should they take to make sure that they're on that list?

Ms. Mundy: Well, if they are already in seniors housing or in the family housing they can just contact whoever their worker is and just let them know what their wishes are. Then as we proceed through the provincial housing strategy, and if that's where we land, there will be something in that community, then if something becomes available then there's always the possibility that they would be able to know; but I would say to have that open communication with

their worker, and then it's really a waiting game and wait and see what we come up with the housing strategy, and that's due to be complete by the end of the year.

Mr. Trivers: End of this year?

Ms. Mundy: Yes.

Mr. Trivers: In the fiscal year or calendar year?

Ms. Mundy: Calendar year, I think. Yeah, sorry, that's a good question.

Mr. Trivers: So, December 2017?

Ms. Mundy: I'm not sure. It's it – we always just refer it by the end of the year. So, I'm assuming it's the end of the calendar year. I can get back to you on that for sure, though. Okay? I'll get back to you on that.

Mr. Trivers: Okay.

Chair: The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

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

My questions are along the same line as the hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald's, but maybe just a slightly different slant on it because, obviously, I'm representing more of an urban area that has experienced unprecedented growth as compared to many other communities here on PEI. What we're experiencing – in a large part – is the multi-family dwellings, the apartment buildings, and the condo buildings that have been constructed.

What we are finding, to a large degree, are seniors that are moving out of rural areas to urban areas to be closer – for various reasons; to be closer to health services, to be closer to retail –

Ms. Mundy: Transportation?

Mr. Aylward: Transportation is another one, exactly.

Then, one of the other big reasons is to be closer to their children and grandchildren because what we're finding is the young professionals and as they're starting their

families, they are – for a large part – they’re moving away from the rural areas and they’re coming to the urban – I’d call bedroom communities, such as Stratford and Cornwall and so on and so forth – and the parents/grandparents, obviously, want to be close to their families as well.

What I’m being asked, almost every time I’m going through a checkout at Sobeys, is some of the staff are asking: what’s happening with affordable housing for seniors? They’re hearing it as the customers are coming through, but in addition, many of the cashiers that are working there are looking for that option as well. They might not be quite seniors yet, but they know that they’re almost there. We have some great contractors that have been putting up some beautiful buildings in Stratford, but I know you had talks with the Member from Rustico-Emerald with regards to the housing strategy and maybe there would be a possibility to put some cash up front or the Triple P, or something like that.

One of the things I think we could look at, as well, is having some kind of tax incentive so that we’re not just putting the cash out there to get these contractors to build units within their buildings, but to actually – as you said before, maybe a 20-year period where there could be some kind of tax credit if you have a building that has affordable housing for seniors – that’s targeted towards seniors – that you would get – and I don’t know what the formula would be, but to make it affordable for these contractors to actually provide that because at the end of the day, they’re in it to make a profit because that’s how they make their living and that’s how they put food on their table and a roof over their own heads.

Is that something that you could bring back to the working group when you’re talking about this housing strategy?

Ms. Mundy: We’re open to all options at this point. We’re in kind of the data collection stage trying to (Indistinct) jurisdictional scans, seeing what other communities are doing and how could we maybe massage that and put it into something that could work for Prince Edward Island as well.

Some of the other comments I get as well are people that – and it’s even in my case – my father lives with me. I converted my garage into – I call it a granny suite even though he’s their grandfather, but is there – because families want to keep their families close – their parents close as well, right? I can give just experience as how valuable my father has been in my children’s life – always being there. He was always there after school when I wasn’t, right? He would take them to hockey games. He would pick them up after. My children know as much about my father as they do about their own father.

You don’t see that in a lot of generations now, right? So, there is that option as well. Are there tax incentives? Can there be a fund set up where families that want to bring their mother or father into the home with them – we can help them convert a room in their home or something like that. Like I say, we’re going to be looking at this in a very creative lens. It doesn’t have to be the way it’s always been – which is bricks and mortar. Let’s just build, build, build, and build. Let’s look at ways we can maximize the amount of funds that we do have and make sure that we’re reaching as many people – and enriching as many lives as we can.

Chair: The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

Mr. Aylward: Thank you, Chair.

It’s interesting how you segued into the granny suite because that was going to be one of the other topics that I brought up because I, too, went through that exercise two years ago where I sold my existing house to buy another house with a larger lot so we could build an in-law suite on for my parents. I wasn’t necessarily looking for a tax break or a program that would help me financially do that – if it was there it would have been great.

I know, provincially – we’re a small province. We only have a certain tax base here on PEI and we have some budgets like – health is extremely demanding and draining on our system, but I guess what I’d ask is when you’re at the FPT meetings, that you lobby the federal government hard to put some kind of program in there. Because,

I'm seeing that more and more and I know Mayor Dunphy is getting that request, as well, at the town hall with regards to building permits and so on so forth that a lot of people in Stratford are starting to look at that possibility or that avenue – whether it be an addition or incorporated into new home construction.

I know the town of Stratford, if I'm not mistaken, is actually looking at revising some of the bylaws as far as in-law suites go and things like that – or granny suites and such. Knowing that we have somewhat limited resources here on PEI that are tax-based, I think it's incumbent on the federal government to help out this as well. I thank you to bring that to your next FPT meeting.

Ms. Mundy: I'll certainly do that.

Mr. Aylward: Thank you, Chair.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you, Chair.

I'd just like to go back because it's the only opportunity we'll have to talk about the revenue stream for your department with \$12,643,000. I'm just wondering where that comes from.

Ms. Mundy: Where it comes from?

Dr. Bevan-Baker: (Indistinct)

Ms. Mundy: The majority of it would be – a lot of it would be federal funding. I'll turn it over to Lane to drill down a little bit more. Some of it would come from rents, as well, in our buildings. We charge seniors in family homes – or family housing – we charge them 25% of their income – would be rent. That would be part of it as well. Anything else you can add to that?

Lane Pineau Director: Yeah. Most of it is rent based on income as far as those units. The other piece of it is federal revenue through our various housing agreements – the investments in affordable housing with Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, as well as we have an agreement with LMDA through PEI Council of Persons with Disabilities, through our social assistance programs.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Okay.

Thank you.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you, Chair.

I'll go to the housing services now. I appreciate the conversation that was had earlier. A couple of the points that I was going to bring up were covered in that discussion, so I appreciate that. One of the ones that wasn't is the discussion – I think the Member from Rustico-Emerald brought this up – about the perception – whether it's justified and real or not – about the interference in the housing lists and people getting what they need.

I remember you talking, Minister, earlier this year in the House – in the sitting – about situations where somebody who require an accessible apartment, for example, would be looked over because the apartment that was available was not accessible. I'm surprised that we have senior's housing which is not accessible. Is that just old stock? What's the reason for that?

Ms. Mundy: Again, it was something I mentioned today. Over the years there hasn't been a lot of investment in new. I would have to say it – and Lane, correct me if I'm wrong – but the average age of our stock would be between 40-50 years old?

Lane Pineau Director: Yeah, at least.

Ms. Mundy: Yeah, roughly. So, a lot of them wouldn't have been privy to any accessibility codes.

As we modify and do improvements to some. We have had some where they may have been two smaller units before, and we knocked the walls out and made it one larger accessible unit. As we continue to do upgrades we try to bring them up to a better standard and a better code.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you.

I'd like to look at the debt servicing line here in the housing services. That's a pretty substantial number, almost a third of a

million dollars. I'm just wondering what the total debt is that is being serviced by that interest? I presume that's an interest payment.

Ms. Mundy: Yeah, a small amount of it would be interest of bank charges, but the majority would be interest on our mortgages.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: That's money, in my mind, that would be much better spent, certainly, in your department, on frontlines services.

I'm wondering why we're still holding the sort of mortgages that require debt within the department.

Ms. Mundy: I'll defer to Lane for that.

Lane Pineau Director: It's based on older agreements through CMHC that we're still paying down.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Is there any sense of when that debt servicing line is going to disappear from the budget estimates?

Ms. Mundy: While Lane is looking at that, I will say that we have been, at the FPT table. That is one of the conversations that come up, as well, is that renegotiation of a lot of these agreements that we have through CMHC. We have been pressing the government for renewed contracts on a lot of these.

That might help, but I'll let Lane talk to it a little bit more, here.

We have a lot of the agreements that are expiring, so when we renegotiate we want to renegotiate for better terms.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: While Lane is still looking for that.

I was interested in the conversation you had that you are – you're doing a jurisdictional scan and you're going to look at models for providing, whether it's incentives or tax

benefits to people, so that people can age in place rather than building new stop-gap. I was really happy to hear that. I presume you don't have any details on what you'll be contemplating, yet.

Ms. Mundy: Not at this stage, no. Not at this stage, but (Indistinct) I keep using the word 'creative.' My team, over there, I think they're tired of hearing it. I'm going to have to use a different word, but that's all I keep saying: Let's just be creative.

Otherwise, we are going to end up in 40 years when that boom starts to drop off we're going to end up with a bunch of aged infrastructure and what are we going to do with it. So, we really have to be cognizant that we don't want to leave the future generation with anything less than what we want for ourselves (Indistinct)

Dr. Bevan-Baker: I'm fine –

Chair: Okay, great –

Dr. Bevan-Baker: – if Lane wants to –

Lane Pineau Director: I'll bring that back.

Ms. Mundy: We can bring it back for you.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you, Chair.

Chair: Thank you.

Minister, I actually have a question.

Ms. Mundy: Yeah.

Chair: Yesterday in the House, you announced \$750,000 for renovations to seniors' homes. We've just heard that a lot of your stock is over 40-years-old.

I do know that in the district that I represent, Charlottetown-Lewis Point, Hunt Court and Spring Park place, which is affectionately known as 501 Queen Street, are in that over 40 year age. I'm just wondering where do they fall in the spots for that \$750,000 for renovations are Hunt Court and Spring Park place are being considered?

Ms. Mundy: I can't comment on Spring Park, but I can comment on Hunt – that I know they're both buildings. There are two buildings there?

Chair: Yes, there are two buildings.

Ms. Mundy: Both buildings are on the list –

Chair: Oh, great. Thank you –

Ms. Mundy: – (Indistinct)

Chair: Thank you, minister.

Also, minister, I have one more question. We talk about this often and there has been discussion on the floor this morning about waiting lists for families and seniors to get into homes. In the Charlottetown area we know the list; the number on the list is high.

My question always has been: How often do we review the list? Do we do it on a six-month basis? Do we do it on a yearly basis, to ensure that the people who are on that list, and who are in the most need for housing are on the list?

Do you look at the list and say: Oh, that person is deceased, or what is the procedure and how often do you review your list?

Ms. Mundy: Right.

We will be, and we have been, reviewing it on a yearly basis. I'm trying to think back now, my memory is not the best here. Probably, within the last, I'd have to say, six months, six to eight months, that we did put a new rule in place that the list will be reviewed on a yearly basis.

We will contact the people on the list, that are currently on the list, just to do an annual review anyway to make sure that nothing has changed since the last time we spoke to them.

I had an incident, even in my district, just the other day where there are two gentlemen that live on a second floor. They're waiting. They're not currently in seniors' housing, but they have been on a wait list for awhile. One of the brothers ended up having to have a hip replacement. During his review, it was revealed that he needed this hip replacement. So that, now, adjusted their file and they've move up a little bit higher on the list.

We will be, from this point forward, reviewing the list on a yearly basis.

Chair: Great, thank you.

Just one more question.

Ms. Mundy: Sure.

Chair: When you're considering what you're going to build in your future housing strategy, one of the newest bills that has taken place under this government has been Charlotte Court, and I know it's a good model for going forward. You may want to look into what were the partnerships and what was done with that.

I'm sure the people at Charlotte Court will be able to give you some advice. Tweaking the building a little more, I know air exchange in the hallways, things like that. There might be some changes that might need to be made for future buildings, but I just want to make sure that you know that that's probably an option for you to consider.

Ms. Mundy: Sure.

Chair: Thank you.

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

Leader of the Opposition: I just have two generic questions, I want to ask, Chair. So (Indistinct) latitude.

The first one is, some communities in my area are asking about expanding the private partnership for housing. Has there been any move on that, or is that system still available, or what is happening with that? Because I think there was supposed to be some federal funding announcement back in the spring.

Ms. Mundy: Great point, hon. member.

Actually, we are waiting for our federal partners' schedule. We kind of have to wait for them to line up their schedules with ours, but we will be, I'm hoping within the next couple of weeks having some major announcements, at least three major announcements. All of those

announcements, there will be RFPs in the paper, so they will go out.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: One further question.

Of course, I thank the department for removing the old C-block in Kinkora, much appreciated.

Ms. Mundy: It looks great.

Leader of the Opposition: I put out a question to the department asking for the possibility of allowing seniors to be able to plant a garden and have access to that to get the seniors out of the buildings and you and I did talk on that briefly.

Ms. Mundy: Yeah.

Leader of the Opposition: Has there been any movement on that to pursue that avenue for seniors?

Ms. Mundy: The last I checked and I will follow-up to see where we are at with that, but after we had our conversation I did speak to staff about that, and they had planned on going out and talking to the seniors in the units just to see what their take is on it.

It is a great idea. It's something that we were thinking about: What are we going to do with that space?

We just want to make sure that we're thinking along the same lines as the seniors in the unit. We do want to make the space beautiful for them, and in whatever what that they want to do it.

Leader of the Opposition: I think it would provide a big opportunity for seniors across the Island.

Ms. Mundy: Sure.

Leader of the Opposition: To get them outside and get them active and engaged and stuff like that.

Thank you very much, minister.

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

Ms. Biggar: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Minister, and this may have been asked, and I apologize if it was. With the recent applications for the home reno programs, the deadline closed April 20th, when will people, who applied be notified?

Ms. Mundy: We have –

Ms. Biggar: Or how many have also did you get?

Ms. Mundy: We had 566 applications. Over half of them were missing information so we're in the process, right now, of contacting those people with missing information to get the information needed. We should start processing them within the next couple of weeks.

Ms. Biggar: Thank you.

Chair: Shall the section carry? Carried.

Total Housing Services

Shall the total carry? Carried.

Seniors and Corporate Support

Seniors

Total Seniors: 350,800.

Shall the section carry? Carried.

Corporate Support

Total Corporate Support: 839,700.

Shall the section carry? Carried.

Total Seniors and Corporate Support: 1,190,500.

Shall the total carry? Carried.

Social Programs

Total Social Programs: 69,736,400.

Mr. Aylward: Chair?

Chair: Question from the hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

Mr. Aylward: Thank you, Chair.

I know this section, in particular, has a lot of grants that go out to some really wonderful organizations that provide services here on PEI, but I do have some very specific questions for the minister before I actually start getting into the grants themselves.

Minister, of course you probably would acknowledge that we have a service gap currently here in the province for victims of sexual assaults?

Ms. Mundy: Sorry, when you say service gap, what do you mean by that?

Mr. Aylward: I guess what I'm talking about is the PEI rape and crisis centre provides a telephone line, but it's not staffed 24/7.

Ms. Mundy: Yeah, it's not a crisis line.

Mr. Aylward: Exactly.

I guess I'm wondering if you can explain why our province doesn't have a 24-hour sexual assault support line.

Ms. Mundy: Because we have other programs through health that do have crisis lines, and there are other avenues for people who are in crisis.

Mr. Aylward: Thank you.

Chair: The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

Mr. Aylward: Thank you, Chair.

Other provinces, what do they offer?

Ms. Mundy: That's a pretty broad question, hon. member, because depending on what province you're talking about there could be many other programs I'm not familiar with; each and every province, and each and every program that each one would have.

Chair: The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

Mr. Aylward: Thank you, Chair.

Just bear with me for a moment, I'm just going through my grants here. Again, the grant that is offered to the organization that provides the service currently, have you gone – has your department looked or your government looked at all about doing a cost analysis to see what it would actually cost to set up and staff a 24/7 emergency line for this, specifically around this?

Ms. Mundy: We – yeah –

Mr. Aylward: Because I mean – and no offence, minister – but if you call 811, and I've had people tell me already they've called 811, and for instance, around suicide, and the operator on the other line said, okay, not a problem. We'll send out a rapid response team, mental health response team. What's your address?

The address is given, and they then say, oh, you're on Prince Edward Island. This service is only available in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, so I'm not saying that it's a terrible thing that we have a helpline that's staffed out of Nova Scotia for the 811, but I think when we're talking about something as serious as sexual assault and/or rape that it's almost like a 911 call.

I mean, you need to know that you can call this number, somebody's going to be there, you're not going to get a recording, and that you're going to get the help immediately that you need.

I guess I'm – again – I'm asking, has your department done any kind of cost analysis on this at all?

Ms. Mundy: Our department would not have, because hon. member our department does not provide this service. We fund the NGOs that do provide the service.

I have been out to the rape and sexual assault department and met with the executive director; I met with board members; I met with the therapists; and we had a very rich and valuable discussion. There was a lot of takeaway for myself and for the department on the great work that they do there.

To say I would be definitely open to sitting down with them, and if that is a service that they feel they would like to add to their program, I would not want to impose that on them, but it would be a conversation that I'd be willing to have with them.

Chair: The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

Mr. Aylward: Thank you, Chair.

Further to my questions around this grant, I wonder, minister, can you explain why the Family Violence Prevention Services and the PEI Rape and Sexual Assault Centre are funded through the grant line for Child and Family division in your department?

Ms. Mundy: Why have we funded it through that line? Would you know?

Lane Pineau Director: Versus (Indistinct)

Ms. Mundy: Versus?

Mr. Aylward: I guess I'm just wondering why they would be under –

Ms. Mundy: Family and child instead of Social Programs or –

Mr. Aylward: Yeah.

Ms. Mundy: I would presume that it's because it deals with children and families, right?

Mr. Aylward: Okay.

Chair: The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

Mr. Aylward: Thank you very much, Chair.

It's an issue that we've been hearing about a lot lately, not just provincially but federally as well, with regards to sexual assault and resources that are available and/or not available to individuals when they come forward.

I would like to amend the grants line for Child and Family Services to increase the funding for these community NGOs who are making a big difference with limited resources, and I move, seconded by the hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque, that

the Community Grants line in Child and Family division be increased by \$601,000, which is the projected surplus that the finance minister had announced.

Chair: Hon. member, you can reduce it but you can't increase it, so that's out of order.

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct)

Chair: Thank you.

Do you have any other questions?

Mr. Aylward: Again, Chair, my question would be: Is it not acceptable that the community grants for the 2017-2018 budget estimate under the Child and Family division be amended from 1,159,800 with an increase of the \$601,000 surplus, that's being discussed by the finance minister, to 1,760,800?

Chair: Hon. member, as I've stated earlier, you cannot increase any budget line. You can decrease it. However, you can maybe take that up with the Minister of Finance when he comes to the floor.

Mr. Aylward: Okay.

Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Aylward: Chair?

Chair: The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

Mr. Aylward: Chair, if I'm not mistaken, here in the House back when we were discussing finances, it was actually the Premier that said that we could bring that to the floor if we would like.

So, why would the Premier say that if now I'm being told that I can't do that?

Chair: I don't know that, but you brought it to the floor, and I've just told you that you can't do that, so thank you for bringing it up, though.

Mr. Aylward: Yeah, no, and –

Chair: Do you have any other questions before I move onto the hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald?

Mr. Aylward: You can go to Rustico and then come back to me, please, Chair.

Chair: Great, no problem.

The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Chair, my question is on the proposed amendment, which of course I do support, and what I'd like to know is: What is the rule that prohibits the increasing of a budget line if it's not increasing the budget as a whole?

Ms. Biggar: (Indistinct) it's in the rulebook.

Mr. Trivers: Yeah, and I want to know what rule it is.

Ms. Biggar: Well, they're looking it up.

Mr. Trivers: Well – they seem to know it, so tell me what it is, then?

Ms. Biggar: (Indistinct)

Mr. Trivers: Because I'm looking it up, too. I don't see it right off the top here.

Mr. Myers: You're wrong. Both of you are wrong.

Mr. R. Brown: Probably.

Chair: Hon. member, I know increasing spending is government business. You can reduce the spending, but you can't increase the spending.

Mr. Trivers: I would like to know what rule it is.

Chair: Thank you.

We're looking that up for you right now.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you.

Chair: Thank you.

Leader of the Opposition: I don't believe it's actually (Indistinct)

Chair: While we're looking for that, does somebody else have a question on something else –

An Hon. Member: Yeah.

Chair: – until we get that?

The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Mr. Myers: On the amendment?

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Mr. Myers: Questions on the amendment?

Chair: No, sorry. We're going to come back to that, but –

Mr. Aylward: Yeah

Chair: – questions on something else.

Mr. Aylward: Thank you, Chair.

On the handout Professional and Contract Services, on page five of five, I note that the *Child Protection Act* review, there was an expenditure there of 35, 600.

Ms. Mundy: I think we're in social programs or (Indistinct)

Mr. Aylward: Well, I'm just going by your –

Ms. Mundy: Okay, I just thought we were in (Indistinct) –

Mr. Aylward: No, it's –

Ms. Mundy: Sorry.

Mr. Aylward: – Child and Family Services.

Ms. Mundy: Okay, could we –

Chair: Yeah, we're not – that's the next section, If you could just save it –

Mr. Aylward: Yeah, okay, sure.

Chair: – for the next section?

Mr. Aylward: Yeah.

Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Aylward: Chair?

Chair: Thank you, hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

Mr. Aylward: So I'm okay to go with another question in this section?

Chair: Sure.

Mr. Aylward: Thank you, Chair.

On the grant handout under Community Grants on page four of five, social program 13, Queens County residential services, we have a grant there encroaching \$4 million. I'm just wondering: What oversight does the government have with regards to a grant that's given to an NGO, in particular when we have a situation that arose at QCRS where a very unfortunate incident happened and a life was lost?

I'm speaking, of course, of Eric Donovan and his case where he was harassed to the point of essentially having a major heart attack which ultimately caused his death, but this happened in the workplace. What oversight or what control does government have to monitor how these NGOs are operating when it's the taxpayers' dollars that is going into funding them and their operation?

Ms. Mundy: That's a very unfortunate incident, and QCRS do have valuable programs –

Mr. Aylward: I don't disagree with that at all.

Ms. Mundy: – yeah, you know, that are very important to many, many families on Prince Edward Island –

Mr. Aylward: Agree 100%.

Ms. Mundy: – and they do have their own board there and they do have their own HR department and they do have their own union and they are responsible for the running of the day-to-day operations of the organization.

We provide funding to them so that families of persons with intellectual and physical disabilities on Prince Edward Island have a place for day programs as well as residential, and the families – it's up to the families to choose where they spend their

money. But again, the day to day is the responsibility of QCRS, their board, their HR department and their unions, so it's arm's length from government.

Currently, there is no legislation in place for licensing of any kind of a day program or residential programming, and they are conversations that are taking place at the moment to see what we do need to have (Indistinct)

Chair: Thank you.

Hon. minister, before we move on, I am now prepared to rule on the motion on the floor. Rule number 85 in the Annotated Rules of the Legislative Assembly of Prince Edward Island reads as follows:

“In proceedings of Committee of the Whole House on supply (consideration of the estimates), motions may be introduced for the omission or reduction of a vote but the Chair shall not entertain a motion to increase, transfer, substitute, or attach a condition to a vote.”

I'll quote: Motion “...to increase, transfer, substitute, or attach a condition to...” amount of money are out of order, as I previously ruled, so we will move on from that.

Thank you.

The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

Mr. Aylward: Thank you, Chair.

I guess, Chair, with that, I will withdraw my proposed amendment.

Chair: With appreciation, hon. member.

Mr. Aylward: Yes, no, and thank you for clarifying that, Chair; but with my proposed amendment that I had just withdrawn, what I would like to do is propose to the government to strongly take under consideration this as a very valid and substantive suggestion for the government to review this and to implement a 24/7 line.

Thank you, Chair.

Chair: Thank you, hon. member.

Ms. Mundy: I'll take that under advisement.

Chair: Thank you.

The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

Mr. Aylward: Back to QCRS; does the provincial government have any liability at all then? I know it's an NGO and they have their own board and their own management structure and their own policies and procedures, but because they're – I don't want to say entirely funded, but very heavily subsidized to the tune of just shy of \$4 million, does the provincial government have any liability in a case such as this where an individual dies from the result of bullying and harassment in the workplace?

Ms. Mundy: Yeah, it is up to the NGO to provide their own (Indistinct) –

Mr. Aylward: Okay.

Ms. Mundy: – (Indistinct)

Mr. Aylward: Okay. Chair?

Chair: The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

Mr. Aylward: Thank you, Chair.

I guess my next question, then, would be: Does the provincial government in its own departments and Crown corps, extend it out that far, does the provincial government have any written policy and procedures with regards to harassment and bullying in the workplace?

Ms. Mundy: Does the – for our employees?

Mr. Aylward: Correct.

Ms. Mundy: Yes, through the Public Service Commission

Mr. Aylward: Chair?

Chair: The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

And we're focusing our questions on the social programs, right?

Mr. Aylward: Yeah, and that's social programs, community grants?

Chair: Excellent. Thank you.

Mr. Aylward: Perfect, good.

Chair: You have the floor.

Mr. Aylward: Thank you very much, Chair. That's excellent and awesome Chair.

Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Aylward: So I guess I bring it back to QCRS and the unfortunate incident that happened with Mr. Donovan. I know his wife and his son quite well. They're not in my district but they're adjoining to my district. I actually went to school with Lisa.

Do you think it might not be a bad idea to look at adopting the – I believe you said the Public Service Commission – policies and regulations around bullying and harassment in the workplace to NGOs? Especially when they're so heavily subsidized by the provincial government, by the taxpayers of Prince Edward Island, so that we can ensure that if they're getting a grant from the taxpayers of PEI that they have the proper policies and procedures with regards to bullying and harassment in the workplace in place?

Ms. Mundy: I'm not sure, legally, that we can impose that on them; however, since we are looking at the way we do fund NGOs, especially those that are dealing with vulnerable populations, and there has been many conversations, that is something I can take under advisement.

Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Aylward: Yes, of course.

Thank you, Chair.

Chair: Do you have more questions?

Mr. Aylward: Not at this time, Chair.

Chair: Okay, Thank you.

The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you.

I was looking at the community grants here, section of this bit, and I notice that overall the amount of grants has gone up a tiny bit; but if you look at the individual grants, almost all of them are static. More than half of them, way over half of them haven't moved at all – which, in essence, means that it's a cut because of the nature of inflation.

Given that all of these community organizations play a really critical role in the fabric of our society, I'm wondering why we don't at least increase the grants so that inflation is taken into account.

Ms. Mundy: We have made commitment to review the grants moving forward on an annual basis. I can say that we made significant increases to our specialized residential care, and there was a, if I'm not mistaken, a 1% increase? Yeah, a 1% increase to our community partner organizations that are providing residential services to individuals with intellectual disabilities.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you.

Having 1% doesn't cover inflation. That is one of the things that did increase, but I'm glad you're doing a review of this. I would hope that we can provide these, again, critical agencies that – without which our community would be in big trouble. That, we, at least, maintain the level of their grants in relation to the cost of living.

Do you directly support any of the food banks on Prince Edward Island?

Unidentified Voice: No.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Okay.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Going back to the materials, supplies and services, in the same section. I see that – I hope – I was out of the House –

Chair: It's okay.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: – was this question asked already? Why that's up substantially

from the budget estimate and back down again?

Ms. Mundy: The forecast, the increased forecast was to support, actually, a wonderful youth partnership that we have with workforce and advanced learning. We partnered with them on two programs; one called the star program and one called the SEAM Program. The SEAM acronym was for: Student Enrichment and Mentorship Program.

That was the one where we targeted, in collaboration with the schools working with the high schools, we targeted 40 youth from St Peters Bay –

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Yeah, I remember hearing about that.

Ms. Mundy: Yeah, exactly.

That was the increase the forecast increase was due to that.

However, I know it's down again this year. We do still plan on partnering with them, but the financial details are still being worked out.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Okay.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you, Chair.

In the disability support program line it's pretty well what it was last year. I thought government was going to introduce a program to expand to cover mental health services and disabilities as well.

I'm wondering how, with the same amount of money, you're going to expand the program to cover that.

Ms. Mundy: Right. And we're taking the next year to develop the program and do a financial analysis. We, very shortly, we will be announcing the accessibility committee that will helping us with that – develop that program, input from people with – you know in the community.

The development is going to take approximately a year so the increase in funding will happen next year.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you, Chair.

Do you have any sense, minister, of what sort of dollar amounts we're looking at, and when we include people with mental disabilities?

Ms. Mundy: Right now, we're doing jurisdictional scans of neighbouring communities that do offer mental health services through their disabilities support program.

Ours is kind of unique in the way it is right now. Actually, we're trying to actually improve on what many of the others out there are, or have been doing. We don't have any kind of dollar figure as of yet. That will all happen within the next coming months, the financial analysis piece.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you, Chair.

In the next line: social assistance benefits. As MLAs, we all – we get calls every day from people who are struggling from day to day.

Ms. Mundy: Yeah.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: I understand that you have increased some of the other areas of social spending: comfort allowances, housing – in a number of areas.

Is there a plan? I see there is, again, virtually no increase from previous years. Is there any hope for those people that you're going to increase those basic social assistance programs?

Ms. Mundy: Actually, the social assistance benefit line is kind of deceiving in a way because our actual case load is down. The increase that you see is due to increased spending that we are doing per case.

I think we were down we're down, approximately, 100 cases over this time last year. That comes from the direct relationship we have we have with workforce and advanced learning and

working with our community partners, such as the Adventure Group.

We are finding that we are taking more people off of the social assistance case load. We're getting them connected. We're helping to remove whatever the barriers were that were keeping them from being employed. We're connecting them to the workforce.

We are anticipating that the case load will continue to go down, whereas the spending, that will leave us more dollars to spend per case.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you, Chair.

A final question. It's to do with implementation of universal basic income here. You knew you wouldn't escape without me saying something about this.

Ms. Mundy: Yeah.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: I know that the federal government, although they didn't offer any dollars behind the most, well, I assume, it's the most recent communication you had with them. They did offer help in terms of supplying us with data and other – I can't remember, resources or supports in that regard.

I'm wondering if you have taken them up on that and if you have asked them to actively give us the data that might help us discern whether it would be a useful thing.

Ms. Mundy: It was a conversation I was hoping to have in person, but Minister Duclos, next time I speak to him. I was hoping to have him break that down as to what does that actually mean? What does that look like, right?

Then, of course, we have been in conversation with the professor at the University of Toronto, as well.

We're looking at the possibility of having those two students arrive in September to help take a look at what a basic income guarantee might look like on Prince Edward Island, as well. We're continue to move – to

work behind the scenes. You know how I feel about this.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Yeah.

Ms. Mundy: We'll continue to work to push behind the scenes.

The important thing is, too, we have a really ambitious agenda ourselves. We don't want to, kind of, I guess, put a halt to what we're doing, as well. We want to continue to try to improve Islanders through our poverty reduction strategy; through our platform commitments; through partnerships with workforce and advanced learning.

We want to continue to move forward with our agenda, but I'll still keep beating the bushes on the basic income guarantee.

Mr. Roach: Carry the section.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: One more comment.

Thank you, minister, for that update. I appreciate the fact that you are working actively on this file. Also, that you have gone ahead and accepted the federal offer for help in terms of collecting information and data we need to do a proper study and find out whether it, indeed, would be something useful here. I appreciate that.

Thank you, Chair.

Chair: Shall the section carry? Carried.

Total Social Programs: 69,736,400.

Shall the total carry? Carried.

Child and Family Services

Child and Family

Total Child and Family: 20,046,300.

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

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Chair.

I'm just looking at the grants for child and family services. I was wondering – so it's page 5 of 5. It know it's for the Girl Guides

of Canada, PEI Chapter, and the Scouts Canada PEI Chapter, the budget estimate is TBD.

I'm assuming that means, obviously, it's to be determined, but if you do put money into there, does that mean you're going to be automatically over budget right away? It doesn't make sense to me to have a TBD in a budget.

Ms. Mundy: I guess the issue there was that we didn't receive an application from them this year. We have reached out to them to see if an application will be forthcoming.

We did want to say that it's, we're not willing to – I guess what we do, is I find money somewhere within my budget. I'd find some money; not spending more, but, for lack of a better term, borrowing from Peter to pay Paul, so to speak.

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Does that mean that this line item: \$1,159,800 is, in fact, incorrect?

It's really not what you think you're going to do?

Ms. Mundy: We couldn't. I couldn't include it because we didn't have an application.

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Chair, this is just one case. We've been on budget estimates for a long time. This is not really about family and human services, per se, minister. This is an example of how the budget itself, being estimates, it is a lot of putting your thumb in the air, and a lot of – I don't put a lot of faith in this document sometimes, Chair. And really, I would like – if this government really is truly serious about being open and transparent – I notice every time we have a minister come to the floor, they've got a book, they've brought a breakdown, they know exactly what's in every line of the budget, or claim to.

So, I don't know why we wouldn't move to a system where this is all electronic. You could drill down in. You could find out all

the details and really be open and transparent. This is something that has been talked about before. I've heard Peter Rukavina talk about it. I've talked about it with other members in this Legislature. It's high time we got into the 21st century and did things in an open and transparent and just a better way of doing things. Thank you.

Chair: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. Roach: Yes, Chair. Just to respond to the comments made by the Member from Rustico-Emerald, I assure him that the work that goes into the preparation of these budgets isn't this. There are a lot of public servants and staff within every department who – it's their job to dig deep into their work and they prepare management plans and there's a lot of hard work long in advance that goes into the preparation of each of the estimates that come from the various departments.

I appreciate your desire to have each and every thing that comes across the floor of the House on the Internet – and perhaps someday we'll get to that point, but just in terms of the budget coming out of the air, I just want to reassure the House and all the members in here that there are a lot of tremendous, hard working staff that I recognize, and we all recognize, within government that put a lot of hard work into coming and doing the research necessary in order to prepare these budgets. There's a tremendous amount of research that goes into it, so I just wanted to share that with everybody in the House.

Thank you, Chair, for that time.

Chair: The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

Mr. Aylward: Thank you.

Mr. Trivers: I just have one more follow-up on that.

Chair: The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock, do you mind if I go back to the hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald for a follow-up?

Mr. Aylward: As long as it's brief.

Mr. Trivers: Yeah.

I just wanted to –

Mr. R. Brown: Get the Speaker's timer out.

Mr. Trivers: I just wanted to urge you, Minister of Finance to share that information.

Thank you. That's all.

Chair: The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

Mr. Aylward: Thank you, Chair.

With regards to Child and Family Services in the grant page in the handout, page five of five, even with the calculation there of the TBD included: 1,159,800 and I look at page 71 under community grants, it reflects that. Below that we have miscellaneous grants for \$60,000 and below that we have supports for children grants to the tune of \$3,128,100 and I can't seem to locate the miscellaneous grants or the grants for supports for children anywhere in your handout.

Do you have a breakdown of that that you can provide?

Ms. Mundy: Can I give it to you verbally?

Mr. Aylward: I'd prefer to have a copy.

Ms. Mundy: Can I bring that back to you?

Mr. Aylward: Promise?

Ms. Mundy: Have I ever let you down yet?

Mr. Aylward: Well. I have a list. I have a list.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Ms. Mundy: I can give you a verbal breakdown and then give you follow-up if you can't wait.

Mr. Aylward: I'll wait until Tuesday to receive the –

Ms. Mundy: We'll have it for your Tuesday.

Mr. Aylward: Thank you, Minister.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you, Chair.

I just wanted to follow-up on something that the Member from Rustico-Emerald said about the accountability and the intervention from the Minister of Finance that each year CD Howe Institute produces a report on fiscal accountability of all the senior governments. They look at how readable it is for an ordinary citizen, if you like, and the timeliness of the information, and how close various governments are to over and under estimating the budgets and in the 2017 report, PEI's financial reporting ranked as the worst in the country.

Mr. R. Brown: Oh, but that's an old Tory (Indistinct).

An Hon. Member: Yeah.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: No, no. That's the truth.

Mr. Roach: Why don't you read the rest of the report to show where PEI has done things far better than other provinces?

Mr. Aylward: Speak through the Chair.

Mr. Roach: There's a lot more in the report (Indistinct), but I do appreciate (Indistinct)

Chair: Thank you.

The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: The point I'm trying to make is that I do think that there's room for improvement here and, clearly, it's not just me who feels that way.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Chair: Order!

Dr. Bevan-Baker: I wasn't bringing criticism of my own; I was just passing on an independent assessment of what we're doing here.

Mr. Roach: Read the rest of the report.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: – and hoping that we can move ourselves up and I think openness and

availability/accessibility for the data is what we need.

Thank you, Chair.

Chair: Shall the section carry? Carried.
Total Child and Family Services:
20,046,300.

Shall the total carry? Carried.

Total Department or Family and Human Services: 103,369,700.

Shall the total carry? Carried.

Thank you, minister. Thank you, Lane.

Mr. Aylward: Oh, no, we're not done yet. Can you bring back that information then we're done.

Ms. Mundy: Oh, you stop.

Chair: Hon. Members, we are now moving on to workforce and advanced learning and we're on page 130.

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct)

Chair: 138 – losing my hearing.

Department of Workforce and Advanced Learning; permission to bring a stranger on the floor?

Some Hon. Members: Granted.

Chair: Before we introduce the stranger, the hon. Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy has some tabling items.

Ms. Biggar: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Actually, I have a verbal report to give, I guess, from my estimates.

During estimates, I was asked to bring back the number of kilometres now eligible with changes to the Bill Canada Fund. That is when the threshold was dropped from 10,000 per day to 1,000 per day yearly average. That, now, makes 482 kilometres now eligible for federal funding and that can change – so, just for clarification – from year to year as traffic counts change, but right now, that has opened up 482

kilometres. That was a question by the Leader of the Opposition.

Chair: Members, we're on the top of page 138. There are handouts being circulated.

Minister do you have a –

Oh, sorry. Could you please identify yourself for the record?

Brad Colwill Director: Brad Colwill, Director of Finance and Postsecondary Education for the Ministry Workforce and Advanced Learning.

Chair: Welcome to the table.

Minister, do you have an opening statement?

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

Yes, I would like to while the handouts are being handed out. It's a pleasure to be here.

There are three main focuses of my department and they are all interconnected. One priority is supporting our workforce for growth, prosperity and opportunities in key sectors and growing the GDP. Of course good jobs, quality training with strong economic growth will help improve the incomes of Islanders and help in poverty reduction.

A big part of this work is helping Islanders get on a career path that works for them. Through Skills PEI, we have a number of programs to support efforts to hire entering students, grads, and unemployed workers.

Workpei.ca helps connect Island workers to employers looking to hire talented people. There are currently close to 450 employers and nearly 2,000 job seekers registered through Work PEI.

We also have responsibility for labour relations, which includes things like employment standards and the Workers Compensation Board. If we're a prosperous economy, we need to make sure our workers are safe, their rights are well-respected and employers have the information they need to make this happen.

The second focus is related to the first, and that's postsecondary education. A well-trained and adaptable workforce is a pillar of growth in our communities. When it comes to preparing Islanders for the workforce, our postsecondary institutions are some of the best in the world. They're investing in innovative programs and we are investing in them.

Operating grants for UPEI, Holland College, and Collège de l'Île will all increase by 1% this year. We are fortunate to be able to increase operating grants to post-secondary institutions this year. Some provinces across Canada have provided no increases to operating grants and even reductions, in some cases.

Government's also investing in students through increasing the budget for student aid and making changes to the student loan programs to assist Island students.

Of course, government continues to be proud of the 24 million in provincial grants and bursaries that have been distributed to our young people over the last five years, and this is to help provide for a more affordable education.

Programs and services for youth are a big component of both our workforce programs and our post-secondary programs. The biggest budget increase is in investment in imaginative programs to help youth excel include: the graduation program expanded to support 300 recent grads; the expanded Team Seafood program to support over 250 students (Indistinct) for future students, and plans for similar pilots in the construction and trucking sectors; supporting youth in careers; our SYnC program, providing 85 young Islanders with employment experience in sectors like IT and aerospace; and the third area of focus is on our population.

We are working on a population action plan to improve repatriation of Islanders, improve immigration, help newcomers settle on PEI, and improve the retention of new Islanders.

Because of our efforts, Prince Edward Island is keeping pace with Canada in population growth and exceeding that of Atlantic Canada. Atlantic Canada is facing an aging population, and our efforts in retaining and

repatriating Islanders and attracting newcomers is helping PEI to fight this trend.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

Chair: Thank you.

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

An Hon. Member: Sure.

Mr. MacEwen: Line by line (Indistinct).

Chair: Pardon me?

Mr. MacEwen: Line by line.

Chair: Line by line?

Mr. MacEwen: Just for now, yeah.

Chair: Thank you.

Departmental Management

Administration

“Appropriations provided for the operation of the offices of the Minister and Deputy Minister.” Administration: 9,000; Materials, Supplies and Services: 3,600; Professional Services: 1,000; Salaries: 285,600; Travel and Training: 8,500.

Total Administration: 307,700.

Total Departmental Management: 307,700.

Shall the section carry? Carried.

Shall the total carry? Carried.

Labour Market Research and Population Development

Administration

“Appropriations provided for research, recruitment, settlement and retention.” Administration: 14,500; Equipment: 4,500; Materials, Supplies and Services: 130,000; Professional Services: 120,000; Salaries: 945,500; Travel and Training: 31,500; Grants: 901,500.

Total Administration: 2,147,500.

Total Labour Market Research and Population Development: 2,147,500.

We have a question from the hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid.

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you, Chair.

Minister, why are the salaries up and the grants down?

Mr. Gallant: Hon. member, the salary increases to 2016-2017 which are in-part received through funding from the foreign recognition qualifications program –

Mr. MacEwen: Sorry, Chair –

Mr. Gallant: There's 2.5 staff.

Mr. MacEwen: Sorry, minister, I can't hear you. Could you say that again?

Mr. Gallant: Okay, sorry hon. member.

Salary increases for the 2016-2017 for our department received funding through the foreign qualifications recognition program for 2.5 staff members.

Chair: The hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid.

Mr. MacEwen: What would those staff be doing?

Brad Colwill Director: They were working with various groups, professional organizations, to try to ensure that the foreign credentials would be recognized in the same manner that people who are trained here. It's a national initiative that flowed through our department.

Chair: The hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid.

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you, Chair.

And the grants going down, is that to do with that?

Mr. Gallant: Well, now that money is provided to the recipients (Indistinct) comes through us.

Chair: The hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid.

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you, Chair.

Minister, last year I had asked for job descriptions for everybody in your department under the Labour Market Research and Population Development, and I never received them back.

Would you be able to provide them to me?

Mr. Gallant: I believe we can.

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you, Chair.

Chair: Thank you. The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you.

I'm just looking at the grants handout here. It's the handout for the Department of Workforce and Advanced Learning, labour research and immigrant recruitment, settlement and retention; it's the forecast amounts from 2016-2017 for professional services.

I'm looking at the companies; so there's MRSB, (Indistinct) services, Hennessey Holdings, Atlantic Evaluation Group, Results Marketing, Jan Sheppard Kutcher, Health HR Group, Think Forward Solutions. But the description is just 'professional services'.

Can you outline what type of professional services these groups might provide?

Mr. Gallant: Want us to start at the top?

Mr. Trivers: Yes, please.

Mr. Gallant: MRSB Consulting Services, they were hired to do some departmental strategic plan needed for creation of the new department.

The next one is Hennessey Holdings; WorkPEI assistance consulting on a new website before and during the launch.

Atlantic Evaluation Group; retention and repatriation of young Islanders, report provided a scan of what was done in other provinces and those practices.

Results Marketing; WorkPEI design, provided work on the design and initial build of the WorkPEI website, which matches employers to jobseekers.

Jane Sheppard Kutcher; settlement and retention analysis, exploring the newcomer support network and recommending best practices from other provinces.

Health HR Group; research conducted on the analysis, research conducted on the current labour market existing in PEI and the key sectors within.

And Think Forward Solutions; youth engagement and retention, (Indistinct) contracted to continue engagement with youth in areas outside of provincial programs and policies not covered by the Youth Futures Council.

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: I'm looking at the line for Results Marketing. You said it was for work done on WorkPEI website, just the initial version, right?

And that's coming in at \$25,000?

I was wondering, to me, I actually work in that area as well – I guess the first question is: Was this tendered this work?

Mr. Gallant: I'll have to ask Brad the answer to that. I think since it was under the \$50,000 –

Mr. Trivers: Sorry, I can't hear you –

Mr. Gallant: Under the \$50,000 policy that it has to go to tender. It was below that.

Mr. Trivers: So no, it was not tendered?

Mr. Gallant: I don't believe so.

Mr. Trivers: All right.

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: To me, \$25,000 for the WorkPEI website is a lot of money, and I was wondering – I know it doesn't qualify – it qualifies being under \$50,000 for not

having to go to tender. I just feel like if you put that out tender you probably could have gotten a lot better deal.

Mr. Gallant: Thank you, hon. member. Maybe Brad can elaborate a little bit more on it. Would that be okay?

Brad Colwill Director: Yeah, certainly.

In addition to the build, they did a considerable amount of the design work as well, graphics and promotion as well.

Mr. Trivers: I just – for the record – \$25,000, even with that graphic design, that’s a lot of money for the WorkPEI website.

All right, thanks.

An Hon. Member: Carry the section.

Chair: We have a question from the hon. Member from Summerside-Wilmot.

Mr. Palmer: It relates to that one.

To create a website that’s database driven, that you can search, which is what I believe that this website will do – allow folks to put in their resume and their information and employers, also to be able to contribute to that so that there is a robust dataset in the backend, I think that that is in the range that you would pay for that.

If it was just a frontend static piece, then probably that would be expensive.

But I think the functionality is there, because I’ve used this site. I’ve looked at it, and I think that functionality is there. I used to be in this business as well.

Mr. MacKay: Talk as long as you want (Indistinct).

Mr. Roach: Carry the section.

An Hon. Member: No keep her going.

Chair: The hon. Member from Summerside-Wilmot has the floor.

Mr. Palmer: That’s all. I just wanted to comment on that to make sure that – from that perspective makes sense.

Chair: Thank you. The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you, Chair.

I’m looking at the forecast variance there, which is almost, well, maybe not, but it’s a good chunk over what the original estimate was, and I’m wondering if you have a breakdown, because it could well be a lot more than 25,000 that we paid Results Marketing for what they did.

Brad Colwill Director: This is in the (Indistinct) section.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: (Indistinct) number four, you give the totals for the forecast amount, but then there’s a forecast variance of 69,000.

I’m wondering what the breakdown of that is.

Mr. Gallant: We thought there were other projects coming through at the time.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: I’m sorry?

Mr. Gallant: We thought there were other projects coming through at the time that didn’t come through.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: So that is money unspent as of yet?

Brad Colwill Director: That is correct. At the time of the forecast we felt that there would be the \$190,000 worth, and a few projects didn’t materialize that we didn’t perceive it as.

Chair: Shall the section carry? Carried.

Total Labour Market Research and Population Development: 2,147,500.

Shall that total carry? Carried.

Labour and Industrial Relations

“Appropriations provided for industrial relations for services to employers, unions and individuals; the Labour Relations Board; the Workers Advisory Program; the Employment Standards Board; the Employer Advisor and the Workers Compensation

Appeals Tribunal.” Administration: 38,800.
Equipment: 2,000. Materials, Supplies and
Services: 15,900. Professional Services:
122,900. Salaries: 763,700. Travel and
Training: 31,600. Grants: 2,500.

Total Labour and Industrial Relations:
977,400.

Total Labour and Industrial Relations:
977,400.

Question from the hon. Leader of the Third
Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: My question is: What
does the Workers Advisory Program
provide?

Mr. MacKay: Call the hour.

Chair: Hon. members, the hour has been
called.

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

Chair: Shall it carry? Carried.

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

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Minister of Agriculture and
Fisheries.

Mr. McIsaac: I move, seconded by the hon.
Member from Summerside-Wilmot, that this
House adjourn until Tuesday, May 9th at
2:00 p.m.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Enjoy your weekend.

The Legislature adjourned until Tuesday,
May 9th, at 2:00 p.m.