

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY



Speaker: Hon. Francis (Buck) Watts

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MATTERS OF PRIVILEGE AND RECOGNITION OF GUESTS	3884
STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS	3885
CHARLOTTETOWN-LEWIS POINT (Page Program)	3885
SOURIS-ELMIRA (Emergency Preparedness Week)	3885
LEADER OF THE THIRD PARTY (Glenaladale House)	3886
ORAL QUESTIONS	3886
MORELL-MERMAID (Draft Report on Democratic Renewal)	3886
MORELL-MERMAID (Meeting re: Discussion on Democratic Renewal)	3887
MORELL-MERMAID (House Leader Appointed to DR Committee)	3887
MORELL-MERMAID (In Camera Meeting for DR Committee Discussion)	3889
BELFAST-MURRAY RIVER (Inside Information to Chris LeClair-further)	3890
BELFAST-MURRAY RIVER (FOIPP Request for Emails Pertaining to E-gaming)	3890
BELFAST-MURRAY RIVER (Financial services Platform and E-gaming Initiative)	3890
BELFAST-MURRAY RIVER (Marketing Financial Transaction Platform Proposed by CMT)	3891
BELFAST-MURRAY RIVER (Cabinet Restricting Auditor General)	3892
BELFAST-MURRAY RIVER (Truth and Government Defense-further)	3893
BELFAST-MURRAY RIVER (Illegal Actions of Government re: Records)	3893
LEADER OF THE THIRD PARTY (Trends on Farm Income on PEI)	3893
LEADER OF THE THIRD PARTY (Pattern of Declining Farm Incomes)	3894
LEADER OF THE THIRD PARTY (Future Prosperity of Island Agriculture)	3895
SUMMERSIDE-WILMOT (Funding to Literacy Alliance re: Benefit Students)	3895
CHARLOTTETOWN-BRIGHTON (Issues of Recalls in Food Supply)	3896
CHARLOTTETOWN-BRIGHTON (Confidence in Exporting of Food Products)	3896
GEORGETOWN-ST. PETERS (MOU Details)	3897
GEORGETOWN-ST. PETERS (Carta Redacted Company Mentioned in Emails)	3898
GEORGETOWN-ST. PETERS (Finance Minister Resignation over E-gaming File-further)	3899
STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS	3901
HEALTH AND WELLNESS (May as MS Awareness Month)	3901
COMMUNITIES, LAND AND ENVIRONMENT (Wildlife Conservation Plates)	3902

TABLING OF DOCUMENTS.....	3904
INTRODUCTION OF GOVERNMENT BILLS.....	3905
BILL 78 – (An Act to Amend the Electoral Boundaries Act (No. 2)	3905
ORDERS OTHER THAN GOVERNMENT.....	3905
THIRD READING AND PASS.....	3905
BILL 104 – An Act to Amend the Highway Traffic Act (No. 4)	3905
MOTIONS OTHER THAN GOVERNMENT.....	3906
MOTION 101 – (Calling on government to adopt a holistic and comprehensive approach to address the health concerns of today’s children and youth through the allocation of Public Health Nurses in Island schools)	3906
STRATFORD-KINLOCK	3906
KENSINGTON-MALPEQUE	3908
EDUCATION, EARLY LEARNING AND CULTURE	3909
LEADER OF THE THIRD PARTY	3912
RUSTICO-EMERALD.....	3913
HEALTH AND WELLNESS	3913
STRATFORD-KINLOCK	3924
MOTION 30 – Calling for the development of a long-term comprehensive plan for Prince Edward Islands fire services)	3925
SOURIS-ELMIRA	3925
ORDERS OF THE DAY (GOVERNMENT)	3928
SECOND READING AND COMMITTEE	3928
BILL 77 – (An Act to Amend the Provincial Court Act)	3928
BILL 72 – (Registered Health Professions Act)	3935
COMMITTEE	3941
BILL 61 – (An Act to Amend the Archives and Records Act).....	3941
BILL 64 – (An Act to Amend the Financial Administration Act (No. 2)	3946
SECOND READING AND COMMITTEE	3959
BILL 67 – (An Act to Amend the Highway Traffic Act (No. 3)	3959
BILL 71 – (An Act to Amend the Regulated Health Professions Act).....	3960
ADJOURNED.....	3962

The Legislature sat at 2:00 p.m.

Matters of Privilege and Recognition of
Guests

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Good afternoon everyone and a special welcome to those joining us in the gallery and folks watching from home and by the Internet.

Wearing red carnations today for Multiple Sclerosis Awareness Month – recognize folks in the gallery over here in that connection – the families and the people who suffer with multiple sclerosis. Of course, to welcome and recognize community volunteers, health professionals and the people who are searching for better ways to deal with this disease and, indeed, to treat and prevent it.

This is the convocation weekend and convocation week at the University of Prince Edward Island. I want to congratulate all of the graduates and the entire community that's part of the success that comes with convocation. There'll be a gathering this evening at the PEI Brewing Company for the new alumni.

To recognize the achievements of Island Storm basketball team in proceeding to the next stage of the second round of the National Basketball League semi-finals.

Finally, to recognize, you and our staff, and everyone who's associated with doing the great job that everyone does in supporting our work here in the Legislative Assembly.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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

Welcome everybody back to the gallery today, everybody watching on EastLink and

in District 19. I want to give a shout-out to Betty Ann Wood who's been a paper carrier with *The Guardian* for a number of years and she also can be seen collecting bottles and taking them back to recycle. She sustained a fall and was in a coma for three days and it's my understanding she's come out of the coma now and she's doing fine and hopefully we'll see her back on her post in the near future.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

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

I, too, would like to welcome everybody back and particularly the people who joined us in the gallery today from the MS Society of Prince Edward Island.

I also want to take this opportunity to thank the Women's Institute for the Roadside Cleanup program which is already underway. But this Saturday, May the 13th is the big day and, of course, all Islanders are welcome to join in that and I encourage all Islanders to get out and to be a part of the Women's Institute Roadside Cleanup, which is one of many things that helps to keep this province of ours so beautiful.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Dumville: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I, too, would like to welcome everybody from the Multiple Sclerosis Society here today and also I'd like to wish all the graduates out at UPEI this weekend a great weekend, as my daughter's one of them.

I'd like to, also, make mention that I had a good friend, David P. MacLean that passed away and he was well known in the Charlottetown area. He'll be sadly missed and I wish all the best to his family.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Statements by Members

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

Page Program

Ms. Casey: – Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Every year the Legislative Assembly gets to meet some of the brightest students in the province. Prince Edward Island's first Legislative Assembly Pages were appointed in 1964 and included William Richard, Michael Brown, Anthony Morley and Kent Martin. Eight years later, in 1972, Janice Clarkson and Brenda MacQuarrie, then students at Montague Regional High School, became the first two females appointed. Since its inception, a total of 350 high school students have participated in the program. The Pages are selected by the respective schools on the basis of their high academic and extracurricular achievements.

The Page Program gives students a unique opportunity to see firsthand how laws are created in our province, and they gain a better understanding of the work of the Legislative Assembly.

It is always interesting to follow the successful careers of our former Pages. Many have gone on to become leaders in business, academia and politics. Our own Premier was a Page in 1970-1971. Emily Doiron, our Clerk of Committees, 2007-2008 and Erika MacDonald, 2011-2012, who is now working in the Opposition Members' Office, were all pages.

I would like to thank this year's team of Pages: Brandon O'Brien, Lindsay Sanderson, Paige Miller, Carleigh Macleod, Yun Huang, Nathan Kerley, Olivia Corrigan, Jasmin Howatt, Chandler Gard, Chelsea Perry, and Sebastien Arsenault.

I must inform the House that Sebastien Arsenault will be participating in the House of Commons Page Program while he is attending the University of Ottawa.

On behalf of all hon. members I'd like to thank each of our Pages for the work that you have done for us and wish you all much success in your future endeavours. I hope this experience has been all you have expected it to be; that you've made lifelong friends, and that you have had a little fun along the way.

It has been our pleasure to get to know each and every one of you. Who knows? Maybe someday you'll be sitting in these seats.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

Emergency Preparedness Week

Mr. LaVie: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Emergency Preparedness Week, May 7th to May 13th, is a time for all of us to reflect on how we prepared we are to deal with emergencies in our homes and in our communities.

This national event is coordinated by Public Safety Canada in collaboration with the provinces and territories. This year's theme: Plan. Prepare. Be Aware, urges Canadians to take action to protect themselves and their families during emergencies.

I would note that Public Safety Canada has launched a new alert ready system. It emits an alarm through televisions and radios to ensure Canadians know of impending emergencies such as; fires, chemicals, spills, tornadoes and hurricanes so they take action to get to safety.

I was also pleased to read the City of Charlottetown is in the process of developing a new mass emergency notification system, which is scheduled to come online this fall.

Their new system can send messages to a large number of emergency contacts via social media, apps, text messages, text to landline and online posts.

I commend the city for this important initiative aimed at helping to keep their citizens safe.

I also want to express appreciation to our emergency responders, paramedics, firefighters, Maritime Electric workers, emergency measure workers, snowplow operators, health care workers and volunteers, who often put their lives on the line, to ensure citizens are safe in emergencies.

None of us want to have to cope with a major disaster, but it's important that we take emergency preparedness seriously. Let's make sure we are ready, that we have our emergency kits; a plan for our families and our communities. Mr. Speaker, let's keep it safe.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Glenaladale House

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

Prince Edward Island is Canada's most Scottish province as measured by the percentage of Islanders who identify as Scots in their heritage. From our music to our community names, to the food we eat, to much of our culture here on PEI is imbued with Scottish legacy.

One icon of Scottishness is Glenaladale House in Tracadie Bay. This beautiful 19th Century structure has a rich history all of its own.

Glenaladale consists of a 529 acre estate with 2,000 feet of shorefront on Tracadie Bay. It includes a large, three-storey brick home dating from 1883 and out buildings, including the Tracadie Schoolhouse which was built in 1899.

In 1772, Capt. John MacDonald, the 8th Laird of Glenaladale in Scotland, brought the first Scottish Catholic settlers to what was then St John's Island. These people are now known as The Glenaladale Settlers, and this first wave was quickly followed by

more Scottish and Irish settlers, having a profound influence on the cultural and economic development of our Prince Edward Island.

The Glenaladale Heritage Trust, led by Mary Gallant and Aggi-Rose Reddin, are on a mission to purchase Glenaladale, hoping to develop the property into a sustainable, active centre that will focus on natural and social history, including a family history centre.

Last year they launched a Buy-A-Brick campaign, with virtual bricks are being sold for \$25 each. And with the support of just a quarter of Islanders they could raise sufficient funds to purchase and ultimately restore the homestead, creating a vital, living memorial to the families who had such a profound impact in shaping our Island, and also in so doing, preserve this Island landmark for future generations.

Last week, world-renowned author of the *Outlander* books, Diana Gabaldon, visited Glenaladale as part of her research for a possible future book in the series set here on PEI. Please join me in wishing the trust well on their quest, and ask Islanders to purchase a brick or two and visit the Glenaladale web page.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Responses to Questions Taken as Notice

Questions by Members

Speaker: Questions will begin with the hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid.

Draft report on Democratic Renewal

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

A draft report from the Special Committee on Democratic Renewal was given to me on Thursday, April 25th, to sign off on.

A question to the Premier: Premier, were you aware that this draft report was circulated to members of our committee?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, it came to my notice because I saw a comment in *The Guardian* that I believe originated from one of the committee members, but otherwise, no, I was not aware.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid.

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Premier, I'll say that again. Thursday, April 25th –

Mr. J. Brown: (Indistinct)

Speaker: Go ahead hon. member.

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you.

Mr. Premier, I had mentioned Thursday, April 25th; those comments were in *The Guardian* after that date.

We were given this report on Thursday, April 25th. Were you aware of the draft report that was circulated to members of our – were you aware that that report was circulated to our committee on Thursday, April 25th?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

An Hon. Member: Easy question.

Premier MacLauchlan: No, Mr. Speaker, I was not aware.

Speaker: Thank you, Premier.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid.

Meeting re: discussion on Democratic Renewal

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Premier, on that same day, I emailed our committee to request a meeting to discuss the original mandate of our committee outlined in the White Paper.

Premier, were you aware that I made this request to have another meeting to discuss the original mandate of the committee?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: No, Mr. Speaker. The committee, I'm sure, has its own deliberations, and I was not aware of that, whatever those deliberations were.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid.

House leader appointed to DR Committee

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Guess what happened next. That was the 25th. Let me read you a letter the Premier sent to our committee dated April 26th, the very next day: Please be advised that the Member from Charlottetown-Victoria Park is appointed to be a member of the Special Committee on Democratic Renewal, effective immediately.

Question to the Premier: Why did you feel the need to appoint the House leader as soon as I requested another meeting?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, for starters, those letters go from my office as there are replacements or substitutions; it's the normal practice of the work of legislative committees. Indeed, I suppose I sign letters similar to that, probably several or more than several per month, and I'd have to say I did sign that. It was in recognition that there's been a vacancy on that committee since the resignation of the MLA for Summerside-Wilmot last summer.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid.

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

So the Premier didn't know that there was a draft report out. He didn't know about my request to have another meeting. And then, apparently, he signed this letter that went across his desk because there's a number of them a month.

So keep in mind that our committee already had a draft report in hand, Mr. Speaker –

Mr. LaVie: (Indistinct)

Mr. MacEwen: Keep in mind that our committee had already met multiple times in the past year with four members after the former Member from Summerside-Wilmot stepped down.

Premier, what was the rush to appoint shut-down-Brown over there to our committee?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Myers: Good question.

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Mr. LaVie: Shut-down-Brown – shut them down.

Mr. R. Brown: (Indistinct)

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, we have a caucus of 18 members, and these matters come up in terms of who will be at meetings or what membership there is and what schedules there are and so on.

As Premier, it's not my role to be aware of, or indeed – and I'm sure that's the gist of the question – the implication being that I would not be aware and I wasn't aware of the work of the committee – but on the question of committee membership, the formal process by which a member of our caucus is designated to take part in the work of this or other committees, I'm sure I've signed similar letters since that date in April.

That's the way it gets done. It falls to me –

Mr. Myers: (Indistinct)

Premier MacLauchlan: It falls to me as leader to do that work.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Myers: (Indistinct)

Speaker: The hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid.

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Let's take the Premier at his word and he doesn't realize about the bad optics of all of this.

Premier, who did approach you to put down the house leader on the committee?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Myers: Good question.

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Mr. Myers: He just can't stop tinkering in it, eh?

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, those discussions take place within caucus. We have a House leader who would always be aware –

Mr. Myers: (Indistinct) appointed himself.

Premier MacLauchlan: – be aware of that, and it's important to the work of the Legislature –

Mr. Myers: Bullets for everyone. Save yourself.

Premier MacLauchlan: It's important to the work of the Legislature that the committees be –

Mr. Myers: There's a leader for you.

Premier MacLauchlan: – there be a quorum, that people be present, and that there be schedules and so on. It's the way of our caucus to be on top of those things.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid.

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'll remind everybody again. Draft report in hand, request to go to the committee for another meeting, a new member appointed, the Premier didn't know about it, the Premier won't say who asked him to appoint that person to it.

My request for another meeting on the original mandate of the committee was turned down. I'll quote the email sent to our committee.

It said – this is from the Clerk: I have consulted with the Chair regarding this meeting. This meeting will proceed as previously scheduled to discuss the report of the special committee to the Legislative Assembly; not – and Premier – sorry –

In camera meeting for DR Committee discussion

Premier, were you aware that the Chair decided to not have an open-to-the-public meeting on our original mandate, but opted instead to have an in camera meeting to discuss the report?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, this is the work of the committee that's being asked about, and in fact, I'm supposing that some of the discussions that are being talked about here are confidential to members of the committee, so I have to say I did find it surprising to see some of this commented on in the newspaper, but I was not – I don't take any part in what the Chair does or what the committee does –

Mr. Trivers: Except for appointing members –

Premier MacLauchlan: – or what meetings they have.

Mr. Trivers: – suddenly after months.

Premier MacLauchlan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

An Hon. Member: Telling the Chair what to do.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid.

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

My request to have another meeting focused on election financing, but our committee was also tasked with things like, looking at ways to increase the participation of women, Aboriginal Islanders, Islanders with disabilities, visible minorities in the Legislature; yet we also suggested a review of the legislative schedule.

We were supposed to – public engagement to level the playing field when it comes to campaign financing, and we were supposed to inform the work of the Electoral Boundaries Commission. It will be interesting to see what is in this final report.

Premier: Do you think the committee has completed its mandate?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Myers: Good question.

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, by the sounds of things this is something that it still under discussion among the committee, or in some form –

Mr. Trivers: (Indistinct) we want to know what you think.

Premier MacLauchlan: – a draft report. I, like other hon. members of this House, will look forward to learning what the committee has to say when it presents its report.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Inside information to Chris LeClair (further)

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The finance minister has been caught spinning tales and avoiding the truth this past week. Surviving emails prove the minister funnelled confidential insider information to Chris LeClair. Among the tales the minister is telling us is that e-gaming and the financial services have nothing to do with each other.

This government 2011 Simplex report said: The government of Prince Edward Island has committed to create a global transaction platform. Phase one will be the creation of a regulatory regime and the supporting technology platform for e-gaming.

Minister: How many times do we have to catch you before you resign?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: Hon. Minister of Finance, before you answer that. Hon. member, you have a very unique way of expressing things and you are very close to unparliamentary language. Very close.

Ms. Compton: I'll take that (Indistinct)

Speaker: So just cool it.

Ms. Compton: Cool it.

Mr. Roach: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's a pleasure to rise in the House again and to address the question that has been posed.

From the outset of this, this was a file that, I believe, started back. I get this from the Auditor General's report that this was a file that started back, I think, in 2009.

My first, I guess, involvement in any sort was the Memorandum of Understanding that I talked about earlier. That happened, I believe, four or five months after the so-called e-gaming file was closed by the government.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

FOIPP request for emails pertaining to e-gaming

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The FOIPP request, which dug out the surviving emails asked for all emails related to the e-gaming initiative. These surviving emails, which the minister had admitted to briefed the minister on the MOU and the financial services scheme.

Clearly, by signing off on this FOIPP the minister's own deputy knows the schemes are one in the same, and the minister does to.

Minister: How many times do we have to catch you before you resign?

Mr. Myers: Good question.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. Roach: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I recognize that the Member from Belfast-Murray River wants to talk about the past. I have no intention of resigning at her request. I didn't spin any tales.

In the last number of years since I have taken this job as Minister of Finance, we have worked extremely hard throughout government. We brought in a balanced Budget. We have an economy that is the third best in the country. It's something that all Islanders can be very proud of, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Financial services platform and e-gaming initiative

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Chapter 6 of the Auditor General's report tells us that: On May 11th, 2011, the former chief of staff, Chris LeClair, and Simplex CMT staff presented the opportunity of marrying e-gaming and the financial services platform to the secret e-gaming working group.

Minister: How many times do we have to catch you before you resign?

Mr. Myers: Good question.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. Roach: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I believe the member talked about May, 2011. I think I was lobster fishing then. But, in terms of this file the Auditor General did some tremendous work; a lot of hard work by her and her staff. They went right back to when this file began –

Mr. Trivers: Could have done better with more information.

Mr. Roach: – the Mi'kmaq Confederacy asked for this to be looked at. Clearly, in 2012, February, the so-called e-gaming file, as it has been called, was shut down.

The Memorandum of Understanding that I was made aware of in July, 2012, a number of months after the e-gaming file was shut down.

I was made aware that there was a memorandum that was being signed to have a conversation with a company.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Marketing financial transaction platform proposed by CMT

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I believe, when I asked the question in Public Accounts, the minister said: I was never briefed.

Mr. Roach: Yeah.

Ms. Compton: End of story.

In the original lawsuit it stated: It was very important to Paul Jenkins, Chris LeClair that the CMT financial transaction platform accommodate e-gaming clients.

In his own file defense, Paul Jenkins, confirmed this, stating: The Province of Prince Edward Island was interested in e-gaming and would require the infrastructure for same, which presented an opportunity to market the financial transaction platform proposed by CMT.

Minister: How many times do we have to catch you before you'll resign?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. Roach: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I don't know, Paul Maines, he has obviously been talking to the member opposite. She was able to quote him.

But, it's pretty straightforward. I said it before and I'll say it again, today: When I became minister of innovation in the fall of 2011 –

Mr. Myers: (Indistinct) from saying (Indistinct)

Mr. Roach: – I was never –

Mr. Myers: (Indistinct) nobody.

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

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I want to thank the minister for that mansplain.

Yesterday, the finance minister told this House: When that MOU was signed in July of 2011, I had heard nothing about e-gaming and there was nothing about that MOU that,

as a result of what I learned from reading the Auditor General's report that was connected.

Minister: How many times do we have to catch you before you resign?

Mr. Myers: Good question.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. Roach: Mr. Speaker, when, in July of 2012, I was not aware there was an e-gaming file. I have said that before, and I will continue to say it because that's the correct answer. It's the truth.

All I was made aware of was that fact that some people in my department, through and MOU, were going to sit down and discuss a financial platform with a company.

At that time I was not aware there was an e-gaming file. I was never briefed, at that time —

Mr. Myers: Back to the Sergeant Schultz (Indistinct)

Mr. Roach: — or prior to that —

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct)

Mr. Roach: — the only time I learned about it was at a much later date and, of course —

Mr. Myers: I see nothing —

Mr. Roach: — as we all —

Mr. Myers: I hear nothing —

Mr. Roach: — know now —

Mr. Myers: — I know nothing.

Mr. Roach: — the — after reading the Auditor General's report we are aware of it now. Now, we can look back and see what took place as a result of the Auditor General's report, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Cabinet restricting Auditor General

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I have a copy of the letter the auditor sent to individuals she was interviewing over these scandals.

The letter shows how the Premier and the Cabinet deliberately restricted the auditor. Executive Council, which is Cabinet, has requested my office to examine a report on government's dealings on Simplex, CMT and all related companies in relation to e-gaming and financial services.

Question to the Premier: Why did you and your Cabinet minister deliberately leave Chris LeClair's secret scheme beyond the reach of the Auditor General?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. LaVie: You were in on it.

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, when the Auditor General was asked to look into this matter it was deliberate to draw the mandate as wide as possible. Indeed, to enumerate the matters, as the hon. member has just read them so that the Auditor General would have a wide scope to her work. Indeed, she did.

She spent months and she interviewed almost 60 people through hundreds of hours and was through 10,000 or more documents. That was exactly the point when that executive memo to Cabinet was brought forward. When the Auditor General was asked to take on this mandate that she have a wide mandate; that she have the resources, which were provided to her, and that's indeed what the Auditor General did; a thorough job and one that we respect and accept.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Truth and government defense (further)

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

This week the Premier said the following of the auditor's investigation: She gave it a thorough investigation. She reported to this house. She appeared before a committee and I hear the member opposite referring to illegal actions and from everything I can tell, from what the Auditor General reported, she did not report that there were illegal actions.

Premier: Why is the truth opposite to your statement in the House?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

I'm not sure exactly what that question is, but if I'm being asked whether the Auditor General did, in fact, report that she looked at everything and that she didn't think there were criminal matters, that in fact is what the Auditor General did say. That's what was the conclusion of her very thorough work with the wide mandate and that is the Auditor General's report and we have taken it – the 15 recommendations in their fullness – and we are moving forward and we are giving the people of this province good government based on the Auditor General's advice.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Islanders need to know the truth on this file. That's what we've been trying to get across to government from the very beginning and we keep getting stonewalled. When questioned about activity happening outside the actual MOU, the Auditor told the committee on November 10th, 2016, she was looking at authorization and the due diligence with the MOU. Today we find out why: because the Premier and these ministers deliberately chose what the Auditor could and could not investigate. The cover-ups need to stop.

Illegal actions of government re: records

Premier: Why did your government destroy all the records and deliberately limit the auditor, hoping the illegal action of Chris LeClair, the minister of Finance, and others would never see the light of day.

Mr. Myers: Good question. That was good.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. Roach: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As she's now currently talking about this government, as the Minister of Finance, all of my emails were available to the Auditor General and also, the emails that the opposition has been referring to for the last three days; the Auditor General had those emails as well.

When I read the email itself, it's simply – I think there are four or five points in there that outline what's taking place. They're talking about a financial platform. I've laid out the dates of when the MOU was signed to talk about this financial platform. I talked about the date in February of 2012 when the e-gaming file ceased by government and clearly, the MOU that was signed and took place in July – was months after the file was closed.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

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

For centuries, agriculture has shaped our province and the success of farming has a profound impact on our economic, social, and environmental well-being. While yields and export numbers are useful statistics to track, it is farm income that is of central importance when it comes to the sustainability of Island farming.

Trends on farm income on PEI

A question to the Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries: What are the trends in farm income on Prince Edward Island?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

Mr. McIsaac: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.
It's a very interesting question, but there are two sides to that for sure – there's the income, but there's also the input costs and you have to put the two of them together to follow any trend going forward, but we can see a rise in the fertilizer price – last year we could see a decrease in it, this year – all the input costs certainly affect the bottom line.

Our amount of crop we get off per acre is certainly going up in many ways too, but again, it takes more input costs. So, that's what the farmers are working on day and night – is trying to get the most income from their crops with the lowest input costs if possible. That's why the technology has changed so much now. They have GPS and they spray or they fertilize or whatever in a certain, specific part of a field that needs it, but not in a part of the field that doesn't.

It's the technology that we're putting in place as well. It really helps the bottom line on the farmers and we're going to continue to use technology – whatever that might be – to make sure that our farmers thrive in this province.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

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

I'll explain to the House what the trends are. As fast as gross revenues have continued to rise, farm incomes have declined. From the mid-1970s, when farm revenues on Prince Edward Island totaled about \$300 million – excluding government payments – they consistently generated profits of over \$100 million. We now have revenues that have peaked at around \$500 million a year, but farm profits are in the order of only \$25 million – again, outside of government payments, which this year are budgeted at \$27.8 million.

Pattern of declining farm incomes

Minister: What is your department doing to reverse this worrisome pattern of declining farm incomes?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

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

This is one of the things I just spoke about. Innovation – we are supporting that in many, many ways. But you take supply management where we have very little input costs into that from government, where the farmers themselves run that system. They run it very well for the last 45 years – where they go out and they come up with a cost production formula, for example, and what it costs to produce a dozen eggs, what it costs to produce a litre of milk – that's the actual costs in there.

With regards to the other commodities that are not in supply management, they are at the whim of the world market, to some degree. In potatoes, we may make a terrific dollar in potatoes one year based on a disaster that may be happening somewhere else. Unfortunately, sometimes that disaster happens right here.

We are working in our department and in the federal government, with the hon. Lawrence MacAulay to make sure that we do have markets, not just depending on the old ones we have, but developing new ones where we can increase the bottom line to our farmers – and we will continue to do that from year-to-year.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Roach: Great. Good.

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

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

I heard: We're going to keep doing what we've been doing for the last 50 years. The provincial and national agricultural strategy has been to continue to develop exports and commodities, as the minister just said, for international markets, but clearly this has

not been a successful approach for a number of very complex, but quite predictable reasons.

Future prosperity of Island agriculture

Minister: When will this provincial government unhitch itself from a failing strategy and recognize that the future prosperity of Island agricultural sector lies in developing high-value, healthy products for predominately local markets with exports as only a secondary concern for surplus production?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

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

You know, hon. member, we would love to have supply management in all commodities, but we can't get that anymore. With the free-trade agreements and stuff right now, if hogs wanted to go into supply management or beef wanted to go into supply management – we can't do that. In the supply management commodities, the income is basically secured based on a simple cost to production formula. They're not getting real rich at that.

We in our department are working with innovation. We're working at new crop development, working with interest groups that are bringing new crops into the province and encouraging our farmers to grow them. The big key that we are trying to work on too – save our soil, improve our soil, and get into a really good rotational crop system where it's not just potatoes, barley, hay, and continuing that way, because a lot of farmers can't make money on the second and third year crops.

So what we're trying to do is get a crop that will rotate with our main crop of potatoes and return extra dollars into the pockets of our farmers, but we cannot just survive feeding the 140 or 150 thousand people on PEI. Our farmers want to grow for the world. The world wants our crops. The world wants the quality product that we produce here on Canada's Food Island.

Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Summerside-Wilmot.

Funding to literacy alliance re: benefit students

Mr. Palmer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, my question is for the minister of education: I understand there has been some new funding given to the literacy alliance to provide tutoring for students during the school year. Can the minister explain to the House how this will benefit students?

Ms. Biggar: Great question.

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

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

The member from Summerside is correct. We have a strong working relationship with the literacy alliance and they're doing great work under the leadership of Amanda Beasley.

The literacy alliance approached myself early in the New Year to look at support for a new program they're running – it's called Ready, Set, Learn! We know that the alliance does some tremendous work with summer tutoring program, but this initiative is in partnership – we were able to support the alliance with myself and the Department of Workforce and Advanced Learning for some additional resources of \$15,000 to allow for supports to children during PD days during the school year.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Palmer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Minister: How will this help students in Summerside?

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

Mr. Currie: Mr. Speaker, all members of the Assembly know the importance of literacy and that it is a key pillar and foundation for our success as a province. This initiative will support a program which will be approximately eight to 10 PD days. The program will – it's a new program – will roll out in Charlottetown, but we are committed to supporting the initiative. We are committed to supporting the initiative in Summerside and Montague moving forward, because I believe that all children need the most equitable opportunity to strengthen their literacy skills and this is a program and we're going to continue to build a positive working relationship with the literacy alliance. I hope all members of the Legislative Assembly will continue to do the same.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton.

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

My question is for the Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Mr. J. Brown: All kinds today.

Issues of recalls in food supply

Minister, there has been a lot of news coverage lately about food recalls, as well as the Norovirus outbreak in British Columbia linked to oysters.

Minister: Is your department tracking this, and do you know why we are seeing more frequent issues with our food supply?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

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

I hope this House continues for many weeks yet to come because finally, week five and week six we're getting some awesome

questions on our natural resources, which is terrific.

Mr. LaVie: (Indistinct)

Mr. McIsaac: That issue, Mr. Speaker, is a very important one.

Unfortunate items like the one in BC do happen with their oysters, but I think it's actually because of the public trust and the focus we're putting on that, both at the federal government level, the provincial government level, the processor and the producer level, that we are putting so much emphasis on public trust because it is the consumers who are purchasing our food and they are becoming more and more aware and more and more interested in where their food actually comes from.

We have put in place, now, a lot more technology so that we can detect if there is a problem, so we can tackle that before it becomes widespread. I think that's the reason that we are finding, perhaps, hearing a little bit more about it. But, we are countering the problem before it gets too widespread.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Myers: Ask about caviar next, bud.

Mr. MacEwen: Can we bring the price of lobster down? It's too expensive.

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

Confidence in exporting of food products

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

My supplementary question to the minister: Minister, can Islanders and Canadians feel safe about what they are eating and how can countries that we export to be confident in our food products?

Mr. LaVie: Yes.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

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

Another really good question. Canada is very well known and very well respected for the quality of the products they produce and it's terrific that we have that reputation. But, we put a lot of dollars into the public trust piece. Of the dollars we put out through our department, 28% of it basically goes directly towards public trust with the different commodities. That's so important.

Yesterday, I was so fortunate to be at the meeting with the other members of agriculture from across the country. We are working on the Growing Forward 3 or the next policy framework. Public trust is actually a big part of that and we had an opportunity to discuss it even further. Our consumers are becoming so much more wary all the time of where their food is, and they are going to watch each and every one of us.

Many of the commodities have now developed a code of practice as to how they look after their animals, how they grow their crops or whatever that might be, and it's so important. Public trust is issue number one for a lot of us and it will continue to be that way.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

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

Minister, you may have answered this in part already, but what can industry and our government's do to help Canadians with this type of thing?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

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

I should expand on it a little more because public trust is one of the new pillars in the next policy framework. We, as a province, have put an extra \$100,000 into public trust

going forward in the next budget and we're very pleased with that.

Because we balanced the budget we have dollars we put in areas like that, we can put it in a public trust. It's so important. We will continue to do that to support our major industries here on Prince Edward Island.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Ms. Biggar: Yes.

Mr. R. Brown: Yes.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

MOU details

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Yesterday, the minister of finance admitted that he didn't know the MOU details. He said he told his deputy, Melissa MacEachern: You can't have a conversation with somebody while that MOU is in place.

Question to the Premier: Will you admit today that that somebody else was Chris LeClair, that Melissa MacEachern was speaking of?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, as far as I know when we come to Question Period we are to answer on matters that are within our current portfolio. I have been in this House since May of 2015 in my role as Premier since February of 2015, so I'm not able to speak to the matter that's raised by the Member from Georgetown-St. Peters.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I have another email in my possession today. In 2011, Chris LeClair sent an email introducing him to Carta Worldwide.

Question to the finance minister: Are you familiar with Carta?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. Roach: Mr. Speaker, no.

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

Carta redacted company mentioned in emails

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Sergeant Schultz routine continues. Funny, I watched a clip from *Compass* this morning with John Jeffery had you there at an announcement with Carta.

The 2011 email reads: This company will be in PEI meeting Simplex on November 3rd. They want to meet with someone on moving their company to PEI.

Chris LeClair was the only government official in the know on these guys.

Question to the minister: Will you admit today that Carta is the mysterious, the redacted company that came from the surviving emails we tabled earlier this week?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. Roach: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. LaVie: Oh, I remember now.

Mr. Roach: I never saw any emails that had anything to do with that company. I was aware that that company came to PEI, a tech company. Other than that, that's all I was aware of, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

An Hon. Member: Oh, you're aware of it now.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

One question ago he didn't know who Carta was. Now, he recalls them coming to PEI.

I want to help jog his memory along here because Chris LeClair leaves government right about that same time. Now, the Minister of Finance comes in and announces Carta is moving to PEI and to the Atlantic Technology Centre.

Minister: What business exactly was Carta in, again?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. Roach: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I guess perhaps on the first question, I didn't hear exactly the name of the company –

Some Hon. Members: Oh.

Mr. Roach: – but I do recall the company.

I was simply request to go to the opening of the company. I was – my information at the time it was a tech company and that's why it was going over to the ATC centre because there were other companies over there, as well.

That's it, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Carta is a financial services company specializing in payment and loyalty cards. In short: they are a financial transaction hub company.

In fact, the company represented at the minister's, this minister's press conference

told the media, and I quote: The company is also working with a client to regulate the off-shore gaming industry in Canada.

Question to the minister, it's kind of hard to divorce yourself from the truth here now, today. Will you resign today over this new Carta email that we found?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. Roach: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The question is no, I will not resign today. That was a company that came to PEI. I was aware it was a tech company. That was the end of it, Mr. Speaker, nothing behind that.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Question to the Premier: Premier, can you confirm to this House today whether or not Chris LeClair and the Jenkins' were all shareholders in Carta international?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, I have no knowledge of the company –

Mr. LaVie: Does anyone know what's –

Premier MacLauchlan: – or its shareholders and –

Mr. LaVie: – going on?

Premier MacLauchlan: – to pick up on the point I made in response to the earlier question about events from, now, six years ago. We've been in government for two years.

Mr. Myers: Ten.

Mr. MacEwen: Ten long years.

Premier MacLauchlan: We've been bringing forward a program of prosperity, of serving the people, of growing the economy, of expanding the services and programs –

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Mr. Trivers: You had your chance (Indistinct)

Premier MacLauchlan: – for the people of this province, and Mr. Speaker, we'd be happy –

Speaker: Order, order!

Premier MacLauchlan: I'd be happy, Mr. Speaker, to tell this House more about what we're currently doing in the current term of this government, but the opposition seems to want to continue to go back –

Mr. LaVie: It's not working for you (Indistinct)

Premier MacLauchlan: – even further in time. Now we're back into 2011. Let's talk about the present and let's talk about the future.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct)

Mr. Myers: I will not be told by some rich man from Covehead who never worked a day in his life what I can and can't ask in this House. I'm standing up for Islanders in this House, and how dare he question me for what questions I ask in this House?

Speaker: Hon. member, you're – I'd call that a personal attack, so just – let's just settle down.

Go ahead, hon. member.

Finance minister resignation over e-gaming file (further)

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Let's go back here; the Carta International gets called in with Chris LeClair, who had been asking the Minister of Finance to provide intimate details about an MOU; intimate details about an MOU being asked of the finance minister.

Then Carta comes in. Chris LeClair leaves government, partners with Carta, and then somewhere along the line somebody invented a cancer patient.

Question to the Premier again: Why won't you make this finance minister resign for what he has done to the taxpayers of Prince Edward Island and this very House?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, I asked the Minister of Finance to take on his duties as the Minister of Finance on May the 20th of 2015, and the minister has brought in, since that time, three budgets. The economy has grown to the point where it's third in the country. We've got a balanced Budget. We've got great leadership in the financial administration in this province and in the leadership of our economy.

The Minister of Finance has my total confidence, and we're very confident about what we're offering the people of this province as we move forward with prosperity and with a vision and with the ability to work together, and we're proud of that, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Georgetown-St. Peters, final question.

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

If we want to go back and talk about this, back when Chris LeClair decided he was going to leave government, back when he decided with the Jenkins boys that they were going to take all of this in and they were going to make all the money even though the Minister of Finance had an MOU with CMT.

So CMT comes along, and they actually want to do the work because they've done all the work and they weren't going to allow somebody to take it from them and just take their idea and run with it and make all the money.

Carta comes along, gets introduced to Chris LeClair by CMT. Chris LeClair tries to partner with them and steal the business from government.

Government decides that they're going to invent a cancer patient to discredit CMT.

Question to the minister – or the Premier again: Premier, why don't you see fit, with all these things that you guys have done, with all these things that your government has done, inventing cancer patients and such, why won't you make this finance minister resign today?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. Roach: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's always interesting when the Member from Georgetown-St. Peters rises on his questions and makes a lot of accusations, and I think if you take the time to read through –

Mr. Myers: You not read the *Globe and Mail* article (Indistinct) –

Mr. Roach: Mr. Speaker, do I have the floor still?

Speaker: Yes you do, go ahead.

Mr. Roach: Okay, thank you.

If you take the time to read the emails that he's referring to that I somehow have some sort of under scheme involvement with Mr. LeClair, there's nothing like that anywhere in those emails; nothing like that at all.

I have no intentions of resigning. I'm working very hard at my job. I have been given a mandate by the Premier.

Ms. Biggar: Balanced Budget.

Mr. Roach: We're driving our economy. We're leading the country in almost every aspect of economics.

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct)

Mr. Roach: That's what this government is striving to do. That's what the people of Prince Edward Island expect us to do.

Mr. Myers: (Indistinct)

Mr. Roach: And that's what we're going to continue to do, so buckle up.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Statements by Ministers

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

MS Awareness Month

Mr. Henderson: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise today to recognize May as Multiple Sclerosis Awareness Month on behalf of the Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada.

Multiple sclerosis is a chronic, often disabling, neurological disease affecting an estimated 75,000 Canadians, and approximately 300 Islanders are living with MS.

MS is unpredictable and can affect persons of any age.

The symptoms widely vary, and unfortunately, there is no known cause or cure for MS.

However, the MS society does tremendous work in the area of research and providing services for individuals and their families.

Volunteers are at the heart of the MS society, and today I would like to acknowledge some of the PEI chapter volunteers who are here today in the Legislature. We have Tom Killorn, Heather Brown, Don Bell, Janet McPherson, Judith Thibodeau, and the 2017 MS Society Person of the Year for PEI, Sharon Fleming.

This carnation that I am wearing today, along with other members of the

Legislature, is the official symbol of MS Awareness Month.

The MS carnation campaign will run from May 11th-14th, and carnations will be sold at various locations across the province with proceeds going to the MS society. Along with the carnation campaign, one of the key fundraisers for the MS Awareness Month is the Medavie Blue Cross MS Walk. This year, the event will take place in Charlottetown on May 28th, and everyone is invited to take part.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

Mr. LaVie: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It is an honour to respond to the minister of health's statement, and May is MS month.

My wife has MS, and I get to attend a lot of meetings in the Atlantic Provinces in the last three years, and the people with MS, I couldn't believe it myself. If my wife walked in the door, you wouldn't know that she had MS, and she got to a neurologist early.

Canada does – we have the highest rate of MS; Canada does of all the countries. And we do lead in prevention, though. Canada does lead in prevention, and I do the walk every year for MS.

Actually, I can't say that. Last year I broke my ankle and I couldn't walk, but I did get in and get a sub. Every year they have subs.

But I'd like to thank the volunteers. That's what makes it work is the volunteers for the MS society, and it's great when you see the same faces every year and you make new friends from year to year. You make real, new friends, and it's an honour for what these people do, to know these people for what they do with MS when you – when one of your own is sick with MS, it really hits home.

I want to thank the minister for his statement. I know the minister and I, we don't see eye to eye all the time, especially

the minister of health, but today we see eye to eye on MS and what the society does.

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.

It's also a privilege to rise today to respond to the minister's statement, and I want to thank again those who are here today from the Multiple Sclerosis Society for your hard work, and also for brightening the Legislature today with the beautiful carnations that we're all wearing.

Although, unlike the previous speaker from Souris-Elmira, I'm not married to somebody with MS; I certainly have friends who suffer from this disease, and I'm aware of how debilitating it is. In an era where we have made such large strides in understanding and treating and even often finding cures for and eliminating diseases entirely, MS remains stubbornly present and stubbornly confounding.

We still don't understand the cause of MS, and many of the treatments, the medications that are used, are sort of only modestly effective, and they have some pretty significant side effects. They're not easily tolerated.

It's certainly a disease that deserves to have a far better track record when it comes to understanding and treatment, especially as it's the most common autoimmune disease that we have – disorder. It affects over 2 million people worldwide and, as I understand it, almost 100,000 people in Canada, one of the countries with the highest incidence of MS in the world.

So while it is a confounding disease and the prognosis is not great – although most people live into their 70s with it, that's pretty typical – it's a very debilitating disease. Yes, we need to raise awareness, absolutely, we need to do that.

But my hope is that we develop, not only a better understanding of the cause of this

disease but, ultimately, and very soon, we uncover a cure so that those who are suffering from it will be the last generation who do so.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Wildlife Conservation Plates

Mr. Mitchell: Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise today and speak about steps our government is taking to further protect Island wildlife.

In partnership with the Prince Edward Island Wildlife Conservation Fund Committee, our government was pleased to sign a memorandum of understanding with the group this week to reaffirm our support of the committee and the great work that they are doing across the province.

This MOU finalizes the agreement in which government provides 100% of the funds raised through the special license plate program to the Wildlife Conservation Fund.

The Wildlife Conservation Fund financially supports groups working on projects that benefit wildlife and wildlife conservation, and in 2016, it funded 51 projects.

It is supported through two revenue streams: Annual license plate fees for hunting, angling, and trapping, and the \$10 special conservation license plate featuring iconic Island wildlife images.

These two types of licensing revenue will continue to help protect wildlife across Prince Edward Island.

The conservation fund committee is composed of 11 volunteers that consider funding applications in the spring and fall of each year. Funded projects are divided into categories including natural areas, habitat restoration or enhancement, education, research and monitoring, and other projects.

These awards go to a broad spectrum of groups, providing excellent outdoor education, habitat restoration, and key

research outcomes that benefit wildlife and Islanders alike.

A full description of the projects can be found at the new Wildlife Conservation Fund website, where Islanders can also learn more about the fund and how to apply for project funding.

This successful program gives the general public an opportunity to join in directly supporting wildlife conservation on our wonderful Island.-

The strong interest in these license plates shows that Islanders care about our wildlife and habitat.

I commend those who pay into the fund and all those groups working to enhance our Island environment.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Well, Mr. Speaker, I can see we're definitely in a polling period here.

Thank you to the minister for reminding Islanders about the license plate program for conservation plates. It is a good program. I think we talked about that last year and talked about that the year before that as well, and it is good that they have it.

Ms. Biggar: More people signing up, more money.

Mr. Trivers: Mr. Speaker, I was looking at the amount of money that's granted through the Wildlife Conservation Fund by this government, and it's \$188,393 in 2016-2017.

One thing that I know the Wildlife Conservation Fund – just like the watershed groups – would love to get more money, and so I'll request that again and make sure, as we say, keep pushing for that.

But I was wondering – so if we've got that grant of \$188,000 or so from last year and we've got all this money coming in from the license plates program, so I wanted to ask

for a clarification on the announcement today. I wanted to know how much money does the license plate program bring in to the wildlife fund.

An Hon. Member: Good question for Question Period.

Ms. Biggar: I'll let you know that later.

An Hon. Member: Break that down.

Mr. Trivers: Ah, you can ask for clarification on the statements, Mr. Speaker.

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct)

Speaker: It's not Question Period.

Mr. Trivers: No, you can do that, Mr. Speaker. There's a rule.

Mr. LaVie: He's getting his homework done.

Speaker: It's up to the minister, minister, if you would like to answer the question or if you would like to bring it back at a later time.

An Hon. Member: Working together.

Mr. Mitchell: Certainly, Mr. Speaker, and that information I don't have readily available at my hand today, but I will draft a response and have it presented to the hon. member at my earliest convenience.

Speaker: Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Trivers: (Indistinct) how much –

Ms. Biggar: I'll let you know when I get the cheque ready.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you.

I appreciate the minister's statement and also his extra response there at the very end. I'll see if I can get one in here before (Indistinct) –

We must conserve wildlife and habitat is something I think we can all get behind. I don't think there's anybody here who doesn't think protecting wildlife, and the natural beauty, and health of wild places here on Prince Edward Island is important. For me, alongside climate change and resource depletion – whether that's in water, or soil, or fish, or trees, or anything else – species loss rates is one of the most profound challenges of our time. So anything we can do in our little part of the world here to preserve the wildlife that we have – and also the habitat on which they depend – is critical.

I know that initially all the funding for this was through licences to fishers and hunters and trappers and the recent innovation of the license plates is a great thing. It would be nice to know how much comes in from that. I'm sure there's a cost involved in making those plates. I do wonder how much actually makes it. I know 100% of the funds go there – it would be nice to know that.

All of these projects that the minister talked about are a direct benefit to Islanders and to our natural world here and it's a great thing. It's a lovely initiative. I wish there were more money – I agree with you, hon. member – I wish there were more money, but I thank the minister for the statement and for all those who were involved in protecting and maintaining and preserving our natural habitat.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Presenting and Receiving Petitions

Tabling of Documents

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

Mr. Gallant: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

By leave of the House, I beg leave to table responses to questions raised in estimates and I move, seconded by the Honourable Member from Charlottetown-Brighton, that the said document be now received and do lie on the Table.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Henderson: Mr. Speaker, today I'm tabling responses to questions taken as notice during the consideration of the Budget estimates for Health PEI, seconded by the Honourable Member for West Royalty-Springvale.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

Mr. Aylward: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, by leave of the House, I beg leave to table 55 written question – and these questions are for the health minister related to the operations of Health PEI, nursing, and surgical wait times and I move, seconded by the Honourable Member from Rustico-Emerald, that the said documents be now received and do lie on the Table.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Mr. Aylward: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

By leave of the House, I beg leave to table answers to written questions 400-408 and I move, seconded by the Honourable Member from Summerside-Wilmot, that the said document be now received and do lie on the Table.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid.

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

By leave of the House, I beg leave to table the letter to the Special Committee on Democratic Renewal that appointed the House leader to our committee and I move, seconded by the Honourable Member from Belfast-Murray River, that the said document be now received and do lie on the Table.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Mr. MacEwen: Mr. Speaker, I have more.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid.

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

By leave of the House, I beg leave to table 40 written questions to the minister responsible for the Office of Immigration and I move, seconded by the Honourable Member from Georgetown-St. Peters, that the said document be now received and do lie on the Table.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Mr. MacEwen: Mr. Speaker, I have one more.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid.

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

By leave of the House, I beg leave to table one written question to the Premier's Office and I move, seconded by the Honourable Member from Belfast-Murray River, that the said document be now received and do lie on the Table.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Reports by Committees

Introduction of Government Bills

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce a bill to be intituled *An Act to Amend the Electoral Boundaries Act (No. 2)* and I move, seconded by the Honourable Leader of the Opposition, that the same be now received and read a first time.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk Assistant and Clerk of Committees: *An Act to Amend the Electoral Boundaries Act (No. 2)*, Bill No. 78, read a first time.

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, section 1 provides for the replacement of the

current schedule of the act. The schedule sets out the electoral districts for the purposes of election of members to serve in the Legislative Assembly and this is pursuant to the report of the Electoral Boundaries Commission.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Orders Other Than Government

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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

Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque, that the 20th order of the day now be read.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk Assistant and Clerk of Committees: Order No. 20, *An Act to Amend the Highway Traffic Act (No. 4)*, Bill No. 104, ordered for third reading.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Member from Kensington-Malpeque, that the said bill be now read a third time.

Speaker: Is there any debate on this?

Some Hon. Members: No.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk Assistant and Clerk of Committees: *An Act to Amend the Highway Traffic Act (No. 4)*, Bill No. 104, read a third time.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Member from Kensington-Malpeque, that the said bill now do pass.

Speaker: Hon. members, this is a bill introduced by leave of the House, read a first time, read a second time, committed to a Committee of the Whole House, reported

agreed to with amendment, read a third time and it is now moved that the bill do pass.

All those in favour, signify by saying 'aye'.

Some Hon. Members: 'Aye'!

Speaker: Opposed, say 'nay'. Carried.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Motions Other Than Government

The hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque.

Mr. MacKay: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Opposition would like to call Motion No. 101 to the floor.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk Assistant (R. Reddin): Clerk: Motion No. 101.

The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock moves, seconded by the hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque, the following motion:

WHEREAS school based Public Health Nurses work with public health, education and community partners to address the health concerns of students within their family, school and community;

AND WHEREAS Public Health Nurses can play a critical role in assessment, support, counselling and referral of students to needed services;

AND WHEREAS Public Health Nurses can offer a wide array of supports in health education; skill development; school-based health or wellness clinics; healthy relationships, self-esteem, communication, social skills, anger management and parental education;

AND WHEREAS besides playing a critical role in school-wide health promotion they can assist other sectors in the assessment, surveillance, and data analysis to identify priority strengths and needs in school populations;

AND WHEREAS there are numerous areas where Public Health Nurses in schools can provide the impetus and expertise in providing holistic and healthy environments with comprehensive action plans for our student population;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that this Legislative Assembly call upon government to establish a public health nurse presence in our Island schools;

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Education and the Department of Health work with the Public Health Nurse Association in the establishment a public health framework by which these nurses can work within our educational institutions.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

Mr. Aylward: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to request the podium.

I am pleased to rise today to address our motion, which urges government to work with our educators and public health nurses in the establishment of a public health nurse presence for Prince Edward Island schools.

I applaud the government for its recent announcement that Island students will receive new supports to help them overcome challenges that can impact their performance in school. That is a goal that I believe everyone can and should support. However, the establishment of school health teams in each of the family of schools, while certainly is a major improvement, does not appear to go far enough.

Today, many provinces have adopted public health nurses in their schools and they play a critical role in helping to build healthy children and healthy communities.

In fact, the Canadian Nurses Association, in a position paper on the need for school nurses state that: These nurses elevate the health of school communities and promote student attendance and academic achievement. I'm pretty sure we can make good use of them here in our school system.

Community Health Nurses' Initiative Group, School Health Committee, which is an

interest group of Registered Nurses Association of Ontario, recently carried an evaluation process of the various programs underway in Ontario schools.

The project was called Evidence for School Public Health Nurses. The 2015 evaluation indicates that school-based public health nurses work in multi-disciplinary teams with other public health education and community partners to address the health concerns of students within their families, school and community contexts.

Health is reviewed in the broad sense of physical, mental, emotional and social health. The document outlines the work of public health nurses, which includes; assessment, support, counselling and referral of students to needed services; health education and skill development with students, families and school staff; provision of some clinical services; locally identified need; school-based health or wellness clinics or youth health centres in secondary schools; consultation and coordination with school staff; participation in case conferences; communication and coordination with families via school visits, home visits, phone calls; coordination with other service or care providers.

Within the school they also develop small group programming with students in areas of identified need. An example; healthy relationships; self esteem; communication; social skills; anger management; staff education on health and development issues and youth engagement; parenting education initiatives; training of group of peer leaders in various topic areas such as playground activity; leaders nutrition and mental health leaders.

They also work on the formation of healthy school communities, which include; providing or recommending curriculum materials to teachers in classroom education sessions on health topics. They provide school-wide health promotion through assessment, surveillance, and data analysis to identify priority strengths and needs in school populations – ensuring a group to address school health or school improvement issues is established and that it includes significant student participation and leadership.

Supporting the group in creating comprehensive action plans, i.e. the plans should include the components of curriculum, teaching and learning, school and classroom leadership, student engagement, social and physical environments and home, school and community partnerships. Encouraging youth across the school to become involved in health action; working with school staff, students and communities to develop and implement healthy school policies and to create supportive school environments; ensuring equitable access to health and social services for the school population.

The school public health nurses also promote a policy of board-side and/or community level health promotion including; contributing to healthy policy development on school board working groups. Participating on board interagency committees related to school services or coordination of care to ensure equitable access. Engaging young people in the development and implementation of health related communications, campaigns including and ensuring connection with appropriate health unit staff and maintaining website information; acknowledging school successes at board or community events; collecting statistics to identify trends and prevailing issues; conducting evaluations.

These are just some of the areas that public health nurses can impact positively in school and community settings. The Canadian Nurses Association in its promotion of public health nurses in Canada, sorry, in Canadian schools, is critical of the fact that there is not a national strategy on public health nursing in schools and suggests that Canada is missing one of the best opportunities to strengthen community health.

They also point out that schools are the second most influential environments in a child's life, of course, after the home, and are therefore, of key importance for improving the health of Canada's young people.

They state: School nurses can address issues affecting the well-being of children and youth from helping to improve food choices to addressing pregnancy risks.

The association is promoting a program called Caring Ahead: a new approach to Health Care. It is a program that takes the basics of planning ahead, anticipating events, considering actions and options and taking steps to be organized and prepared and applies them to health care.

They note that planning ahead increases an individual's chances of coping and thriving in business and in life and suggests that Caring Ahead will give the same chance to the health of Canadian school children.

According to the association, research shows that having public health nurses in school improves attendance and educational results. There is also ample evidence that having primary care clinics in schools improves educational outcomes, reduces absenteeism and decreases teenage pregnancy rates. Comprehensive school health programs, they say, help students develop the skills they need to be physically and emotionally healthy for life. They also argue that healthy students are better learners and better educated individuals are healthier.

Their Caring Ahead initiative has its goals: the development of a comprehensive health strategy in Canadian schools, one that will clearly define the public health nurses role within it. They pledge to lobby for the strategy to become policy across Canada, and ensure it is backed by proper funding and cooperation between ministries of health and education.

They also pledge to prepare registered public health nurses for a broad and comprehensive leadership role in population health including; community engagement; intersectional management; program evaluation; applied research, and policy development.

I believe that having public health nurses within our schools will improve the delivery of needed services for our special needs students and ensure that students who require specialized help, such as speech language pathology, or behavioural intervention, get the help and care they require.

Public health nurses in schools, I believe, will provide an important link between the

school, the family and the health care system in ensuring children do not fall through the cracks both in terms of the identification of health problems, but also in terms of dealing with mental and emotional issues that need addressing.

As you know we have many gaps in services across this province in terms of children and students requiring specialized services. I would ask that this Legislative Assembly support our motion and provide this crucial service in our schools, which are fundamental to child and community development.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The seconder of the motion, the hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque.

Mr. MacKay: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today and second our motion that urges this government to provide a public health nurses presence in our Island school system.

The Premier likes to talk about our small province taking a leadership role in terms of innovative practices and policies and our motion, I believe, provides that opportunity.

The report of the Community Health Nurses' Initiative Group, School Health Committee, which is an interest group of the Registered Nurses Association of Ontario, has evaluated several of their programs and I will use the evaluation report on Perth District Health Unit and Avon Maitland District School.

A school-based public health nurse program has been in place in the rural Perth county area for more than 10 years. The program is a cost-shared by the local school boards and public health unit. Annually, over 1,000 students receive service from approximately six public health nurse full-time equivalents.

The program includes ensuring access to health services, building individual health skills and action competencies, forgoing community links and enhancing the school's social environment. The purpose of the evaluation was to demonstrate the impact of individual services on student health and

educational outcomes and identify any needed improvements to the program.

Their findings showed that the greatest positive impact was in the students' increased ability to deal with problems, increased hopefulness, reduced worrying, improved relationships at school and at home, and better decision-making about healthy living. The program, the evaluation, indicated also resulted in respectable improvements in marks, schoolwork and attendance. School staff viewed the nurse as a resource to assist teachers in helping students focus on school.

The evaluation concluded that the school-based public health nurse program provides students, parents and school staff with access to high quality services in health and mental health care and interpersonal skills counseling. They indicated that the program's success was in part related to the fact that it was offered in a familiar environment that may not be available elsewhere in a rural or underserved communities.

Many countries around the world have embraced the importance of public health nurses in their schools. For example, in Britain, their new public health strategy expects nurses to improve children's readiness for school, decrease their absences, lower teen smoking rates and reduce excess weight among the young.

In Australia, school nurse practitioners specialize in adolescent health, while those in New Zealand, amongst their other roles, screen all grade nine students for a range of issues, including home life, drug use, eating habits, and depression. There are also a large number of programs scattered throughout the United States. Their studies have revealed great successes for their students through this model.

We believe that the school-based public health nurse model best serves the interests of all children, not just those who are at high risk. The public health nurse can help address issues that students with asthma, or other chronic health conditions may need help with on a daily basis in order to achieve academic excellence.

They can help ensure that the nutritional needs of students are being met – they can provide advice on skin conditions like acne – or physical immobility due to an injury. Right now, in my own area there's an outbreak of lice. It is causing a lot of misery for parents and families involved. The presence of a public health nurse, I believe, would greatly help to reduce the spread of these kinds of infestations.

What's best about the in-house public health nurse model is that students have more accessibility to whatever their needs are. In-house public health nurses can provide consistencies in dealing with individual students and can ensure that the links with other health professionals are maintained and that critical follow-up occurs. They will know if something isn't working for the student and they will be equipped to find out why.

I believe that the public health care nurses have a critical role to play in providing a wide array of services to our students. I would like to see them established in a school environment – on a daily basis – so when a problem arises, they are there. They can facilitate a referral of a suicidal student to a mental health professional, and ensure that they get the help they need, when they need it.

I believe the presence of public health nurses in our schools would help reduce stress on our health system by addressing health and mental health issues before they get out of control. I believe our Legislative Assembly should support the Canadian Association of Nurses, which has clearly identified the important role that these nurses can play in a school setting.

I would ask for support for our motion.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

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

I would like to begin by saying there is now a public health nurse liaison for each Island

school across Prince Edward Island. As a former educator, I am very familiar and was always very grateful for the presence of a public health nurse that was tied to the schools that I was assigned to prior to my time in public life.

Our schools have always had good access to nurses when they need them. Currently, Public Health Nurses visit schools for many reasons. It could be to provide immunizations or to provide staff and families with education and training on how to support a student with anaphylaxis or other medical conditions.

Schools have a longstanding relationship with the Chief Public Health Officer who is always there to help protect the health of students and staff. We are excited about the new role that nurses will play in supporting student well-being. We have presented to Islanders over the past six weeks our new initiative on school health teams, and school health teams are new positions and new resources with a new mandate to work with students and to work with educators in Island schools.

We have announced that this September in the Westisle Family of Schools and the Montague Family of Schools that we will be presenting the resources and the professionals, the nurses, the counsellors, the youth service workers and other professionals that will be on the ground working with Island students.

That was a theme that came loud and clear over the last number of years as we had conversations with communities, conversations we had with the District Advisory Councils, the Principals Councils, the Learning Partners Advisory Council and most recently, there was a lot of conversation and a lot of discussion through the school review process about the need for other supports and services to support children who are in schools every day in communities across Prince Edward Island.

We are excited about this new initiative. We're excited about the investment. I'm very grateful for the support of my colleagues at the Caucus table for this initiative. This year it will be a \$700,000 investment – 10 positions will be rolled out and we'll be rolling out to the other family

of schools over the next two years; an initiative that, I believe, has significant upsides.

I always felt, as a school principal, that there was significant opportunity to work in a collaborative, integrated approach to bringing professionals together, whether it be counsellors, whether it be youth service workers and to kind of build on the investments that we already have outside classroom instructional positions in the public school system.

The nurses have been playing and will continue to play an integral role in supporting children in our public school system. But, the school support teams will do much more than clinical advice and supports for medical issues that arise in the public schools system. They will bring – mental health nurses will be brought in to address the needs of students that may be dealing with a level of anxiety, maybe not coping well; whether it be with issues in the school or issues that are with friends or coming from home.

The nurses will support students in need while working to reduce the stigma of mental health and increasing the focus on prevention and promotion. Currently, we are constantly evaluating curriculum. If you look at the work that's been done in curriculum development around health curriculum, you'll see a shift and a different focus in respect to the curriculum that's being taught, to look at the programs that are being implemented, not only in the K-6 age category, but the seven to nine which is the intermediate category, and obviously at the high-school level.

Another thing that, as the Minister of Education, Early Learning and Culture, that I'm extremely proud of are the investments that we're making in putting this whole discussion around social-emotional wellness as a top priority. We've got three pillars in the department of education, and one is to improve literacy. One is public engagement, building confidence in communities across Prince Edward Island, and we are working very closely with all of the schools in the Public Schools Branch to set goals around social-emotional. I think the school supports, which is a high volume of resources which will be coming into

schools, which we'll be backing up that initiative and that investment. I think it's got a significant amount of pressure to be on the ground and to reach children and support educators, support administrations to make sure that we continue to support children in the learning environment.

We're excited. We're pleased. Not only are we going to make this investment of additional resources, but we're going to continue to tie those school support teams in with the current public health nurse liaison that is assigned to every school in the Province of Prince Edward Island.

Recently, we had Dr. Stan Kutcher meeting with our department and all senior leadership about the programs that he's implementing and working with in other provinces and how we can learn from what he's been doing and how we can continue to support our mandate to provide appropriate and timely access to services and supports in the school and to educate children around mental health literacy in our province.

Principals and staff are doing excellent work at the ground level to promote mental wellness. This past year was the first year that we tied the responsibility to school principals and to schools that all schools and staff were to create objectives and goals, activities, and there's not a school that you wouldn't go into across Prince Edward Island and ask about some recent initiatives or current initiatives that are going on to create strong, healthy, social, emotional buildings in the Province of Prince Edward Island.

We're very pleased that that is being implemented under the leadership of the principals, which are part of the school plans which are created by staff and support staff, too, as well. The custodians, the bus drivers, the admin staff, the cleaning staff, are all very much part of positive school cultures in our communities.

We basically recognize the role of the nurse and we recognize that this is not necessarily a new initiative, but this is an initiative that we're currently working with public health nurses, and this new initiative will continue to bring more nurses into schools across Prince Edward Island.

During my time as the health minister, I developed really good working relationships with the – not only the nurses union here in the Province of Prince Edward Island. I've got two sister-in-laws that are nurses and certainly have an appreciation for the role that they play, as a former minister of health, and the support and the care that they provide, not only in hospitals, but in long-term care facilities, but in schools.

Nurses are an integral part of our communities and our province. I had the opportunity as the minister of health to build a positive working relationship with the Canadian nurses union and to really meet the union leadership across the country in my role as a provincial/territorial lead, and as a lead on the federal/provincial/territorial responsibility.

I got to sit at the table with the nurses from across the country and to hear their concerns about what's currently going on. I see this initiative that we're rolling out here in schools will continue to build on the role that the public health nurses are currently playing in the public school system here in the Province of Prince Edward Island, and have been doing for a long time.

I'm very pleased that our government continues to recognize the role of the nurse in schools that they continue to build on the investment, not only by bringing in, but supporting that with a philosophy and a mandate and a plan to execute to put those school support teams in place for years to come.

So, very supportive of the role of the nurse in our public school system, and I think that we're just scratching the surface in respect to the potential and the opportunities and the professional advice they'll be able to provide in a collaborative, interdepartmental focus on the ground, in the schools, every day in our province.

I can't help but think of the investment that our government has made, not only in just supporting nurses, but also looking at the accelerated nursing program which allowed us to train additional nurses for the workplace. It also allowed us to – the investment we made in the new School of Nursing at the University of Prince Edward

Island under the leadership of Dr. Kim Critchley, who is now the deputy of health and wellness.

I feel confident that, not only the investments that we've made, but the investments that we're currently making will continue to support this motion and support the initiatives and the work that nurses do.

But bringing nurses into schools – and I know that the School of Nursing right now has internship opportunities that are currently in schools, so they are ahead of the curve in respect to identifying the role of the nurses, and they've already had students that have been working in schools as part of their training.

I rise to support the motion. I think it's a motion that we're going to continue to build on. We've been doing some great work, and I (Indistinct) to recognize that this is not a new initiative; the role of the nurse has always been an integral part of the public school system, and there were the announcements and the investments that we've made with the school support teams will continue to build on their professionalism.

I know, as a former principal, that I always had a great working relationship with nurses. I had nurses in conference calls. I had nurses at the table discussing issues with students, and they always brought tremendous insight and a level of professionalism that gave educators a deeper understanding of some of the challenges that students were facing.

So I thank you for that, and thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

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

I want to first thank the Member from Stratford-Kinlock for bringing forward this motion. I stand to support it.

We were recently blessed with the presence of nurses here in this Legislature, I think it was last week, and there was much said

about the value of nurses in our health care system; that they are, in many ways, the heart of the health care system and the heart in the sense that they work hard, but also, that they are compassionate and at the centre of caring and love in our system.

Public health nurses are one way that nurses provide that care, that hard work, but also that compassion. I have strong memories of public health nurses when I went to school in the Highlands of Scotland growing up, and my strongest memory is of how clean they smelled when they were all in their starched uniforms, and they were all very neat and tidy, and I was not. I was smelly and I was scruffy, so maybe that's why I have great memories of them.

But they were also very kind and they were very patient, except when they had to give you an immunization. I have very strong memories of public health nurses, and generally, very positive ones.

I believe that one thing that we have to do everywhere in our health care system is to look for opportunities to focus on prevention. When it comes to public health nurses, the opportunity exists in our schools when our children are young, to encourage and help them to develop good habits, whether that be good eating habits, good habits in terms of exercise, or good mental health habits; just understanding how to think clearly and to deal with anxiety and all of the natural things that we, as human beings, all have to cope with.

As the members who promoted the study, the seconder of the study as well, cited some studies where there are clear benefits to children being – to the access to these sorts of services when children are young.

I'm forever citing the WHO, the World Health Organization, definition of health, because we sometimes think of health in terms of the provision of health services in our health departments, but really health is something that we should aspire to. It's something positive, and the WHO definition of health is a complete state of physical, mental, and social well-being, and not just the absence of disease or infirmity, so it's something very positive. I think we need to always bear that in mind that when we're talking about health care, it's not just about

dealing with problems, but it's about promoting health in us, individually and in our communities.

The work that I imagined public health nurses doing in school is to provide information on those good habits to healthy living so that our children can grow up knowing what it takes to be healthy and to remain healthy, whether that's, again, physical health or mental health, and also to help them develop and adopt healthy attitudes about their own and other sexuality. I think that's something that is desperately needed in our schools, and I think we could do a much better job of that, and to me, public health nurses would be the perfect vehicle for doing that.

The benefits, of course, of this are many-fold. There are individual benefits in terms of better health for these individuals, for children in our schools. When you are healthy and when you are fit and when your mind is clear, you will be a better learner as well.

I think when we provide services to make our children healthier or encourage them to be healthier; it's not just physical benefits we're looking at here, there are intellectual benefits as well. Of course, if we have an educated, happy society, then we are all going to be better off. I think there are collective as well as individual benefits to this.

I see benefits in terms of relieving pressure on our health care system as time goes by, where our children will have developed healthier habits, are less inclined to develop those chronic diseases that are such a burden on our health care system. Most of the chronic diseases that account for the greatest cost in our health care system are largely avoidable; they are largely preventable. If we can get into that early and encourage our children to develop healthy habits, then there will not only be health benefits and intellectual education benefits, but also economic benefits to this province.

As the old phrase goes, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure and in this case, I think the analogy to that would be: A fleet of public health nurses in our schools will bring huge long-term benefits to our community.

I stand here to support this motion. We should always be looking for things that can be done to create, not just a better health care system, but better health, that will in the long-term, lead to a solid path. That's how we will create a sustainable, solid path to a healthier population, stronger communities and a more prosperous province.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I wanted to thank the Member from Stratford-Kinlock for bringing this motion forward, and I wanted to rise in support of this motion of public health nurses in Island schools.

Really, I just want to make a very brief point. The other members have raised many of the key reasons that public health nurses are needed in Island schools, but the point that's most important to me is the way to help people is through prevention.

If public health nurses can help prevent various conditions of all types that have to deal with the human body and mind by being in schools and catching things early, and making sure they are treated; making sure they are diagnosed and stop the need for expensive medications down the line or other expensive treatments, as well as basically allow the conditions to be treated sooner so that the health of the patient can improve and they don't get to a point where conditions are exacerbated and become serious. I think that's the most important thing.

I support this motion, primarily, because public health nurses in schools will help so much with prevention of illness.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Henderson: Thanks, Mr. Speaker.

Could I ask for the podium, please? A lot of paperwork on a very important subject here.

Before I get into too much detail on this particular motion, I want to remind the members of the House that this Budget that was presented by the Minister of Finance in the Legislature about a week ago and in that Budget Address the Minister of Finance and I quote from educating our children and youth section: Furthermore, new resources will be used to fund: a Mental Health Therapist to provide assessment, therapy and clinical coordination; school nurses to focus on health promotion and education; youth workers to help with issues related to behavior, social skills and alcohol and drug awareness; and, a school Authority Counseling Consultant to provide case planning support for students.

That just puts it in a little bit of perspective, that these are the types of things that we are embarking on as a department in collaboration with the department of education as we try to deal with the issues of mental health and health challenges that young Islanders face; that they are in the school system. We have a dedicated profession on this Island and that's our nurses. I think it's important to note that the nurses' association really comprises of many different components of nursing.

We have our RNs, which is the obvious one. We have, I think, 1,353 RNs working in Health PEI and those are dedicated individuals that work extensively with Islanders in dealing with either prevention or helping with their health care needs. We also have 18 nurse practitioners. I do recall, since becoming minister that number has increased. We've made commitments to increase the nurse practitioner components on Prince Edward Island. I think the goal was to have 20, and our department is embarking on a plan that will roll out more nurse practitioners into the future.

We also have 528 LPNs, and they play a key component in health care and the collaboration of how we deliver health care. It's not always about one profession, one designation. It is about making sure we collaborate as well.

As we move into the school system, that's where we have to get more innovative. We have to get more specialized. We have to put together, maybe, a new model for comprehensive nursing positions and those people are going to help deal with some of those more complex mental health issues, as well as helping those individuals that are displaying comprehensive and complex issues, to make sure that they are getting to the professionals that are best capable of dealing with that.

As you heard in the Budget Address, school health nurses, as well as a full team of service providers, is already a priority of this particular government. We have already committed to expanding and enhancing supports for student well-being and it is our plan to hire school health nurses for Westisle and the Montague Family of Schools. We have them in place for this coming school year.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Henderson: As the minister of education has already publicly stated in his address, it is his intent to have school health teams roll out in all regions of the province over the next three years. Our Department of Health and Wellness is going to be a key player in helping that minister achieve that goal, and I'm only too honoured to be a head of a department that is going to collaborate with the department of education. That's why we are working together. We're a government that's about collaboration. It's about addressing the needs of Islanders; it's not always about what department does what.

We're very happy to collaborate and work and solve issues because we are well aware that if there's a mental health issue or if there are other issues pertaining to health in our younger population, it is going to transpire as those individuals graduate from school and they are going to be part of the health system.

In our instrumental health and addictions strategies, we talked about trying to have earlier interventions, get these things under control; issues, whether it's anxiety issues, sexuality and all those types of problems that tend to create mental health issues,

addictions and try to get at them at an earlier stage.

Our government has committed to having a core team of dedicated staff working in our schools, delivering direct health services to our young people and our families. School health nurses are the first step of redeveloping direct health care services in our schools. Resources will be provided at the school level, and services will be delivered at the school level to meet the needs of students and parents, school staff and communities.

I really emphasize that we do have a big presence of our public health nurses, as they play a role in the health care system. What we're talking about as a government is an enhancement to that. We're not just adding on more duties to an individual or anything like that we're talking about enhancing and having new people that have specialized capabilities. These are going to be comprehensive nursing positions that will focus primarily on mental health issues.

The responsibility of a school health nurse will focus on communities – or will provide individual assessments, screening, treatment and referral for students and parents, working with students awaiting appointments; reducing the stigma of mental health, working directly with students and their mental health concerns, facilitating a smoother transition of an at-risk student to the community mental health services and programs that are already in place; reaching out and engaging diverse and marginalized youth; providing health education and skill development to students to provide knowledge and social skills to make decisions affecting physical and psychological health on a wide range of issues such as; coping skills, anger management, stress, building resiliency, media literacy, drugs, alcohol and smoking.

What we've seen in society today is, is that these things have become more complex. We're seeing the issues of social media. We hear about the Rehtaeh Parsons girl in Nova Scotia where social media bullying has an impact on her mental health to a point where she did harm to herself. These are tragic situations. I think it's important that we try to address these things. These things are changing rapidly. It's a challenge for health

care professionals, especially our nurses, to keep up with the new techniques, the new strategies in how we deal with the people that are having their challenges when it comes to societal– and being a key contributor to society, and dealing with the anxieties that they might face.

Issues around healthy eating, we, certainly, have seen issues where people are not eating properly and they're concerned about their image, and the mental health challenges that that deals with.

These are very complex, but they're comprehensive issues. It's not just as simple as saying: A nurse is going to be able to deliver a vaccine, or different polio vaccines and things of that nature. It's about making sure that we deal with the holistic approach to an individual and their overall well-being, both physically and mentally and issues around how many students deal with physical activity. Not every student feels good about their body image. When they are participating in sports through the department – the physical education, they sometimes don't feel good about that. It takes awhile for them to adapt and we have to be there to try to help those individuals deal with that and cope with those things so that they can get involved in more physical activity and sports and teams.

We deal with a lot of issues around violence and abuse. We can't imagine the issues that many Islanders and the living conditions that they're in and the trauma and drama that goes on in their lives. We've got multitudes of situations where families are mixed families, separations, single-parent families. These are very difficult issues for young people to cope with and adapt with. Although, there are many that are able to handle it well and adapt to those things, there are some that are not able to, and they need help. They need supports and encouragement to face those challenges. Those are the types of issues that we have to be able to adapt to as a government in providing something that is innovative and creative in ways that we can deal with these situations.

We have to coordinate effective uses of our services and supports available in the school and the broader community. We talk here; mental health is a serious issue. All parties

have been coming up with ways to try to come up with solutions, but it is an all encompassing challenge. We have individuals at young ages have had mental health issues. We're seeing seniors with mental health issues. We see individuals with diagnoses of schizophrenia and illnesses of that nature. It's a challenge to make sure that we're providing the types of services that can be reflective of being conducive of good health care and good mental health. That's the big challenge.

Sometimes, if you're having a program or you're having people with addictions issues, usually there are some issues of mental health that come with that. Those addictions issues people want – they don't want to go to maybe an AA if they're too young, they may not feel comfortable in a crowd of older adults. That's why we have issues around the Strength Program. That's why we have issues around our behavioural support teams. That's why we tried to implement some – get some people with expertise in child psychiatry. It's a very complex issue. There are a lot of different people have different situations and they need to be able to get the treatment in a way that they feel comfortable and in a surrounding that they feel comfortable in and they're willing to share their issues.

That's why we need to make sure that we're coordinating these services and making sure that the specialty people are in a place where they can help with that.

Working with the provincial sexual health program in respect to that education, once again, there can be many challenges that come with an issue of maybe a teen pregnancy and how an individual may be able to cope and handle that. Do they have the supports of their family? Are there religious components of that that may take the place? We have to make sure we're providing those needs.

We have to work with children with medical diagnoses as a resource for students and parents and staff. We do have, sometimes, preschool individuals that may have different diagnoses, ADHD and anxieties and things of that nature. We have to be able to transition that individual from home to the school system in making sure that those supports are there until we get to a point

where they transition from the school system into the society and public life and things of that nature.

Through these initiatives and the work of our new school health comprehensive health nurses, we anticipate reduced wait times, improved service coordination, increased awareness of supports that are available and focus on prevention and ultimately better outcomes for youth and families.

Basically, it is all about trying to incorporate people to be productive members of our society and that they have the confidence and ability to function effectively and raise their own families and whatnot.

Principals and staff will play an integral role in this new approach. It's about working closely with our school health nurses to identify and meet the needs of children and youth and their families. These new comprehensive school health nurses will go beyond the role of the current public health nursing program in Island schools.

Don't get me wrong our public health nurses do play a vital role in communities. They not only deal with illness prevention and also health promotion and community development, but the school health nurse is, in what we're proposing, in a comprehensive school health nursing system will be partners with our current public health team and will work close in collaboration, while not duplicating the role of the public health nurse.

Public health nursing delivers programs that promote, protect and preserve the health of individuals, families and communities. Public health nurses serve Islanders at every stage of life from infants to seniors. We have our public health nurses, I know, I have a new granddaughter. My daughter, I think at two weeks, four weeks, and six weeks, there is a visit by the public health nurse. They work with the mother to make sure that they are feeling comfortable with handling a newborn. Making sure the nutritional components; dealing with issues around breastfeeding, and also, I think it's really important to note, that our public health nurses are trained in the ability to identify issues around postpartum depression and dealing with some of the challenges of that particular issues.

I just want to make sure that the people understand that there are differences between these different roles, and I say: Our public health nurses are wonderful people and they do great things, but I don't think we want to be adding duties onto them, that maybe that's not part of their mandate or their training. That's why we are focused on something that is a little more different in our collaboration with the department of education, and why this has to be a little more innovative; something that hasn't maybe been tried before, and that we can focus on the overall mental health and well-being. These comprehensive mental health nurses will be really well trained in identifying and focused mostly on those issues around mental health.

From birth until a child reaches school age, public health nurses see children on a regular basis for immunization, as well as, programs such as the New Beginnings Program, the Best Start program, assessment, Launching Little Ones Program, and the NutriSTEP program. Public health nurses provide assessment on children or referrals if the development appears to be lacking in any way. That's why we try to get these early interventions where we can see that there are individuals that seem to be struggling with these types of situations. If we can identify problems early and we can get them before they even get to the school system, that's even a better situation.

Our public health nurses, I just have the upmost of admiration. I know one of the public health nurses in my district is Bethany MacIsaac. I know when my granddaughter was born, it was suggested that we get a booster shot for polio and I had to go in and get that done and Bethany is just a wonderful person and she's able to deliver those services, explain that to me, and my role as a grandparent and how important that is in the development of the child.

Public health nurses do play this important role in our school age children and they provide immunizations with our school as well as vision and hearing screening for grade four students; people need to be aware of that. Anytime it is requested by a teacher, they provide family life education classes and health promotion activities when

requested. That's already a very collaborative approach that our public health nurses have with the department of education and we certainly have been developing new programs. I can think the Eye See...Eye Learn program where children have a chance to get an eye exam and we do that on a collaborative approach with our optometrists in the province.

Public health nurses will continue to provide all of these services in our schools and they will be an excellent resource and colleague for our new comprehensive mental health school health nurses. In addition to these new nursing positions and our public health nursing programs, the student services division of the Public Schools Branch currently provides various support services to children and youth in schools including school health counseling, psychology, speech therapy, and alternate education, among others. Throughout the government departments, we provide various direct services to students in school facilities including addiction programs and justice programs.

We've talked about our mental health – some community mental health services that we were delivering at Westisle. I think of Cindy Howard and the great work that she does up there. We've added on appointments – without requiring an appointment to a walk-in service for anybody that may be requiring some mental health services – I know we have that at Westisle. We have it in O'Leary. I know these scheduled times are not every day, but at least once a week. If anybody is having a concern, they can actually go and get some treatment – I shouldn't say treatment, they should get some supports and some counselling and an initial review of their situation and then, once again, we would help them through the system from that point on.

School staff are referred students to services available in our community often play in a liaison or navigation role from families and our multi-agency support teams are available in many intermediate and senior high schools – providing case coordination and facilitating access to services in the community. Based on what we've heard from parents, teachers, students, principals, and Home and School Federation, the

district advisory councils, and the school review process, we understand that there are gaps in our system –

Mr. LaVie: Gaps? Holes. Craters.

Mr. Henderson: – and we are working to fill those gaps with the presence of a comprehensive public health school nurse including improved accessibility of services, awareness of programs, early intervention, and referrals. These are the types of things that we are embarking on as a government and with support of the Minister of Finance and our Budget increase of about 5.8%; these are the places that we're looking at investing in Islanders and making sure that they are able to get the supports that they require when they require them.

With these new comprehensive mental health nurses, students, parents, and school staff will be encourage to participate in health-related strategies that are important to them. Opportunity to enhance mental health and healthy lifestyle literacy will be offered through educational supports, events, and materials. Research has reported that positive outcomes with school nurses will work in many different ways and I think the reality is that we have to adapt to these changes – and this is probably not where things are going to stop. We will do these investments, we'll assess how they work, we'll be willing to expand upon that if needs exist. We've already done a lot of extremely good investments and, once again, a lot of these are fairly new. Some of them were rolled out after we rolled out our Mental Health and Addiction Strategy in November and that gave us a blueprint to where we're proceeding on our investments.

Research has reported that positive school outcomes with mental health nurses working in our schools and improved academic performance. We've seen increase health-related quality of life; increase accessible aid to health services by marginalized groups; and improved relationships between schools, parents and communities; and decreased utilization of emergency room departments.

Many jurisdictions from across Canada provide a number of health services within school facilities and supplement it with the access to support services within the community. We do know that these types of

investments can work and, with that, we feel these are the types of things that we can focus on.

I mentioned earlier there about Public Health Nursing. The Public Health Nursing certainly is a program that helps deliver, promote, protect, and preserve the health of individuals, families and communities. Public health nurses serve Islanders at every stage of life, from infants to seniors. The school system is no different from any other. These public health nurses play a key role in those delivery of services. Public health nurses focus on immunization of infants and children, promote healthy child development, and they provide developmental vision and hearing screening – preschool services of that nature. Many public health nurses can deal with pregnancy planning and pre-natal care.

As I had mentioned earlier about from birth to eight weeks of age the New Beginnings Program. I think it's important that the members of the Legislature are aware of some of these programs. Soon after you return home from hospital with your new baby, a public health nurses will call and offer a home visit to make sure that you and your baby are off to the best possible start. The nurses are experienced health professionals who can answer the questions you may have about your baby's health and development and help you and your family get the extra support you need.

Ms. Biggar: Great program.

Mr. Henderson: That's the New Beginnings Program and I know my daughter's experienced this program –

Mr. Aylward: Speaking to the motion.

Mr. Henderson: – and she felt pretty good about that. This is all about public health nurses and making sure we're clear of the roles between –

Mr. Aylward: Public health nurses in the schools – in our schools.

Mr. Henderson: – public health nurses in school systems. Then we have the Best Start screening program and assessment. Best Start is a voluntary program offered in your home to provide parents information and

support to promote the healthy development of your child.

Mr. LaVie: How come I never got them notes?

Mr. Henderson: Public health nurses offer all families the Best Start and screen and, if appropriate, the Best Start assessments. Families who meet the criteria are often offered the Best Start program.

In know we have the CHANCES Early Year Centre up in O'Leary and these are the types of programs that they would help deliver and it gets these people off to a really good start before they enter the school system where it's important that we can take any issues that come up to take them to the next level. The Period of PURPLE Crying program – public health nurses review the Period of PURPLE Crying program which is introduced in the hospital. This program for the National Center on Shaken Baby Syndrome helps parents and caregivers to best understand normal crying and offers the information for coping strategies.

Once again, at the very infancy stage, we have a number of programs that are there to make sure we help Islanders get off to a good start and get ready to eventually get into a preschool and then enter into the school system.

I had mentioned earlier about a program called the Launching Little Ones Program. You can bring your child to one of these infant and preschool health clinics offered throughout the province and these clinics are offered at 2, 4, 6, 12, and 18 months and at 4 years of age, Mr. Speaker. A public health nurse will immunize your child according to PEI's immunization schedule – as directed by the Chief Public Health Office. This nurse also assesses your child development in areas such as: growth and nutrition – and I can remember weighing my granddaughter, Olivia, and saying: Well, she's right on average right now, or she's maybe half a pound below average and some of those things, so it helped my daughter get a better understanding of how we should be providing the proper nutrition and care for my granddaughter, her daughter.

We talk about vision and hearing – making sure that they're responsive if there's noises made or whatever, do they respond appropriately. Oral health – once again as children start to teethe, making sure that that's going normal. The gross and fine motor development, speech and communication, and problem solving – these are the types of things that our public health nurses do, and the issues around personal social development within the family.

Your nurse will also guarantee, answer any questions and concerns that you have and tips to keeping your young family healthy and safe. I think that's really important because the young mothers are never confident enough sometimes and sure that their everything is a normal situation. Babies cry for extended periods of time, you know, to get it used to that.

They also deal with the Ages and Stages Questionnaire. Before your child's 18th month, 4-year visit to the public health nurse, you'll be sent a questionnaire with activities to complete with your child and the nurse will review your answers with you and offer ideas for activities for your child's age.

If your concerns are noted that you will follow up with an appointment, a nurse can – after discussing it with you – refer you to another health care professional. It's about, once again, that sense of navigation. So if you have challenges and you're concerned about your kid as they enter the school system, we can be preemptive in those things and we can get those children the help that they need.

Then there is the NutriSTEP program. So when you arrive at your child's 18th and 4-year assessment, you'll be given a short screening tool with questions about your child's everyday eating habits and your public health nurse will review your answers with you and provide you with the information and could refer you to a dietitian.

Now we get to the point of school health and how public health nurses play a role in that. The program, obviously, I had mentioned earlier of immunizations, public health nurses provide immunization in Prince

Edward Island schools according to our immunization schedule for this province.

Vision and hearing screening occurs. Public health nurses provide vision and screening in Island schools in children age four and they will provide vision and screening at other times at the request of a teacher. These are the types of things that if a teacher in the school system feels that a child doesn't seem to be responding normally or naturally, they can ask our public health nurse to get involved and work with that individual and that family to maybe get them the screenings and assessment tools that they require. They also provide family life education. Public health nurses are available upon request to provide accurate, age-appropriate information about family life and human sexuality to individuals or groups in schools.

Our needle exchange program: the primary goal of our needle exchange program is to prevent the transmission of human immunodeficiency virus, the HIV, hepatitis B, hepatitis C that is spread by sharing equipment that is used by people who inject drugs. The program is a harm initiative and offers services as this.

We hate to admit it, but we do know we have drug issues in our schools and we have to try to be as preventative and address these as best we can. We provide a needle exchange with safe needle disposal, immunization counseling, sexual health counseling and detox information and referrals to other health care providers.

So you can see that the role of a public health nurse is quite extensive, and then the other roles that they can play is the issue around community health promotion, public health and environmental health professionals working together to reduce the spread of illness from person to person.

Communicable diseases: our public education and immunization for our flu shots, and we're very fortunate as a government and this province that we're going to have universal influenza vaccines that will be out in the fall and that's something that we feel will have a significant impact on health care in this province for the overall population, not just for children that are in schools.

They certainly would deal with issues around following up for sexually transmitted diseases. If there is a particular outbreak of a communicable disease in a certain area our public health nurses and our epidemiologists would get involved and try to see what they can do to stem the tide or spread of these types of diseases.

They also would follow-up with food-borne and communicable illness outbreaks as reported. If there was a restaurant that had a problem, or if there was a community hall or whatever, our public health nurses would be called in to assess the situation and give some advice to them.

To give you an idea that, our public health nurses are also all across Prince Edward Island, this is about rural development. This is also about public health and safety. We have offices in Souris, Montague, Charlottetown, Kensington, Summerside, O'Leary, Tignish, Wellington, Tyne Valley, and Alberton. We're talking a very extensive component of what our public health nurses do. That's why I think it's important that we are, on this particular motion, that we are talking, not only about what our public health nurses do, but how we're going to enhance this by providing new health care professionals that have a comprehensive background in health care delivery and that they are able to identify issues within our school system and help those children get the help that they need.

We are very fortunate as a government here, I know, we just released recently a nursing strategy for PEI. I had the opportunity to speak at the Nurses Union annual meeting in Summerside. The floor was open for questions and they had issues around nursing in long-term care. One of the questions that they did ask me was: How are we going to handle some of the new funding that has been provided by the federal government as it pertains to mental health and addictions issues.

I was pretty proud to say that the type of innovation that we're looking at is to develop these comprehensive mental health nurses that are going to be in our school system. We're going to roll that out over the next three years. These are the things that we're looking at implementing.

They also had questions just about our nursing strategy. It was interesting to look at some of the actions that we were looking at doing in recruiting and retaining nurses. It's not only about making sure that we have nurses in our regular health care system, we need to make sure that we're providing – being able to recruit and retain nurses that are going to be able to work within our school system.

These are the types of things we will be working in partnership with the Department of Health and Wellness, as well as Health PEI. In our section we have our recruiting and retention division. I can think of Cathy Sinclair and Sheila MacLean and Calleen Gillis. Some of those individuals work really hard at making sure that we are able to attract and retain the nurses that we have here on Prince Edward Island.

Some of the things that we're looking at doing in our new strategy is to develop a new Nurse Graduate Employment Guarantee program. This has been developed as a result of student feedback and existing challenges with staffing. This program will be implemented and monitored and there is continued support for the current baccalaureate in nursing sponsorship program.

Our nurse turnover rates will continue to be monitored on an ongoing planning and evaluations and we will be implementing some of those things we monitor as we look to the future of our nursing workforce.

One of the strategies that we are looking at is to try to deal with our full-time to part-time ratio. When I was on the floor with my estimates, I was pretty proud to say that we are really looking at ways, and I've had the chance –

Mr. LaVie: You never answered the questions.

Mr. Henderson: – to meet with the nurses out at UPEI. I've talked to them about what they feel is ideal. We do need to make sure that we are getting a better mix of full-time and part-time positions. We are now looking extensively on ways that we can provide a full-time position to our nurses and give them a better comfort level, that when they get a position that they would look at staying

in that position for the long-term. I know nurses, when you get a 20% or even a 40% position that can be a challenge for some nurses. I mean lots of them are working 100%, but they have the classification of a 20, 30, 40% whatever, what have you. That has impacts on benefits. It has impacts on if things change in the future. We have to be flexible and try to adapt to some of the demands and needs that the workforce has out there. It is important that we are making sure that as we have any new positions come up or if we can collaborate positions – already the Nurses Union had said that they have turned down some requests to break positions, so a 100% position reducing that to two fifties. We have to work with the Nurses Union and try to see if there are ways that we can address those situations and meet the needs.

We're looking at making sure that, right now, just to give you an idea, our nursing complement is 51% full-time, 49% part-time. We need to make that – our goal is to have that a 60-40 split. So 60% of the positions will be full-time, 40% part-time.

Those are the types of things that we're looking to address some of these recruiting, retention challenges. I know the hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock, he's right in saying that there are a lot of vacancies that we're having a challenge in filling. That's why we're trying to adapt and look at these things to see if these would be solutions that would create a better work environment in retaining these highly qualified trained professionals.

We need to improve the practice environment and our work-life balance for nurses, and that's why we're looking at engaging in leadership in our nursing situations.

We certainly will be looking at what is an ideal life-work balance here on Prince Edward Island when it comes to our nursing profession, and we will try to make sure that we have the leadership there that nurses feel comfortable and that they're being heard and that they can address any issues that they feel is appropriate in patient's care needs.

So this is the development and implementation of a frontline nursing leadership, in partnership with Health PEI

and the faculty of nursing at UPEI, and the commitment to nursing leadership and development and education is an integral component of the ongoing component of our nursing strategy.

I know my daughter was a – is a clinical nurse at Wedgwood Manor in Summerside, and recently, she has just accepted a position as the head nurse at Stewart Memorial Manor in Tyne Valley, and she's kind of uneasy about the new challenges of leadership and working, but she – I certainly have every confidence in her – but having these types of supports where she can fall back and get advice from others is about developing our new young nurses into the leaders if they so choose to be and they want to take those chances.

So leadership education will be incorporated into the framework of our performances of our nurses.

We certainly want to enable nurses to practice at the level which they are educated and licensed, full scopes of practice. The previous minister made a significant issue around that, where we made sure that our LPNs, our RCWs, and our RNs are fulfilling their full scope of practice based on their training. We've made the changes around that.

But it is important to make sure that we focus on a collaborative approach as it comes to the delivery of nursing services in this province, and it's important that we make sure that if we're focusing on mental health issues like we are in the school system that we support a culture that values learning and education as is specialized around that.

Even our issues around suicide prevention, we have all of our emergency room nurses are being trained to the (Indistinct) component of suicide prevention, and they are trained to try and deal with those responses and urgencies as best they can, and we're continuing to focus on that.

Innovation; we're seeing technology advance, and we'll see that in the school system when it comes to assessing for hearing and things of that nature. We'll try to incorporate that innovation as best we can with our nurses, and we'll do that. Who

knows what we can predict in technology as it advances. There may be things that will be *Star Trek*-like where you can do a quick scan of an individual and determine individual things, and I think that's important that we do that.

As we see our population age and see grandparents looking after children in the school system, we have to make sure that we're fulfilling those obligations and meeting our innovation as much as we can.

Anyway, we've done a lot of things as government, and I've had a lot of responsibility on me as minister to make sure that we can focus on providing the levels of service as needed to our children in our education system, and we certainly understand that the toll that mental illness can have on families, and we're certainly doing, and I'm trying to do everything as I can to build a continuum of care that is better able to respond to the needs of Islanders.

That's why I look at this Budget and the things that we've done: A 10-year mental health and addiction strategy for PEI, and that's going to play a key role. Certainly, in our (Indistinct) situation, we've allocated our department this year 400,000 has been allocated –

Mr. R. Brown: Great.

Mr. Henderson: – to increase the mental health support in Island schools through our school health nurses.

Mr. MacKay: (Indistinct)

Ms. Biggar: (Indistinct)

Mr. Henderson: If you take the issues of women's wellness, because many of our young students are young girls in school, we now will have our Women's Wellness Program that will play a role.

These are all services that, not only in the school, but anybody can access these services.

We've just commenced and rolled out our postpartum depression mental health supports, the nurse practitioner is going to be commencing soon at our women's –

probably is already there at our Women's Wellness Centre. That's over a million dollars worth of payroll that's going to be going into that particular facility to support women with all their particular needs.

And our school – comprehensive mental health school nurses will play a role in that. They'll have the contacts at the Women's Wellness Centre. So if there is a young girl, teenage pregnancies, and mental health issues, they'll be able to transfer and help navigate that individual through the services that we provide so that they get the best services that they can access.

We also have increased by 93 hours a week our community-based psychiatric care to children, adults, and seniors at Richmond and McGill Centres. So once again, if there's a student in a school that requires some help, these are where our mental health nurses will be able to help refer that individual.

I know we've had some criticism around our new tele-psychiatry services, but once again, these are modern techniques that are available to get the best quality of capabilities and training, and Dr. Kiesselbach is there to provide those services, and we've had many – I'd have to comment on Ray Brow, who's been a big advocate. He had a good letter to the editor not too long ago in *The Guardian*, and he really promoted the concept of how we can access more services.

Mr. Aylward: He's trying to get rich off it.

Mr. Henderson: Well, we'll –

Mr. R. Brown: No.

Mr. Henderson: We're trying to make sure that it's about getting the best professional possible training that you can get anywhere in the world, and we have with these tele-health types of services, we can access those. It's not about always – mental health isn't about breaking skin or doing surgeries. It's simply about trying to make sure that we can get the counseling and services, and once again, like I said, it's not maybe ideal, but we can at least fill the gap.

The Insight Program with Dr. Jackie Goodwin; a great program that is down here

in West Royalty area, and it began in October, 2016, and it's providing treatment to youth that are aged 13-18 years of age that are experiencing significant and persistent primary mood, anxiety, and/or psychotic disorders. We're having individuals that are there now. They're getting help. They're getting services.

But, it's not that long that those services were just implemented, so we're working hard as a government and I'm working hard as a minister and my department; they're doing everything that they can to help meet those needs.

I think of the Insight Program, once again, works with young people in the school system. We've got the Behavioural Support Team. Dr. Rhonda Matters; she is working with children age four to 12.

Mr. LaVie: Ruining a good motion.

Mr. Henderson: Once again, in the school system and she works with their families. It has to be a comprehensive approach –

Mr. LaVie: Spoiling a good motion.

Mr. Henderson: – and these are the types of services that we're providing. When you add in the Strongest Families Program, mental health and walk-in services, we have a lot of services that we're doing to enhance not only what the public health nurses are doing in the school system, as well as what we proposed in our new –

Mr. LaVie: (Indistinct)

Mr. Henderson: So with that, I'll conclude my remarks, and I look forward to other members of the Legislature to provide great insight to what they're providing in their points of view when it comes to nurses in our school system.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: Are there any other members who would like to speak to this motion? If not, I will revert back to the mover of the motion to close debate on the motion.

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

I certainly appreciate the minister of education speaking on this motion and speaking directly to this motion today. I found his remarks to be quite on target.

I have to say, I am quite embarrassed for the minister of health and what he did, essentially, to this motion this afternoon, blatantly taking it off topic.

We're talking here about public health –

Ms. Biggar: (Indistinct)

Mr. Aylward: We're talking here today about public health nurses in the school, and in my opening remarks, I acknowledged the government and the work that they're doing, the announcements that they've made, and I congratulate the government for some of these great measures.

But, what we're talking about is not just a team assigned to a particular family of schools. We're talking about a public health nurse imbedded in each and every school on Prince Edward Island.

We know, for sure, we know just talking to teachers the daily workload that's put upon them, and what a teachers experiences now in a classroom compared to what they experienced 20 years ago is completely changed, and a lot of this has to do with behavioural issues, mental health issues, different types of illnesses as well.

I guess I do have to make a couple of comments with regards to what the health minister was saying with regards to the great services that are out there for mental health.

He talked about the Skyping with Dr. Kiesselbach, and I don't for a moment diminish the great work that this doctor is doing. Just yesterday I was contacted by a mother of a 14-year-old who was just released from Unit 9, discharged from Unit 9, and his next appointment with this doctor via Skype is June 6th. This young man is experiencing on a daily basis extreme issues, and he can't get an appointment, even via Skype, until June 6th.

I was just handed a note here a few moments ago to call a gentleman about his daughter. She's a 13-year-old. The minister talks about the new mental health walk-in clinics and how great of work they're doing. Well, this family has been waiting for over a year now; over a year to get help for their daughter.

For this minister to stand up here in the House, first and foremost to talk completely off-topic with regards to a great opposition motion, one that the minister of education already has said that he plans on supporting –

An Hon. Member: We are (Indistinct)

Mr. Aylward: – and then goes off-topic and talks about all the wonderful things they're doing for mental health here on PEI –

Ms. Biggar: (Indistinct)

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct)

Mr. Aylward: – and then to completely ignore what's actually happening out there with regards to mental health, well, as I've said before, I'm completely embarrassed for this minister.

We asked another minister to resign earlier. I think this minister should be resigning for not understanding –

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Mr. Aylward: – for not understanding how important –

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Mr. Aylward: – for not understanding how important this file is on Prince Edward Island.

Anyway, I could go on and on, but unlike the minister of health, I will not do that.

So, again, I implore the Members of this Legislative Assembly to look at this motion, and if you haven't read it already – because obviously the minister of health didn't read it, because he never spoke of it – but I implore all Members of this Legislative Assembly to do the right thing and support this motion.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: Are we ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Question!

Some Hon. Members: Standing vote.

Speaker: Okay, a recorded division has been requested.

Sergeant-at-Arms, you can ring the bell.

[The bells were rung]

Mr. MacEwen: Mr. Speaker, opposition is ready to vote.

Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

Mr. J. Brown: Mr. Speaker, government members are present.

Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

All those not supporting this motion, please stand.

All those supporting the motion, please stand.

Clerk Assistant and Clerk of Committees:

The hon. Government House Leader, the hon. Minister of Finance, the hon. Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy and Responsible for the Status of Women, the hon. Premier and Minister of Justice, the hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries, the hon. Minister of Education, Early Learning and Culture, the hon. Minister of Family and Human Services, the hon. Member from West Royalty-Springvale, the hon. Minister of Rural and Regional Development, the hon. Minister of Health and Wellness, the hon. Minister of Economic Development and Tourism, the hon. Minister of Communities, Land and Environment, the hon. Minister of Workforce and Advanced Learning, the hon. Member from Charlottetown-Lewis Point and the Deputy Speaker, the hon. Leader of the Third Party, the hon. Member from Tignish-Palmer Road, the hon. Leader of the Opposition, the hon. Opposition House Leader, the hon. Member from Stratford-

Kinlock, the hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald, the hon. Member from Summerside-Wilmot, the hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton, the hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid, the hon. Member from Belfast-Murray River, the hon. Member from Georgetown-St. Peters, and the hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

Speaker: The motion is carried. It is unanimous.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque.

Mr. MacKay: Mr. Speaker, opposition would like to call Motion No. 30 to the floor.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Ms. Biggar: Oh no, I've got something to say (Indistinct)

Speaker: Okay, Motion No. 30 was?

Mr. LaVie: (Indistinct) just about in 25 minutes.

Ms. Biggar: I'm just telling you.

Speaker: Okay, this motion has been read, hon. members, and the hon. Member from Souris-Elmira had the floor, adjourned debate, so carry on, hon. member.

Mr. LaVie: Podium, please.

Well, Mr. Speaker, back again; very important motion for the volunteer service of PEI and the firefighters of PEI.

In 2013, the PEI fire services environmental scan and gap analyst outlined a number of deficiencies in the provision of the fire services in our province. That was in 2013. It also called for the PEI *Fire Prevention Act* to be overhauled.

Our volunteer fire departments are being asked to do more and more with less and less. I can't say enough for our volunteer firefighting services here on PEI, and these volunteers work with what they have.

Every time there's a call, just think, for instance, there's a new drug coming toward the east, fentanyl. I know the RCMP, Island EMS; they're all carrying these kits to protect themselves, also. This drug is so deadly, just if they come in contact with it, just if they breathe it in, that's how deadly this drug is. It's a deadly, deadly drug.

These volunteer firefighters, when they are called to a scene, they don't know what to expect.

As we speak, I know the police have it, and EMS have it, and now we're looking at it for the volunteer fire services as we speak, because they're first responders, also. So that's just an incident that these volunteers work with.

Another thing volunteer firefighters do: When there is a house fire people are running out of the house. These guys are running into a house. Volunteers are running in when people are running out. When they are running in, they don't know what to expect. They are not familiar with that house. They don't know what's in that house for materials. So, when people are running out, these volunteers are running in; very dangerous.

I believe it's time we begin to listen to their concerns and clearly define the role and the provision of the fire services in our province. Firefighting is much different today than it was in the past. That's true.

Before I get too far in, I know I mentioned the provincial Fire Marshall's Office in my opening remarks the other day, about Dave Rossiter and Robert MacKinnon and John Chisholm. I have been in the fire services now for 36 years, and what these three guys do for the provincial Fire Marshall's Office, they go beyond the call of duty, what these three guys do.

David Rossiter, the Fire Marshall, I knew Dave for a number of years now; way back, we go way back. Dave was on the volunteer fire department in St. Peters and took over as chief; a good chief, he was too. I know when Dave applied for a Fire Marshall's job in a western province and when he applied that job was his if he wanted, so he had to make a big decision. That was a big decision to make; whether to move west or stay here

on PEI. I'll tell you, it was PEI's advantage that Dave stayed. I'm glad he didn't take the job out west; he stayed on PEI, because he is doing one awesome job, in my books, right across Prince Edward Island. He goes out of his way.

On Halloween night, most departments stay at the station. I know in my department, we stay at the station and he will travel from St. Peters up to Souris to see what's going on in the department. He will go down to Montague; he'll go to St. Peters. He does all of the stations. He'll go right to Alberton, and so does his deputy and John. They are on the go all the time.

I saw them travel in snow storms to get to the fire scene. That's how keen they are to help you, and they want to get at it right away, as the member from Montague would know and as a police service and stuff, you want to get on the scene right away as quick as you can.

When they get on the scene, they do a thorough investigation. I'll tell you, I'm usually on the scene with them and I stay on the scene with them just to learn from them, is what I do, but they will give it one thorough investigation because they want to know the root cause of the fire and they will find the root cause of the fire.

I remember John Chisholm, he just went into the Fire Marshall's Office, and one of his first fires was up in Souris and John's family is from Souris. They were Paquets. You remember Ducky Paquet – he'd be Ducky's nephew. So when John came up to Robert to do the investigation on the house, it has been a while since he was in Souris – and you know when there's a fire or a police scene, the red lights and flashing lights and everybody attracted, right? So there were quite a few people around and I was telling the people: This is Ducky Paquet's nephew, it's John Chisholm. Everybody would come over and talk to him, and every time Robert went to look for him he was over talking to somebody. It was all good though. People were bothering him because they were excited to see him, and they knew him and he wasn't home for quite a while so they were excited to see him and he was over talking. At the last of it, Robert just did the work on his own. He just left John alone, let him introduce him – but it was good. John

really caught onto the job and I'm glad he did, because John is a nice guy. He's in the fire services himself.

Eastern Kings is well represented in the Fire Marshall's Office. You've got the Fire Marshall, Dave Rossiter, up in St. Peters. You've got the Deputy Fire Marshall, Robert MacKinnon, from Montague, and you've got the investigator, John Chisholm, which his family is from Souris. They are well represented in the Fire Marshall's Office by three great guys that go way beyond the call of duty for what they do. I want to thank them for that, for what they do.

I also want to thank the volunteer firefighters and what they do. They go through a lot that we don't realize, because every time they go to a call – and this is in their own community, is where they are – and when they go to a call they are not sure what that alarm is going to be.

I have been there for 36 years now and I can pretty near tell you every fire, every car accident, every death; that stuff never leaves you. The member from Montague very well knows, or the Member from Borden-Kinkora that was in the police services, those memories never leave you, especially when you're in your own community.

I want to put a big shout-out to the volunteer firefighters, what they do, because they do the work of paid professionals. They are volunteers. The province should be really proud of these volunteer firefighters, for what they do.

I remember my first introduction – the first time I was ever in Province House, my first time, and I'll tell you who took me here. It was Dave Rossiter at the time, and that was in 2009, I believe. I believe the Member from Charlottetown-Lewis Point was the speaker at the time, and I was up in the gallery and we had our fire uniforms on and the government at the time was going after the feds for the tax credit. Remember? It was 27 members – I'm pretty sure the speaker at the time got up and spoke also.

I didn't know how the House was run or anything – there were 27 members got up and spoke about the volunteer firefighters in their district. We were all sitting up there in

our uniforms and I remember at the time, Olive Crane stood up and she made an amendment to your motion that the province, also, give a tax credit. That's when the tax credit came out; I believe it was in 2009. My memory is a little off there, but I'm pretty sure that's around the time. It was before I came in and I came in in 2011. But, that was my real, first introduction to the Province House.

I want to thank Dave Rossiter for putting me in this seat here today. He was the one who introduced me to the House. It was great. But no, I remember the 27 members getting up and I'm sure if we had the time today on this motion that 27 members would stand today and speak to this motion, if we had the time, because what these volunteer firefighters do in our community, we should be very grateful.

I realize it, or the member from Montague, or the Member from Borden-Kinkora, anybody that's done the police service and the fire services, and the Member from West Royalty-Springvale, also – sorry, I didn't see you back there. He was an RCMP officer. So we walked in their shoes so we can understand exactly what these volunteers are going through, because we walked in their shoes.

Their alarm goes off; it doesn't make any difference if it's Christmas Day, if it's Easter, if it's 2:00 a.m. in the morning, 3:00 a.m. in the morning. These volunteers jump at the call of duty, and they are proud of it, of what they do, and we've got to give them credit for what they do. A thank you goes a long way with a volunteer.

Not only the firefighting part of it, but it's the fundraising some of these departments do. They put a lot of time into fundraising for the departments because they want to keep their equipment up-to-date. To do a job properly, they want to keep up-to-date. They work hard at it, and they are proud of what they do with these fundraisers. These fundraisers are in their own communities and the people in their community do help them out. When it's a volunteer fire services and people see what they do, they recognize what these volunteers do. People support them. There's not too many times –

Ms. Casey: Call the hour.

Speaker: The hour has been called.

Mr. LaVie: Extend the hour?

Speaker: Do we have unanimous support to extend the hour?

Some Hon. Members: No.

Speaker: This House will recess until 7:00 p.m. this evening.

The House recessed until 7:00 p.m.

Speaker: We'll give way to the hon. Deputy Speaker for recognition.

Matters of Privilege and Recognition of
Guests (II)

Ms. Casey: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Welcome back everyone. I would like to draw your attention to the gallery tonight. I would like to welcome Joyce England, who is joining us tonight for the discussion of the *Regulated Health Professions Act*.

Joyce England has been an advocate for midwifery services on this Island. I have been here 10 years. She has sat on the Canadian Association of Midwives for over 15 years. She has been around a whole lot longer than we all have. She has waited for this day for this bill to come to the floor.

I would like you all to welcome Joyce England to the Legislative Assembly.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: I will also give way to the hon. Minister of Education, Early Learning and Culture for recognition.

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

I welcome all the guests and today we got news that I would be bringing my final piece of legislation to the floor. I'm pleased to welcome Const. Currie, who coincidentally was brought in for this evening's discussions. Just in case you need a backup,

he has always been there for me. He's very capable. I'm feeling much more relaxed and much more comfortable tonight—

Mr. LaVie: You're scared —

Mr. Currie: — as we bring our legislation —

Mr. LaVie: — you're running scared.

Mr. Currie: — on.

Mr. R. Brown: (Indistinct) the House (Indistinct)

Mr. Currie: Yeah.

Mr. LaVie: You're running scared. Get the house doctor (Indistinct)

Orders of the Day (Government)

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

Mr. McIsaac: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. Premier, that the 19th order of the day be now read.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk Assistant and Clerk of Committees: Order No. 19, *An Act to Amend the Provincial Court Act*, Bill No. 77, ordered for second reading.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

Mr. McIsaac: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Premier, that the said bill be now read a second time.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk Assistant and Clerk of Committees: *An Act to Amend the Provincial Court Act*, Bill No. 77, read a second time.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

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

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

I will call on the hon. Member from Tignish-Palmer Road to chair this bill.

Chair (Perry): The House is now in a Committee of the Whole House to take into consideration a bill to be intituled *An Act to Amend the Provincial Court Act*. Is it the pleasure of the committee that the bill be now read clause by clause?

Leader of the Opposition: Could we (Indistinct)

Premier MacLauchlan: Sure, and may I have permission to invite a strange to the floor –

Ms. Biggar: Granted.

Premier MacLauchlan: – and while she is coming I have a one-and-a-bit page overview that can be distributed to hon. members, please; the members and the Clerk.

Chair: For Hansard purposes, could you please state your name and your title, please?

Ruth DeMone Acting Director: My name is Ruth DeMone. I am the acting director of Legal and Court Services at the Department of Justice and Public Safety.

Chair: Thank you.

Premier MacLauchlan: If I may, Chair, I can give the overview.

Chair: Sure.

Premier MacLauchlan: I'll start with the context.

Across the country there have been issues around the independence of Justices of the Peace. In other provinces that has been dealt with by separating those JPs that have functions that are judicial in nature from those that have administrative functions, in fact, that's it.

We actually have a case in this province where an application has been made seeking charter remedies where it's under the *Controlled Drugs and Substances Act* where

a client has been, or the lawyers, on behalf of clients charged with trafficking and marijuana has questioned the independence of the Justices of the Peace.

In response to that, we have been making due, you might say stretching the resources by having the judges do those functions. That is a contingency arrangement or a provisional measure; not one that would be recommended as a long-term solution.

In the broader context where criminal justice systems across the country are in crisis with trying to deal with matters in a timely fashion in line with the ruling in the Jordan case. Prince Edward Island has been managing, but this is something that is needed to ensure that the strong track record that we have in dealing with criminal justice matters, in a timely way, which, of course, you would want to do, we are far and away at the top of the rank in the country for that by having these judicial Justices of the Peace. We can ensure that our system will continue to work well and to work in line with the constitution.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: How many – basically right now do we not have three different types of Justices of the Peace in the court system?

Ruth DeMone Acting Director: More or less two different types. There are the ones that work in the court system who are – will be categorized as staff Justices of the Peace –

Leader of the Opposition: Yes.

Ruth DeMone Acting Director: – under this legislation. Then, there are –

Leader of the Opposition: Basically, talking about they'll be behind the wicket and in front of the judge?

Ruth DeMone Acting Director: Yeah. If you go to pay a fine –

Leader of the Opposition: Right.

Ruth DeMone Acting Director: – or plead guilty on a charge under the Summary Offence Ticket.

Leader of the Opposition: Yeah.

Ruth DeMone Acting Director: The other is the Justices of the Peace who are appointed also under the *Provincial Court Act*, but they are designated for special purposes –

Leader of the Opposition: So, you're talking EPO?

Ruth DeMone Acting Director: – those that work in a municipality.

Leader of the Opposition: Okay, right.

Ruth DeMone Acting Director: Those who are authorized to perform marriage ceremonies, and those who issue Emergency Protection Orders under the *Victims of Family Violence Act*.

Leader of the Opposition: So, the EPO –

Ruth DeMone Acting Director: There are special purposes –

Leader of the Opposition: Yes, so on the special purposes ones, though, there basically be two would there not?

Premier MacLauchlan: The –

Leader of the Opposition: Two different types?

Premier MacLauchlan: There are currently two and by creating, in effect, a third type the judicial Justices of the Peace, these JPs would have the ability to conduct matters that are judicial in nature and the most common examples of those would be a show cause hearing, a search warrant, or a bail hearing in the criminal justice system.

Leader of the Opposition: Yeah.

Who's actually asking for this? Is this coming –

Premier MacLauchlan: This is government asking for it, but really it's government asking for it to be sure that our system is, I might say, modernized in line with the charter and in line with the various roles that are required. There have been full

consultations with the judges in developing in this legislation.

Leader of the Opposition: Chair?

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: So how many Justice of the Peace do we have right now?

Ruth DeMone Acting Director: I believe there's about – probably at the Provincial Court and then in Summerside and in Georgetown, there's maybe eight – eight-nine, but not all of them do the various functions or did the various functions of search warrants and the judicial interim release. These would be the staff justices – those will be categorized as staff Justices of the Peace under this legislation – so the ones that work either in the Provincial Court or the Supreme Court of the province.

Premier MacLauchlan: And it's envisaged that with the creation of the judicial Justices of the Peace, that there would be three or at most four that would be designated. The reason for that number is, in order to have – you might say a roster that people can be on call. This is a 24 hour a day business. It's not envisaged that these would be full-time responsibilities.

Leader of the Opposition: Chair?

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Given the problems we've had in other provinces with timely proceeding of the court. Any stats on where we fall or what the average time we're getting matters through the court?

Ruth DeMone Acting Director: Not really an issue that we were looking at in conjunction with this because this is more of a judicial independence issues, as opposed to an issue with time.

Premier MacLauchlan: But, we do have those stats and Prince Edward Island is far and away the fastest. In fact, there's quite a contrast between Prince Edward Island and Nova Scotia, which has some significant concerns about the Jordan rules – we don't have any concerns and I can't pull the number of months out of the air, but I can bring that information; it's quite impressive

in the cast or in a scan of experience across the country.

Leader of the Opposition: Just give me one minute there if you want to –

Chair: Okay.

The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you, Chair.

I have a few questions on this, Premier. The first would be: If you could explain the different duties of the three types of Justice of the Peace – just so I have it clear in my mind what they all do.

Premier MacLauchlan: The one that we're dealing with principally here and creating as a new – I'll say category – is the judicial Justice of the Peace. Those people would carry out duties that are judicial in nature, which the others cannot do in criminal proceedings. If somebody's looking to get a search warrant. If there's a bail or interim release hearing or a show cause hearing as part of a criminal matter – those would be the main examples of those that are – call it judicial in nature.

Maybe I'll ask Ruth to give then the examples – or to say again the examples of the administrative and staff roles.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Okay.

Ruth DeMone Acting Director: Okay.

With the Justices of the Peace who work in the court system now, they will be categorized as staff Justices of the Peace under this legislation, so, in part, we're creating the judicial Justice of the Peace as a category of justice of peace, but we're also formalizing the distinction between those who are staff Justices of the Peaces who work for the province and those who don't work for the province in their capacity as a Justice of the Peace. They could work in a municipality, for instance dealing with bylaw issues or they're working, as I indicated before, they do emergency protection orders under the *Victims of Family Violence Act*. They'll be categorized as administrative Justices of the Peace. They're sort of a, as I would call it, a special purpose Justice of the Peace.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Sure, yeah.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: I realize this falls under the *Judicature Act*, but I'm curious about the prothonotary, whether this would have any impact on that position at all.

Ruth DeMone Acting Director: Well, the prothonotary is a position that's created under the *Judicature Act*, but the prothonotary is also a Justice of the Peace – it's a separate appointment. It's not, sort of, a task that's welded to the prothonotary's position. It's a separate appointment. The Justice of the Peace duties – they would be able to retain any staff Justice of the Peace role, but not the judicial justice of peace because there has to be a separation between a judicial Justice of the Peace and government in order to have that judicial independence.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Would there be any overlap then between this new designation and a prothonotary – or not?

Ruth DeMone Acting Director: Well a prothonotary is a separate position. It's a position within the Supreme Court, primarily. The Justice of the Peace function that the prothonotary currently carries on is really more of a Provincial Court function, but technically they're appointed for purposes of the Supreme Court and the Court of Appeal.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Okay.

I have some more questions, but I don't know if you want to go back to the Leader of the Opposition.

Chair: Okay.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you.

Back to the very first there – you mentioned about some independent's concerns. Can you comment on that?

Premier MacLauchlan: The main one would be the remuneration.

Ruth DeMone Acting Director: There are three areas that are important for purposes of judicial independence and that is financial security, security of tenure, and also administrative security. So basically, they have to operate at arm's length from government – they sort of can't be beholden to government in court performing their judicial functions and that's the reason for creating a separate judicial Justice of the Peace.

Leader of the Opposition: That's what I thought you were meaning. That's what I thought.

Premier MacLauchlan: This legislation sets up a precise process for the nomination of the naming, the time in office, and the remuneration of the judicial Justice of the Peace.

Leader of the Opposition: I've actually spent quite a lot of time going through this prior to us getting here. I'd like to carry the bill.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: To go back to what we were just discussing, are the duties of this new category of JPs – are they currently carried out by the Justices of the Peace that we have now?

Ruth DeMone Acting Director: Right now the prothonotary is doing most of the judicial interim release – that's still being carried out by the prothonotary, in her capacity as a Justice of the Peace. There are other senior Justices of the Peace or staff Justices of the Peace doing that, but the search warrants are being handled by the Provincial Court judges currently.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Currently. Okay.

Ruth DeMone Acting Director: Because with the judicial interim release, it can always go before a judge to be reviewed if there's an issue with it, whereas the danger, obviously, with a search warrant is that it gets thrown out when you get to court.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Sure.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: I'm curious about the fact that the new Justices of the Peace will not receive any benefits. Premier, you mentioned it was not a full-time position. Is that the reason why that it's not a position that would come with benefits?

Premier MacLauchlan: They get paid.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Yes. I'm talking about health – all of the other benefits that civil servants (Indistinct) typically.

Ruth DeMone Acting Director: It's envisioned as a part-time position. They would get paid to be on the roster – a per diem for being on the roster, so there would always be a JP available on call and they would be paid for that and then they would also be, in addition to that, paid an hourly amount for each hour or part of an hour that they actually provide services.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Okay.

Premier MacLauchlan: And it's quite likely that the people who would be a) interested in this position and qualified would be semi-retired or even retired. So in that sense, we might assume that they've made other arrangements for their benefits.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thanks, Chair.

Following on from that, are there any current employees who may be full-time employees who might get appointed as these new justices who would risk losing their benefits if they were to take that position?

Ruth DeMone Acting Director: The judicial Justices of the Peace can't be employees of the province.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: So, no?

Ruth DeMone Acting Director: So, no.

They would stay on as staff Justices of the Peace because there are still Justice of the Peace duties to be performed in the court system, such as swearing informations, taking guilty pleas on summary offence tickets. So there's still Justice of the Peace functions there, but there sort of, I guess,

considered the more routine ones. They're not judicial in nature; they're more administrative in nature.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Okay.

Thank you, Chair.

[Cell phone ringing]

Dr. Bevan-Baker: If I understand this correctly, a judicial Justice of the Peace – they have limited judicial authority and they're selected by an independent committee.

Ruth DeMone Acting Director: Right.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Is that correct?

Mr. Myers: Alarm clock, nobody calls him.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: The appointment of judges here in the province, I realize that's not what's contained in these amendments, but for the appointment of judges, I couldn't find anything in the act that's similar to the independent procedure that's being set up for these new justices, so I was wondering what the current process is for appointing provincial court judges. (Indistinct) this is relevant.

Ruth Demone Acting Director: Well, there is an advisory committee for the appointment of provincial court judges, but they do have, I mean, as a result of the previous judicial independence cases, we do have the Judicial Remuneration Review Commission. It was actually something that was set up in order to provide for a separation between government in terms of the setting of the remuneration that provincials court judges who have a – every three years – they have a commission that's established for purposes of reviewing the salaries of provincial court judges, and they'd compare it to those in other provinces and the territories, and then they make a recommendation. They'd file a report and make a recommendation as to what the salary of those judges should be.

So there has been a system already set up, and the justice of the peace – the judicial justice of the peace system borrows on that. It actually – the review of the remuneration

for justice of the peace would be done by the chair of that commission.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Okay.

Premier MacLauchlan: And if there were a vacancy (Indistinct) of a provincial court judge, there would be an advisory committee that would be put in place.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Okay –

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: I'm interested in where that process is outlined, where this independent committee can be found, because for these appointments it's all contained within the act, and I couldn't find anything in the act similarly regarding judges.

Premier MacLauchlan: And you may be right. I mean, it's outside of the purview of what we're dealing with this evening, but it may well be something that's done by convention. Certainly there's precedent for how those advisory committees have been put in place before, and I don't mind saying, if we were to come to another one and we had any concerns about the independence, then we'd have to look and make sure that that was addressed. But we're not at that (Indistinct)

Ruth Demone Acting Director: But it's not the appointment process as much. It's more the functioning of the judge. That's where the independence is, in particular, the concern. It's that security of tenure, the financial security, and also the administrative security, and then also the discipline process that they can't be dismissed without cause or without an independent process.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Yeah.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: And I understand that, and thank you.

I'm just – with so many regulations and so much contained in this legislation surrounding the selection of justices of the peace and so little surrounding selection of the judges – or nothing, actually, that I could find in the act – and given the difference in

profundity, to take nothing away from the JPs, but of course, the provincial judges have a much more profound impact on our community here on Prince Edward Island.

I was just wondering why that isn't contained in legislation and if there's any thought that you might review that.

Premier MacLauchlan: I appreciate the question being raised, and it's something that we should trace back and get a note on that, and we'll share it with members here, and if there's a feeling that our next crack at amending the *Provincial Court Act* would be provincial court judges, we could take a look at that, but we'll see if we can get this one for tonight.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Yeah, sure. And I have on final question. I understand that but –

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: I won't be rushed.

And this is a very technical one: I'm curious about the consequential amendments for the *Victims of Family Violence Act*, section 32, subsection (3) of the bill.

In section 4 of the *Victims of Family Violence Act*, it provides justice of the peace with the authority to issue emergency protection orders, EPOs.

This amendment replaces the term "justice of the peace" with the term "justice".

Now, I couldn't find that term, "justice" defined anywhere in the definitions of this act or the *Victims of Family Violence Act*, so I just wondered whether that was a typo, whether it was – whether you wanted to specify a particular type of justice there, or why that term "justice" which seems even broader than "justice of the peace" is there, rather than –

Ruth Demone Acting Director: But the definition of justice of the peace is – I'm not sure I understand the question.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Well, the amendment in this bill replaces the term "justice of the peace" with the term "justice", and that term "justice" isn't defined anywhere in the definitions of the *Provincial Court Act* or

the *Victims of Family Violence Act*, so I was hoping you could tell me what the term means and whether that amendment will expand the number of people who are authorized to issue EPOs.

Premier MacLauchlan: (Indistinct)

Ruth Demone Acting Director: Yeah, I don't have the *Victims of Family Violence Act* in front of me.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Just (Indistinct) the term "justice", of course, is a very –

Ruth Demone Acting Director: (Indistinct)

Premier MacLauchlan: I think if we had the family violence act and looked at the definition of justice, you would find that it means a judge. I don't have it in front of me.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: I couldn't find that, but –

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct)

Ruth Demone Acting Director: And I know, under the – in the *Interpretation Act*, I believe –

Leader of the Opposition: I might add to this. Under that system, if somebody wants to appeal the decision that the justice put in place or any EPO, must go before a provincial court judge, which (Indistinct) –

Ruth Demone Acting Director: It's actually a justice – they're always reviewed. Emergency protection orders are always reviewed by a Supreme Court judge –

Leader of the Opposition: That's correct.

Ruth Demone Acting Director: – once they're issued.

Ms. Biggar: Justice Mitchell, or –

Ruth Demone Acting Director: (Indistinct)

Leader of the Opposition: That's right.

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

Chair: Shall it carry? Carried.

Great, thank you.

Premier MacLauchlan: I move the title.

Chair: *An Act to Amend the Provincial Court Act.*

Premier MacLauchlan: I move the enacting clause.

Chair: Shall it carry? Carried.

Premier MacLauchlan: I move the enacting clause.

Chair: Be it enacted by the Lieutenant Governor and the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Prince Edward Island as follows.

Shall it carry? Carried.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Chair, I move the Speaker take the chair and the Chair report the bill agreed to without amendment.

Chair: Shall it carry? Carried.

Mr. Speaker, as Chair of a Committee of the Whole House, having had under consideration a bill to be intituled *An Act to Amend the Provincial Court Act*, I beg leave to report that the committee has gone through the said bill and has agreed to same without amendment. I move that the report of the committee be adopted.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

Mr. McIsaac: Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. Minister of Health and Wellness, that the 15th order of the day be now read.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk Assistant and Clerk of Committees: Order No. 15, *Registered Health Professions Act*, Bill No. 72, ordered for second reading.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

Mr. McIsaac: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of

Health and Wellness, that the said bill be now read a second time.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk Assistant and Clerk of Committees: *Registered Health Professions Act*, Bill No. 72, read a second time.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

Mr. McIsaac: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Health and Wellness, that this House do now resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole House to take into consideration the said bill.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

I will ask the hon. Member from Charlottetown-Lewis Point and the Deputy Speaker, if you wouldn't mind coming and chairing this bill.

Chair (Casey): The House is now in a Committee of the Whole House to take into consideration a bill to be intituled *Registered Health Professions Act*. Is it the pleasure of the committee that the bill be now read clause by clause?

Some Hon. Members: No.

Chair: The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

Mr. Aylward: Thank you, Chair.

Perhaps we could just have an overview first.

Mr. Henderson: This is basically a piece of legislation that the Madam Chair here has been a big advocate of, but it's of the ability to take smaller health professions and regulate them as a unit. We have had interest from the midwives association, the naturopaths, the acupuncturists. These are smaller professions. As you are well aware that professions like the doctors, dentists, lawyers are self-regulated professions, they have a large volume of professionals who work in this province so they are able to have enough people to create their own board to regulate themselves. Small professions like midwives, naturopaths, acupuncturists would have very small

numbers so it's very difficult for them to do this without this legislation. This legislation will allow them to come together as a group.

I have a stranger –

An Hon. Member: Yes.

Mr. Henderson: – that I'd like to bring forward if you have any further details of questions. This can be rather legal sometimes.

Chair: Permission to bring a stranger to the floor?

Some Hon. Members: Granted.

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

Nichola Hewitt Legislative Specialist: Nichola Hewitt, Solicitor and Legislative Specialist with the Department of Health and Wellness.

Chair: Welcome.

Nichola Hewitt Legislative Specialist: Thank you.

Mr. Henderson: If there is a bit more detail you would like to, that maybe Nichola could give you some more background in.

Chair: The –

Nichola Hewitt Legislative Specialist: Sorry, do you want me to?

Chair: Go ahead, Nichola.

Nichola Hewitt Legislative Specialist: We passed *Regulated Health Professions Act* in 2012. As the minister indicated, the majority of health professions on Prince Edward Island are large enough to form colleges to self-regulate. It became apparent that there were some professions on the Island that are just simply too small in numbers to self-regulate.

We looked around across the country and nobody else had really dealt with economies of scale like we have. In some jurisdictions they just chose not to regulate those professions. In some jurisdiction they would allow somebody to practice in their

jurisdiction, as long as they were registered elsewhere. We felt that there was a bit of a risk in taking that approach. We developed the *Regulated Health Professions Act*. What it does is, it allows these small professions to seek to become regulated. There will be profession specific regulations drafted for each profession that applies for and is granted registration, or designation for registration under the act.

As the minister indicated we've reached out to the audiologist, midwifery, acupuncturists, naturopaths, podiatrists. There were a number of professions that we reached out explaining what we were doing, sent out draft legislation and asked for feedback.

We received feedback from three groups only. All three of them fully endorsed what we were doing, and supported it.

We have also had other provinces approach us with respect to this approach. Most notable, and recently, New Brunswick has approached us, their department of health very interested in this approach and thinking something similar might work there. It's a novel approach, but we think it's going to work well.

Mr. Henderson: Innovative.

Nichola Hewitt Legislative Specialist: Yeah. You have to look at it outside of the box, right? When you're small –

Mr. LaVie: What did the last health minister do?

Nichola Hewitt Legislative Specialist: What we did, we looked at –

An Hon. Member: Not much.

Mr. Aylward: Selfies.

Chair: Order!

Nichola Hewitt Legislative Specialist: We looked at all the types of provisions that are in regulated health because wherever possible we wanted to treat these small professions the same way as we did the larger professions. That's why we're bringing in another bill to amend the regulated health because we identified issues. Wherever possible the small professions and the larger professions will be treated the same; the discipline process is

the same, everything other than they won't be their own college.

Chair: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton.

Mr. J. Brown: Thank you, Chair.

I have a few questions and we have actually talked about this –

Nichola Hewitt Legislative Specialist: Yes, we have.

Mr. J. Brown: – a little bit years back, or a couple of years ago, anyway, probably now, and discussed the need for this legislation. I am happy to see it hitting the floor here tonight.

I'm just curious a little bit about a couple of things. One would be, what I'm going to say is the process. Obviously, there are groups out there that are interested, you have named a few of them there tonight that I have come across.

Say you were a podiatrist on PEI, will they have to – would you have to go an approach you guys, being the department, to be regulated, or are you regulated?

Nichola Hewitt Legislative Specialist: No. They would make applications. What the act says is the majority of the persons who are carrying on that profession is to approach the ministry the same as they do under regulated health to seek regulation.

An Hon. Member: Chair?

Chair: Go ahead.

Nichola Hewitt Legislative Specialist: As long as it's a majority of them. If you have 10 people and they're practicing podiatry, and if seven of them come forward or six of them come forward and say: We want regulation. Then, there is a set of criteria. We ask them to explain why they want to be regulated. We don't regulate just for the sake of regulating.

Mr. J. Brown: Okay.

Nichola Hewitt Legislative Specialist: There needs to be a demonstrable need to regulate. I know in Nova Scotia they had an application for disc jockeys to be regulated.

You don't want to regulate for the sake of regulation, right?

Mr. J. Brown: Right.

Nichola Hewitt Legislative Specialist: What we look at is the risk to Islanders if these people aren't regulated; the risk to health if people are performing activities that they might not be competent to perform. They haven't got adequate training, and there is a risk to people.

Generally speaking the professions approach us, but there is an ability in both these acts for the minister to say, we have heard you're performing these kinds of activities. We are going to be regulating you. We think there is a risk. There are two streams that can come in.

Chair: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton.

Mr. J. Brown: Thank you, Chair.

That was a big chunk of my question, if you will. Then, I'm envisioning that you set-up a set of bylaws for that profession –

Nichola Hewitt Legislative Specialist: Regulations, yeah.

Mr. J. Brown: – and there are regulations that go on from there.

How would that look in terms of the actual, the operation of the regulation? Would there be somebody from government who oversees or is it professionals?

Nichola Hewitt Legislative Specialist: What we have done, in regulated health the college oversees it. In registered health the minister will be appointing a registrar. The registrar will oversee all these groups.

Mr. J. Brown: Okay.

Nichola Hewitt Legislative Specialist: It won't be anybody sitting next door to the minister. It will be somebody with appropriate qualifications –

Mr. Henderson: It could be.

Nichola Hewitt Legislative Specialist: Well, you know what I mean. It has got to

be somebody that has a bit of distance, but has appropriate –

Mr. J. Brown: Yeah.

Nichola Hewitt Legislative Specialist: – some knowledge and some qualifications.

Mr. J. Brown: Will they have their own –

Chair: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton.

Mr. J. Brown: Sorry, thanks, Chair.

Will they have their own – say it was podiatrists, would there be a podiatrist that's involved in the regulation of podiatrists, too?

Nichola Hewitt Legislative Specialist: No.

The way regulated health has been working is when the determination is made that the profession is going to be regulated I will reach out to that group of individuals. Usually, it's the registrar. It may be other people, but that body has designated, and I will work with them in my role in developing the legislation.

I would see it being no different whether we have got three professionals or whether we have got 300. It would be no different.

Mr. J. Brown: Thank you, Chair.

I would like to say thank you. I think this legislation is going to be, as you have indicated, cutting-edge and I think it's something that is really called for.

I can tell you of – I could tell you of a few situations that I have encountered in my professional capacity over the last few years where there was a huge scream for regulation. You and I have discussed this before, Ms. Hewitt. I think it's long overdue.

Chair: Thank you.

Mr. J. Brown: Thank you.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you, Chair.

I want to echo what the Member from Charlottetown-Brighton just said. It's fantastic that this is finally coming to the floor. I'm absolutely delighted. I'm absolutely delighted we have representatives from the midwifery community with us tonight, but for the other unregulated professions out there.

You mentioned that you spoke to many, but you only heard – or you invited comment from many –

Nichola Hewitt Legislative Specialist: We reached out. Yes.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: – but you only heard back from three. Can you tell me which groups you heard back from?

Nichola Hewitt Legislative Specialist: I can.

We heard by midwives, acupuncturists, and naturopaths.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Okay.

How many did you send out? How many groups did you approach?

Nichola Hewitt Legislative Specialist: I'm going to say there were probably eight to 10 groups that we had identified. It's really difficult for us to put everything – but we certainly had it on our website. We had a link to it.

There was some information that had gone out through comms saying it was available there. But we know which groups we really needed to target that we felt would be very interested in this. We certainly reached out directly to those.

For those that we weren't aware of we had done it through the website.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: With the three groups that got back to you, did you have ongoing consultation with them –

Nichola Hewitt Legislative Specialist: Yeah, so –

Dr. Bevan-Baker: – and were there amendments made to the act as you went along?

Nichola Hewitt Legislative Specialist: No. We didn't make any amendments.

I'm getting to be an old hand at this now –

Mr. Henderson: Very experienced.

Nichola Hewitt Legislative Specialist: What I did do, is I reached out to them. Two of the groups, the naturopaths and the acupuncturists did have questions and they raised issues and I contacted them and discussed and went through every issue they had raised in detail.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: I have some questions as we go through the act, but I just, again, want to thank you for what you're doing, and that PEI is on the cutting edge, it's wonderful.

Nichola Hewitt Legislative Specialist: We are, yeah.

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Chair.

I believe we might add some correspondence back in, about, January of 2016. There was a constituent of mine who is a counsellor, and the Canadian addiction counsellors' federation wanted to apply to be regulated. They fill out the forms, they submitted their application; they were refused.

So I just wanted to clarify for the record: Is that exactly the sort of – counsellors, for example – exactly the sort of people and profession that will be covered under the *Registered Health Professions Act*?

Mr. Henderson: Yeah, we'll let Nichola (Indistinct)

Nichola Hewitt Legislative Specialist: I'm not aware of an application that ever came through that was refused –

Mr. Trivers: Okay.

Nichola Hewitt Legislative Specialist: – because the minister's office always sends the applications on to me.

But I can tell you that the counselling association, the deputy, and myself, and I think it was Kevin Barnes, our director – it might have been just the deputy and I, I can't remember – met with the counselling association back in January or February of this year, and we've now received an application for regulation under regulated health, and we are proceeding with that.

Mr. Trivers: Well, that's fantastic news.

Thank you.

Nichola Hewitt Legislative Specialist: But that's under regulated health. This is registered.

Mr. Trivers: Yes, still, I mean, that's still fantastic news. I know my constituent will be very happy that they're on their way to being regulated.

Nichola Hewitt Legislative Specialist: Yeah, it was Peter Mutch and somebody else we had met with –

Mr. Trivers: Okay.

Nichola Hewitt Legislative Specialist: – and so have received their application.

Actually, in fact, there are amendments to the *Regulated Health Professions Act* to accommodate that group.

Mr. Trivers: Oh, good.

Thank you.

Chair: The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

Mr. LaVie: Thank you, Chair.

I have no question. I just want to make a statement on the bill. I think it's a great bill, and Nichola, I think you did an excellent job with this. I think this is close to your heart, and I support this bill. There's a lot of work done into this bill, and if you've got other provinces looking at your information here in this bill, you did something right.

So for that –

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. LaVie: So I want to thank you.

Thank you, minister, and thank you, Chair.

Some Hon. Members: Carry the bill.

Chair: The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

Mr. Aylward: Well, I'm not going to stand up, unlike the member behind me, but I would like to give some – undo recognition to the Chair and her advocacy towards getting this finally through. It's very much long overdue.

I know I've met with the midwifery groups as well and been at some of the rallies, and I've spoken here in the Legislature about my belief and feelings that we need this service here on PEI.

As I said, I'd just like to congratulate the Chair on her hard work and dedication in making this happen.

Thank you.

Chair: Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Chair: Shall the bill carry?

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Chair: Sorry?

Oh, sorry.

The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: I have a couple of small questions.

One around section 6 of the bill, and this was the one where the groups themselves can be charged with the cost of investigating, whether they can apply to be, indeed, a registered profession. I'm just a little concerned about that, whether – what sort of costs we might be looking at.

The minister may – I get that, but I'd like to know what sort of costs we may be looking at here, and for a small group, that might be onerous.

Nichola Hewitt Legislative Specialist: I can certainly speak to that.

The reason that provision was put in there – and it is in regulated health, as well, and I can't speak for the minister – but it was our belief at the time we were originally drafting in 2011, that if a profession comes forward and Cabinet says no, we're not going to regulate you for whatever reason, we didn't want them to turn around and put in another application right away and become one of these vexatious-type applicants.

That was the purpose behind that provision, that it would give us just a little bit of a tool in our toolbox, so to speak, to discourage that type of behaviour. That was the only reason it was put in there.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Chair, I have some –

Nichola Hewitt Legislative Specialist: Sorry, can I add one other thing?

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Yes, please.

Nichola Hewitt Legislative Specialist: Just for clarity purposes: To date, we have never charged anybody for an application under regulated health.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the –

Nichola Hewitt Legislative Specialist: For the investigation, sorry. We have – there's an application fee, and there will be under this act, as well. But we've never charged them for the investigation.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: My remaining questions, I mean, I know what great work you've done. If the groups that consulted you are happy and all of their questions are answered, I'm just going to absolutely allow the bill to pass.

Chair: Shall the bill carry? Carried.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Henderson: I move the title.

Chair: Shall it carry?

Mr. Henderson: The *Registered Health Professions Act*.

Chair: *Registered Health Professions Act*.

Shall it carry? Carried.

Mr. Henderson: I move the enacting clause.

Chair: Be it enacted by the Lieutenant Governor and the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Prince Edward Island as follows.

Shall it carry? Carried.

Mr. Henderson: Madam Chair, I move the Speaker take the chair and the Chair report the bill agreed to without amendment.

Chair: Shall it carry? Carried.

Mr. Speaker, as Chair of a Committee of the Whole House, having had under consideration a bill to be intituled *Registered Health Professions Act*, I beg leave to report that the committee has gone through the said bill and has agreed to same without amendment. I move that the report of the committee be adopted.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

Mr. McIsaac: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I move, seconded by the hon. Minister of Education, Early Learning and Culture, that the 6th order of the day be now read.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk Assistant and Clerk of Committees: Order No. 6, *An Act to Amend the Archives and Records Act*, Bill No. 61, in committee.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

Mr. McIsaac: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Education, Early Learning and Culture, that

this House do now resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole House to take into consideration the said bill.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

I'll ask the hon. Member from Summerside-Wilmot that if you wouldn't mind resuming your duties in the chair to continue carrying this bill.

Chair (Palmer): The House is now in a Committee of the Whole House to take into consideration a bill to be intituled *An Act to Amend the Archives and Records Act*.

Do you want to bring the stranger to the floor?

Mr. Currie: Yes, please.

Chair: Can we bring a stranger to the floor?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. LaVie: Bring them up. We want answers; (Indistinct) stranger on the floor.

Mr. Currie: Yeah.

Mr. LaVie: We need answers.

Chair: Will you introduce yourself for the record, please?

Jill MacMicken-Wilson Provincial Archivist: My name is Jill MacMicken-Wilson. I'm the Provincial Archivist.

Chair: Okay, thank you.

When we last left this, we were just before section 19, and there was an amendment, and the minister's going to speak to the amendment now.

Mr. Currie: Following the discussion we have had on this bill to date, I would like to introduce a motion to amend the bill. This –

Mr. Trivers: Do we have the (Indistinct)

Mr. Currie: Yes. I would like to pass the amendment.

An Hon. Member: Chair?

Mr. MacKay: I believe the last time this was brought up; there was already an amendment on the floor (Indistinct)

Chair: Just a second. We had too many amendments on the go.

So we are – we do have an amendment from the Member from Rustico-Emerald which we were discussing.

Does everybody want a copy of this?

Mr. Myers: Is it on bradtrivers.com?

Chair: Probably is. (Indistinct)

The amendment was – it was in addition? At the end of section –

Mr. Currie: (Indistinct) lengthy amendment –

Chair: Okay.

We're on inserting this, and I can read this to you at the end of section 19, subsection (3), so this is 19.1(4) where a person employed in public service to protect, manage or administer records,

(a) conspires or colludes with or assist any person to illegally destroy records;

(b) knowingly permits any violation to the law related to the protection, management or administration of records;

(c) – there is no (c) –

(d) willfully makes or signs any false entry in any book or willfully makes or signs a false certificate or return in any case in which it is his duty to make an entry certificate or return;

(e) having knowledge of the violation of any law relating to the protection, management or administration of the records or fraud committed against the province under any such law fails to report such knowledge to a superior officer; or

(f) demands, accepts or attempts any sum of money or other thing of value for the compromise, adjustment or destruction of any record, the minister may suspend the person from their employment.

Mr. Aylward: Better get serious, the bosses are back now.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Chair: So do we vote on this amendment?

Does anyone want to speak on the amendment, or do we just go to votes?

An Hon. Member: Question.

Mr. Trivers: Chair, I just want to say one quick thing.

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Yeah, so the reason that we made this amendment, and I presented it, was we wanted to cover these various cases where a person conspires or colludes or assists (Indistinct) permits any violation and cover off the full scope of ways that a person might interfere with or in any way make the records deleted or changed.

As you can see, at the end, the main operative clause is the minister may suspend that person from their employment. And so, I just – I thought it was a robust way of making sure that the proper consequences were brought forward if there was any problems with records.

But I would like to call for a question now.

Some Hon. Members: Question.

Chair: Copies are being made. Can we just wait for a minute until those come along?

An Hon. Member: We don't need our copies.

An Hon. Member: He's called the question.

Mr. R. Brown: Are we ready for a vote? We're ready. Okay, we're ready.

Chair: Is everybody ready for – you're okay?

So is everybody ready?

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Are you ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Question.

Chair: Shall the amendment carry?

Ms. Biggar: No.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Mr. Trivers: Aye.

Mr. MacKay: Carry it.

Mr. Myers: One to one. Let's do it again.

Mr. R. Brown: LOL.com.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Chair: All right.

An Hon. Member: Pretty good to me. What do you think, Chair?

Chair: I'm not sure the result.

Clerk Assistant (Reddin): Then ask for a show of hands.

Chair: Okay, let's do a –

Clerk Assistant: Or do it 'aye' and (Indistinct) –

An Hon. Member: You can't have a standing vote.

Ms. Casey: No, a show of hands.

Chair: How about a show of hands vote.

An Hon. Member: Two hands is good.

Chair: Just a show of hands.

Mr. Myers: For?

Chair: For. Raise your hand for.

Ms. Casey: For the –

Chair: Raise your hand for.

Mr. LaVie: (Indistinct) the amendment?

Ms. Biggar: You're fine.

Mr. R. Brown: You were winning.

Mr. Myers: Your hand's up.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Mr. LaVie: Oh, the hand was up.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Mr. Myers: Remember the last time you did this?

Mr. R. Brown: (Indistinct)

An Hon. Member: Two hands.

Mr. R. Brown: Yes.

Chair: Okay, you know I've got you.

Mr. R. Brown: I already voted twice. Last time I ever vote.

Chair: And raise for against now. And raise hands for against, please.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

An Hon. Member: You can't vote twice.

Chair: Okay, so this has been defeated. So the motion has been defeated.

Mr. MacEwen: What was the count, Chair?

Chair: The count was 12-8.

An Hon. Member: The Chair recognizes –

Mr. MacEwen: Twelve to eight?

Chair: Yeah.

Mr. MacEwen: So how many abstained?

Chair: I don't know (Indistinct) I didn't go by names. There were some that weren't here.

Mr. LaVie: (Indistinct)

Ms. Biggar: You can't (Indistinct)

Mr. Trivers: No, no one's questioning –

Mr. Currie: No, we already voted. We already voted, right? The vote's over.

Chair: Okay, all right, so do you have a new amendment that goes in here?

Mr. Currie: Yes.

Chair: Okay, so we have another amendment that is coming in just before section 90, and the minister is going to give us a – are you going to tell us what it is, or a summary of it?

Mr. Currie: Yes, I'll start.

Chair: Okay.

Mr. Currie: Mr. Speaker, following the discussion we've had – this has been the third day we've had on this bill to date – and I would like to introduce a motion to amend the bill, and I will pass the amendments around for to look at, and I'll wait for a minute before I introduce the amendment.

I'll wait for a minute until we're –

Chair: (Indistinct)

Mr. Currie: I've got a script. (Indistinct) I'll start.

Chair: Okay, so it's an overview? The minister's going to give us an overview of the –

Mr. Currie: I'll give an overview.

This amendment will provide greater clarity about the potential penalties associated with violating the prohibitions set out in the act.

This motion will amend section 18 of the bill to add a subsection (4) to the new section 19.1 of the act that provide that if an officer or employee of a public body commits the actions that could be subject of an offence, he or she may be subject to disciplinary action, up and to and including termination from employment.

This amendment will provide greater clarity about the penalties associated with violating the prohibitions set out in the act as per some of the debate and discussion in this assembly.

Existing employment law principles will ultimately determine whether disciplinary

action, including termination, is warranted, which are already laid out.

This amendment confirms government's intention to ensure that records management practices are taken seriously and that provisions of the act are respected.

Therefore, I would like to move that section 16 of Bill No. 61 is amended in the proposed new section 19.1 by the addition of the following after subsection (3):

“(4) In addition to apart from the sanction provided in subsection (3), an officer or employee of a public body who contravenes subsection (1) may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination from employment”.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Chair: Thank you, hon. minister.

The hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid.

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you, Chair.

An Hon. Member: Isn't he the Speaker?

Chair: What did I say?

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct)

Chair: The hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid.

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you, Chair.

Minister, first of all, thank you for coming back with the bill; it's been quite some time since we've seen you, and I appreciate the amendment, because when we'd last spoke weeks ago, we – you're right, there was a lot of debate over this, and one of the things the opposition was really trying to do was teeth in this, and we've actually had other bills that we've debated in here with penalties or fines or consequences that were more significant than what was in your original bill.

One of the things we've been trying – and I use the example of, I've said it a number of times, when you go to the co-op and someone says hon. member, I just – somebody should be held accountable. And your comeback to that was well, you know,

(Indistinct). The Premier mentioned it too, well, you know it's going to be tough (Indistinct) that person (Indistinct) back to work if it's really serious and all that, but we still didn't see something that was in there.

I think this moves towards that, to be quite honest, and I'm happy you brought something back like this, because it's been something we've been asking about for a while. I mean, I know we can't go retroactive, but going forward, this will send a message that if something is done that there'll be disciplinary action up and to and including termination from employment.

It's something that we've pushed for very hard, and I'm happy to see that, minister, and if there was a chance to second it, I would even second this amendment, because I'm glad to see this. Because we want teeth in it, and that's what we want going forward, so I appreciate that.

Thank you, minister.

It's something we've been calling for, for a long time, and it's good.

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Chair.

I wanted to echo the comments of the Member from Morell-Mermaid and I wanted to say thank you because, although you did vote down the amendment that we had on the floor here, I think – and although this amendment is more limited in scope, I think it has the intent of the amendment that we just voted down.

In fact, I do like the wording:

“...subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination from employment.”

I think that really does show true consequences and that's what we're looking for.

I know the wording is “maybe subject” and perhaps it could be, “shall be subject” but, Chair, I just wanted to say I, too, support this amendment and will be voting for it.

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

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Chair.

I want to echo the same. This has been a conversation we had for a long time and I remember back when you came to the Public Accounts Committee to talk about emails being deleted and we had this very conversation. So, I'm happy to see that – and I think Islanders will be happy to see that there's some sort of a punishment now going to be associated with it and as we move forward, that at least there's some sort of a deterrent that isn't just punitive by financial nature, it's also punitive by future employment nature.

So, I want to thank you.

Mr. Currie: As I indicated in my statement, this really clarifies and really focuses on the accountability piece and I think that's the most important part of the amendment. Through the discussion that we've had back and forth over the – well, the three times that I've been on the floor – that certainly accomplishes this. Of course, it sends a pretty clear message and I think it defines the intent of the amendment, but the seriousness of it as well.

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

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

I also want to thank the Opposition House Leader over the last few days. We've been working together and he's done a tremendous job in pushing this through. He's done a good job and I just want to thank him.

A lot of people might say that democracy doesn't work and the legislatures don't work. I think this bill and this compromise and this amendment has shown that it does. Most other jurisdictions – you'd probably see the government party and the opposition party dig in on opposing sides and fight it out and I think this shows that this place is working for the people of Prince Edward Island.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. MacEwen: Shut down Brown. Shut her down, he says. Shut her down.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you, Chair.

I just want to talk – I'm happy with this amendment, by the way – but I want to talk about whether your department looked into BBMs and whether there's the possibility or the will to block BBMs, or if there's a policy in place to implement their use in any way.

Mr. Currie: I'll just make a comment and then I'll let Jill speak in more detail. The challenge, obviously, with BlackBerry is that the BBMs aren't the property of the Province of Prince Edward Island.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Yes.

Mr. Currie: I think we had that discussion. I think the Member from Stratford-Kinlock raised that – we had good information back and forth, but I'll let the Provincial Archivist, Jill, sort of get some comments to clarify that question.

Jill MacMicken-Wilson Provincial

Archivist: We have continued to look into what other provinces are doing with regards to the use of, not just BBMs, but text messages in general and we've been kind of surveying what their policies and procedures are so we're still looking into it here.

As the minister mentioned, there is the concern that we don't own the BlackBerrys and that it's very difficult to access records that are on someone else's BlackBerry. So we're continuing to investigate that and hopefully we will be able to come up with a policy that will deal with all of the issues around government records that may be in that format.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Okay.

Thank you, Chair.

Chair: Shall the amendment carry? Carried.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. R. Brown: Even the guy walking up the street voted for it.

Chair: 19. Section 20 of the Act is amended

(a) by the repeal of clause (a) and the substitution of the following:

(a) designating and establishing –

Ms. Biggar: Carry the bill.

Chair: Carry the bill?

Is the bill carried? Carried.

Mr. Myers: We're just going on your word.

Mr. R. Brown: I'll allow it.

Mr. Currie: I'd like to just acknowledge Jill MacMicken-Wilson's work and maybe we'll give her a bit of a hand for everything.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Currie: Long time coming. Good job.

I move the title.

Chair: *An Act to Amend the Archives and Records Act.*

Shall it carry? Carried.

Mr. Currie: I move the enacting clause.

Chair: Be it enacted by the Lieutenant Governor and the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Prince Edward Island as follows.

Shall it carry? Carried.

Mr. Currie: Mr. Chair, I move the Speaker take the chair and that the Chair report the bill agreed to with amendment.

Chair: Shall it carry? Carried.

Mr. Speaker, as Chair of a Committee of the Whole House, having had under consideration a bill to be intitled *An Act to Amend the Archives and Records Act*, I beg leave to report that the committee has gone through the said bill and has agreed to same with amendment. I move that the report of the committee be adopted.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

Mr. McIsaac: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. Minister of Finance, that the 7th order of the day be now read.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk Assistant and Clerk of Committees: Order No. 7, *An Act to Amend the Financial Administration Act (No. 2)*, Bill No. 64, in committee.

Mr. McIsaac: In committee?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

Mr. McIsaac: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Finance, that this House do now resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole House to take into consideration the said bill.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

I will now ask the Member from Charlottetown-Lewis Point to come and Chair the bill.

Chair (Casey): The House is now in a Committee of the Whole House to take into consideration a bill to be intituled *An Act to Amend to Amend the Financial Administration Act (No. 2)*.

Hon. members, this has been read – not read, but it's been under debate. Permission to bring a stranger to the floor?

Some Hon. Members: Granted.

Chair: We'll wait till they get set up.

Good evening could you introduce yourself and your title for the record, please.

Gordon MacFadyen Comptroller: Good evening.

Gordon MacFadyen, Provincial Comptroller.

Chair: Welcome, Gordon.

Minister, do you have anything to say?

Mr. Roach: I can give an overview.

Chair: No. We've already done that.

Hon. members; as you realize there's just one clause and it's a date change.

Shall the bill carry?

Some Hon. Members: Carried.

Chair: We have a question from the hon. Member from Belfast-Murray River.

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Chair.

I'm wondering: Where did the legislation originate to change the date?

Gordon MacFadyen Comptroller: It was actually – when I got appointed three years ago, one of the things that I had identified as a concern for the office was by having a statutory date as late in the year; that became the (Indistinct) post that you could be pushed up against almost regularly. I found on my research that a majority of the times we were indeed finding ourselves into January because that's the date that you had to have it done by.

Initially, upon my appointment, we had some early discussions with the Office of the Auditor General. We have had some additional discussions with them on the particular date on what might suit their work schedule and their resources available and our work schedule and resources available in preparing the information. We arrived sort of at a date of October 31st that would be acceptable to both offices.

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

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Chair.

If you could just explain, if we have had some debate whether it's October 31st of the current year or the following year, are we changing –

Gordon MacFadyen Comptroller: It's October 31st of the current year.

Ms. Compton: Okay.

Mr. Roach: So it backs up.

Ms. Compton: Okay.

Why is it a priority of government to change it?

Gordon MacFadyen Comptroller: It was my office that was pushing it a little bit to try to get the statements done earlier so that they could be ready for a fall sitting of the Legislature every time that they came back. Timeliness has been raised as an issue in the past. This is our attempt to try to bring a little more timeliness to the product.

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

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Chair.

The blue book requirement was legislated by Wes Sheridan and Robert Ghiz, so correct me if I'm wrong, but why are you changing it? It's a fairly current decision.

Gordon MacFadyen Comptroller: The January 31st date has been there for some time. Like a long time, not just in this past couple of administrations. It has been a standing date for as long as I can remember. Most provinces have gone and pushed that date back.

Alberta is actually June 30th. BC is August 31st. Nunavut, Manitoba, Ontario, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia are September. Yukon and Saskatchewan are October. Us and Newfoundland are now in October, as well.

Mr. Roach: In Quebec, the Government of Canada and the Northwest Territories are December 31st.

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

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Chair.

This current fiscal year of 2017-2018 and it's the last full fiscal year before the scheduled fixed election. I'm just trying to get a handle around how we do this. So 2019 is the next scheduled election. For all intents and purposes for 2018, the blue books will not be issued until the end of October?

Gordon MacFadyen Comptroller: For the year end, October – March 31st, 2018 they'll be October of 2018.

Ms. Compton: Okay.

Gordon MacFadyen Comptroller: For March 31st, 2019, it'll be August of that year.

Ms. Compton: If we're willing to do it in August for an election year, why can we not do it in August every year?

Gordon MacFadyen Comptroller: That is a potential. We did discuss that with the Auditor General. They were a little concerned about having their staff available to get the work done and provide some summer vacation on PEI, as well. We definitely can get it done. We did get it done the year that the last fixed – the last election was in the fall of the year and it was August 25th that we were published that year.

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

Ms. Compton: It's two months in the difference.

Gordon MacFadyen Comptroller: Yeah.

Ms. Compton: What date do you get the books to the auditor?

Gordon MacFadyen Comptroller: We drop them off, our first draft of it, this year, in about August – the first or second week in August. They got them back to us towards the middle of October. Then, we were back and forth a little bit on – there are always a few issues that arise on interpretations of what we believe and what they believe. They sign the opinion at the end of the day so we kind of have got to make them happy.

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

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Chair.

I'm just not sure why we cannot, every year, have them done by August.

Gordon MacFadyen Comptroller: The Auditor General, as well, does all of the

Crown corporations. That's a legislated date for June 30th. The consolidation process does take some time once we get all the pieces together. We are shooting to get the government entity itself and all of its pieces together by June 30th. The Crowns are June 30th. Then, we start putting it all together to make a consolidated product.

It has been done. We have done it for sure. It's not the preference of our office to do that every year. It's a big exercise. The Auditor General wasn't supportive of that, every year, either, when we talked to her. It was not her preference either.

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

Ms. Compton: What happens, we know the next fixed election date is the fall of 2019, in theory. What happens if we have an early election call? Can we expect that the books will be done in August of that year?

Gordon MacFadyen Comptroller: If it was – we had that exact situation happen the last election. We were on schedule that year because it was scheduled for a fall election. We were on tap that year for an August deadline.

When the election happened in the spring, we sort of split the difference with the Auditor General. We were out on September 30th that year.

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

Ms. Compton: What date would you have the books ready? When are they closed so that then you can push them forward for the blue books?

Gordon MacFadyen Comptroller: We were ready this year late July, early August.

We turned the full set over the Auditor General. She completes her work. Then we are at her mercy until they –

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

Ms. Compton: You're saying it's the auditor that's slowing this process?

Gordon MacFadyen Comptroller: No. I'm saying the auditor has some work to do. I don't tell the Auditor General how to do her work. She's an independent officer. When – I'm trying to get done as fast as I can, but I can't push them along.

Ms. Compton: What happens from the end of April until August? Why the delay?

Gordon MacFadyen Comptroller: It does take some time to get everything in order. It does take some time to produce the statements; the schedules; produce manager estimates, get it in the hands of the auditor; get the audit done.

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

Ms. Compton: We know for that next election year it's going to be 2019. If we have an early election can we expect that the books will be, the blue books will be out before the election?

Gordon MacFadyen Comptroller: It would –

Mr. MacEwen: What defines an election year?

Mr. Roach: (Indistinct) in August.

Gordon MacFadyen Comptroller: That's a hard question to answer because without knowing what the date is, if it happened to be May 15th –

Mr. MacEwen: Imagine if you're in opposition.

Gordon MacFadyen Comptroller: If it was May 15th, I can say that you would be relying on the previous year's financial statements.

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

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Chair.

Let's just say we are going to have an election next October. Is it possible, and will there be legislation in place that we can have the books in August?

Ms. Biggar: There's no election in 2018.

Ms. Compton: No. Never.

Mr. MacEwen: (Indistinct) last time, too.

Mr. Myers: Put that on the record.

Mr. R. Brown: Okay (Indistinct)

Mr. MacEwen: It's a serious question.

Gordon MacFadyen Comptroller: It would be –

Chair: Hon. members, we are trying to hear the answer.

Gordon MacFadyen Comptroller: I would expect if we were in a position with the agreement of the Auditor General we would make best efforts to get the information available. It would depend on how much lead time we would have to know when the decision gets made; work with the Auditor General. Their staff isn't sitting around doing nothing, waiting to do our books, either. They have other audits on the go. They do value for money work. They do other Crown corporation work.

If we could schedule it, we would make best efforts to get it done, for sure.

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

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's not legislated that in an election year, other than the – right now, the proposed election year is 2019.

Gordon MacFadyen Comptroller: Yeah.

Ms. Compton: It's not legislated that if we have an election earlier, which is definitely a possibility that the books will be ready.

Gordon MacFadyen Comptroller: The *Financial Administration Act* points to the *Election Act* so whatever determines – in there is what we would be following off of. It's a fixed election date schedule. We have a schedule for 2019 now. We'd be going in August in 2018, we'd be going in October.

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

Ms. Compton: I understand, fixed election date. We know the next fixed election date is the fall of 2019. We know that that's not going to be the case because the federal election will fall at the same time. It's too cute by half that we bring this legislation onto the floor when we need to have the books, the blue books out for an election date. For 2018, we need to have some kind of reassurance that there are going to be blue books out before the election, if it's early.

Gordon MacFadyen Comptroller: Without this amendment we'd be out January 31st.

Ms. Biggar: There is no election this year, and (Indistinct)

Chair: Order, order!

Gordon. Mr. MacFadyen –

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

Chair: Order! Gordon MacFadyen has the floor.

Gordon MacFadyen Comptroller: Without the amendment, we'd be at January, potentially.

Mr. MacEwen: But we can improve even more.

Gordon MacFadyen Comptroller: Pardon?

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

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Chair.

I'm just trying to get a handle on – March 31st, your year-end, and having worked a number of years in government – as a matter of fact, having worked in the financial system of government – I'm curious how many months do your books stay open before you close them off so you can send them to the Auditor.

Gordon MacFadyen Comptroller: We'd run the books open for a full month after the year ends so that we have transactions that occur in inter-year get deposited in the right

year, and we'd be running another couple of weeks – are there any bills that you're aware of that you didn't get by that particular cutoff that we believe were approved the old year.

We'd be in through June 30th trying to get the operating fund for government reconciled, balanced, and complete. The Crowns are working trying to get their Crown corporation statements balanced and complete and audited, and then we take the audited pieces of the Crowns and the operating fund, starting at June 30th, to consolidate.

The process makes – we look at all the inter-company transactions that happen between the Crowns and government to eliminate them so we're not overstating revenues and expenses, to try to get a fair picture. We're looking at management estimates of revenues, allowance for (Indistinct) accounts; some things that you can't just point to, that's the number that's in the bucket when you go. There is a number of accounts that take some management estimates.

We'd be done – we're shooting to be done the first week in August for that, so that gives us sort of another four or five weeks to get the notes together, the schedules together that represent the stack of the bluebooks we handed off to the Auditor General. They do their work and (Indistinct) get her done by the end of October.

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

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Chair.

How many sets of books would you have in government?

Gordon MacFadyen Comptroller: We run – we have one set for the government, and we have about 20, 22, 25 Crowns.

Mr. Myers: Twenty-five Crowns and health has its own set of books?

Gordon MacFadyen Comptroller: Health has its own set of books.

Mr. Myers: So you have 26 or so?

Gordon MacFadyen Comptroller: I'll say 25 Crowns. I didn't count them all, but.

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

Mr. Myers: Do you think the creation of all these Crown corps that government has created more – is one of the limiting factors about – from getting your books done early?

An Hon. Member: Good question.

Gordon MacFadyen Comptroller: I wouldn't say that. There's definitely a number of Crown corps that would – that do report on a different accounting basis than government. Those are the government business enterprises that are self-sustaining profit centres. They have a different set of accounting standards that they have to, so those Crowns would be difficult to run some sets of accounting standards under one entity.

I know when Health was within government, it was tough. They have a different operating environment. They have a different chart of accounts over there. It was a tough go for government to handle that entity within its entity.

Are there some that probably (Indistinct), perhaps, but that's up to each ministry to sort of figure out what business they need to be operating, and we go whatever departments see fit to kind of run their operation, kind of work through.

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

Mr. Myers: Just one more.

Just on that same scene, I do understand the chart of accounts is quite different in Health. I know I was at a project one time where we looked at trying to absorb it, and it was complicated, and I think you were actually part of that at one point. It is complicated, I do understand that.

I do wonder if getting – there's a lot of reasons why I believe you should have everybody on the same financial system. One is the cost of the financial system is ridiculous, and you would know that firsthand. Having several iterations of that is

– but the Oracle financial system is capable of having more than one set of books, and if you had them all in under government with separate sets of books, it would be a lot easier for you to consolidate them at the end of the day. There would be a lot more automation provided.

Gordon MacFadyen Comptroller: Yeah, it's definitely – we could benefit from a few more entities being on Oracle. We – it takes time and effort. We went through a project with the school boards were they retired their accounting system and we brought them into Oracle, and it was a big deal that we amended our chart a little bit to accommodate one – they accommodated their business practice to work with us. It brought a lot of efficiencies for them. We were able to roll out our purchase card program to them; they can use our vendor lists and things like that, so there is some economies, for sure. It's finding the time and the project resources sometimes to kind of keep them both going at the same time and kind of work it through.

We do have – we're working with the self-insurance fund right now to try and get them absorbed within us. We are in discussions with the Agriculture Insurance Corporation to do the same. We're looking at Tourism, but again, we're – we kind of have got to keep it running every day; without a project team (Indistinct) year-round that are dedicated to that work, it's difficult just to do it off the side of your desk.

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

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Chair.

I totally appreciate that. I know exactly the complications that come with that, so I do appreciate what you're up against.

I guess what I wonder, and maybe it's more of a question for the minister, if there's an overall will from the overarching government to have that become a reality. There's two things: One, they could mandate it, which would make it so that everyone had to kind of fall in under you, and they could also allocate funds or people or whatever to make to make sure that it could happen, and I know it isn't a project

that could probably happen – I'm not even sure you could do it in a year.

It might be a two or three year project to actually make that happen, but if government dedicated to it, the long-term is savings for, in my opinion, there's savings for government, not just in the functional costs of the financial systems that you have in play, but also when it comes to the work that your office must have to put in to consolidate the books when it's all said and done.

Gordon MacFadyen Comptroller: We're definitely – we –

Mr. Roach: Member, that's an excellent question, actually, because I think that's pretty much what's happening here. As you stated clearly, and you're correct, this is – this would be a powerful amount of work, and to do it in a year would literally not be possible at all, so I think this is really the first step towards trying to do exactly that and move it back, but it's going to take a lot of resources.

Right now, I think the big feeling, our biggest concern is this is going to change – it's going to be a big change for everybody that's involved on the financial side of this. Also, it's going to be a change for the Auditor General's office, so I think this is a good way to kind of graduate, work towards that.

I appreciate your questions. It's – you hit it right on the nose, there, so thank you.

Chair: Shall the bill carry?

An Hon. Member: Question.

Chair: Oh, sorry. You were not on the list.

The hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid.

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you, Chair.

Minister, a concern here is the actual election year, and I believe the legislation states right now that it's in a fixed election year, correct?

Mr. Roach: Yes.

Mr. MacEwen: What would be the harm in just changing that to an election year?

Mr. Roach: In the fixed election year, we know it's going to be October, so it drops this –

Mr. MacEwen: We think it's going to be October, to be fair.

Mr. Roach: Well, the act says it's going to be –

Mr. MacEwen: I know.

Mr. Roach: – in the fall.

Mr. MacEwen: Said that last time, (Indistinct)

Mr. Roach: It's not (Indistinct) –

Mr. MacEwen: I ran in the last election, and it was not supposed to be in that time.

Mr. Roach: Yeah, it's obvious you did, yes.

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Mr. MacEwen: It's not so obvious that the next election is going to be the fall of 2019, though.

Chair: Order!

Mr. Roach: Yeah, and I'll be honest with you. As Minister of Finance, and in doing this legislation, I do not control when an election going to get called.

Mr. MacEwen: No, I understand that. Chair?

Chair: The hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid.

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you, Chair. And Chair, sorry about the back and forth there.

But, it's quite fair that none of us in here, at one point, knew that there was going to be an early election called, and so that's – I think it's great, I think it's awesome that you guys are bringing this forward, that we're going to have earlier bluebooks.

The question is just that: Is the conversation versus in a fixed election year versus an election year?

I understand the pressures of the AG's office that to rush it and in our opposition caucus, we debated internally heavily on maybe we should ask for it in August every year, and the Member from Belfast-Murray River asked a fair question, so we understand the complexities and the pressure that it would cause every year.

But in an election year, not just a fixed election year, I think that would be a fair compromise to say that we bring those books in early for that year; and if a government in the spring of the year decide to say: No, we're going to – for whatever reason, it might be a very necessary reason that they have to have an early election. It probably wasn't last time, but maybe this time there might be a realistic reason to have it, that the books be presented in an election year.

So as the hon. Member from Belfast-Murray River said, if for some reason – and maybe a very legitimate reason – that we have to have an election in the fall of 2018, we would have blue books prepared for that. Would that be a fair amendment, say?

Gordon MacFadyen Comptroller: The only issue with that is if you just took an election year and it was May, there's no way we could get it done. If it's June, we can't get it done. July, we'd be really pushing it.

So it's hard to say when you just say an election year. I don't know what date the election happens in that year. You're assuming that it's going to be in October.

Mr. MacEwen: Chair?

Gordon MacFadyen Comptroller: If it is in October, then it's a fair comment. If you can get it done in August for an election year, why not that election year?

Mr. MacEwen: Chair?

Mr. Roach: So if it were the fall of 2018, then we should have the books by August 2018.

Gordon MacFadyen Comptroller: As long as we knew –

Mr. Roach: Yes.

Gordon MacFadyen Comptroller: – far enough in advance –

Mr. Roach: Far enough in advance.

Gordon MacFadyen Comptroller: – so that I could get the resources lined up and the AG can make sure they get the resources lined up; because I've discussed lots with staff in their office, and they're not happy till they're happy. They have to be happy with the product.

They respect the act. They respect the dates, and they work backwards from those dates to try to make sure that they have enough work done and enough staff around to get the work done.

Chair: The hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid.

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you.

I completely appreciate that, and I appreciate you're under – you're right, if in January or March of the year they decide to have an election in June 1st –

Mr. Roach: May 15th, June 1st –

Mr. MacEwen: – you can't have that happen. So we need a drop-dead date, then, for this. You've thrown out a couple of dates that: Yeah, if it was pushed, we could do that if we had it by this date. I think we do need a date that, says: if an election is called by this date, then we could have those books to you.

I completely get what you're saying, and I know that even if, say, in next spring that the current government says: We're going to have an election in the fall, and you will do your absolute best to get those out. If they say it's in October – maybe even if it's in September, we'll do our absolute best to get those books out to you, and I believe that.

It's just we don't have control over when Executive Council decides to pull the plug and hold an election. Even the Minister of Finance say he doesn't know, and I'm sure

he would love, as the Minister of Finance, to be able to plan for that; but you don't know. It's up to your colleagues to pull the plug, but I think it's fair to the public that we do push the civil service in an election year to have those books ready if it's past a certain date.

I guess my question is: What is your drop-dead date that the government would have to call an election and we could still have the blue books?

Gordon MacFadyen Comptroller: I can speak for my office.

Mr. MacEwen: Yeah.

Gordon MacFadyen Comptroller: I can't speak for the Auditor General's office, and that's the one dynamic that I –

Mr. MacEwen: I get –

Gordon MacFadyen Comptroller: – (Indistinct) –

Mr. MacEwen: Yeah, you're – that's a good point.

An Hon. Member: She's not here.

Gordon MacFadyen Comptroller: She's not here to say one way another, so I'd be really reluctant to say: Yeah, I can get it done for you, because then I'd be speaking for her to get her work done as well, and her office to get their work done.

Mr. MacEwen: So what's your drop-dead date then?

Gordon MacFadyen Comptroller: Well, I – you know (Indistinct) –

Mr. MacEwen: What's the absolute earliest you could have it ready if –

Gordon MacFadyen Comptroller: Well, the absolute earliest is we'd be ready in an election date by the end of August, because that's what the legislation says. We would have to get a work plan going every year for that. I've brought that to the Auditor General. They were not in favour of that.

Mr. MacEwen: No, I can understand that.

Sorry, Chair.

Gordon MacFadyen Comptroller: If they had their druthers – I asked for September. They were not in favour of that. They were comfortable with October. Now, if we get a couple of Octobers under our belt and they fell comfortable with the way we're getting our work done and getting our work to them and they're getting through their work and they get comfortable into that cycle and we adjust the staff levels and the work assignments then perhaps we could start walking it backwards a month at a time. This is not –

Mr. MacEwen: Chair?

Chair: The hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid.

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you.

I'm not so much pushing for every year by August, but in an election year. I guess that's probably part of the job, that if the bosses say we're going into an election this year, that means the government has to kick into action and get those blue books ready.

When you say August, did you say earlier though you had your information into the Auditor General earlier, that you can have it in earlier than that?

Gordon MacFadyen Comptroller: We –

Mr. MacEwen: What's the early – like, if –

Gordon MacFadyen Comptroller: The earliest –

Mr. MacEwen: – if your minister came to you and said: We need these done. When can you have those books to the AG? And I know you would annoy a lot of people when you say that to them.

Gordon MacFadyen Comptroller: Oh for sure, because I'm speaking for a lot of departments (Indistinct) –

Mr. MacEwen: I know, and I get it – summer vacation, all this stuff – but if a government decides go to an election, that's the government's fault that they're pushing their people to do this.

Gordon MacFadyen Comptroller: Our sort of soft date for this year would be about the 15th of July. We try to get the consolidation done. Getting all the schedules and the notes and the fine tuning – the Auditor General likes to have a finished product in their hands to kind of start their audit work. They don't like redoing things over and over again. So we're kind of off the cycle where I'll give you a draft that's a rough draft while I'm still working over here and they do a bunch of audit work. We've kind of committed that we would have a good quality draft available to them by –

Mr. MacEwen: July 15th.

Gordon MacFadyen Comptroller: July 15th is when we're going to get the work done.

Mr. MacEwen: When you're pushed.

Gordon MacFadyen Comptroller: We get a week or two to kind of fine tune it, and then for sure, first of August in their hands.

Chair: The hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid.

Mr. MacEwen: So, July 15th. Normally you said that you would get it to them by the end of August in time for October, right?

Gordon MacFadyen Comptroller: We have in the past, because then we're – you've got to appreciate we're working backwards from a January 31st date –

Mr. MacEwen: Yeah.

Mr. Roach: (Indistinct) accomplished October.

Mr. MacEwen: And we appreciate that, because that's something that opposition has pushed for for a long time on both sides of the political fence, to be honest with you. So you're talking about six weeks' turnaround from the AG, maybe eight weeks?

Gordon MacFadyen Comptroller: Well, again, it depends on the scope of the issues that are the on the go. Sometimes the accounting standards are changing. We've had a couple over the last – pensions was the last big one that we dealt with on the pension reform.

When you get into those types of situations, it burns a little bit of time; them gathering opinions, us coming up with a position. They're researching their position. We're kind of back and forth a couple of times on sometimes single issues and –

Mr. MacEwen: No, that's good.

Chair: The hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid.

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you, Chair.

I really appreciate understanding the whole process that happens within the civil service and the AG's office. So now, minister, my question is to you: Do you have the political will to say to your department in an election year, regardless if it's fixed or not, you will push your department to have the blue books ready?

Your staff says that if pushed – and yeah, there's going to be people that are pushed that summer and schedules that be rearranged and the AG would have to agree – the AG can potentially have the books by July 15th? The AG potentially could have them back within six weeks or so.

Minister, do you have the political will to make that happen? I guess is what I'm saying. Would you entertain some sort of amendment or some sort of further discussion on this bill that if your government pulls the plug or – say the hon. Member from Belfast-Murray River runs the show in a few years' time and –

Mr. R. Brown: (Indistinct)

Mr. MacEwen: – she decides –

Ms. Compton: (Indistinct)

Mr. MacEwen: – she decides to do it?

Mr. R. Brown: As Deputy Premier.

Ms. Biggar: Hypothetically.

Mr. MacEwen: Hypothetically.

Ms. Compton: Premier.

Mr. MacEwen: But you know –

Ms. Compton: (Indistinct)

Mr. MacEwen: – for future governments –

Mr. R. Brown: (Indistinct)

Mr. MacEwen: I'm being serious. Do you have the political will to make some sort of amendment or to put some sort of a date in there on a year that's not a fixed election to protect against future?

Mr. Roach: I think where, as of right now, we're still working with the same number of resources, whether it's within the government realm and all of those departments and all of those Crowns, and where the Auditor General is still working with the same number of assets, the fact that we're backing that up from the 31st of January to the 31st of October, I think that's a challenge in itself just to make that move.

Once, I think, that staff have worked through that, as was said previously, a couple of years, then I think we can, perhaps, once we get to that point, start to move it back. But I think the will is one thing, but I think the reality of what staff can do given the time frame – and I know we freely talk that, you know, we have to do this and we have to do that, but after being in finance for a couple of years and I see the amount of work –

Mr. MacEwen: Yeah.

Mr. Roach: – that those staff have to do just to meet those dates, I don't know if I could commit to say that my staff will get that done, and I certainly can't commit anything on behalf of the Auditor General.

Chair: The hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid.

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you.

This is just a comment, not a question. I think we are getting close to agreeing to disagree, but I appreciate the intense pressure that would be on in an election year to get them ready for that August 31st deadline. You say you're coming from January to October, but in an election year you're going to August. You're confident

enough to let them do that in fixed election year for August, the end of August.

What I'm saying is: Why can't we be comfortable enough to do that in an election year that's not fixed, but the election is still called?

That's my concern. I understand that that I get what a major shift it is from January to October and then every four years in August. My concern is that if you feel your staff can do it in a fixed election year can't we try and make it happen in a non-fixed election year, or an election year?

I'll finish my comments. I think we're coming to agree to disagree on this. Thank you, minister.

Chair: The hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque.

Mr. MacKay: Thank you, Chair.

I guess I kind of agree with some of the comments on this side of the floor. It's a concern to us for a couple of reasons. One, government has tabled a balanced Budget for the first time in years and they're quite proud of that, which, let's hope it is an accurate budget. But, if an election was called and Islanders are going to the polls without having the actual facts of the blue books, going to polls to vote, I don't think it's acceptable.

For one, all of a sudden, after an election, and if the blue books do come back and we find out the Budget wasn't balanced, it was almost misleading to Islanders going to the polls.

I think that's the main reason we're asking for this. Don't be upset at us for asking. There are a couple of things going on here. We look – you have a leader that's polling your party by 20%. Two years is a long time for an election.

If an election is called early, these blue books never get seen by Islanders and people going to the polls. We're just looking for a simple change here. I don't think it's a lot of ask. All we're asking for, is if we're to going to an election, at any given time, that the blue books be out for Islanders to verify and see the accurate information.

Mr. Roach: I think if that were to take place – we're going to have another budget next spring with another forecast. There will be a strong indication in there. We just went through the cycle. We would be having, yet another, budget being brought done, if what you're saying were to take place.

Chair: The hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque.

Mr. MacKay: Thank you, Chair.

I want to give you a couple of examples, minister, and then tell me if I'm off the mark on it. If we were to go to an election in the fall of 2018, prior to October 31st, would the blue books be available?

Gordon MacFadyen Comptroller: Pick a date.

Mr. MacKay: October 15th, 2018.

Gordon MacFadyen Comptroller: The issue that I see, it's kind of like a supertanker going down the road. You can't just throw it in reverse and go backwards. There is a little bit of – there is some planning that takes time to get this exercise completed.

As long as we – if we had enough lead time to know that this was coming, and some discussions with the Auditor General. So they had their staff lined up appropriately.

That's why I said: We'd make best efforts, but if it was – it's only sometimes 21 days or something –

Mr. MacKay: Right.

Gordon MacFadyen Comptroller: – 30 days. That's not really enough to –

Mr. MacKay: Chair?

I certainly realize you would make your best effort, but my point being: an election could be called and the accurate blue books could not be tabled when Islanders go to the polls to vote.

Gordon MacFadyen Comptroller: What I'm saying is: if you make the amendment, I don't think I can do it anyway.

If it's only a 30-day election call—

Mr. MacKay: Chair.

Gordon MacFadyen Comptroller: — because I have my plan down the road for a certain point in time and the information changes, I can't get the work done; get the Auditor General lined up guaranteed. That's where I'm at —

Mr. MacKay: My final question —

Chair: The hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque.

Mr. MacKay: Thank you, Chair.

Maybe somebody had asked this question, but why the push for this legislation all of a sudden? What is causing this to come to the floor tonight?

Mr. Roach: We're just trying to provide the books earlier, that's all. That's part of it, I guess.

Gordon MacFadyen Comptroller: It was partly my request. With a legislated date of January 31st we were the last in the country. Newfoundland moved theirs back to October 31st. We went, this year, trying to get it out faster than — we were September the year before because we had the ball rolling for a fall election. We had the plans in place. The Auditor General agreed that we would continue on at that pace.

September 30th was the eventual tabling date that particular year. I tried to keep that same momentum going with our staff and with their office and we slipped into November this year.

Mr. MacKay: I'm good, Chair.

Chair: Thank you.

The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Chair.

Thanks, again, for bringing this to the floor. I appreciate you trying to bring the blue books, the audited statements out earlier. That's great. I applaud for that.

Building on what the Member from Belfast-Murray River, and the Member from Morell-Mermaid and, the Member from Kensington-Malpeque, had said, our concern, is, of course, in the legislation it says: When a fixed date general election is to be held then it's in August, but if there was a general election that wasn't fixed-date i.e., in another year then we might not get the blue books before a general election.

I had prepared an amendment to remove the word 'fixed-date' but I do appreciate that. That you need some lead time. It sounds to me like you need to know by mid-July that the election was —

Gordon MacFadyen Comptroller: Earlier than that —

Mr. Trivers: — coming. Or earlier before you could meet that end of August date. Both you and the Auditor General.

I fully appreciate that. I think that our concern has been voiced adequately. Especially, with a balanced Budget. It would be nice to see the blue books before we went to an election if there was one that was called next fall in 2018.

I'm just going to leave that comment at that, Chair.

Chair: The hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid.

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you, Chair.

I'll summarize my comments, too. I don't want to vote against this bill because it is bringing the blue books earlier, something that we've called for, for quite some time.

I'm not going to rule out trying, in future, to push for, in an election year, not necessarily a fixed election year, and then maybe trying with your department, work out what that drop-dead date would have to be, that the election had to be called by, that we could still get the blue books, and talk to the AG. Without the AG being here, I don't think it's fair that we put an amendment forward right now, without some input from her.

Personally, I'm going to support the bill for now, but with reservations on that election

versus fixed election and to discuss it again with your department.

I just wanted to make those comments that that's my mindset right now.

Thank you, Chair.

Chair: Thank you.

Shall the bill carry? Carried.

Mr. Roach: I move the title.

Chair: *An Act to Amend the Financial Administration Act (No. 2).*

Shall it carry? Carried.

Mr. Roach: I move the enacting clause.

Chair: Be it enacted by the Lieutenant Governor and the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Prince Edward Island as follows.

Shall it carry? Carried.

Mr. Roach: Madam Chair, I move the Speaker take the chair and the Chair report the bill agreed to without amendment.

Chair: Shall it carry? Carried.

Mr. Speaker, as Chair of a Committee of the Whole House, having had under consideration a bill to be intituled *An Act to Amend the Financial Administration Act (No. 2)*, I beg leave to report that the committee has gone through the said bill and has agreed to same without amendment. I move that the report be adopted.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

Mr. McIsaac: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy, that the 5th order of the day be now read.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk Assistant and Clerk of Committees: Order No. 5, *An Act to Amend the Highway Traffic Act (No. 3)*, Bill No. 67, ordered for second reading.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

Mr. McIsaac: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy, that the said bill be now read a second time.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk Assistant and Clerk of Committees: *An Act to Amend the Highway Traffic Act (No. 3)*, Bill No. 67, read a second time.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

Mr. McIsaac: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy, that this House do now resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole House to take into consideration the said bill.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

I will ask the hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton, if you wouldn't mind coming and chairing this bill

Chair (J. Brown): *Act to Amend the Highway Traffic Act (No. 3)*. Is it now the pleasure of the committee that the bill be now –

Ms. Biggar: Could I bring someone on the floor, Mr. Chair?

An Hon. Member: Granted.

Ms. Biggar: I'll ask Graham Miner, our director of Highway Safety, to be with us here on the floor.

Thank you.

Chair: Great, thank you, minister.

Thank you, Mr. Miner.

Ms. Biggar: I do have an overview of the amendments.

Chair: Would members like an overview of the amendments?

An Hon. Member: Sure.

Ms. Biggar: Okay.

In this spring of 2016, we did some amendments to the bicycle act to allow for the creation of new bicycle safety regulations. The development of those regulations is underway and ongoing. Consultation has started.

We have been in consultation with Cycling PEI –

Mr. Aylward: Chair, carry the bill.

Ms. Biggar: Okay.

Chair: Shall the bill carry? Carried.

Ms. Biggar: Thank you.

Chair: I move the title, oh sorry.

Ms. Biggar: I move the title.

Chair: *Act to Amend the Highway Traffic Act (No. 3).*

Shall it carry? Carried.

Ms. Biggar: I move the enacting clause.

Chair: Be it enacted by the Lieutenant Governor and the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Prince Edward Island as follows.

Shall it carry? Carried.

Ms. Biggar: Mr. Chair, I move the Speaker take the chair and the Chair report the bill agreed to without amendment.

Chair: Shall it carry? Carried.

Ms. Biggar: Thank you.

Chair: Mr. Speaker, as Chair of a Committee of the Whole House, having had under consideration a bill to be intituled *Act to Amend the Highway Traffic Act (No. 3)*, I beg leave to report that the committee has gone through the said bill and has agreed to same without amendment. I move that the report of the committee be adopted.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

Mr. McIsaac: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. Minister of Health and Wellness, that the 14th order of the day be now read.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk Assistant and Clerk of Committees: Order No. 14, *An Act to Amend the Regulated Health Professions Act*, Bill No. 71, ordered for second reading.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

Mr. McIsaac: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Health and Wellness, that the said bill be now read a second time.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk Assistant and Clerk of Committees: *An Act to Amend the Regulated Health Professions Act*, Bill No. 71, read a second time.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

Mr. McIsaac: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Health and Wellness, that this House do now resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole House to take into consideration the said bill.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

I will ask the hon. Member from Charlottetown-Lewis Point, if you wouldn't mind coming and chairing this bill.

Chair (Casey): The House is now in a Committee of the Whole House to take into consideration a bill to be intituled *Act to Amend the Regulated Health Professions Act*. Is it the pleasure of the committee that the bill be now read clause by clause?

Mr. MacKay: Overview, Chair.

Chair: Overview. Can we –

Ms. Compton: What's the number?

Mr. Henderson: It's number 71.

Chair: Permission to take a stranger to the floor?

Some Hon. Members: Granted.

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

Nichola Hewitt Legislative Specialist: Nicola Hewitt, Solicitor and Legislative Specialist with the Department of Health and Wellness.

Chair: Welcome, Nichola.

The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness, an overview was requested.

Mr. Henderson: I'll ask Nichola to provide the overview. It's very legal-like.

Nichola Hewitt Legislative Specialist: When I started drafting the registered health professions act, as I indicated earlier, we were trying to make sure we were treating both large professions and small professions the same. There were a number of issues in the *Regulated Health Professions Act* where we identified provisions that were duplicated; definitions that can be tightened up. It was just a general cleanup, really, to that the two acts really are very similar in terms of the provisions.

We have one college that is currently regulated under regulated health. We did consult with them on the changes. That's the College of Pharmacists. They gave us the green light. They had no issues or concerns.

Chair: Shall the bill carry?

The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: We had discussed earlier how – you had mentioned that some of the amendments to the *Regulated Health Professions Act* were in direct response to some applications that were made, for example, by the PEI addictions counsellors, or just PEI counsellors in general.

Nichola Hewitt Legislative Specialist: Yes.

Mr. Trivers: I was wondering if you can, very briefly, talk about the sorts of amendments that were made that that particular application might have caused.

Nichola Hewitt Legislative Specialist: Section 2 of the act is amended. What we have are some professions and counsellors are one, for example. Another one would be psychologists, in which the scope of activities of that profession sort of overlaps amongst a number of professions. You really don't have a very specific defined scope. What the act initially contemplated: you would have a defined scope.

What this amendment says is it doesn't matter that they don't have a distinct and identifiable scope. We can still regulate them under the act. There are some professions and counsellors are one of them in which really what they're looking for is title protection. That only –

Mr. Trivers: Yes.

Nichola Hewitt Legislative Specialist: – people with certain levels of education –

Mr. Trivers: Right.

Nichola Hewitt Legislative Specialist: – can call themselves a counsellor. Although, they don't have an identifiable scope there is a purpose in regulating them to protect the public from being fooled into consulting with people who are calling themselves counsellors who really aren't counsellors.

Mr. Trivers: Right.

Nichola Hewitt Legislative Specialist: That's one of the changes we've done.

There is another change in here. It wasn't specifically aimed at counsellors, but other professions that may be coming in. Some professions do, when they assess competency, they look at different ways of doing it. Sometimes it's through self-assessment or peer assessment, so we have added those provisions in here.

Mr. Trivers: Great.

Nichola Hewitt Legislative Specialist: We've added some audit provision in here, in which, the college will audit members.

That's how it facilitates some of these additional professions.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you.

I know that groups like the PEI counsellors are very happy that they're going to be able to be recognized now.

Thank you for bringing these amendments forward.

Chair: Shall the bill carry? Carried.

Mr. Henderson: I move the title.

Chair: *Act to Amend the Regulated Health Professions Act.*

Shall it carry? Carried.

Mr. Henderson: I move the enacting clause.

Chair: Be it enacted by the Lieutenant Governor and the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Prince Edward Island as follows.

Shall it carry? Carried.

Mr. Henderson: Madam Chair, I move the Speaker take the chair and the Chair report the bill agreed to without amendment.

Chair: Shall it carry? Carried.

Mr. Speaker, as Chair of a Committee of the Whole House, having had under consideration a bill to be intituled *Act to Amend the Regulated Health Professions Act*, I beg leave to report that the committee has gone through the said bill and has agreed to same without amendment. I move that the report of the committee be adopted.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

An Hon. Member: Call the hour.

Speaker: The hour has been called.

The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

Mr. McIsaac: I move, seconded by the hon. Member from West Royalty-Springvale, that

this House adjourn until tomorrow, May 12th, at 10:00 a.m.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Have a good night and we'll see you at 10:00 a.m.

The Legislature adjourned until tomorrow, Friday, May 12th, at 10:00 a.m.