

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY



Speaker: Hon. Francis (Buck) Watts

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Third Session of the Sixty-fifth General Assembly

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The Legislature sat at 2:00 p.m.

Matters of Privilege and Recognition of
Guests

Speaker (Watts): The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Welcome everyone to the floor and to those watching by Internet or television from home. I want to welcome representatives of the PEI Rape and Sexual Assault Centre to the gallery today.

I want to congratulate Kevin Doyle on winning a nomination last night in District 2 Georgetown-Pownal. It was a great turnout on a hard evening and a great contest with Roger Crane putting his name forward. Everyone left there in a very upbeat frame of mind.

Also, last night was the annual excellence awards for the Greater Charlottetown Area Chamber of Commerce. There were a number of deserving recognitions there. Let me mention several: for the first ever People's Choice for Community Impact Award: Amber Jadis and her Bricks 4 Kidz company. Great initiative and Amber's a terrific person in our community. Entrepreneur of the Year: Dan MacIsaac, Excellence in Business Award: Seafood Express (P.E.I.) Ltd., and the Not-For-Profit Excellence Award to Big Brothers and Big Sisters of Prince Edward Island.

Tomorrow, as we'll all know – it's important to have it on the record in recognition – will be the 31st Annual Rotary Youth Parliament starting out on Friday afternoon and into Saturday in this Chamber. Starting with participation by her Honour Antoinette Perry and the Speech from the Throne.

It seems like when we have the Youth Parliament, whether we have it in the winter or now in mid-November, we can always run into some rough weather. It seems to be the case for Friday into Saturday.

Speaking of Saturday, there will be – in your district – Tracadie Cross Community Centre on Saturday morning, a breakfast – the

proceeds of which will go to the Salvation Army: Toys for Tots program.

It's great to be here making the headway that we are in our first week of the fall sitting. I look forward to today's session.

Thank you.

Speaker: Thank you, Premier.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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

I'd also like to bring greetings on behalf of the official opposition and acknowledge, as well, the individuals that joined us here today from the Prince Edward Island Rape and Sexual Assault Centre and commend for the wonderful work that they do.

I also just noticed that we had a group of journalism students that came in again today to join us and it's great to see them here.

I'd like to send out special recognition today; there are many individuals that do tune in on the Internet or EastLink, particularly from seniors homes across PEI. In particular, I'd like to say a special hello to two constituents of mine that reside at St. John House in Stratford. Shirley Cleveland and Alice Pickett, I know that they quite often tune in. So, I'd like to recognize them, as well as all the residents at Andrews of Stratford.

Also, the residents and staff at Beach Grove Home – I'm a frequent visitor there as my mom and dad are both residents at the facility now. I just want to send out a special hello to Bill and Liz and thank the staff for the incredible work that they do for our residents.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

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

Welcome everybody back and everybody in the gallery, particularly the journalism students from Holland College. I noticed a

couple of them coming in just as we sat down.

There's a young gentleman among them, Cameron Ralph, who lives in my district who's recently had a couple of interviews on *CBC Radio* with Matt Rainnie; really distinguished himself as very eloquent, articulate and very interesting young man. A man who has collections in several areas to do with the history of Prince Edward Island, with some wartime history and just a very astonishing young man, actually. I think he's 18-19-years-old. I'd just like to extend a special welcome – oh there you are – to Cameron sitting over there.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque.

Mr. MacKay: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's an honour to rise here again today on this beautiful Thursday afternoon. I'd just like wish everybody from Kensington-Malpeque that's tuning in today, a good day.

This morning there an article that came out in the *Journal Pioneer* that was about a 32-year-old young woman from Kensington that is having some health troubles right now. A single mother with four kids and it really made me think twice today, I guess, of what's taking place and what's going on.

There are always people out there that are fighting some tough battles. I just wanted everybody to know that as the MLA of Kensington, I have reached out to the minister, and the minister is going to do his very best to help this young lady out right now. Hopefully good things will come to her and her family very shortly.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

Mr. LaVie: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to say welcome back to everybody here today, especially to those watching on EastLink, especially our senior's right across Prince Edward Island.

On the way in this morning, I had to opportunity to stop in the Fortune Community Centre, where the PEI Senior Federation was holding their AGM. It was an honour for me to get up and say a few words because these seniors are what gave us our communities today – like our halls, our rinks, our bingo halls and these are the seniors that built this for us, and it's up to our generation to keep these halls up and our generation has to pass this on to the generation coming up behind us.

I do my part in my community and I always thought highly of the seniors for doing what they did, so it was an honour and privilege to be asked to say a few words as an MLA on PEI.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Statements by Members

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

Consensus Governments

Mr. Dumville: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I was a believer of majority governments. The premise was that governments needed the ability to move forward positive initiatives for the public good. Also, as one who has chaired the majority of legislative committees, I have observed a deteriorating cooperation of committee members over the past 10 years.

The abuse of power by former and present party administrations has convinced me that there is a better way.

I have gone on record of supporting a consensus government, as well as the Leader of Official Opposition. The real power and the direction of this government is with the Premier, his executive staff, and powerful business and professional friend.

The power is, not with this Legislature, not with Cabinet ministers, not with opposition MLAs, and certainly not with government MLA backbenchers.

I will be introducing a private members bill later today, based on other jurisdictions in the country, who work under consensus

government, requiring the Premier and government members to be elected by this Legislature and by secret ballot.

The time for one-person government is over. It is time to end the executive abomination of the elected Legislative Assembly, and return the real power back to all MLAs represented in this Legislature.

It is time for all MLAs to serve the residents of this province.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Belfast-Murray River and the Opposition House Leader.

Point Prim Bottle Village

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I am pleased to raise today and recognize Gar and Bonnie Gillis and their bottle village in Point Prim PEI.

Gar opened the village over 15 years ago, after seeing the original bottle house in the Evangeline area. He had gone through thousands and thousands of wine and beer bottles since his opening, and as Gar has said, he can honestly say he hasn't had one of them, since he hasn't had a drink for 40 years.

The little village in Point Prim has eight buildings, including a tea room, sports centre, school, and even a lighthouse all made of bottles cemented together. Tourist and visitors to his bottle village have told him that he should start a business, but Gar adamant not to, because he said it would be too many regulations and he didn't want the hassle of it.

Instead, Gar decided it would be best if he donated the money to the IWK Health Centre in Halifax.

Over the past number of years, Gar and Bonnie, through the bottle village have donated thousands of dollars to the IWK, in fact, this year, \$10,408 this year alone. Gar isn't quite sure how much time he spends working on the village, but some days he is out there until **5:30 a.m.**, mixing cement, getting ready for the day's work.

He doesn't mind, and says: You have to keep moving when you're retired, or you'll end up six feet under.

I want to thank Gar and Bonnie for the bottle village and more importantly for the bottle village and more importantly for his generosity through support of the IWK. We are extremely thankful for the hard work that he does.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

Island Potato Farmers

Mr. LaVie: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

When I have a chance to get up and speak of our farmers across PEI it's always a privilege.

I want to take this time to rise and recognize all of the potato farmers across PEI this year and the tireless work they have put in trying to get their crop harvested this fall.

Almost 10% of the crop is still left in the ground, some 85,000 acres.

I can't remember seeing a fall this wet and windy in my lifetime. The conditions our farmers have had to face have been relentless. Almost every second day we saw rain, wind, cold and even snow at some times.

The potato industry is worth over \$1 billion to the PEI economy and employs thousands of islanders.

PEI is a tight-knit community and we have a tradition of helping each other when someone is in need. That tradition continued when we saw farmers reach out to their neighbours when they were in need.

We have seen the acts of generosity on Facebook and on Twitter of farmers who have finished their harvest, stepping up and helping others harvest their fields.

It's nice to see our farmers are resilient and they will put through this tough year. I hope the government is there to support them when they need it.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Responses to Questions Taken as Notice

Questions by Members

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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

Each day tens of thousands of vehicles travel back and forth across the Hillsborough Bridge. Traffic congestion and motor vehicle accidents are an all-too frequent occurrence.

Safety and traffic on Hillsborough Bridge

Question to the transportation minister: Minister, what options is your department working on to improve traffic flow and safety on the Hillsborough Bridge?

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

Ms. Biggar: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We have put together a committee to review the plans for the Hillsborough Bridge. It's called the Active Transportation Committee.

It's been working with the municipalities, Cycling PEI and Island Trails. An RFP for design was awarded this year and the task group themselves are expected to have those options ready for review within the next few weeks and then from that, there will be some other discussions being held as to what everyone has come up with to look at.

Thank you.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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

So it's clear that this minister does not have a plan.

Three things I often hear about from constituents: Dealing with the sewage issue, better active of transportation links between Stratford and Charlottetown and the safety

barrier recommended in the province's own suicide prevention strategy.

Question to the transportation minister: When will Islanders see progress on addressing these issues on the Hillsborough Bridge?

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

Ms. Biggar: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

This particular summer we've been doing strengthening of the actual bridge itself to be able to take the additional walking lane that is going to be installed and will also need to be strengthened in order to take the sewage line that is coming from Stratford.

The Stratford council has delayed that RFP and we'll be working, continuing to work with them whenever they're ready to proceed and we have a number of other communications that we have going on with them.

We do have a conceptual design – services that we have retained to do a conceptual design for a design of a trail across the Hillsborough Bridge and the causeway and again, our report will be out soon.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Our office obtained a copy of the 2017 bridge inspection report by the minister's own department and I'll quote: There is no project funding set aside in the five year plan for any structural modifications to the Hillsborough Bridge –

Some Hon. Members: Ooh.

Leader of the Opposition: – as a result of any future active transportation quarter or sanitary force main.

Funds for Hillsborough Bridge upgrades

Question to the transportation minister: Why has your department not set aside funds in its five year capital program for these very important and necessary projects?

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

Ms. Biggar: Mr. Speaker, in regard to infrastructure funding for upgrades to that particular bridge, that comes under a different department budget line. It doesn't come under the capital.

We work with the infrastructure on our funding partners with municipal, federal, provincial to set aside funds that we are working towards those particular projects.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Speaker: The hon. Member from Borden-Kinkora.

Mr. Fox: Good afternoon, Mr. Speaker.

As Leader of the Opposition said, we obtained the bridge inspection review, the written questions and its findings are very startling.

Inspection of Island bridges

Question to the transportation minister: How comfortable are you knowing that only less than one in five, 288 bridges are inspected every two years?

Ms. Biggar: We invest \$7 million annually in our bridge infrastructure.

We do ongoing bridge inspection programs. We have 11 structures that have been closed, to public notice, but we have an ongoing list of work that's going to be taking place and again as I noted, we do those inspections biannually. We hire and use professional contractors, engineers. Our own engineers are well qualified to keep on top of that are we are always working to maintain the safety of those structures.

An Hon. Member: Great.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Borden-Kinkora.

Mr. Fox: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Did you know that the ministers department says that 52% of those 288 bridges inspected in 2017 were assessed in fair or poor condition?

Poor condition of Island bridges

Question to the transportation minister: Doesn't that tell you that you have a big problem on your hands?

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

Ms. Biggar: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to look back since the hon. member may not recall that it wasn't until our government came into power that we started those annual bridge inspections.

Mr. Myers: So if somebody goes through a bridge today, you didn't do it. You're in charge when you want to be in charge.

Ms. Biggar: The overall conditions of bridges have improved since the monitoring program began and the rating system that's there actually there –

Mr. Myers: (Indistinct)

Ms. Biggar: – to maintain and ensure that they're structurally sound and that they are safe for traffic and we will continue to monitor that program.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Borden-Kinkora.

Mr. Fox: 53% of the bridges inspected were rated at high or medium risk.

Question to the transportation minister: Do you consider that an acceptable level of risk for the safety of Island bridges?

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

Ms. Biggar: Mr. Speaker, again as I said, we invest over \$7 million annually on our bridge infrastructure programs.

We continue to upgrade bridges in the member's own district. We did one in Tryon –

Mr. Fox: (Indistinct)

Ms. Biggar: – two on just Tryon, we have one that's going to be replaced next year and I'm sure he will be looking forward to see which one that is.

Our department is very conscientious on making sure that our bridge inspection program is the most efficient, most safe and most structurally sound that we can ensure that the travelling public are safe going across those structures.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Borden-Kinkora.

Mr. Fox: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

2,108 performance deficiencies were flagged by the bridge inspectors.

Question to the transportation minister: If these levels of problems are found in such a small sample couldn't, we'd be looking at much bigger problems across the whole bridge work of PEI?

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

Ms. Biggar: Mr. Speaker, when we're talking about structures we are also including in that, things like culverts that go across the road, a number of box culverts, wooden culverts, larger structures. That all encompasses all of the bridges and –

Mr. Myers: (Indistinct)

Ms. Biggar: – across Prince Edward Island.

Again, we do it on a semi-annual –

Mr. Myers: A potato truck going through them doesn't cause any issues (Indistinct)

Ms. Biggar: – basis.

We are confident and always keeping on track of what needs to be done right across Prince Edward Island and at times, if there is a concern, we will restrict it until we get in and move forward with a replacement or necessary repairs.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Borden-Kinkora.

Mr. Fox: Mr. Speaker, for over the last two years I've been urging government to replace the Searletown bridge and she kept on saying: It's fine. There's nothing wrong with it. She refused to look at it, and then we had a car fall through it.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Cost of temporary repairs to Searletown bridge

Mr. Fox: Question to the transportation minister: How much did the temporary repairs to the Searletown bridge cost this summer?

An Hon. Member: Good question.

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

Ms. Biggar: I'll take that information back, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Borden-Kinkora.

Mr. Fox: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm told that the costs were over \$18,000.

Repairs to Tryon bridge

What about the Tryon bridge down the (Indistinct) a car went over that and it practically fell through and cut the tires all from underneath it.

What are you doing about that bridge?

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

Ms. Biggar: I see, Mr. Speaker, that the member today is again having trouble with his facts.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Biggar: Cars did not go over the bridges, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Ms. Biggar: Cars did not go through the bridges.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Ms. Biggar: Mr. Speaker, as I noted, we are always conscientious of safety and if there's ever any doubt that there's a risk or a safety

risk, that bridge will be closed until we can get it fixed.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Borden-Kinkora.

Mr. Fox: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Well, that car did fall through that bridge and there were other cars that were damaged and they ended up restricting the bridge and reducing it.

2017 Searletown inspection report

The 2017 Searletown inspection report estimated the bridge and the recommended repairs of \$101,000.

Question to the transportation minister: Why was nothing done then?

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

Ms. Biggar: Mr. Speaker, right across Prince Edward Island we are investing in replacing bridges. We just did an \$8 million bridge down in Souris. We did one up in Cascumpec. We did one in Murray Harbour this summer, which is going to be officially done in December and I know that the Member from Belfast-Murray River is looking forward to having that done.

Those are all investments we're making in bridges, making sure that we are investing in communities, and we will continue to do that, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. R. Brown: Great.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Borden-Kinkora.

Mr. Fox: I think we need to remember that 53% of our bridges are in medium or high-risk categories across the whole Island.

Replacement of Searletown bridge

A question to the minister of transportation: Will you commit to this spring coming up to replacing, in whole, the whole thing, the Searletown bridge in District 19?

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

Ms. Biggar: Mr. Speaker, we have lots of work we're going to be doing this spring and I'll be looking forward to having those discussions when we get to the capital budget.

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

Communication with district road supervisors

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Question to the transportation minister: How often do you communicate directly with your department's district road supervisors?

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

Ms. Biggar: Mr. Speaker, normally, unless there's something that I need to specifically ask that a constituent from a particular district is looking for information, those modes of communication usually go through the deputy or through the supervisor.

Normally, at times obviously, I am CCed on those communications and when I reply back to something that has three or four different people on it, including the district road supervisors, I guess you could call that a communication.

But, normally on a day-to-day basis, I rarely communicate with those individuals.

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

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Well, we've been hearing some odd stories and we filed a freedom of information request for the minister's emails with all district road supervisors. We found odd things; 53 pages worth of frontline staff getting direct emails from the minister.

An Hon. Member: Whoa.

Mr. Myers: Oh.

Communication directly with line staff

Ms. Compton: Do you consider it appropriate to bypass your deputy and senior management to deal directly with line staff?

Mr. Myers: Oh.

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

Ms. Biggar: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Normally, if it's a district supervisor in my MLA district, that crosses three different supervisors in my own particular district so there's three district supervisors that boundary on my own individual MLA district. So, at times, when I get requests from my constituents for particular work, I will forward that to that particular district supervisor to follow up on, and that is how some of those email communications occur, not from me as a minister, but from me as an MLA.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

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

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

There are more than two dozen district road supervisors, but the funny thing is all we got back from our FOIPP were 53 pages of emails with Prince County road supervisors.

Approval of contracting of equipment via email

Question to the transportation minister: Do you routinely approve the contracting of equipment directly with road supervisors by email?

Mr. Myers: Oh.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Mr. Myers: I don't even think that's legal.

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

Ms. Biggar: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I work very closely with our Prince County supervisor. We were just up there, the

Premier and I, up to visit at the government garage. I was up to the Alma –

Mr. Myers: (Indistinct)

Ms. Biggar: – government barbeque this summer. We had a great visit up and touring with staff. We like to get out to the frontlines. I tour around, the same as other MLAs in this House get out and they tour around the district with their district supervisors.

I get messages all the time about who is driving around in trucks with whom –

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Ms. Biggar: – and I certainly –

Mr. LaVie: You drive around?

Ms. Biggar: – like to keep in touch with all of our staff to make sure that they're aware that I appreciate the work that they do on a day-to-day basis.

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

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I guess you communicate with the other road supervisors other than email because the 53 pages were from emails for the Prince County supervisors.

We have an email where that's just what happened.

A road supervisor has been approached by a private contractor about getting some work for a Bobcat with a sweeper and closed by saying: Just wanted to get your thoughts on this. You replied: I'm good with that.

Emails from contractors to minister

Question to the transportation minister: Do you get a lot of emails like that in the run of a day?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Some Hon. Members: Oh.

Mr. Myers: Here it is.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, I want to follow up on what the minister said because I did have the privilege to travel with her two weeks ago to visit the Prince County garage at Slemmon Park and we went from one office right into all of the bays in the garage right out to the wash bay and the minister is very familiar with the staff. She's a good –

Mr. Myers: No doubt she is.

Premier MacLauchlan: – representative of her area, of her county and of our province.

She's a very strong minister who's got hands-on and looking out for the interests of the travelling public of this province and she's got the highest respect, and I really saw that firsthand of the people who work in her department, and I really appreciated that and I hope the opposition does too.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Well, I'm glad the Premier found it – to get up. That was great because, Premier, you created an Ethics and Integrity Commissioner because of all the shady shenanigans that have been going on with this government for the past decade.

Ethics and Integrity Commissioner re: direct contact with minister

Question to the Premier: Will you show leadership and refer this matter to the Ethics and Integrity Commissioner for further review – the contact of road supervisors directly from the minister; 53 emails in her own Prince County area?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, I'm glad that the hon. member has raised the question of the Ethics and Integrity Commissioner. That was one of the first things we did when we came to government –

Mr. Myers: (Indistinct)

Premier MacLauchlan: – on March 31st of 2015.

It wasn't because of shady practices. It was because we believe in good public service, we believe in supporting our public service.

Mr. Fox: (Indistinct)

Premier MacLauchlan: We believe in serving the public, in an open and transparent fashion, and I am pleased to say that the Ethics and Integrity Commissioner has done a great job now, over three years and has supported our work. We are really proud of what she is doing and the ways in which our public servants continue to do a great job in their jobs and in serving the public.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Parkdale.

Ms. Bell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Yesterday in Question Period, the Minister of Family and Human Services spoke at length about this government's upcoming investments in poverty reduction.

The minister mentioned increases to social assistance shelter rates, of 3% last June, and another 6% coming soon. The 6% is the total called for in the five-year Poverty Reduction Action Plan; that works out to 1.25% per year, likely far less than rental rates will increase in the current market.

In other words, Islanders on social assistance are not getting ahead. They are merely not falling behind as quickly.

Increase in shelter rates vs. cost of housing

A question to the minister: Do you think your plan's 6% increase in shelter rates over the next five years will be enough to cover the cost of housing?

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

Ms. Mundy: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I am very proud of the Poverty Reduction Action Plan – first ever, I will add, in Prince Edward Island. I'm proud of the people who lent their voices to the action plan, and who stood up and carried the voices of Islanders to that action plan; 66 recommendations and this MLA, this hon. member, chooses to pick one.

We are looking across government at investments. We are looking across community to help us with those investments. It is not one department's – poverty cannot rest on the shoulders of one department. It is a cumulative effect and we are doing our part to make sure that Islanders can live in dignity.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Bell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Even with a cumulative 9% increase, shelter rates are still hundreds of dollars short of what Islanders actually have to pay for housing right now. The goal in the Poverty Reduction Action Plan is simply not enough.

A question to the minister: What is your timeline for increasing shelter rates to the point of actually covering the full cost of housing?

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

Ms. Mundy: Mr. Speaker, we are currently rolling out rent supplements which are helping Islanders, who are living in safe, appropriate housing right now, who cannot afford it.

We are already on target to meet our target of 275 for this year, and we are doubling that amount for next year. We are also increasing, as the Premier mentioned yesterday, 4,000 homes in Prince Edward Island, that have received renovations through our home renovation programs, because of the investments we have made.

Poverty is not just about shelter. Yes, that helps, but it is a cumulative effect. We are doing many things; this is a five-year plan.

We are not going to do everything overnight.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Bell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The latest report of the Auditor General noted that rates for clothing, household and personal items have not been increased in over a decade. There is no mention of these in the poverty reduction 66 action items.

Rates for clothing and personal items

A question to the minister: Why does your poverty reduction plan not address these glaring deficits?

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

Ms. Mundy: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As the hon. Member from Charlottetown-Lewis Point pointed out yesterday, this member comes into the House and misleads Islanders.

That is not a fact. In fact, we are in our fifth year of increases to food allowances; \$2.8 million we have invested into food allowances.

We have also invested, as I said, in our home renovation – we are increased our shelter rates, we have a generic drug program; we have increased our personal exemptions, so that now 5,200 Islanders are not paying any taxes at all. We have reduced our electrical rates.

Again, this member comes into the House; she focuses on one area and often doesn't even get that right.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct)

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

A few weeks ago, the provincial government published an advert in *The Guardian* regarding its climate plan. An ad generously funded, I might say, by the taxpayers of Prince Edward Island.

The ad extols the Liberal plan while decrying the cost of and I quote: All other plans – unquote.

Government ads in *The Guardian*

Could the Premier please tell us, whether he believes that this was a partisan ad?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, that ad was place and there are others that will be placed in a series that is about our energy plan, about our climate change action plan, and about the steps that are being taken by Islanders –

Mr. Myers: Call for an election and pay for it yourself.

Premier MacLauchlan: – in response to incentives offered by this government and we're proud –

Mr. Trivers: It was shameful.

Premier MacLauchlan: – of the number of Islanders who are indeed, taking up those incentives –

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct)

Mr. Myers: I was embarrassed for you.

Premier MacLauchlan: – who are reducing our carbon footprint and that's exactly what this is about. It is about public engagement to ensure that we are meeting our climate targets.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you, Premier.

Ms. Biggar: (Indistinct)

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

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

As one local journalist commented on Twitter, and again, I quote: Hard to see this misleading graphic – misleading graphic – as anything other than an election ad – unquote. Under our forthcoming advertising standards bill, which we will table today, an ad would be considered partisan and thus prohibited, this ad that appeared in *The Guardian*, and I will be tabling it later today.

Public money on partisan ads

A question to the Premier: Do you think the Provincial Government should spend public money on partisan ads?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, I believe the provincial government should and does, spend money on public engagement, on public information – enabling Prince Edward Islanders to know the options that are open to them, the incentives that are available to them, the steps that they can take –

Mr. Myers: (Indistinct)

Premier MacLauchlan: – to achieve our carbon emissions target –

Mr. Myers: (Indistinct)

Premier MacLauchlan: – and I hope that's –

Mr. Trivers: It was even worse than the flyer.

Premier MacLauchlan: – the Leader of the Third Party would agree with.

This is about public engagement. But it seems to me that the Leader of the Third Party thinks that anything you do to communicate with the public or to inform them of what is taking place in their interest, or to give them an opportunity to act, is partisan –

Mr. Trivers: You didn't even (Indistinct)

Premier MacLauchlan: It's only partisan because he doesn't like it.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

I don't think any of us would have any problems at all if it were indeed public engagement or public education, but this was clearly not.

The advertising bill that we will be tabling was informed in part by advertising legislation brought forward in other provinces, as well as Robert Ghiz's 2004 advertising bill.

In the past, the Liberal Party of this province has supporting holding government to account on how it spends tax payers dollars on government ads.

Advertising accountability

Does the MacLauchlan team no longer support advertising accountability?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, I might point out that one of our first initiatives was called: Be aware, get your share. That engage Prince Edward Islanders in benefits that are available to them to the point where –

Mr. Myers: Even Robert Ghiz (Indistinct)

Premier MacLauchlan: – that we had a 7% increase in income tax filing, so that Islanders access benefit.

But let me go back to the ad that the hon. member is asking about. I think his problem is that he does have a plan, which envisages Islanders paying on the order of \$47 million in additional taxes.

We were letting Islanders know that the agreement that we had reached and had approved from Ottawa is a much different arrangement, which will meet our climate targets, which doesn't have the tax burdens, and will achieve environmental leadership and energy democracy in our province.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Myers: I think you just invented energy democracy.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Vernon River-Stratford.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

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

My questions are to the hon. Premier.

Our province, although one of the smallest jurisdictions in Canada, is a producer of some of the best agriculture and fisheries products, as well as many other manufactured products.

Meanwhile, the territories in our North are experiencing a level of food security that is unacceptable in such a rich country as Canada.

Food security in the Northern territories

Premier, frequently you meet with Canada's first ministers, has food security in the North made it to the minister's table since you took a seat at that table?

Speaker: The Hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for raising this question.

It has indeed been raised, this question of food security in the north, and it's one that for which I have a great deal of appreciation.

The senior person at our first minister's table now is the hon. Bob McLeod, the Premier of Northwest Territories. This is something he has raised on a regular basis. The premiers of Nunavut have, in succession, raised these issues, as has the Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador.

This indeed is something that is on our minds collectively, and it's something that we, as Prince Edward Islanders, are happy have raised at the national level, and to see if there are any opportunities we can contribute to solutions.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Vernon River-Stratford, your first supplementary.

Mr. McIsaac: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Several of us as MLAs of this House, including yourself, Mr. Speaker, had the opportunity last month to visit Iqaluit, the capital of Nunavut, and experience firsthand the high cost of foodstuffs and other products for the residents due in large part to transportation costs.

Trade deals with products to the north

If we can negotiate trade deals like CETA, TPP, USMCA – is there not some way, with the help of the federal government, to possibly link our high quality products here on the Island with our neighbours in the north.

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: This is something that would be entirely in line with the work that's being done through the food partnership towards Canada's Food Island.

There is a program that is under – now under the responsibility of the hon. Dominic LeBlanc in his role as intergovernmental affairs also has northern affairs and internal trade. It's called the Nutrition North Canada program. It's something that I've heard within the past month – Minister LeBlanc speak about on the program – the House – where he says that that program has lost its way, and indeed, I understand it's in his mandate letter to work with the northern communities to do better with that program.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Vernon River-Stratford, your second supplementary.

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

I'm glad to hear that because I think it's something that we can do as a small province to be a bit of a leader in this way because it's definitely needed.

Last Thursday, a fire in the Northmart store in Iqaluit – one of their main supply stores suffered a major fire, putting more pressure

on the level of food security in the north. This one disaster is a prime example of how quickly a bad situation can be made worse.

Shipment of produce to Iqaluit after fire

Premier, last year the province joined with the Island producers to send a shipment of produce to Georgia to help our southern neighbours after the devastation of Hurricane Irma. Is this something the province could spearhead again for our family in the north after last (Indistinct)

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, I'm aware of that fire at the Northmart store; in fact I've been in it and observed the high price of food in the north that's been commented on regularly.

Indeed, the organizations in the farming community, and many of the farmers, the producers and organizations combined last year to respond to, first Hurricane Irma in Florida and Hurricane Maria in Puerto Rico, to send shipments of food. Indeed, this is something that we'd be willing – of course, has been said a number of times in this House, the farmers have had a late fall and a tough season. But I believe now that we're getting to the point that we are, this is something that we as a government, and that Prince Edward Islanders as a people would be happy to explore to respond to the dire situation in the north.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

So we've been hearing a lot of grumbling from construction companies about the Cornwall bypass, in particular, the large slice of pie that has been cut out by the minister for the premier's cousin.

Concerns from construction companies re: Cornwall bypass

Question to the minister: Have you heard these same concerns?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. MacDonald: It's great, Mr. Speaker, to be able to rise to talk about the arterial highway after the hon. Leader of the Opposition talked about the importance of safety in his community. The hon. Member from Borden-Kinkora talked about the importance of safety in his community. I felt obligated to stand and talk about the importance in my community.

The arterial highway will reduce cars to 10-15,000 per day travelling through a road that was built in 1955. I find it's troubling to hear what the opposition has to say in relevance to the safety of my community. I felt the importance, not only that, but there's markets that are being –

Mr. Trivers: Can't even get a speed radar sign.

Mr. MacDonald: There's the hon. member that was talking – criticizing, trying to make a link to the arterial highway with seniors going to Moncton on a trip.

Mr. Trivers: Absolutely.

Mr. MacDonald: Absolutely. So you're criticizing seniors going to Moncton on a trip from the community of Cornwall.

No further comments.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Myers: What a joke that little diatribe was because the question is about the cost and the fact that it was all carved out and given to the Premier's cousin, it's nothing about the safety about your community. It's how you guys are carving up the money and putting all this money into deep Liberal pockets that have close connections with the Premier.

Island Coastal and Cornwall bypass

According to the answer to a written question, Island Coastal received 45% of the \$75 million worth of work. Do you consider that a disproportionate share for one company to get on a multi-million dollar project?

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

Ms. Biggar: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

This particular project will improve the safety of the residents of Cornwall, taking over 27,000 cars that go there on a daily basis – down the middle of their community.

This particular project is a federal-provincial project; everything is forwarded to Ottawa for auditing. Anything that goes out is tendered and all those tendered come back and whoever is the lowest bidder on these tenders are the companies that are bidding and the companies that get the tender.

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

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

So the Premier's cousin got pretty near half of the work so far, but the other half was split between 31 contractors.

Paving tenders off Cornwall road

Question to the minister: Who won the tender to pave the onramps and roundabouts off the Cornwall road?

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

Ms. Biggar: Again, as I said all those are tendered work pieces that go out.

This project, also, is employing Islanders right across PEI and putting money in the pockets of families that are working on those particular projects with those great construction companies that are all contributing and putting forward tenders on these projects – a project that is going to increase efficiency, increase safety, and community and allowing Cornwall to expand.

It's on a construction boom. Look at that housing that's going up out there; the improvements that are going on and going to increase safety around the school. We will continue to work with that community.

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

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Another disgusting display at attempt to answer a question here in the Legislature when I simply asked who won the tender. The reason she can't answer the question is there was in fact no tender – she gave it away to one of the companies who was complaining about the big piece of pie that was cut for the Premier's cousin.

So what she did, she took nearly \$2 million worth of work untendered and handed it out to her other Liberal friend.

Question to the minister: Can you confirm that you didn't tender it and you, instead, handed it out to another good Liberal friend?

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

Ms. Biggar: Again, as I said, this is a project that's in partnership with the federal government. All the work that we do is forwarded, it's audited, it is looked at through the audits in Ottawa. All the procedures that are put in place are followed that are required by us as a funding partner, a partnership with the federal government on the largest project that we – and funding right across PEI because of our partnership with the federal government on the new Build Canada projects, we're able to do this improvement, improvements in your community, improvements in everybody's community and we'll continue to do that work.

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

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

So late, late, late in the summer there was barges landing in the Charlottetown Harbour loaded with gravel and one big Liberal contractor was loading up piles of gravel in their backyard.

Other contractors were calling me, saying: why is it that such-and-such is loading up on gravel? There's no more work – there's no more work to be called, why would you load up on gravel this time of year? Low-and-

behold, all of a sudden they're out doing the onramps and paving out in Cornwall, untendered.

Island Coastal and Cornwall bypass (further)

Question to the minister: Will you admit to this House that you broke the law and gave \$2 million worth of work to a Liberal company – illegally – to pave the onramps to the bypass in Cornwall?

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

Ms. Biggar: We just did paving on the Cornwall Trans-Canada Highway extension to do an extra phase –

Mr. Fox: We have the pictures.

Ms. Biggar: – last week we just finished it up, we're ahead of schedule on that particular project and we are very pleased with the progress that we have made – it's going to make travelling safer for the people of Cornwall.

Mr. Fox: Untendered.

Ms. Biggar: Again, all our work that we have put forward is audited by the federal government as a funding partner.

Mr. Fox: How are you going to cover that up?

Speaker: The hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Leader of the Third Party was talking about partisan advertising for government and I couldn't let it go by with the answers from the Premier.

The ad, I think one of the one ads you were talking about in particular was the carbon tax affect ad that ran in *The Guardian* talking about all of their plans. It was just a really awkward looking ad for a government to put out.

Carbon tax ad in *The Guardian* (further)

Can the Premier tell me: Did you actually see that ad before it went to print?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: I did not see that ad before it went to print and that would not be unusual, it's not something that the Premier does in the normal course.

Let me say, I opened the paper that Saturday morning, we had been preoccupied with that question, I think it was on the Tuesday if I'm not mistaken, that the national approach was announced and indeed there were four provinces that were subjected to the federal backstop.

So it's not hard for me to understand what it says about the other plans and indeed if the official opposition had pursued its course – which is to do nothing – they would have had the backstop and if the Third Party had pursued their course, which was publicly advertised, they would have had the federal backstop or its equivalent.

It's not hard to see what all other plans are; it's the plans that are in New Brunswick, Ontario, Saskatchewan and Manitoba.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid, your final question.

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Ignoring all that stuff – Premier, I would expect this honestly from someone who's been sitting in the chair for 11 years, there's other people over there that might say: yeah whatever that's an ad, yeah give it to them.

There's no way in the world you would approve this three years ago when you were elected. Not a chance in the world if you had have seen that, that you wouldn't have said: No not that one, not that one.

I get that you're up here explaining it but let's be very, very honest, if you had have seen that ad, there's no way you would have approved that three years ago – and I'm even guessing if you had of seen it before it went this time, you would've said: No, don't print that.

Speaker: Do you have a question?

Mr. MacEwen: That was it. He wouldn't approve it.

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: I will say a word, I have no question, but I might as well, I've got 25 seconds.

Let's remember the context of all this. There had been attention nationally; headlines have been talked in this House for three years about: is it going to be this, is it going to be that and who's going to do what.

On that date in October when the federal government indicated what the deal was going to be or what was accepted or not accepted in the provinces across Canada – Prince Edward Islanders had good reason to be relieved in a context where there had been a lot of different ideas suggested, in fact a lot of them from across the floor.

So for the government to say to Islanders – this is the deal for Prince Edward Islanders, a deal that is going to be acted on in this House and you'll have a chance to have your say on it then, we'll see if you're for it or not – that is providing information to Prince Edward Islanders and we think that's the proper thing to do when you have a chance to do something of this significance for their benefit.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Myers: Especially when it's their money.

Point of Order

Ms. Bell: Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Yes, go ahead.

Ms. Bell: I will rise on a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Yeah go ahead.

Ms. Bell: Mr. Speaker, during my last question in Question Period on my supplementary, I made statements regarding

the information available to us through the Auditor General's Report and the poverty action plan, regarding the clothing, household and personal allowances made available to those on social assistance.

The Minister of Family and Human Services has said that had I misled to the House. I have confirmed my facts, as I always do, and I would request that she withdraw that remark as there is no mention of the clothing, household and personal items for social assistance clients in the poverty action plan.

Mr. Myers: Notwithstanding the fact that it's unparliamentary.

Speaker: Go ahead, hon. member, would you wish to respond to this?

Ms. Mundy: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Actually the personal comfort allowance has been raised not once, but twice, during our mandate, so I stand with my comment that she is misleading the House.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Trivers: Wow.

Ms. Mundy: Sorry, misleading Islanders.

An Hon. Member: No, no, you can't say that (Indistinct)

Ms. Mundy: Sorry, I guess I have to withdraw that and just say that the facts were not correct.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Yeah in this particular case hon. member, I'm going to review the point of order and I'll report back.

Ms. Bell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Statements by Ministers

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

Enhanced Funding for PEI Rape and Sexual Assault Centre

Ms. Mundy: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Today I rise to announce that our government is investing more than \$216,000 in additional funding for the PEI Rape and Sexual Assault Centre.

These funds will help the center increase access to specialized therapeutic services for Islanders who have experienced sexual assault as well as for adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse.

Often these community partners are the unsung heroes of our province – quietly working behind the scenes to make a profound impact on lives.

I'd like to acknowledge that Anne MacAuley and Amanda Brazil are in the gallery today – both members of the PEI Rape and Sexual Assault Board.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Mundy: I thank you for being here with us today and we know that Sigrid Rolfe, operations coordinator, wishes she could have been here too, but is out of province.

Timely trauma counseling services are crucial to ease the impact of traumatic experience of sexual assault and are needed to support recovery.

The PEI Rape and Sexual Assault Centre will put these funds to immediate use by hiring an additional trauma therapist which will improve access to services for Islanders, increasing staff hours at the centre to be there for Islanders calls for assistance and supporting culturally appropriate trauma therapy for Indigenous persons across Prince Edward Island.

This funding will also go towards expanding Men Matter, a confidential group program in Charlottetown, which will now offer services in Summerside.

Men Matter is led by experienced professionals for male survivors of sexual assault and childhood sexual abuse.

It is my hope that Islanders who have experienced sexual assault will receive some comfort knowing that services are there to support them on their journey toward healing.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I want to thank the minister for her announcement it's been a long time coming.

I know we talked about the Rape and Sexual Assault Centre a number of times and the lacking of the hours they need and the staffing and I want to welcome the members here that sit on that board and do the volunteer work that they do.

We know the impact of families and individuals is great and the sooner that something can be recorded and we can deal with the therapy that's needed, it will improve the lives of those people. To have a specialist and increase the hours and provide more money for them, matter, I think are all wonderful initiatives and I encourage the minister to continue to work with the Rape and Sexual Assault Centre and all of those wonderful organizations that make a difference in the lives of Islanders.

Thank you.

Speaker: The hon. from Charlottetown-Parkdale.

Ms. Bell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'd also like to thank the minister and her department for having stepped up and provided support for essential programming and services that are offered by this invaluable community partner – one of many that deliver programs and services into our communities that otherwise just would not be there

We also know that there are many discussions happening at the moment about ongoing funding and operational and core funding to make sure that this work can continue and have that multi-year impact.

Programs often get going and then finish so we really are looking forward to seeing in future that those conversations are also happening so that the programming and the good work that comes from those can continue into the years forward.

So, it's great to see this coming forward and it is a significant investment and one that we really value, so much appreciation.

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

School Food Program

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

I would like to recognize the excellent progress being made to develop a comprehensive and sustainable School Food Program that will increase students' food literacy and provide them with food made from scratch using fresh, local, healthy Island products.

Partners are now working on collecting input from community; determining infrastructure and training needs and preparing pilot projects. Several decisions are now being made.

A centralized kitchen model is being explored where food is prepared at a central school and delivered to satellite schools. Nine champion schools have stepped forward to pilot the model in September 2019, including East Wiltshire Intermediate, which would prepare meals for students at Eliot River; Kinkora Intermediate and Senior High, which would supply meals to Somerset Elementary and Amherst Cove; and Montague Regional, which would deliver to Montague Consolidated, Montague Intermediate and Southern Kings Consolidated.

A cost-shared model will be used and supported by government and community partners.

Programs will be coordinated by new non-profit organizations that would hire chefs and cooks to deliver the program.

The school nutrition policy will be revised. Food literacy will be integrated across the curriculum and culinary students will be involved in planning and preparing school food.

A pay-what-you-can, or similar model, will allow families to anonymously pay what they can when placing orders online.

Projects will be piloted next year to test the delivery model; engage and gather feedback from students, families and staff; determine food service infrastructure needed; collect baseline data; and inform the roll-out to all Island schools.

The plan is now taking good shape and schools are being identified to test the centralized kitchen concept early in the New Year.

Student engagement has been a key part of the planning process, along with input from Home and School and school communities over the past number of years.

Based on this input, we will have a comprehensive community-based program that will help students learn to eat healthy at a young age; provide youth with healthy meals to support their learning; create equity for students living in food insecure conditions so that they can belong and thrive along with their peers.

We know that schools have great capacity to impact our children's health and well-being and this initiative is a key plank in our new Poverty Reduction Action Plan.

We appreciate the contributions of educators, Home and School and many partners who are working with us to make this possible.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque.

Mr. MacKay: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's a great announcement, minister. It's vital for our children's health to have good nutrition while going to school. There are too many kids in this province going to school hungry.

I hope this program eventually – I know it's a trial program – but hopefully it does make its way and that every school on Prince Edward Island can adopt this and hopefully it happens in the very near future.

I also thought it would be a good time just to say thank you to all the volunteers that do help at all the school programs as well. I

know in Kensington alone, it's not only parents that go and help with the breakfast programs. There are quite a few seniors that go and they do a great job helping out and getting the students' meals prepared in the morning, so I think it's certainly a great initiative and hopefully it keeps up.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

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

I mean, this is a great announcement; perhaps one of the ministerial announcements of which I've been most excited since I got elected three years ago.

Good policies should solve problems, and great policies, and I think this is a great announcement containing a great policy. They solve multiple problems at once and they create long-term benefits in a number of areas, and that's exactly what the universal local food program does in our schools.

I really want to thank the minister for this announcement. I know we've talked about it on a number of times in this House and this is, for me, a huge step forward.

If we look at the benefits, there are educational benefits, of course, derived from better nutrition to our children, particularly in a province where we have such a high percentage of children who are living with food insecurity. There are opportunities to learn in the preparation of that food, and the minister mentioned that in his announcement; and also about where food comes from, about the health of the soil and the water of this land. They learn about cooking. They can learn about cooperating with others; so many educational opportunities.

Economically, this could be a real boost to this province. If we are going to source a large, significant percentage of the food for this program from local sources, and I heard that from the minister, then the opportunities for not just the money that we spend directly, but the multiplier effect providing markets for our farmers here is enormous.

There are educational and economic benefits. There are also environmental benefits, of course, to promote stewardship of the land and again, give those farmers access to markets. It's such a critical thing for farmers these days, and providing them with a local market for their fresh produce is enormously important.

Of course, then, there are health benefits as well to those Island children who access healthy food.

As Tony Geraci said when he was here, PEI has this amazing – I'm quoting: this amazing opportunity to make a global statement about Prince Edward Island when it comes to local food. And that statement, of course, is about pride of place and it's about self reliance, and it's about progressive policies just like this.

So, thank you so much, minister. It's a wonderful announcement.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Opioid Action Plan Progress/Addiction Awareness Week

Mr. Mitchell: Mr. Speaker, across our country this past year opioids have been taking the lives of thousands of Canadians.

We are fortunate that here in PEI the impact of illicit fentanyl and opioid deaths have been minimal, but that does not mean that we can become complacent.

One year ago we released the PEI Action Plan to Prevent and Mitigate Opioid Overdoses and Deaths. This comprehensive approach to this crisis, is not only helping to save lives, but it is also diminishing the impact that these drugs are having on Island families and entire communities.

Opioids are drugs such as oxycodone, hydrocodone, morphine, fentanyl, and carfentanyl. When medically prescribed and used properly, opioids can be very beneficial for a patient requiring pain management. But, when opioids are misused, particularly in combination with other drugs, they can be deadly.

The key to addressing this challenging situation is collaboration. We must continue working with health providers, law enforcement, and community partners to keep Islanders safe, and to prevent the spread of opioid abuse in our province.

Earlier this month we released our one-year progress report on the opioid action plan. It is available on our website and I will table it here today.

It outlines the tremendous amount of work completed this past year and the ongoing work plan for the year ahead. I would like to highlight a few pieces of that report.

This year we enhanced surveillance and reporting of overdoses and deaths, linking data from the Chief Public Health Office, emergency departments, Island EMS, and our trauma registry so that we can see more clearly what is happening across our province.

Mr. LaVie: We know what's happening (Indistinct)

Mr. Mitchell: We have established, tested, and refined a rapid response protocol which we used in May to inform the public of presence of laced cocaine in our province.

We have launched a take-home naloxone program and to-date, close to 800 naloxone kits have been distributed. We know of at least 12 which have been administered.

We have developed a plan to increase public awareness on use and misuse of opioids.

The Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome Committee has developed materials for new parents and caregivers, and Health PEI has established a prescription monitoring report on narcotics to avoid duplicate prescriptions, potentially harmful medication interactions, and possible diversions.

We know that although a great deal of work has been done, there is still more work to do and we are committed to building on initiatives to help prevent opioid overdose.

I empathize with families who are struggling with the impact of addiction, and to those whom have lost a friend or a family member to an overdose.

As we approach the National Addictions Awareness Week which starts November 26th, this is a time for all of us to recognize those who are suffering from addiction, as well as those who work in the addiction field, and to do what we can to help reduce the stigma associated with addiction and recovery.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

Mr. LaVie: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I commend the minister for what he is doing in addictions, but over my last seven-seven and a half years as MLA I've been listening to these words and we've been collecting data for seven years now – we've been collecting records for seven years now and what we do for mental health and addictions is great, but it's putting band aids on what we really need.

These people need help and they need help fast. Our suicides right across Prince Edward Island should not be happening at the vast they are happening.

I have friends in recovery right now and I am a recovering and I know all about addictions, both alcohol and opioids. So I've been down that road. I'm a lucky one.

I sat with a parent, only a week ago – I sat with this parent for a year and at the end of our conversation we were both in tears. As an MLA, we get to help a lot of people in our district, a lot of people across our Island. When it comes to this parent, this is where I feel like a failure – when I can't help this parent.

These are good people. It'll happen to any one of us in this room. It can happen – don't think it can't. All it takes is one pill and that's speaking from experience – one pill.

That's what happened to this young girl. Now she's hung up on a lot of pills. These parents are scared every night they go to sleep of what's going to happen with their daughter.

I know how that parent feels about a daughter because I have my own daughter in

that same boat. I know what it's like to go to bed every night and not sleep.

So, this is happening seven years ago, it's still happening today. I have the same feeling as an MLA, I cannot help these people. I sat in committee meetings and I heard their heart wrenching stories from these parents. That wasn't yesterday or last week or last year, that was two-three-four-five years ago I sat down and listened to these parents and it's still happening today.

But what do we do as a government? We cut our health care, we cut our RCMP – RCMP are vital across this province and here we are we're cutting them. We got to get our priorities straight in this province. What we do is band aid jobs. We got to get to the root of the problem. We got to get our priorities right.

I respect the minister. I know in health care it's a big portfolio. It's our biggest money budget. I commend the minister for standing up and doing what he can – he only has so much to work with, but we got to think about our priorities on PEI and help the minister do better for these people on PEI with mental health.

Thank you.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

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

For the first time in living history, life expectancy in Canada is actually going to go down. The reason for that is because of the deaths of young people through, particularly, a fentanyl problem and especially out west.

That it would have that profound an impact on a statistic like life expectancy in a country as big as Canada is a measure of how serious this problem is. Of course, here on Prince Edward Island we're not immune to that.

I appreciate the minister's announcement on this and as we all know addictions do not discriminate. There is no facet of society; there is no part of our community that is immune to the effects of addictions. Life is

hard – to paraphrase that Buddhist phrase: “Life is suffering”. That’s true regardless of who you are or where you live or how you live.

Addictions are an attempt to escape, in most instances, from that difficulty of life. Life is hard. Addictions are an attempt for us to escape, to flee from that lived reality of pain that so many feel on a daily basis.

It’s an enormously complex problem to deal with. It’s tied in with all sorts of other issues: poverty, of course, and a number of very intractable problems.

It would be very unfair for me to stand up here and accuse this minister of not doing enough. I think that’s inappropriate in this case. I think this is a problem that is caused by a wide array of issues, and needs to be dealt with in that manner.

I just hope that we recognize that – and thankfully there’s been a new awareness about addictions, we no longer treat those people as though they have a deficiency of character or they’re morally deficient or something like that. We recognize that addictions are a disease and treat the people with the respect and the love and the care that they deserve.

Again, I appreciate the minister’s announcement, but absolutely understand how complex this problem is.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Recognition of Guests (II)

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Rise in recognition of two people who weren’t in the gallery when we started out: Gordon McNeilly who’s for three years led the United Way in our province as the chair of that campaign and involved in many other ways in the community and looking to get further involved in public life and we welcome that. Welcome to Gordon, and Bethany Collicutt-McNab, who’s been here earlier in the week and great to see you back, Bethany.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Presenting and Receiving Petitions

Tabling of Documents

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. MacDonald: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I just wanted to table the Housing Action Plan, yesterday the third party made reference that there was no inclusion of, or reference to, housing related to post-secondary housing and it’s on page five.

Mr. Speaker, thank you.

Mr. MacDonald: Seconded by the Minister of Health and Wellness.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Minister of Communities, Land and Environment.

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

A request made yesterday by the opposition that we table the documents or the proposal from Cavendish Farms concerning their pilot project on testing the deepwater wells.

Mr. Speaker, by leave of the House, I beg leave to table the report from Cavendish Farms and I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Finance, that the said document be now received and do lie on the Table.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Mr. R. Brown: I think that’ll explain everything – the request from yesterday.

Thank you.

Mr. Myers: Hope you get a second chance for that interview.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Mitchell: Mr. Speaker, by leave of the House, I beg leave to table a document entitled October 2018 Progress Report: Prince Edward Island Action Plan to Prevent and Mitigate Opioid-Related Overdoses and

Deaths and I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries, that the said document be now received and do lie on the Table.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you.

Mr. Speaker by leave of the House, I beg leave to table the government advertisement that I referenced earlier in Question Period and I move, seconded by the Honourable Member from Charlottetown-Parkdale, that the said document be now received and do lie on the Table.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Reports by Committees

Introduction of Government Bills

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

Mr. J. Brown: Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce a bill to be intituled an *Act to Amend the Securities Act* and I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Workforce and Advanced Learning, that the same be now received and read a first time.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk: *An Act to Amend the Securities Act*, Bill No. 47, read a first time.

Speaker: Could you give me an explanation, please, hon. minister.

Mr. J. Brown: Yes, Mr. Speaker.

This Bill amends the *Securities Act* to have enforcement orders from other provinces apply automatically in Prince Edward Island, and enhance enforcement powers and recognize self-regulatory organizations.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you, minister.

The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Mitchell: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce a bill to be intituled an *Act to Amend the Regulated Health Professions Act (No.2)* and I move, seconded by the Honourable Member from Charlottetown-Lewis Point, that the same be now received and read a first time.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk: *An Act to Amend the Regulated Health Professions Act (No.2)*, Bill No. 48, read a first time.

Speaker: And an explanation of this Bill, hon. minister.

Mr. Mitchell: Yes, Mr. Speaker.

We're putting forward a number of amendments to this bill, which are primarily administrative in nature and they include such things as: the correction of two cross-referencing errors, clarification on how a hearing committee should be appointed when a (Indistinct) is transitioning to the *Regulated Health Professions Act*, and allowing to cancel to a point, either a public representative or (Indistinct) to a disciplinary committee. I might also add; that the college is currently, under the act, have unanimously approved the proposed amendments.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. R. Brown: Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce a bill to be intituled and *Act to Amend the Unsightly Property Act* and I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy, that the same be now received and read a first time.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk: *Act to Amend the Unsightly Property Act*, Bill No. 30, read a first time.

Speaker: Hon. minister, could you give us a brief explanation as to what this Bill is about.

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

These amendments were made to the *Unsanitary Property Act* in order to work with the residents that orders have been issued to clean up their properties. We only have 30 days to have them cleaned up, and if they're not cleaned up, the government will move in and clean them up. We would rather work with the property owners and have them clean up their own properties before we have to step in. So this give us more time to work with the property owners that have unsanitary properties to clean up their properties before we move in with an official order.

Thank you.

Speaker: Thank you, minister.

Motions Other Than Government

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

Mr. Dumville: Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce a bill to be intituled an *Act to Amend the Executive Council Act* 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 (Reddin): *An Act to Amend the Executive Council Act*, Bill No. 125, read a first time.

Speaker: Hon. member, could you give us an explanation about this bill.

Mr. Dumville: Yes, Mr. Speaker.

Section 1 repeals section 1 of the *Executive Council Act* and replaces it with a new section that provides: that the Executive Council of the province shall consist of the Premier, chosen from the members of the Legislative Assembly, appointed by the Lieutenant Governor on the recommendation of the Legislative

Assembly, and not less than seven or nine other persons appointed by minister of the Lieutenant Governor or the recommendation of the Legislative Assembly.

Section 2 repeals section 8(2.1) of the act. The subsection permitted the Lieutenant Governor in Council to appoint not more than two members of the Legislative Assembly, who are ministers or members of Treasury Board.

Section 3 repeals subsection 9(2) of the act. The subsection permitted the Lieutenant Governor in Council to appoint not more than four members of the Legislative Assembly, who are not ministers, as members of a committee of the Executive Council, or to designate one of those members as chair person.

Simply, our first order of business is to elect a Speaker, second order of business would be to elect a Premier, and the next would be to (Indistinct) Executive Council, those wishing to withstand.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you, hon. Member.

The hon. Member from Borden-Kinkora.

Mr. Fox: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I beg leave to introduce a bill to be intituled the *Mental Health Court Act* and I move, seconded by the Honourable Member from Kensington-Malpeque, that the same be now received and read a first time.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk Assistant: *Mental Health Court Act*, Bill No. 117, read a first time.

Speaker: Hon. Member, could you give us a brief explanation about this Bill.

Mr. Fox: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Two other provinces in the country, this Bill was actually following the Province of Nova Scotia and Province of Ontario. It is a voluntary offender- based program for adults, persons 18 years of age and over, that would have been change with a criminal offense and have a mental disorder, that are

incompetent to participate in a criminal justice system. It's almost like the alternative measures program that was brought in a number of years ago.

For this program, mental disorder means a recognized, significant, and persistent mental illness. Examples of the significant mental illness include: schizophrenia or other psychotic disorders, bi-polar disorders, mental health and mental depression.

Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce a bill to be intituled *Mental Health App Act* and I move, seconded by the Honourable Member from Morell-Mermaid, that the same be now received and read a first time.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk Assistant: *Mental Health App Act*, Bill No. 119, read a first time.

Speaker: Hon. leader, would you give us a brief explanation?

Leader of the Opposition: Certainly, it would be my pleasure, Mr. Speaker.

Essentially, what this bill does, is it calls upon government, particularly the department of health, to initiate a software program that Islanders that are experiencing issues with mental health or addictions, they could access through social media, such as their electronic devices, a Smartphone or a tablet, or computer, to have a better understanding about what's available – in real-time, with regards to assistance around mental health and addiction issues.

Speaker: Thank you, hon. leader.

The hon. Member from Georgetown-St. Peters.

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I beg leave to introduce a bill to be intituled an *Act to Amend the Conflict of Interest Act (No. 3)* and I move, seconded by the Honourable Member from Morell-Mermaid,

that the same be now received and read a first time.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk Assistant: *An to Amend the Conflict of Interest Act (No. 3)*, Bill No. 118, read a first time.

Speaker: Hon. Member, a brief explanation about the bill.

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

This bill increases accountability and transparency by having a cooling-off provisions of the *Conflict of Interest Act* apply to the executive division employee of government. This means that senior government officials cannot leave government and immediately receive contracts or become involved in lobbying, or make representations to the government, or accept certain contracts for a period of six months following their departure from government.

Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

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

I beg leave to introduce a bill to be intituled *Government Advertising Standards Act (No. 2)* and I move, seconded by the Honourable Member from Charlottetown-Parkdale, that the same be now received and read a first time.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk Assistant: *Government Advertising Standards Act (No. 2)*, Bill No. 126, read a first time.

Speaker: Hon. leader, a brief explanation about the Bill.

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

The *Government Advertising Standards Act* would do three things: establish standards for government advertisements, it would outline the role of the Auditor General and upholding those standards and the third thing, it would require all government ads to

state clearly that they are paid for by the government of PEI.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Orders Other than Government

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

Ms. Compton: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque, that the 22nd order of the day be now read.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk Assistant: Order No. 22, *An Act to Amend the Municipal Government Act (No. 4)* Bill No. 121, ordered for second reading.

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

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I move, seconded by the Honourable Member from Kensington-Malpeque, that the said bill be now read a second time.

I move, seconded by the Honourable Member from Kensington-Malpeque, that this House do now resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole House to take into consideration the said bill.

Speaker: Hon. member, it must be read a second time.

Ms. Compton: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Member from Kensington-Malpeque, that the said bill be now read a second time.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk Assistant: *An Act to Amend the Municipal Government Act (No. 4)*, Bill No. 121, read a second time.

Ms. Compton: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Member from Kensington-Malpeque, 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 Rustico-Emerald, if you wouldn't mind coming and Chairing this bill.

So you can't? Can I get someone to volunteer to Chair the bill?

Okay, the hon. member for Member from Georgetown-St. Peters, you can come and Chair this bill.

Chair (Myers): The House is now in a Committee of the Whole House to take into consideration a bill to be intituled *Act to Amend the Municipal Government Act (No. 4)*. Is it the pleasure of the committee that the bill be now read clause by clause?

Ms. Biggar: No.

Chair: Okay would you like to open it up with some statements?

Mr. Trivers: Yes, thank you Chair, I would really like to do that.

Chair: Okay.

Mr. Trivers: The purpose of this bill is obviously to amend the *Municipal Government Act* and really, it stems from meetings that I've had with small municipalities across the province and feedback I receive from them.

In particular, a meeting with the small municipality in St. Nicholas. I know that the minister was there a one of those meetings as well. The Minister of Communities, Land and Environment, really, I think, is trying to act in the best interest of these small municipalities and allow them to continue to exist without having to dissolve or amalgamate.

That's what they wanted in most cases, sometimes they want amalgamation.

Sometimes there is legislation, there's sections of the *Municipal Government Act* that introduce requirements to those municipalities which means they have to incur expenses that are beyond their current budgets and would require large increases in their taxes.

So the Minister has said that he is quite open to doing things and making changes to

legislation to allow them to continue to exist and allow the province to take on additional responsibility or allow them to share responsibilities with other municipalities, or even government agencies so that they can continue to exist.

I think the ministers agrees with – it's about common sense and allowing them to be the most efficient they can be. This particular amendment is looking at whether or not a municipality has to have their municipal office in the municipal boundaries and whether or not a municipal office has to be open to serve the public for 20 hours a week or more.

In the current legislation, the *Municipal Government Act* says: it has to be in the municipal boundaries and it has to be open 20 hours a week or more and very specifically this is what communities are saying – they're saying, if we have to renovate a location inside our municipal boundaries that's accessible and meets the requirements, then that can be cost prohibitive and we'd have to raise taxes quite a bit. Or, if we have to hire someone to make sure it's open and staffed more than 20 hours a week that can be cost prohibitive.

So in the spirit of cooperation, I wanted to work together with the minister to help make changes to the act, so that he can indeed give the communities the support that he has promised them.

So this amendment is to allow municipalities that have been grandfathered in as small municipalities, or ones that have been established, even though they don't meet the criteria as specified in section 13.1, so this is the population criteria and or the real estate criteria because municipalities can still be established if they don't meet those criteria.

If they're those smaller municipalities – they don't meet the criteria or they'd been grandfathered in, then this allows them to place their office outside the municipality and allows them to be open to serve the public for less than 20 hours a week.

The whole idea is then they can share the duties, they can make things happen, they can continue to exist, they don't have to dissolve, they don't have to raise taxes and it should be a win-win for everyone; a win for

the small municipalities, for the residents, for the government and for Prince Edward Island as a whole.

So I really am hoping for support on this amendment, it's pretty straight forward, it's pretty simple, it's common sense, I believe, and I'd be happy to answer any questions you have.

Chair: The hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid.

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you, Chair.

Thanks member for bringing this forward. I just want to be clear though, so, if the minister goes ahead and does this for say a small community like, say St. Peters or Morell like a municipality that's already there, is there anything stopping one of our major municipalities saying: Oh we could save a whole lot of money by doing this and forcing the minister to allow them the same thing?

I get where you're really trying to help out a small community that simply can't afford some of this stuff, what's to protect a large municipality from trying to take advantage of the same thing?

Mr. Trivers: Well that's a very good question –

Mr. MacEwen: Oh thanks.

Mr. Trivers: That's the reason why, if you look at the bill, we have in the (Indistinct) exception clause 3a., it specifies the council of a municipality that has been established under section 21, despite the fact that it does not meet the criteria specified in subsection 13.1 i.e. it's a small municipality so it doesn't have the population threshold or the property value threshold, or it's been continued or restructured as a rural municipality.

In other words, it's only if it meets those two criteria which would not include the large municipalities, the ones that are greater than 4,000 and have a property value that meets the criteria in the act.

Essentially they wouldn't be able to do that no, just for the small guys.

Mr. Myers: The floor is yours, go ahead.

Mr. MacEwen: Well thank you, some Chair.

Mr. Myers: Well I didn't have anybody else on the list (Indistinct) you. So you have one question.

Mr. R. Brown: He's got until 5:00 p.m.

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you, Chair.

I know the current minister or the minister previous always said: We're trying to make it work.

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct) teamwork.

Mr. MacEwen: Oh look at that. That's cute.

An Hon. Member: Teamwork.

Mr. MacEwen: That's teamwork, too.

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct)

Mr. MacEwen: I'd help him out too.

They both said we don't want to be forcing these things and forcing these things, but we've heard a lot of small municipalities say that's exactly what they feel like. They feel like they're being forced out of their small municipality, they have to join up. They have to.

I'm not talking about the really, really tiny ones. We've got good municipalities from our area, say Morell or St. Peters or Mount Stewart, that they're kind of in that middle stage, right? They meet. They're active, but there are some of the things that are just really cost prohibitive.

To me, this is a really good solution to some of this. Do you know what I mean? I understand, okay, if the minister really believes that the amalgamations and communities that want to get together to form these super communities or bigger communities, is the right way to go is one thing. But, this kind of takes away that thought process out there in some of the smaller communities, that we're being forced; we're being eliminated by some of these rules.

So, it grandfathers in some of these ones. So, I think that's a really good solution, to rid that perception out there that that's what this whole bill was about.

If any communities are going to amalgamate together, they have to follow the new rules. I guess they couldn't do this. If two small communities got together and amalgamated, would they be still eligible for this? Or, as soon as you amalgamate are you in ineligible for this type of funding?

Mr. Trivers: Thank you for your questions.

I just want to make some comments on the first part –

Mr. R. Brown: (Indistinct)

Mr. Trivers: – and that's that, the prime reason that small municipalities and communities have to dissolve is because of cost. They feel like they need to raise the taxes to a point within their communities that people don't want, and so that is definitely the driving force.

But yes, if two municipalities amalgamated, or if there was an amalgamation and annexation, a complete restructuring, they would have to be established under section 21 which means that they don't meet the criteria specified in 13.1 for population and real property, in order to qualify here.

If they – you know, they meet those qualifications and section 21 is not involved, then they would have to have a municipal office in the municipality that would have to be open 20 hours a week.

The whole point of this is to provide options. It doesn't preclude the *Municipal Government Act* acting the way it initially was written for larger municipalities, or where it makes sense, where it makes good common sense to happen, because sometimes it does make common sense to have the municipal office within the municipality. I think that's pretty obvious, and have it open more than 20 hours a week so people can access it.

But it gives that option where it doesn't make sense and the cost burden is too much for municipalities to do it. And it doesn't mean, as well, that if you're a rural

municipality or if you were established under section 21 because you can't meet the criteria in 13.1 for population and property, it doesn't mean you can't have a municipal office inside your boundaries, or it doesn't mean you can't be open for 20 or more hours a week. It just gives you that option.

And again it's the council for the municipality that decides on this. It's democracy; it's the will of the people. I mean, it's really democratic all the way around.

Mr. MacEwen: One more, just a comment.

Chair: Okay, sure.

Go ahead.

Mr. MacEwen: Thanks, Chair.

Mr. R. Brown: (Indistinct)

Chair: I got a list here.

Mr. MacEwen: It really makes a lot of sense, especially, like I remember we went through the whole *Municipalities Act* and the former minister was there and he kept referring over and over again: We want to work with the communities; we don't want this to be a top-down approach.

Of course, we were coming back saying: You're giving yourself all of the authority; you could do this all the time.

So to me, this amendment plays right into the current minister and the former minister's hands. They should be all over this because I think it would dispel a lot of concerns out there in our smaller municipalities, especially right now, so I thank you for bringing this forward.

Thank you, Chair.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you.

I would agree with that. This is meant in the spirit of cooperation, trying to help the ministers through and keep some of the promises he's made to the small communities, really. And I mean, I probably should also mention that – I mean, this is not meant to address all of the flaws in the

Municipal Government Act or the process by any means.

Chair: (Indistinct) we'd be here all night.

Mr. Trivers: But this was – like almost like a stop gap measure to allow small municipalities to continue to exist without having to dissolve, until, you know, more extensive changes to the act can be made.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you, Chair.

I like the fact that you just used the phrase 'spirit of cooperation', hon. member, and like you, I had many reservations about the MGA as it was originally drafted and I would have supported the most recent bill that you brought forward in the last sitting regarding the MGA and here we are, I think you have three before the House. This is the first of three in this sitting.

I really appreciate the fact that you have spent as much time as you have trying to overcome some of the problems with the original draft. With this particular issue – and we know that government has already made some exemptions regarding the very stringent and robust requirements of the MGA and I'm wondering whether – maybe I can ask through the Chair to the minister responsible – whether the government has already made any exemptions in this particular area that this bill addresses.

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

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

I just want to thank each and every person that put their name up in the last set of municipal elections. It was in the *Eastern Graphic* the other day – and I know a lot of us may not believe the *Eastern Graphic*, but I do – there was a mayor in there saying it was a great turn-out, 70% of his constituents in his district turned out. The people in the district said: I didn't want to go to public meetings before because I didn't want to have to stand to vote for the mayor or the councillors and the new system, that was opened up.

A lot of comments were brought back that how well the act was working in terms of the municipal election and in terms of getting people to put their names forward and in a secret ballot and an all-day voting time.

Mr. Trivers: This bill has nothing to do with that.

Mr. R. Brown: So you know?

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Mr. Trivers: Really.

Mr. R. Brown: You know what? Over 500 Islanders put their name forward to represent their communities; 500 people came forward to say: I want to participate and be a part of a better Prince Edward Island and for the member that's promoting this bill to demean their commitment or there entering politics to help their province and not allowing me an opportunity to thank the people that put their names forward, that went out and worked for the betterment of their community, put ideas forward for the betterment of their community to say today: Look, let's not talk about that, I'm going to talk about it because I think 500 people came forward (Indistinct) –

Mr. Trivers: (Indistinct) I thanked them on the floor of the Legislature the first day it opened.

Chair: You do have the floor and you have it until 5:00 p.m., so fill your boots.

Mr. R. Brown: Over 500 people came forward to make Prince Edward Island a better place to live, work and play and we should commend them for that effort.

And this new piece of legislation, the *Municipal Government Act* allowed that to happen. Without it, you know – there was a lot of people weren't participating in democracy, because of the public meetings. I commend the former minister for bringing this forward and for making our elections process open and transparent to all people across Prince Edward Island, and to allow people to come forward to help their communities.

The municipal government level of councillors and municipal government have a difficult job, it's one of most difficult jobs you could have, because you're involved in the day-to-day activities of your residents, you're involved in making your community better, you're involved in – because I was one for 14 years – you are involved in fence wars, you're involved in dogs barking and everything like that. You're really involved in the betterment of your community. It's a lot of hard work. I'd say, in some respects, it's a lot of hard work, a lot more work than being an MLA.

We just elected new councils, new mayors, all across this Island. I'll not be supporting any amendments to the MGA at this time and I have asked my colleagues to honour my commitment here because I believe that we should give the new municipal governments an opportunity to be sworn in on December 5th, to get working on their communities, to get working on projects in their communities that will make their communities better.

Let's not get wrapped up in the small details of the MGA. Allow them the opportunity to do their budgets, to present their budgets to their public, and to get their communities, in a lot of respects their new communities, and their new roles, in place.

I'm asking the opposition party and the Third Party to allow them time to do their work – they've a tremendous amount of work to do over the next couple of months, you know?

You're a new mayor or you're a new councilor, you're coming in – you have to do a budget, you have to do a – reorganize your municipality, set the priorities for the next couple of years for your municipalities. I want our municipal elected officials to be spending time and making their province and their area of the province better for their residents.

Let's not get discussing small details of the *Municipal Government Act*. We do have time, there is time, there is lots of time, there's lots of time in the act for some of the things that are being done. So why would we – and I will be asking my colleagues to vote down these amendments that are coming forward at this time.

We did make a commitment with the federation municipalities and with municipalities across Prince Edward Island. After they're done of their budgets next May or next March – after they're done, give them five months to get their budgets and everything together and to get things ready, we sit down and we say: Okay, how can we make the act better? How can we do things better?

But allow them the opportunity – I'd rather hear from the people that are going to be affected by this act and live by this act being the municipal elected people to have an opportunity to discuss changes in this act. You know, I don't know why the member does not want the municipalities that opportunity to sit down with the federation of municipalities, to sit down with their own groups, to look at what improvements can be made to this act, then come back with a comprehensive package to government and to this Legislature because any changes will be made, will be made through this Legislature.

So, I will be voting against any amendments to the act at this time, because I want municipal leaders, municipal governments to spend time making their part of Prince Edward Island a better place to live, work and play. I can assure you that 99. – 100% of them (Indistinct)

They want to spend their time on making their community better; they want to spend their time on making life for their residents in their area better, and they don't want to be fighting with Charlottetown, they don't want to be fighting with the Legislative Assembly.

I just ask this House to give a chance to them to get off on the right foot. Let's put this aside for a couple months and then maybe come back in the spring session after consulting with them on what changes they think they have to do in order to make their community better for Prince Edward Island.

They're the closest ones to their government, they're the ones that we've – we gave them a legislative authority to go out and run their areas – to participate in their areas. Let's give them an opportunity to do that first and foremost before we spend the time arguing over, you know; they're not

big enough to come forward with the changes, we're the only smart ones here, they're only little municipal councils. I'm the big MLA from the area and I will tell the little municipal council what's best for them. Let them decide what's best for them for once in a while.

Thank you very much.

Mr. LaVie: Do you remember (Indistinct)

Chair: Well okay, we have – the member wants to respond and I'm sure that the leader – are you satisfied that you got an answer to your question?

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you, Chair.

What I asked was, is government already making exemptions in some areas of the MGA, and clearly the answer is yes, although, I didn't hear that clearly from the minister.

So, as I see this we have an act that was quite onerous, quite restrictive and placed a lot of burdens on small municipalities. In some – and people are working around that in a variety of ways. This member has brought forward some amendments to the act in order to work around those – what many of us in this House perceive as problems.

The minister works around this by offering exemptions or providing exemptions to communities. Some of the communities themselves are coming up with creative ways to avoid some of the obligations of the act. For example, the elections that would have been required were expensive and onerous, and so what they did was they put forward exactly the right number of people so everybody was acclaimed and they didn't have to go through the electoral process.

That, to me, is not a really great way of dealing with a problem with an act, which is that it obligated small municipalities to fund and run what would have been very expensive elections. That's just one example of how we're sort of dancing around the problems with this act.

This government is providing exemptions. I see this as a very reasonable piece of legislation dealing with one small aspect. I

agree with you. It's not – I mean, there are many issues with the act as it originally drafted. This deals with one of the small issues.

I don't think that in supporting this tiny amendment we're suggesting that we throw out the *Municipal Government Act*. To me, it's just a more formal, and indeed, a better way of dealing with the problems created with the original act.

Thank you, Chair.

Mr. R. Brown: In response to that, the federation of municipalities – I've asked the federation of municipalities to look at whether they could set up a centralized system for municipalities that have concerns about the 20 hours and if the federation of municipalities – I'd rather wait to work with them.

If the federation of municipalities comes back and says: well we have assigned a person to this function that will take calls on behalf of municipalities and it's these people in municipalities that don't want to live up to the 20 hour commitment or work with them. Let's let them have an opportunity to see how they can come up with innovative ways to do things.

You're right with some of the exemptions like the mayor – I've told councillors that don't have a full council, but they have an operating council – a quorum – that I will wait for a recommendation from the council if they have someone in their community that wants to come forward and I'll appoint that person to that council. I'm not going to arbitrarily go out and pick people in a particular area. I will allow the council to do that.

As for Souris West, there was an issue there. We offered to pay for the election because there was some confusion over that.

I also want to take this opportunity to thank the staff of municipal affairs at PEI government. They did a great job. They worked extremely hard with municipalities. They would have come up with: let's give them an extra week to go find councillors. When people realized: oh there is an election, I can put my name on a ballot, I don't have to go to a public meeting and my

friends don't have to go there and stand or not stand. I want to really take this opportunity to thank the staff down there because the staff has worked with municipalities' right across Prince Edward Island.

Let's give them a chance to work with the municipalities and they will come back with some ideas too. I think in the spirit of cooperation with the new structures that have been set up across Prince Edward Island that – I don't know what our problem is. I've perceived that the last set of elections here on Prince Edward Island from the municipal side was a tremendous success. You can call them a failure; I think they were a tremendous success.

There are a lot of new mayors out there. There are a lot of new councillors out there. They put their name forward and they want to get on to working. I think, let's not start being big brother over them right away. Let's not be the big brother that says: you're the little councilor, you don't know what you're doing. I'm the big MLA here. I'm the MLA; I know what's best for you. I'll tell you what's for you because you know.

Mr. LaVie: Arnold Schwarzenegger (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: Spike.

No, but you know I'm serious. It's a great discussion, but you know let's not take control away from the people that we're trying to give control to.

Thank you.

Chair: Do you have an interjection there hon. member?

Mr. Trivers: I'd like to just agree with a lot of what the Minister of Communities, Land and Environment is saying. He makes some really good points.

The staff at municipal affairs did a great job. The elections went off well. It was great and listening and working with the federation of municipalities is also extremely important.

The changes that are being proposed here, the amendments, came directly from a meeting with St. Nicholas that the minister

was actually at. He knows the source of it. It doesn't have to do with elections or what kind of job the municipal affairs people are doing or trying to override the will of councils or – in fact, it was amazing.

You remember that night, minister? We were down there. It was the second meeting. You couldn't make the first one because you had to go to a political nomination. You kind of stood them up a little bit – they had to reschedule. But anyway, finally got you there and they were really, really frustrated. It was one of the most moving displays I saw.

We were sitting in the meeting, and they were ready to throw in the towel. They were ready to dissolve. They didn't have enough people to – and the member as well from – sorry the Minister of Workforce and Advanced Learning, of course that was his district, was there. I think you'll remember that well, too.

They didn't have enough people, as the Leader of the Third Party was saying, in order to continue the council. No one was putting their name forward. We had a discussion, and they brought up big concerns, very specifically, concerns about the municipal office and the 20 hours a week. Those were two of the main concerns they had, multiple people brought it up.

And the minister said: you know what, legislation isn't perfect, it needs to change; we need to make changes so that you guys can continue to exist, and I'm going to work to make those changes so you don't have to dissolve. And you know what? People who had never come forward before, they stepped up – out of the crowd – they stepped up and they came to the front of the room, and they saved their municipality that night. It really almost moved me to tears, it was quite incredible.

So minister, I'm just working with the feedback from those people and the councilors that were there that night, the community members – trying to help you out, because these are the legislative changes they asked for. You saw what it did for that community, once they knew beyond a shadow of a doubt, that there were changes being made. That's why I think it's better to take a little bit of action now, with very

small changes and I'm really looking forward to hear what the federation of municipalities said and see what a (Indistinct) bigger changes might be, because I think there are much bigger changes needed.

That's why I'm bringing these forward, now. Also, just to show the small municipalities that these aren't empty promises being made by government and people here in the Legislature. We really, truly, are trying to make change, trying to move forward, and see these small municipalities continue to exist.

Of course, I'm very disappointed at the direction you're taking, where you'd like to sit back and wait and talk, instead of making some very pointed, small changes that I think would inspire municipalities in the short term. But, I'll have to take your comments at face value, considering it is a majority government. If you want to whip your caucus to vote against this, then I guess that's what it's going to be.

Chair: Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you, Chair.

Just a couple of points on what the minister said. I mean, one is yes; the federation represents municipalities, but not all municipalities, in particular, not members of the federation; and so, feel that their voices or their opinions are not necessarily reflected in the position that the federation takes, so I think that it's important that we state that in the House.

The second thing is that there is a feeling among some municipalities, not all of them, but some of the rural municipalities, that they are being compelled into amalgamation here and that they don't essentially have a choice because of these owner's obligations created by the act. And again, I come back to this particular piece of legislation, which is designed to overcome one of those, to allow in the interim anyway, and I use the phrase: a stop-gap measure; that would allow people time to accommodate this and to find their feet in the changing world of municipal governance.

Again, I'd like to support this bill and you now we're not – you said yourself – we're

not the know-all MLAs sitting here telling everybody else what to do, but apparently, you feel comfortable telling the rest of your caucus what to do, when it comes to voting for this –

Mr. R. Brown: They are my colleagues, they are my equals.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: – well okay. But I think I heard you say that you would instruct your caucus not to support these –

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: (Indistinct) you never instruct this group.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Okay, we'll check Hansard tomorrow, but I'm pretty sure that's what you said, minister.

I have some material questions on the bill itself. I'm not going to assume this is going to fail, because I think everybody on this side of the House does have an open mind –

Mr. Roach: Your own votes (Indistinct)

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct).

Mr. Trivers: I would love to discuss the actual bill, that would be amazing.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Again, I support the goal of this bill, but are you concerned that in allowing the office to be outside the municipality that might create some issues of accessibility transportation-wise for people in a municipality.

Mr. Trivers: No, that's a very real concern. And that's one of the reasons, I think, that the legislation was written the way it was because it's important to have easy access to the municipal office, if you're going to be able to go conduct business there as a member of the municipality.

I think it's really important that this gives the option and it's the members of the council of the municipality that make the final decision on where it goes. They, of course, are acting on behalf of the people in the municipality to make the best decision for those people. I think it is key to remember that this is an option.

I think there is a saying: that theory is different than practice, and theory is good in theory, accept it's sometimes not good in practice; something like that.

At any rate, to give a practical example, you have a small community like St. Nicholas, and they were talking about at this meeting that there is an Access PEI office nearby. They said: we go to the Access PEI office for a lot of our needs already – it would be great, if maybe that's where we went for our municipal needs as well. But, because it actually, technically is outside the boundaries of the municipality, it wouldn't be allowed under the legislation. This is a practical example.

It really is an option that allows councils to use common sense when they're making decisions –

An Hon. Member: Oh.

Mr. Trivers: – on behalf of their constituents. That's essentially it. It allows them to make decisions where they don't have to raise taxes, period; or even, significant amounts as what can be the case, depending. In this case, hiring someone for more than 20 hours a week was a really big sticking point, they were like: we just don't have the budget in our municipality, unless we raise our taxes. I think it was 13 cents per \$100,000 of property value or something like that, which was a massive increase.

That's what it's about. It's about supporting councils and supporting councilors and allowing them to have options when they're trying to service their constituents the best way they can.

Chair: Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you, Chair.

So that issue that you just brought up about how much extra it would cost to staff an office for 20 hours, and we are in the process of going through an amalgamation in my district, District 17, in the Three Rivers area – or not the Three Rivers, excuse, the West River area. The change in tax rates varies a lot, depending on the population of the municipality; if you have a very small municipality, your tax rate can

increase hundreds of per cent, and in some, it may not increase at all.

On that 20 hours, the way the legislation is drafted here, paragraph 3(d), it says: that the municipal office shall be open to serve the public for less than 20 hours each week; at least giving them that option.

Is there anything in there that would stop a rural municipality from having zero hours a week – you just say less than 20, but – the legislation as currently written says: not less than 20 –

Mr. R. Brown: Oh yeah, this legislation (Indistinct).

Dr. Bevan-Baker: – this amendment says: shall allow them less than 20. So is there anything in here which says zero hours.

Mr. Trivers: No, there's nothing to stop a council from doing that. This whole *Municipal Government Act* relies on the mayor and council acting in the best interest of their communities. Assuming that they decided that they didn't want to have a municipal office open at all, then they would have to answer to their constituents. That has been a criticism, of course, of the *Municipal Government Act* as a whole, that does put a lot of power in the hands of the mayor and the council. I think that's another debate all together.

I think that allowing the mayor and the council to determine, like really to decide what they want to do on behalf of their constituents, is really in line with the *Municipal Government Act* and its intent and how it's written all the way through.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Okay.

Chair: Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Just a fine comment, Chair, thanks.

I interpreted the way you just did, member, that it wouldn't stop them for having zero hours. And of course, if that were the case, there is no point in having an office at all, and you would be answerable to your constituents about that.

I'm just not sure if you would want to revisit that particular one, or if you're comfortable with that.

Mr. MacEwen: (Indistinct)

Mr. Trivers: I'm open to amendments about that –

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Okay, nothing to suggest, but I just –

Thank you, Chair.

Mr. R. Brown: You might want to thank the Leader of the Third Party for finding that flaw.

Chair: Member from Belfast-Murray River.

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Chair.

Mr. Trivers: If you actually decided to debate the bill, you might find some stuff, too.

Mr. R. Brown: Everybody's not perfect like you.

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Chair.

I appreciate the minister's comment that there was wonderful engagement and I might like to mention that I saw it as engagement under threat, very much like when they threatened to close the schools and I got a number of calls saying: We don't have enough people and if we don't get the people, government is going to appoint somebody.

There was a lot of stress around the new municipal act from the very beginning and I understand you're trying to do what's right for communities. In our district we've got three municipalities and I applaud Pat Bray for reoffering, and she was acclaimed as the mayor; Paul White in Murray Harbour, it was an elected position and Paul is a new mayor, and Jill Walsh in Belfast, and she was acclaimed.

But I appreciate these amendments because in Belfast, we have no municipal office and our chief administrator had to resign because she cannot do 20 hours a week. So it's created quite a stir in the community. And I'm glad to hear that the minister is willing

to look at exemptions because I think that's important.

But, I'm wondering – and maybe we can go through the Chair here to the minister – how many municipalities have reached out to you with concern with some of the exemptions that they're interested in?

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

Mr. R. Brown: Thank you, Chairman.

I've been out and about and we were at a great meeting in St. Nicholas. It started out, there were a lot of concerns and I want to thank the new mayor of St. Nicholas for pulling it together. By the end of the meeting, it was a pretty exciting room. People came forward. People came forward; I think we had a council and a mayor elected – established that night.

There is concern out there and that's why I'm just saying like, we want to give authority to the local community to make decisions on behalf of their constituents. We have very important policy decisions coming forward in the next couple of months too, that I think municipalities will be concerned about.

I believe we had a great discussion in St. Nicholas about zoning, about people's investments in their houses. The biggest investment a family makes in their lifetime is their house. That's their biggest investment and that's where most of their money goes into their house. Municipalities are there to protect those investments in their fellow residences.

To start second guessing their ability to protect those residents, I think is kind of unfair. I'm willing to work with each and every municipality through the federation of municipalities, and the Leader of the Third Party said a lot of municipalities are not a member of the federation of municipalities. I've asked the federation of municipalities to look at having them included, a way we can include them, and give them a grace period or something like that, over the Province of Prince Edward Island, would assume their fee structure. We're discussing that.

In order to get this working and get it working great; I'm just asking for time. I'd appreciate if the members could defer these bills until next April. I'd be willing to bring these bills back to the different organizations and just have their input, because after all, these bills affect the functioning of their municipality. They should have a say in it.

I'm asking here today that the member forego these bills he's having on to amendments to the *Municipal Government Act* until the municipalities have a chance to talk about them. Let's not start out successful elections of municipal people across Prince Edward Island – over 500 people came forward to make their Island a better place to live work and play; to make their place of Prince Edward Island a better place for their constituents.

Let's not start out by dictating to them how they should run it. Let's allow them the opportunity at least for six months, at least until next April, for me to take these bills out to the members and to have discussions with them and see how they want it. Let's give them the opportunity. We don't have to be big brother to everybody, okay?

The people that got elected here are very smart people in 100% of the cases. They put their names forward. They know what they want for their community. Let's give them an opportunity to see what they can come up with in terms of these amendments. To start off, a new council, all of a sudden a Legislative Assembly of Prince Edward Island is now changing the rules and changing the dictation and everything without my input.

You know? That may be the opposition's way to do things, but the Liberal way to do things is to consult with Islanders, to have Islanders say into best how they work and you know what? As I've always said, the Liberal way is the best way.

Thank you very much.

Mr. Trivers: I'd like to (Indistinct)

Chair: Okay, go ahead.

You want to – we'll start here at the table so you go ahead and you can respond (Indistinct)

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct)

Mr. Trivers: I'd just like to point out that these amendments really are all about giving mayors and the councillors of municipalities more options.

It's about letting them choose and have more choices. It's really, right now, they're limited in what they're allowed to do by the legislation and the minister has promised them that he will make changes to give them the options they need to continue to survive.

So this is really trying to help out the minister with that by taking the feedback directly from the councils and the municipalities to give them more options. And this of course, this allows this particular bill, allows a municipality, the mayor and councillors to have the option if they want to; to have an office that's not within municipal boundaries, and have the option, if they think it's in best interest of their constituents, to have the office open for less than 20 hours a week.

So it's really about giving people more options. I think that there's no reason at all to wait until before this legislation is brought into effect. I think we're here to debate legislation and if there are concerns with it, then we should get it out today. But also, because it just gives additional options and it doesn't limit in any way what can be done, then a mayor and council can always say: You know what? Even though that amendment was introduced, doesn't matter to me. I want to do what the legislation already had in there and I'll just continue to do that.

So really, it doesn't have any impact. It's not limiting in any way whatsoever to what the mayor and council do. All it does is give them more options and that's why I think more options is better. I think more options in this case are what everyone that I've talked to has been asking for.

We heard that today on the floor, especially the 20 hours a week. We just heard that there have been CAOs that have resigned because they can't spend 20 hours a week and I've heard that as well from other municipalities across the province.

So the new MGA is impacting municipalities now. It's impacted them since it was brought in, and that's why we need to take action to amend this legislation now. The Progressive Conservative government is about taking action. The Liberal government is about (Indistinct) –

Mr. R. Brown: The Progressive Conservative government is about (Indistinct) in control (Indistinct)

Ms. Biggar: Okay.

Mr. Trivers: He's not recognized, Chair.

Chair: Okay, we're going to go back to the Member from Belfast-Murray River.

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Chair.

I appreciate the minister's comment that he doesn't want to play big brother but I think the Liberal government has already played big brother because they brought this in and there has been very little consultation with the smaller municipalities.

We've got a lot of concerns and it's great to hear that you're willing to make exemptions and adjustments, but it would be really good if they would have known that from the beginning because it's thrown municipalities into a turmoil; a number of them.

In the three municipalities that I represent, we have Murray Harbour and Murray River, which are very, very small concentrated areas, and Belfast, which a huge municipality, but not a big population.

So there are a lot of issues. And in Belfast, where are we going to head that office that's going to be accessible? At the school? Probably not going to. At the legion? At the rink? At David Cooper's store in the liquor agency?

Like, we need a solution here and it has to –

Ms. Biggar: (Indistinct) maybe he can answer that question.

Mr. MacKay: (Indistinct) doctor's office are already paying for (Indistinct)

Ms. Compton: Or the doctor – in Murray River we could have it in the doctor's office

in the clinic that government is paying for. Maybe that's where we should put the one in Murray River.

There are a lot of issues, and to hear you say you're going to wait till the spring, well yeah, maybe the municipalities will have it all sorted out by then and again, it's engagement by threat because if they don't do it, government is going to do it for them.

We have a lot of concerns and I appreciate the fact that with this bill, there is some flexibility for those small municipalities, three of which I represent.

So thank you for that. Big brother has already intervened here and now he's waiting to see what problems are going to come out the other end, but let's let them sort it out. This is what you have to do, but we'll let you sort it out and we'll see what comes out the other end.

People are upset and maybe because the minister is from Charlottetown, he doesn't understand that these are big issues for small municipalities. They're very big issues; 20 hours a week having an office that's accessible; they're big issues for small municipalities, and they're going to have to raise their taxes.

So, I fully support the amendments to the bill and I would hope that everyone else will, because a number of the members in this House represent small municipalities and they all know that they're struggling too, to meet the regulations.

Chair: Go ahead, you had a response (Indistinct)

Mr. Trivers: Thank you member for bringing that forward.

I think a very key importance is the *Municipal Government Act* – the new MGA, is in effect now, communities are being impacted now, they are feeling the stress that the act has caused to them now, actions are being taken now, CEO's are leaving their positions now, that's why we need to change the legislation now – to give council and mayors and municipalities more options so they can continue to exist now.

We need to take action immediately.

That's why I think it's so important that we pass, really, which are small changes to the legislation that give more options. More options is better.

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

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

There's been mention too, of the community in my district, the community of St. Nicholas, which is near and dear to me and it's a pretty nice community and I was at both meetings and I appreciate the people that were there.

At the first meeting there were some very, very serious concerns and rightly so, but there was a lot of good questions asked –

Mr. Trivers: They're very concerned, the Minister of Communities, Land and Environment stood them up, I know they were concerned about that.

Mr. Gallant: We got past that after a couple of minutes –

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct) you want a divide. If the member from down east (Indistinct) Charlottetown –

Mr. Gallant: Excuse me, Chair, do I have the floor?

Mr. R. Brown: (Indistinct) against rural PEI. You guys always bring up the City of Charlottetown can't compete against rural PEI. (Indistinct)

Chair: Everybody just take a deep breath.

Mr. R. Brown: You're (Indistinct), you're like Donald Trump, you want to divide the Island and not unite the Island.

Chair: I understand everybody is a little hot under the collar about this, but the member up here has the floor and I'd like to hear what he has to say please.

Mr. Gallant: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Yeah getting back to it. I was very fortunate to be able to attend that meeting. Yes there

was some concerns as I mentioned earlier and a lot of their concerns were very – we took them very serious at that meeting and they decided to have a second meeting, which the minister did come to and myself and Mr. Trivers and Mr. Fox – sorry, the hon. members were there.

There was a gentleman in the crowd – let me just back up a little bit – there was three options: do we dissolve, do we join another municipality or do we try to continue on our own.

Well at the first meeting there was some uncertainty and when people got some questions answered or people felt a little differently when they'd come to the second meeting, they decided they would continue on their own by the end of the meeting.

I remember a gentleman said: If I wanted to join a municipality, I'd have moved to another municipality. If I wanted streetlights and sidewalks, I'd move where there is streetlights and sidewalks. He moved to the country for that reason and he was very comfortable there and most of the people in that room felt the same way, so they decided that they would continue. The Chair said he would reoffer and they asked people in the audience and at that particular time they had six people. One just didn't get things in quick enough so they had to go to the 26th date, they got everything in order, they didn't have to have a vote.

The big clincher at that meeting that I understood was the dialogue that went back and forth and the minister did say and they heard it and I heard it and the people that were there – everybody that was there heard it: This 20 hours a week you have until 2022.

It's not happening next weekend, it's not happening next year, so it gave them the solace or the comfort to know: If we do continue as a municipality and look at putting our rates up a little bit, we can sustain ourselves until we get to that time.

The minister said he would look at that and to the best of my knowledge that's what he said and I take him for his word and I think we need to let things fall and roll out as planned for now, just after having municipal elections and some went in unanimously.

Let them hit the ground and see what they need and what the do's and don'ts are for their municipality and then we'll go from there.

Chair: So time is upon us, would you like a vote on this issue?

Mr. R. Brown: Sure. (Indistinct)

Ms. Biggar: It's up to you, do you want us to bother or (Indistinct)

Chair: Shall the bill carry?

Some Hon. Members: No.

An Hon. Member: Carried.

Chair: It sounded like maybe the no's probably had it –

[Laughter]

Chair: It's hard to count the no's but –

Mr. R. Brown: You've got a very good sense (Indistinct)

Chair: So where do we go here? Not recommended? Can you read that?

Mr. Trivers: Mr. Chair, I move the Speaker take the chair and that the Chair report that the bill has been recommended.

Chair: Shall it carry? Carried.

Mr. Myers: Mr. Speaker, as Chair of a Committee of the Whole House, having had under consideration a bill to be intituled *Act to Amend the Municipal Government Act*, I beg leave to report that the committee has gone through the said bill and does not recommend same to the Legislative Assembly, I move that the report of the committee be adopted.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Speaker: Sergeant-at-Arms, a recorded division has been requested, you can ring the bell.

[Audio Malfunction]

Ms. Bell: (Indistinct) ready for the vote.

Mr. Dumville: The fourth dimension is ready, sir.

Speaker: Okay hon. members I just want to make sure that we're voting the way we think we're voting.

The committee report says that this bill not be recommended.

Those voting against this, please stand.

Mr. R. Brown: Oh, now there's a whipped vote.

Clerk: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Parkdale, the hon. Leader of the Third Party, the hon. Opposition House Leader, the hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque, the hon. Member from Borden-Kinkora, the hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald, the hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid, the hon. Member from Georgetown-St. Peters, and the hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

Speaker: All those voting in support of this, please stand.

Clerk: The hon. Minister of Communities, Land and Environment, the hon. Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy, the hon. Premier, the hon. Minister of Finance, the hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries, the hon. Minister of Health and Wellness, the hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir, the hon. Minister of Rural and Regional Development, the hon. Government House Leader, the hon. Minister of Family and Human Services, the hon. Minister of Education, Early Learning and Culture, the hon. Minister of Workforce and Advanced Learning, the hon. Member from Charlottetown-Lewis Point, the hon. Member from West Royalty-Springvale, and the hon. Member from Tignish-Palmer Road.

Mr. MacEwen: Pretty close.

Speaker: Okay, thank you.

Hon. members, the committee report that says the bill not be recommended, carries.

I now call on the hon. Member from Charlottetown-Parkdale.

Ms. Bell: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. Leader of the Third Party, that the 20th order of the day be now read.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk Assistant: Order No. 20, *An Act to Amend the Innovation PEI Act*, Bill No. 123, ordered for second reading.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Parkdale.

Ms. Bell: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. Leader of the Third Party, that the said bill be now read a second time.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk Assistant: *An Act to Amend the Innovation PEI Act*, Bill No. 123, read a second time.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Parkdale.

Ms. Bell: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. Leader of the Third Party, 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.

The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Lewis Point to come and Chair the bill, please.

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 the Innovation PEI Act*. Is it the pleasure of the committee that the bill be now read clause by clause?

Ms. Biggar: Could we have an overview, Madam Chair?

Chair: Certainly can.

Hon. member, would you please give the House an overview?

Ms. Bell: Yeah.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

This bill brings forward a simple and short proposed amendment to section 14 of the *Innovation PEI Act* which is a section regarding the economic sectors.

It identifies the economic sectors for the purposes of the act and makes an addition and an amendment.

The current sectors are biosciences, aerospace and defence; information and communications technology; advanced manufacturing and processing, including value-added food development and production; renewable energy and an economic sector designated as such in the regulations.

The amendments proposed are to add creative and cultural industries and to amend 'renewable energy' to 'renewable energy and clean technology'.

The general approach for this is that adding cultural and creative industries as a strategic sector will ensure an appropriate level of economic development and operational support is allocated and that the long-term strategic plan; key directions and actions for the cultural sector are protected through legislation.

By amending and expanding the definition of renewable energy to include clean technologies, we will broaden the sector scope to better align with federal and regional priorities, and private sector innovation and opportunity.

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

Ms. Biggar: Perhaps you could further expand what you consider should be under clean technologies.

Ms. Bell: Certainly.

That sector has come as a recommendation through consultation with the community, but primarily with federal partners and regional partners, and the primary approach is that clean technology is any process, product or service that reduces environmental impacts. These technologies are developed by a broad array of firms, so that could include any other existing sectors of the community, of the economy.

But by developing and adopting clean technologies, companies and industry can look to better control costs, to meet new regulatory requirements at home and abroad; improve global competitiveness; and reduce impact on climate, water, land and air.

We have a \$2.3 billion investment that has been made by our federal government through the innovation, science and economic development department federally, as well as through Industry Canada.

If we don't have that direct reference to clean technology in our primary economic sectors, it makes it much more difficult for the provincial applicants, the most interested, including at the provincial level, to align funding applications and programming activities with those federal programs.

It really kind of opens up those opportunities on a regional basis. It's also showing up more and more through the Atlantic Growth Strategy. Again, it's trying to make sure that we're not missing on opportunities that we can bring home to PEI from the absence of those three words in our primary economic sector.

Thank you.

Chair: Thank you.

The hon. Member from Borden-Kinkora.

Mr. Fox: Thank you, Chair.

Two things: Do you have a list, or who did you consult with to add, or where did you come up with the creative and cultural industries? Do you consult with different groups?

Ms. Bell: I actually didn't need to do the consultation myself because it was done by the government as part of the production of the Cultural Action Plan, which was published last year, and that was done prior to my being elected, so I was involved in it as one of the consulting partners.

But, the Cultural Action Plan was published after consultation that extended over a number of months. It included consultation

with 27 focus groups, seven group interviews, six informal pop-up cafés, and a public survey with 1,500 responses in both official languages.

The creative industries are identified as a strategic sector in Prince Edward Island as a required action in that action plan on page 14 of the action plan here, and so this is actually bringing forward an action that was identified in the government's strategy release last year.

Chair: The hon. Member from Borden-Kinkora.

Mr. Fox: Thanks, Chair.

So understanding all of that; so after you – going through a lot of information and coming up with the bill, did you go back to any of those groups and have any conversations with them?

Ms. Bell: That's a great question.

The action plan is already in play. It's already begun to be implemented.

There is a director of cultural activity already employed at Innovation PEI who also has a temporary staff person working with her as well. And a number of the initiatives have begun. However, this strategic sector initiative has not, and has been identified as one of the kind of really key requirements to help that action plan move forward.

Certainly, the ongoing feedback from the cultural and creative industries and partners in PEI is that they're very happy with the fact that the action plan exists. But, they are concerned that if this is not identified as a strategic sector, that that good momentum that has happened over the last year that they're seeing benefits from, could change.

And so by enshrining it in legislation it really kind of reinforces the commitment that is there to make sure that work continues.

Chair: The hon. Member from Borden-Kinkora.

Mr. Fox: So I ask the question: Did you go back to any of these groups after – given the

fact that the actual plan is in place? Did you go back to any of those groups after the fact and have a chat with them?

Ms. Bell: I have had a formal and informal briefing with the director of Cultural Services who is employed at Innovation PEI to find out her view. She's the one that's actually in power to get that information. I've had a very good conversation with her and with other stakeholders in the community.

Mr. Fox: Okay, Chair?

Chair: The hon. Member from Borden-Kinkora.

Mr. Fox: I'm just interested in 1b also it says in clause E – do you have the actual wording available to us on that clause E? What that is?

Ms. Bell: It's currently – it's renewable energy.

Mr. Fox: Simply is that?

Ms. Bell: It's just that.

Mr. Fox: Thank you.

Chair: I'm going to go to the hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Chair.

Thank you, member, for bringing this bill to the floor.

In District 18 Rustico-Emerald, of course many constituents are involved in the creative and cultural area. These include authors and musicians of course. They include lots of craftspeople. They include dancers. They include film producers. There are people who are passionate about museums and heritage which also falls under that. There are videogame designers, which again in many cases falls underneath that – publishers, photographers.

I think that in today's world, as we see so many – so much automation happening through technological innovation and these sort of jobs becoming fewer and fewer, to me this is actually the area where people –

where jobs are going to be created with unique content that's creative and cultural. I think it's really important that Innovation PEI be allowed to support this sector. I think that that's a very good amendment. So I wanted to say that. I'll definitely support your amendment there for that one.

Ms. Bell: Thank you, member.

Mr. Trivers: In terms of clean technologies, that one needs to be considered a little more separately. But again, one of the biggest problems that has been identified right now, and is generally agreed upon throughout the world, is with things like climate change and finding ways to reduce climate change.

Of course, we've stated very clearly here in the official opposition, and I've very clearly that I don't think that a carbon tax is the right approach to it. We may disagree on that, perhaps. I think clean technologies, on the other hand, are one way that we can make significant inroads into helping prevent carbon emissions and mitigate climate change as well and slow it.

Again, I'd like to support that amendment as well. Innovation PEI is one area that should support those sorts of changes. I fully support your amendments.

Chair: Thank you.

The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Roach: Thank you, Chair.

I'd certainly like to recognize the work that the Department of Economic Development and Tourism has done on this file, and the department of innovation within that. I'd like to recognize the tremendous amount of work that that department has done on this to make this happen.

I noted that in their recommendations, this is pretty much exactly what they had recommended when it came to creative and cultural industries. For those reasons, I will be supporting this.

I do thank the member of the Third Party for bringing this pretty much forward on behalf of that department.

Chair: Thank you.

The hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. MacDonald: Basically, the director of culture now, Michelle MacCallum, is actually in the innovation office.

Ms. Bell: That's right.

Mr. MacDonald: Right.

So, are you anticipating any change in the cultural action plan, the arts grants program, the Island Capital Partners program, Island advance ignition funds and the zone which fund all, basically to some extent, cultural aspects of it, or in some extents renewable energy?

I guess, I'm trying to get my head around – I'm not totally against this. I think it's likely a good idea. I'm trying to my head around what the change is that's presently taking place. They're accessing federal funding – double-dipping if that's what you want to call it.

No?

An Hon. Member: No.

Mr. MacDonald: No?

Ms. Bell: Let's not call it that.

Mr. MacDonald: But there's – I guess if you could maybe explain it a little more thoroughly to me then.

Ms. Bell: It's a really good question because this has come up in terms of why does having strategic sectors matter?

We have strategic sectors identified in two key places. We have them identified as economic development sectors and we have them identified as the sort of areas of focus for innovation.

A lot of our programming and supports that you mentioned happen in innovation, particularly for early stage start-up and scale. In terms of economic development those are our big broad ones, aerospace and defense and biotech. They haven't really moved or changed a huge amount since they were an issue put in place over 10-12 years ago with the prosperity strategy and other documents.

By putting these into the *Innovation PEI Act*, we're saying that we are fulfilling a commitment. That these things matter enough, that we're placing them and saying – strategic means that we commit to them on a long-term basis. When we put things in place as a long-term plan, we're saying that no matter what else moves and changes over that time that these things will remain a priority for us.

We heard how important that was yesterday with the wind – with the announcement about BioVectra and how that support of the biotech and that long-term vision of the biotech community meant that that success was more likely to happen. That long-term vision only happens when we have things enshrined as priorities.

It was also identified for that same reason, you know when you mentioned Michelle and her team, that that's a very – shift and change that's happened in quite a short period of time after a long time of things not changing. Things can change back. It's a very good thing.

I've been absolutely clear the movement, you know, this plan is a really, really great piece of work. There's been a huge amount of work done on it, but we have to commit. So by getting this into the – as a key economic development sector, we're not necessarily saying that that means new money, what we're saying is it means increased focus and commitment.

Mr. MacDonald: (Indistinct)

Chair: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. MacDonald: Sorry, Chair,

Is there any possibilities that there would limit what we're presently doing to those groups or these other programs? Is there anything that you've looked at to say: If we do this, maybe we won't qualify for this?

I mean, if it's the ignition fund – because if you get to that point there are criteria around all those different programs and if the criteria doesn't match what we're trying to present here is a cultural opportunity say, then what happens?

So then you do need money because you're going to need to create a program to satisfy the growth in that area.

Ms. Bell: There will always be, within delivery of programs a limitation on funds.

So what we need do though is ensure that our programming reflects the priorities that a community tells us are priorities. If the community has engaged so much in the development of this plan, and has brought the commitment forward to not only sort of participate to the way that they did, but also really push to say that they see this. And we've heard this, you know from the Premier, how important the culture of PEI is to our story.

We also, economically, can't ignore that this sector brings in an equivalent level of direct revenue as the biotech sector does. Now, granted the biotech sector is growing more rapidly. It's got a 20 year runway.

It doesn't mean that necessarily this means the government is going to have to redo its programs – though it could, but what it does is say, without interfering in the operational management of programs and services that the government overall is recognizing and valuing this sector as a strategic one for the province and the story of the province. How that comes out, in terms of how we move programs and services forward, will be as much about how we choose to be creative with what we do.

Chair: Minister, we've come to the allotted time on this.

Who's up next?

I'm going to allow one more question, and then we'll –

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct)

Chair: Minister do you still have a question or are we going to do that?

Mr. MacDonald: (Indistinct)

Ms. Biggar: (Indistinct)

Chair: Sorry? Do you have another question?

Mr. MacDonald: I just wanted to reassure that obviously we know through the NAFTA negotiations how important culture is to Canada and the federal Liberal government. I just want to make sure that we're not closing off any of the other programs. I have no problem with this whatsoever, but I hope we're not limiting –

Ms. Bell: No, and I think that is up to the experts within the department who have that expertise to ensure that doesn't happen.

Mr. MacDonald: I'm fine, thank you.

Ms. Bell: Thank you, minister.

Chair: Shall the bill carry?

Sorry Premier, I didn't have you on the list.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Chair: Excuse me, sorry.

The Member from Vernon River-Stratford, what are you saying back there?

Mr. McIsaac: According to the allotment of time we have the floor from 4:50 p.m. to until 5:00 p.m.

Chair: Thank you.

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

Chair: Shall it carry? Carried.

Mr. Speaker, as Chair of a Committee of the Whole House having under consideration a bill to be intitled *An Act to Amend the Innovation PEI Act*, I beg leave to report that the committee has made some progress and begs leave to sit again. I move that the report of the committee be adopted.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Member from Vernon River-Stratford.

Government Motions

Mr. McIsaac: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. Member from Borden-Kinkora, that Motion No. 91 be now read.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk: Motion No. 91.

The hon. Member from Vernon River-Stratford, moved seconded by the hon. Member from Borden-Kinkora, the following motion:

WHEREAS gender-based violence remains a reality for many women and children; and

WHEREAS indigenous women across the country experience a rate of violence three times higher than non-indigenous women and are murdered at a rate six times higher; and

WHEREAS the Moose Hide Campaign is a grassroots movement of indigenous and non-indigenous men taking a stand against violence against women and children across Canada; and

WHEREAS the Moose Hide Campaign promotes the wearing of a small piece of moose hide signifying the wearer's commitment to honour, respect and protect the women and children in their lives, and to work collaboratively with other men to end gender-based violence; and

WHEREAS the Moose Hide Campaign movement has spread to over 350 communities across Canada and distributed over 1 million moose hide pins;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that this House encourages all Members of the Legislative Assembly to support the Moose Hide Campaign and work toward ending violence against all women and children in Prince Edward Island and across our country.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Vernon River-Stratford, the mover of the motion, would you like to speak to the motion?

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

I'm very pleased to have the honourable member from Member from Borden-Kinkora agree to second this very important motion and I hope all members of this House will support this campaign. I also

want to thank you, Mr. Speaker, for your support for this campaign from our first discussions about putting this forward in our Legislature.

The inspiration for the Moose Hide Campaign actually came from a hunting expedition in Northern BC. Paul and Raven Lacerte were hunting moose on Highway 16, which is a highway in Northern British Columbia that's also known, unfortunately, as the Highway of Tears and it references some 40 Aboriginal women who've disappeared along this stretch of highway in Northern British Columbia.

As this family was harvesting the moose, they kind of got the idea: why don't we use the moose hide from this animal to try and emphasize or address the violence against women that's going on in our country. They took it upon themselves to launch this campaign.

If you look at some of the reasons why this idea came to them at this particular location in 2011, is because the highway itself has been the site for a string of murders and disappearances in BC that stems back to the late 1990s and into 2000.

As I said earlier, the number of Aboriginal women who are missing in BC in this particular area is as high as 40. I guess where Paul and Raven were, was approximately the same area. It was the very issue that sparked the idea that the moose hide could be used as a simple to end violence. They thought it was about a little more and they decided if they take the moose hide and they tan it and they cut it up to little squares, they could give it to men as a token of their commitment to end violence against women and children in this country, and as a promise to never commit a violent act towards women and children in our lives.

You ask, why moose hide?

Once you look at many of the pins and many of the emblems that represent different chapters in our lives – we've had pink ribbons, we've had many, many other different kinds – I guess the hope was that seeing such an unusual pin, this piece of tanned moose hide, it would spark conversation, it would generate interest. It would focus on violence against women as

an Indigenous effort and an effort on behalf of many in our communities. It was during our last Canadian Parliamentary Association meeting in Iqaluit that the conversation started for some of us when we saw the Speaker of the Newfoundland Legislature wearing his moose hide pin.

The look of this pin is always a discussion starter and that is why it works.

The Moose Hide Campaign is an indigenous-led initiative rooted in culture and ceremony. What started as a movement to get men involved in ending violence against Indigenous women and children, has since grown into a national campaign to engage all Canadians in ending domestic and gender-based violence.

Violence against women and children touches every community, every ethnicity, and every nation. It is not confined to any one of them. It touches every profession, every religion and every socioeconomic stratum of our society. It can be overt and extreme or subtle and insidious.

It can be something that anyone would recognize to be wrong, or something that led some to believe to be tolerable, not really all that bad in the greater scheme of things – it can be a single incident or a progression of incidents. It can be committed by someone under the influence of drugs or alcohol, or by someone who is stone-cold sober, but it is never okay.

People need to reflect on what this means. They need to learn what's not okay and what crosses the line. They need to be educated and they need to make a personal pledge not to do it, and as well, not to stand by when someone else does it.

They need to be a part of the solution. This campaign is solution-oriented.

If you look at violence against women, there are some concerning stats, some statistics that we're not happy with, but they are there.

We can't deny the fact that some of these statistics about violence against women in our regions and in our country is not something that we can be proud of.

In 2004, the union UPSE created the first PEI Silent Witness silhouette, in memory of Kimberly Byrne.

The Silent Witness symbol became an important part of public events remembering murdered women and raising awareness about violence.

The Moose Hide Campaign is another initiative that I'm hoping will increase the focus on addressing violence against women. There is more to this campaign than just putting on another pin.

During the Moose Hide Campaign, fasting is an important ceremonial practice because it demonstrates a personal commitment to honouring and protecting women and children in our country.

The Moose Hide Campaign men's fast is simple; they fast from sun-up to sundown.

The fast begins 20 minutes before the sun comes up and it ends 20 minutes after the sun goes down, to ensure that there's a full fasting day.

It's a symbol of a strike or a public protest, a non-violent protest that shows that we are supporting this cause. We don't condone violence against women or violence against children, and this is our form of protest, a non-violent protest that works towards that.

As for Paul and Raven, their initial vision was to have a million men fasting with them to end violence against women and children in Canada.

It was also their goal to distribute 100 million of the moose hide pins across the country in order to raise awareness. They've actually, already presented their one millionth pin and the whole campaign is growing.

It would be really good to see a united effort and a common stand against violence from this Legislature.

When we look at the numbers of people that are getting on board – like today – this Legislature would be the fifth in Canada to stand and support the Moose Hide Campaign and I couldn't be more proud than to see us jump on board.

The other four provincial legislatures have stood in support of the Moose Hide Campaign are: British Columbia, Alberta, Northwest Territories and Newfoundland. Many smaller communities and municipalities have also joined the campaign.

In October of last year, the federal government announced that it would be supporting the Moose Hide Campaign and a national day of fasting and support.

They encouraged all men to abstain. Prime Minister Justice Trudeau delivered a congratulatory message to the Moose Hide Campaign stating its purpose and especially how important it is as government, move forward with reconciliation and the inquiry into the murdered and missing Indigenous women.

I'd like to note that Mi'kmaq Confederacy here on PEI is very supportive of us joining the Moose Hide Campaign. They also wanted to form a strong partnership and work very closely with the provincial government on dealing with the serious issues related to mental health and addiction services for Indigenous people in our urban population.

It's our hope that with this motion, we will agree that all of us in this House will join with those in other legislatures across the country to join this campaign and help to eradicate violence against women.

As a father of four young men, the father-in-law of three beautiful young women, and the grandfather of two of the most precious grandchildren in the world, I feel it's only right that I stand up and be counted.

It is inconceivable that anyone could in any way harm these little ones now or in the future.

As a proud grandfather now for less than two years, my life has been refocused around these two little ones. Becoming a parent is an awesome gift, and becoming a grandparent is a blessing at a whole new level.

In closing, I'd like to ask everyone to do their part in supporting the Moose Hide

Campaign and help end violence against women and children.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Casey: Call the hour.

Speaker: The hour has been called.

We will reconvene at 7:00 p.m. this evening.

The Legislature reconvened until 7:00 p.m.

Speaker (Casey): Good evening, everyone.

Mr. Gallant: Good evening, Madam Speaker.

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

Orders of the Day (Government)

Mr. Gallant: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I move, seconded by the hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir, that the 9th order of the day be now read.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk Assistant: Order No. 9, *An Act to Amend the Police Act*, Bill No. 45, ordered for second reading.

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

Mr. Gallant: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir, that the said bill be now read a second time.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk Assistant: *An Act to Amend the Police Act*, Bill No. 45, read a second time.

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

Mr. Gallant: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir, 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 call on the hon. Member from Vernon River-Stratford to Chair the Committee of the Whole House.

Chair (McIsaac): 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 Police Act*. Is it the pleasure of the committee that the bill be now read clause by clause?

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Could we have an overview (Indistinct)

Chair: An overview?

Do you want to bring a stranger on the floor?

Mr. J. Brown: Yes. I wouldn't mind, Chair.

Chair: Okay, is it okay if we bring a stranger on the floor?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Chair: And then we'll have the interview – or the overview. Interview, too, likely.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Mr. J. Brown: Could I beg a moment for recognition of guests too?

Chair: Sure, just a second.

We've got to get him –

Mr. J. Brown: Yeah, sure.

Chair: Just state your name and title there, Blair, please.

Blair Barbour: Blair Barbour, Manager of Policy, Planning and FPT Relations at justice and public safety.

Chair: Okay.

We're going to take a break for a second and give the minister an opportunity for recognition of guests.

Recognition of Guests (II)

Mr. J. Brown: Thank you very much, Chair.

I'd like to recognize and welcome John Flood and Randy Robar to the gallery. They are our – I guess we'll say our departmental sidekicks when it comes to policing and between the two of them, they have a great wealth of experience, one with the Charlottetown City Police and one with the RCMP.

I've had great careers with those organizations and we're fortunate to have them helping us out now, and fortunate to have had their help through the process to develop this legislation.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chair: Now we'll have the minister give us an overview of the bill.

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

This bill amends the *Police Act* to provide for the appointment of conservation officers as police officers for the purposes of the act, to enlarge the minister's authority to address circumstances where an investigation has determined that a police service, chief officer, or police officer is not in compliance with act; to modernize the complaint process; and to require the minister's authorization for any significant changes in municipal police services.

The department engaged in an extensive consultation process with policing partners in the development of this bill, including consultation meetings in October 2017 and February 2018, which involved clause-by-clause review of the proposed bill with policing partners and additional written consultation activities following the October and February meetings.

We'd like to thank our policing partners for their feedback from these consultation activities, which is reflected in the final form of this bill.

Consultation was primarily through the current police training advisory committee, which is comprised of police unions and associations, CUPE, the Charlottetown

police association and the PEI police association, CAOs of municipalities with municipal police services, municipal police chiefs and deputies, UPEI security police services manager; Atlantic Police Academy and Holland College; the 'L' division of the RCMP; the PEI chief conservation officer; and the PEI police commissioner and manager.

I would say, I attended one of those meetings and I remember thinking to myself, I am probably the safest person in Prince Edward Island right now, as we had a roomful of the highest-ranking police officers on Prince Edward Island and I'm glad to say it was a very productive meeting.

The discussion was frank and we got right down to the issues and I'm glad –

Mr. Fox: (Indistinct)

Mr. J. Brown: I'm glad to have had the cooperation of all of those different groups that we just mentioned, through this process.

Literally, they went word by word over the amendments that is we have put forward and we hope that that will be telling and we would mention, with that level of consultation, that we have an expectation that the bill suits the needs of those different groups, Mr. Chair.

Chair: Do we want it read clause by clause or are we open for questions first?

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Chair: Okay, first I'll take a list here.

The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Thanks, Chair.

Let me add my comments to what the minister has said by way of appreciation to all of the partners who have worked on this and, of course, to recognize Mr. Flood and Mr. Robar as leads, as the minister said, sidekicks, was it?

But, many people were involved and I speak, having been minister through to January of 2018, this process had been underway for upwards of a year at that point – actually, more than that, and there were

unions. There were police agencies. There were people in the community who had real knowledge of this, and of course outside consultants.

The overall theme was one of partnership and collaboration. I believe that's really what we see reflected in the bill and I just wanted to say how much I appreciate having been in that role, the work that's been done on this.

Chair: Thank you, Premier.

The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you, Chair.

I, too, would like to welcome John and Randy. Randy, of course, was a fine candidate in the 2015 election in District 17, so we spent a lot of time together back then. It's nice to see you again, Randy.

Just a couple of general questions before we get going, minister. You said in your opening remarks that this is in response to the 2016 review that your government undertook of the *Police Act*, a policing review.

Can you indicate which recommendations of that review are covered by this act?

Mr. J. Brown: I should be clear first off to say that it's not – there were a few simultaneous processes that were on-going. I mentioned this to you earlier today, at the time.

Much of this is related to what I'm going to call housekeeping matters that are being done to – you know, the *Police Act* hadn't been amended in quite some time and there is a lot of different pieces. I'll use the police commissioner as an example, that are very functional pieces of policing and how police officers face our community. That had not been addressed in quite some time – that would be one example.

Conservation officers were brought in under their purview of this legislation as another prime example, off the top of my head. I don't know, Blair, if we have a list, other than that. But I think those would be the two main pieces that I can think of that are addressed in this legislation.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thanks.

And I know that in the report that was released in March of 2017, government committed to address 10 of the 17 recommendations within 18 months, and we are at that end of that 18 month window now.

How many of the recommendations will the legislation – and I understand that a lot of the recommendations were not legislative or statutory – but, can you tell us how many of those recommendations that you committed to fulfill will be fulfilled with this legislation?

Chair: Minister Brown?

Mr. J. Brown: I think Blair might actually have a better kind of list, right there –

Chair: Mr. Barbour.

Blair Barbour: Yes.

One of the recommendations was to improve reporting, with respect to complaints. This bill does bring forward a reporting mechanism so that if the police department receives a complaint, it was to notify the police commissioner's office. For instance, that's in that move to make the accountability regime of the act more measurable, to bring greater accountability to police forces.

Bringing conservation officers under the *Police Act*, this was recommended in the *Police Act* review, and also in a supplementary report dealing with conservation officers. There was a recommendation to have complainants have the ability to have their complaints, respecting municipal police officers or departments, to the police commissioner's office. This act enables that to happen.

The report also spoke to an expanded role of the police commissioner with respect to municipal police departments. We think particularly through the amendments to section four that this bill does that as well.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you.

So, minister, I wondered – and given that we are at the end of that window of opportunity, I'm wondering whether I could just ask for an update on the 10 commitments that your government made from those recommendations and where we are with them.

Chair: Minister Brown.

Mr. J. Brown: Maybe I'll say it this way: I don't think I'm in a position – they are fairly substantive. We're working on 10 or 11 of them. We're actually in a position where we will probably provide an update on them, perhaps even during the time that we are sitting here now or sometime in the very near future.

We have actually started on some aspects of the second phase, as well. We found that with the groups that have been meeting and we listed off the group that has met, and I believe would meet quarterly. A lot of the subject matter of the *Police Act* review will come up in one way or another in an on-going basis. Just because we said we were going to have 10 done in 18 months doesn't mean that we aren't working on other things as well and there will be pieces of it that will indicate that we will not be doing.

I suspect we will have a more fulsome update, and those are some pretty substantive pieces before too long – whether it be tomorrow or the next day, or whatever – here tonight – but it won't be long.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Okay.

Chair: That's good?

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Great.

Thank you, Chair.

Chair: Thank you.

The hon. Member from Borden-Kinkora.

Mr. Fox: Thank you, Chair.

Minister, I'm wondering – in section one, you clearly define the chief conservation officer – is this because the police commissioner had no authority to

investigate complaints prior to this change? Because my understanding before: from means with department officials, if a person wanted to make a complaint against a chief conservation officer of a conservation officer, was there no mechanism in place that the commissioner could actually investigate that complaint.

Chair: Minister Brown.

Mr. J. Brown: Certainly, I'm not going to say that when we are dealing with the definitions in number one, you know, I'm not going to say that's why chief conservation officer is defined in number one as an example, or conservation officer for that matter. But certainly part of the idea behind the legislation, or the amendments to it, is to bring the conservation officers under the same legislation as the police service, generally would be – the whole piece of it, from discipline, to requirements, to everything you can think of.

You were a police officer –

Mr. Fox: Yeah.

Mr. J. Brown: – and you understand all of the (Indistinct) –

Mr. Fox: Yeah, and that's my understanding –

Chair: The hon. Member from Borden-Kinkora.

Mr. Fox: I'm curious that if a chief conservation officer is actually, by definition a chief of a police department, would you agree with that?

Chair: Minister Brown.

Mr. J. Brown: Would I agree that they are?

Mr. Fox: Yes.

Mr. J. Brown: Essentially, yeah.

Blair can provide some further clarity on that.

Chair: Mr. Barbour.

Blair Barbour: Yes. If you go farther into the bill where we provide for the

appointment, they act in the same capacity as a chief officer would at a police department, for the purposes of the action.

Mr. Fox: That's right, so –

Chair: The hon. Member from Borden-Kinkora.

Mr. Fox: Thank you, Chair.

Where I'm going with this is back in the spring sitting of the Legislature, we produced at emailed where the chief conservation officer of this province, immediately after charging a farmer, notified the chief of staff, Paul Ledwell, the minister of justice, the minister of agriculture, and the Premier's office.

Would that not be irregular that we have – because I know for a fact that the commanding officer of the RCMP, or the chief of police for Charlottetown, or wherever, would not inform a politician or an elected body, who they are charging.

Chair: Minister Brown.

Mr. J. Brown: Well, we addressed this back at that time, and my recollection is this – and to be clear, I wasn't involved when that email was sent, but I did see the email after the fact.

When a charge is made and laid, the charge then becomes public information and there is a notification that this had happened and that was pursuant to a policy that was in place in relation to that particular type of environmental offense at the time.

Chair: The hon. Member from Borden-Kinkora.

Mr. Fox: So are we sanctioning? Actually, it wouldn't be a public document until the information was laid out at the (Indistinct) of a courthouse. So, I'm wondering, are we sanctioning the chiefs of police, or councils of being notified who is charged and who is not charged in this province?

Chair: Minister Brown.

So I'll start by saying this: This is outside of the purview of the bill that we have in front of us.

But, when somebody is charged and it becomes public information, there are rights and abilities to do that, and over and above that – and we see it all the time. We see, just as an example, the report today was on the Clow appeal; you go through and we knew right from the moment Mr. Clow was charged that he was charged. We saw fairly quickly after that a remand hearing took place and so on and so forth.

It's the process, it's recorded by the media, and in particular, in that case, it was an environmental offense and the policy at the time had been because of the nature of those offenses in the Prince Edward Island landscape.

That was the policy to alert the folks that were department heads. I think the people that you have mentioned were department heads or deputies that were notified.

Chair: The hon. Member from Borden-Kinkora, I'm going to give you two and then we will (Indistinct) come back, okay?

Mr. Fox: Sure, yeah and then come back.

I'll just comment on that.

I don't think that Paul Ledwell or the chief of staff need to be notified who is being charged. When I was the chief of police, I would never send an email to somebody letting them know. The only person I would ever let know that somebody was being charged would be the Crown Prosecutor's office, and that would be the end of that.

I'm interested in 9.2, para five –

Chair: Just before we get into that – do we want to go into questions (Indistinct) the bill, right?

Mr. Fox: Just questions.

Chair: Good.

The hon. Member from Borden-Kinkora.

Mr. Fox: Section 9.2, para five says: Production of identification card.

It says that a member must offer his identification card when requested to by the public if it's deemed safe to do so.

Would not also a badge be sufficient? Until such time –

Chair: Mr. Brown or Blair?

Blair Barbour: We were looking – this provision updates the provision that already existed in the *Police Act* dealing with the identification card. That was the standard that has been in place for some time. This bill doesn't change that requirement, it merely updates the requirement.

Mr. J. Brown: I could add too, that this was a request of the unions that deal with police and you may recall this – the trouble was that if you were on vacation or you were at the beach or whatever and somebody came up to you, a park warden saying: show me your ID and you're on vacation at the beach, you know, that's not really a fair ask.

Mr. Fox: That's right.

Chair: The hon. Member from Borden-Kinkora, one more and then I'll –

Mr. Fox: 14.2: Where pursuant to the report of investigator under subsection 4(4), the Minister concludes that the chief officer of a police department has contravened or failed to comply with the requirements of this Act or the regulations.

Do you have any examples where the chief officer might not be able to comply with the act?

Chair: Mr. Brown? Mr. Barbour?

Blair Barbour: Do I have an example in mind, not particularly. I don't have a specific example in mind, but it may be that you do have a chief who, is either, through intent, or through omission failed to meet one of the requirements in the act. Perhaps it's with respect to screening of employees; perhaps it's with respect to other aspects that are in the Code of Conduct.

So this is something that would catch one of those instances, if the investigation determined that those were in place, this section would provide the minister with the authority to issue that direction to remedy that.

Mr. Fox: Okay, thank you.

Chair: Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: So I see in this bill it creates a new position in the commissioner's office and that's the judicator. Can you describe what the responsibilities of that new position are?

Chair: Minister Brown.

Mr. J. Brown: Sorry, I might just clarify first that the judicator isn't necessarily a position within the police commissioner's office per say. It's a function that's related to the function of the police commissioner if I could kind of put it that way.

It'd kind of be like – I like in the police commissioner, and it's not exactly like it, but just follow me as the closest analogy that we would know would be the human rights commission here. So you go in and you make a complaint, and there would be an investigation that would be conducted by a staff person within the human rights commission. If the matter's not disposed of amicably, we'll say, then it goes to a hearing, which is a hearing before a panel. The adjudicator is the same as a panel.

So in this case, if a member of the public makes a complaint to the commissioner, the commissioner would make efforts to deal with that – investigate and deal with that complaint. If they can't successfully resolve it, then it would go before an adjudicator. Now and previously, that had been a different process.

We've actually not had any complaints, in recent memory anyway, that have gone that far.

Chair: Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: So just so I'm clear on that. So the position of an adjudicator is not necessarily a new hire or a new body in the office of the commissioner. It's just a role that is carried out – I don't know, from your description there, it seems like it's carried out outside the commissioner's office.

Chair: Mr. Brown.

Mr. J. Brown: Similarly to the human rights commission, there'd be a number of commissioners that would be technically

appointed, but they would be like – they're on a standby basis if you will.

Then if there's a need for them, they get a pretty (Indistinct) stipend, or whatever, to come engage in a hearing process. I'll be honest and blunt and say we don't envision a tremendous need for that, but there will be somebody appointed and I think the term is three years that referenced in here at a time.

Chair: Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thanks.

So the commissioner's office was established in 2007, do you have any sense of how many complaints have gone through the office since that time?

Chair: Minister Brown.

Mr. J. Brown: Thank you.

Blair has numbers here. Maybe I'll let Blair answer the question.

Blair Barbour: Sure, so there are some categories that, I apologize, I don't have the sum amounts.

Under section 28 of the act for review of a decision of a chief officer concerning complaints about the conduct of members of a police department: 2011, we had six complaints; in 2012, five; 2013, two; 2014, three; 2015 and 2016, one in each year; and zero for 2017.

With respect to the director of the Atlantic Police Academy, there's only ever been one complaint and that was in 2013. We've never had a complaint about any conduct of a chief officer that has been made to the police commissioner's office; same thing with respect to the conduct of the director of the Atlantic Police Academy.

In 2012, there was one complaint dealing with the conduct of a security police officer. That would be at UPEI has security police officers. Then there have been a number of files labeled here – assistance files that have been opened by the manager of the police commissioner's office to assist people who want to engage in processes under the act.

Chair: Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you.

So not a huge number in the 10 or so years. Am I right in saying that it's not every complaint against a police officer that would end up in the commissioner's office? Typically it would be dealt with at the local – whether that's a municipal police service or whatever.

Mr. J. Brown: You might have – Somebody might call and say well I called and it took you five minutes to get here. They might say right on the phone when they called I don't want you to do anything about this, but my expectation was greater than this or whatever, right?

So, it's really up to the individual and there's a requirement that they sign their complaints. There is a piece of this where you don't – there's a difference between investigating every complaint that might come in and having some common sense about how that would happen. That's part of the process that I just mentioned here, and it's a similar process, as an example, with the human rights commission, where there'd be early efforts made to determine whether a file needed to be opened, whether an investigation needs to occur, whether you can come to an amicable resolution before you go through any of the above, et cetera, et cetera, depending on what the complaint was and who's making it and what they want to see out of it.

Chair: Leader of the Third Party, I'll give you one more and then I'm going to move on. Okay?

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Okay.

So what are the criteria or the parameters that decide whether a complaint is dealt with at the local level, within the municipal police force, or whether it gets sent up to the commissioner's office, and is that at the behest of the complainant?

Mr. J. Brown: With this bill, an individual from the public will now be able to go directly to the police commissioner, whereas before –

Dr. Bevan-Baker: – they'd go through the –

Mr. J. Brown: – yeah, they'd go to the police department and make the complaint that way.

So, it's really up to them at this point in time. They could still go to the police department or they could go to their commissioner but there's more of an intentionality in terms of being able to track what complaints are open.

Chair: We're going to go to Montague-Kilmuir and then after that we'll go to the hon. member from Borden-Kinkora.

The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Roach: Thank you, Chair.

So I take it when the complaint would come in there would be a number of levels of how that was to be dealt with depending on the severity. Who would get the first opportunity if the complaint came in – and let's say it came directly in to the commissioner – who would have the first opportunity to try and deal with that complaint, either through some sort of reconciliation or explanation about why things happen the way they happen?

Chair: Mr. Brown.

Mr. J. Brown: Maybe I'll have Blair describe the processes.

Chair: Mr. Barbour.

Blair Barbour: Sure. If a complaint did come into the police commissioner's office, the manager of that office would refer to the chief officer of the police department. So, it would be the local police department that would first address that issue with the complainant to determine whether there's an informal resolution possible or even just to explain processes.

The manager, though, at the police commissioner's office, would be able to assist a complainant in terms of explaining how the processes work, his or her rights, including the ability if they weren't satisfied with the resolution of the issue at the local office to take that to the police commissioner's office once the local police department made their decision.

Chair: Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Roach: So would there be – is it your expectation that there would a number of people within that police service that would be kind of designated? Or, who would it fall upon to – once it left the manager and went to the police service – who would it then fall upon to actually make that contact with the complainant?

Chair: Mr. Barbour.

Blair Barbour: I think that depends on the operating procedures of the local police department. Ultimately, the chief is responsible – the chief officer – for addressing those complains but there may be situations where there they find it's more effective to designate someone in particular to deal with that complaint.

Chair: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Roach: Let's just hypothetically, it goes to the manager, the manager sends it to the police service, the police service will deal with the complaint if they can't come to a resolution. It would then go back to the commissioner to assign an adjudicator?

Chair: Mr. Barbour.

Blair Barbour: No actually, so the way the process would work: if the complainant decides to make the complaint, the chief officer would look at the issue, there could be an investigation and would make a decision based on that investigation on whether to dismiss the complaint, whether further action was needed in terms of discipline, whether or not there was another alternative available to resolve the complaint.

Once that decision is made by the chief officer, then the complainant or the officer affected would have the ability to take that decision for review to the police commissioner's office.

Chair: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Roach: Now we're back to the police commissioner's office.

Does the commissioner, does he then assign an adjudicator at that point?

Chair: Mr. Barbour.

Blair Barbour: As the bill sets it up, it would go to the police commissioner's office and there's a process where the manager of the police commissioner's office would look at the complaint, there would be an investigation and then it would be assigned to the appointed adjudicator for a hearing.

Chair: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir, I'll give you this one and then we're going to move on.

Mr. Roach: Thank you.

So could you give me any idea of how – and I think if I heard it correctly you could have several adjudicators so that you could reach out and have someone available.

Could you tell me what the qualifications are required for that adjudicator to fulfill that role?

Chair: Mr. Barbour.

Blair Barbour: Those will be set out in the regulations but the intention is that they will be similar, if not identical, to the requirements we currently have for the police commissioner.

So that would include significant experience in adjudicating those sorts of matters.

Mr. Roach: Chair, I don't think my question was heard.

Chair: Okay, the hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Roach: I'm not concerned with the commissioner; I'm asking the qualifications for the adjudicator. It's the same person?

Blair Barbour: They will be the same.

Mr. J. Brown: The first thing that he said was they'll be set in regulations but they will likely be pretty well the same as the qualifications that are set out for the police commissioner.

Mr. Roach: Thank you.

Chair: The hon. Member from Borden-Kinkora.

Mr. Fox: Thank you, Chair.

In 14.4, appointment of a police officer by the minister – I noticed that it appears that the conservation officer have been changed basically – am I understanding right, that they basically refer to him before as a peace officer and now they're being referred to a police officer? So there's a role change?

Chair: Minister of Justice.

Mr. J. Brown: Sorry, I'm not totally sure what you're asking again, what?

Chair: The hon. Member from Borden-Kinkora.

Mr. Fox: Conservation officers, it seems that we're now being referred to as police officers, prior to that they were peace officers so has their role changed?

Chair: Minister of Justice.

Mr. J. Brown: I'll let Blair give an explanation of this.

Blair Barbour: So section 14.4, you're correct; it does say they are appointed as a police officer. The reason why we use that language is that elsewhere in the act we have provisions that deal with police officers and the idea is to be consistent in how we refer to them.

Conservation officers though, will continue to be peace officers, as well, and so the difference really is a peace officer – there is a common law definition, a definition in the Criminal Code, the intent is absolutely – they will still be peace officers and they will be able to enjoy the immunities and authorities that goes with being a peace officer.

The Police Act itself deals with police officers and so if you look at it they are both police officers and peace officers (Indistinct) the act.

Chair: The hon. Member from Borden-Kinkora

Mr. Fox: With that, if you go over to section 9: subject to the conditions attached to his or her appointment, a conservation officer appointed as a police officer under this section is a peace officer and has all the powers of – under the common law of the Criminal Code of Canada and other federal and provincial enactments.

So what I'm wondering there is: conservation officers – and I'm very aware of what they go through for training as a conservation officer at the Atlantic Police Academy – are they going to receive now further training or are they going to need further training to handle occurrences under the Criminal Code or any other federal statute?

Chair: Mr. Barbour?

Blair Barbour: The jurisdiction of conservation officers will still be determined at the time of appointment. So my understanding is that there is currently an intention to restrict the duties and responsibilities of conservation officers to certain matters.

So you're not going to see: all of a sudden because a conservation officer is a police officer, under this act, that they have full jurisdiction to enforce all statutes. It will still be limited and it will be limited by the appointment.

The appointment power in this act allows the minister to restrict those matters that they are – the jurisdiction that those officers have.

Mr. Fox: Okay for now. For now, that's good for now.

Chair: Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you Chair.

So just to follow up on Borden-Kinkora's questions regarding the conservation officers because here in the province we have conservation officers in the justice department and also in agriculture and fisheries and I'm assuming, that the conservation officers we're referring to here are just the ones currently in the justice department.

Chair: Minister of Justice and Public Safety.

Mr. J. Brown: So this is actually going to switch.

The way that they were set up in one department, appointing in the other department we'll say: owning – and it'll be all set out now so they'll all be appointed by our department if that answers your question.

Chair: Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thanks, but my understanding is that not all of the conservation officers – the environmental ones for example – they're not armed they don't carry arms.

So will that change this?

Chair: Minister of Justice and Public Safety.

Mr. J. Brown: So the folks that you are talking about may not be conservation officers –

Mr. Fox: I think he's talking about – you're talking about the compliance officers.

Mr. J. Brown: We have six conservation officers on PEI.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: And are they all within the Justice Department?

Mr. J. Brown: They're all within the Justice Department, yeah.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: My nomenclature is off there, my apologies for that.

Chair: Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thanks.

Could you explain the impact of subsection 1.1 on the minister's ability to appoint an investigator?

Chair: Minister of Justice and Public Safety.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Sorry, that's section 2 sub 1.1, it's the top of page 2.

Chair: Mr. Barbour.

Blair Barbour: Can you repeat the question?

Chair: Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Sure, I'm just wondering what the impact of that subsection 1.1 is on the minister's ability to appoint an investigator?

Chair: Mr. Barbour.

Blair Barbour: Just for the record, so we're talking about the amendment that will add a section for subsection 1.1, and it provides that: for the purposes of a investigation relating to matters in sections 14.1 to 14.3, the Minister shall assign the responsibility for the appointment of an investigator to conduct the investigator in accordance with subsection (1) to the Police Commissioner.

So with respect to certain matters that fall under 14.1-14.3, it will be the jurisdiction of the commissioner to order the investigation rather than the minister.

Chair: Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: So looking at section 9.1 and section 14.1, that seems to be a fairly significant increase in the minister's authority over municipal police services. I know you had an in-depth consultation with the municipal police services on this, so did they support the new level of authority of the minister?

Chair: Mr. Barbour.

Mr. J. Brown: Certainly, we went clause by clause through these provisions with them. They had some concerns with the original proposals that we had prepared following the police review.

We responded by changing or removing some of those provisions and our feedback from our police partners was that they were satisfied with the contents of the bill. There were no particular concerns that they raised with the content that we have before us today.

Chair: Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thanks.

So in the police review, the third recommendation – which deals with minister's powers and changing the minister's powers – I'll read from the review: and authorizes the minister to dissolve and establish police departments and police services.

Now I don't see anything in the bill about the dissolution of existing municipal police services. Is that – did I miss something, or is that part of the review or recommendation from the review not covered by this bill?

Chair: The hon. Minister of Justice.

Mr. J. Brown: Thank you, Chair.

The main issue that we – the thrust behind that recommendation was to ensure that if there's an issue that effectively we are ensuring, we being the ministry is ensuring that there's adequate police coverage for Prince Edward Island. The big piece in that, when we set out to negotiate the legislation, was that that be covered off.

We've been able to effectively do that by saying: Okay, we don't need to have the hammer, if you will, so long as we have notice of what's going to be able to happen, and then the ability to react if something does happen that we would need to know about.

Say we have whatever town where there's an RCMP policing contract and the town decides: Well, we're going to discontinue our RCMP policing contract and we're going to put our own police force in. They have to notify us of that, and then we would have the ability to look at it and say: Okay, well, what are you going to – you know, say the RCMP had five officers in there. Are you going to try and do the same thing with one as an example?

And what arrangements would you have, you know, to cover certain things off? As an example, the ERT team is something that the RCMP would often deploy if there was an incident that required it in a jurisdiction. Do you have something set up to cover that off? Or what eventualities are you not considering in changing?

As long as we have the ability to ensure that the police coverage is adequate, we feel that where we got to with the legislation does the same job as what was recommended by the report.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Okay; and my sense from the police review that was done and the report with the recommendations was that the intent was to create a consistent and the best police service for Islanders from tip to tip.

I sensed from that that there was a – we'd either move to RCMP coverage for the entire province, or we would create one provincial police force for the whole jurisdiction. Maybe my interpretation of the review and the goals of the review are incorrect, and please correct me if that's the case; but with that provision not being in here, I'm sensing that you're perhaps stepping away from that goal, if that indeed was a goal.

Mr. J. Brown: I will say categorically that, and the – I don't think it's explicitly stated in the report, although I think it is inferred. I will say categorically that we are not looking to move to one unified police force across Prince Edward Island.

I can speak to that in all sorts of different ways, but really, in each municipality or in each entity where there is a police force or a policing contract, they might have their different reasons for wanting one police force or another, as long as the police force that's here on Prince Edward Island is unified in terms of its capabilities and in terms of its ability to work together, as I mentioned a minute ago. That's really what we're trying to accomplish. I don't think it matters whether it's one police force or 21 police forces as long as they're working together effectively.

There may actually be benefits to having, you know, different kinds of policing in different parts of the province, and focuses on different strengths in different areas, so I think we can all live harmoniously together so long as we are ensuring that we're taking the best parts of it and making sure that they're working in the different communities where they need to be.

Chair: Okay, thanks.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thanks, minister.

Chair: We're going to a question from the hon. Member from Borden-Kinkora.

Mr. Fox: Thank you.

What is it, 19.2, para 10, item number five. Just wondering, what is that in relation to, that none of these people can make a complaint? And what I'm wondering about is a member of a police department, including an auxiliary constable, what can they not make a complaint about?

Chair: The minister of justice.

Mr. J. Brown: So, effectively, you'll see in the situation in there, that essentially the question you're asking me revolves around the fact that the act is set up such that a member of the public can make a complaint, but it's states who can't.

Basically, there are internal processes that the group that we had mentioned before, that we were consulting with, in preparing this legislation, felt that, you know, effectively, it'd be inside baseball to have them go making complaints about each other to a superior or to the police commissioner's office when they'd normally be dealt with through procedures set up in negotiations with their unions that would enable them to be able to deal with those complaints internally.

So that would –

Mr. Fox: So what happens if two police officers are driving around tonight and I witness that other police officer doing something that is against the law? Are you saying that I have no avenue to make that complaint?

Mr. Roach: (Indistinct)

Mr. Fox: That I have to go to a union? What'd you say, Al?

Mr. Roach: (Indistinct)

Chair: Minister of justice.

Mr. Roach: (Indistinct) a police officer doing something wrong or illegal, arrest him – or her.

Chair: Minister of justice.

Mr. J. Brown: Yeah –

Mr. Roach: It's straightforward.

Mr. J. Brown: So that is the blunt –

Mr. Fox: I don't think you could do that.

Mr. J. Brown: Well, sure you can, but this is the piece of it.

There are differences between, you know, an administrative issue, like somebody didn't show up for their shift, or somebody didn't comply with a back-up call, would be one example of something that could be a complaint. That can be sorted out internally through –

Mr. Fox: I would agree.

Mr. J. Brown: – the chief or a manager or a shift supervisor or whatever, without having to go make a complaint to the police commissioner; and that's the essential point that the unions made and the chiefs backed them up on, that – you know, we don't want – not everything that would, you know, kind of be the subject of a complaint when it's between two of our officers should become a complaint to the police commissioner's office and remove that from our normal day-to-day, administrative – I don't want to say burden, but our operational work that we do.

Chair: The hon. Member from Borden-Kinkora.

Mr. Fox: But as we've seen in some police departments, we have an internal affairs department where police officers – you know, it's a mechanism to investigate police officers that do something wrong. You just simply can't go arrest the guy and throw him in jail as somebody suggested a minute ago.

So if I see something that's being done and it's wrong, then, if there's no internal affairs department, then I would take it to my supervisor or my chief of police. Would that mechanism still be there?

Mr. J. Brown: Yeah, so I guess you have to kind of – you have to further define what you mean by wrong.

Mr. Fox: (Indistinct)

Mr. J. Brown: I'll start out with saying that; but if it's something illegal, as the hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir mentioned, if you're a police officer, you do have the power to –

Mr. Fox: Yeah, you could, yeah.

Mr. J. Brown: – do whatever you're going to do with them. That's a different thing than this.

If it's something, like as I say, a failure to cover a back-up call, that's something totally different. That's between two police officers and their employer. In other words, it's an employment law situation that would typically be dealt with in-house by police management.

If they have a policy that says that you're going to bring in, you know, internal affairs, or whatever to investigate that, then so be it; and we've seen incidents lately where, as an example, CPS did an investigation –

Mr. Fox: That's right.

Mr. J. Brown: – of officers and disciplined in them in a public way. That happens, and that would happen outside this procedure now and it will continue to happen (Indistinct) –

Mr. Fox: Okay, that's what I wanted to ensure. I wanted to ensure that that mechanism is still in place –

Mr. J. Brown: Yeah.

Mr. Fox: – at the end of the day.

Over in section 18.1, 35, complaints, I take it the same reasoning is being used there as you previously explained it, to do with 35.1 in number five.

Mr. J. Brown: Sorry, I thought you said 18. Just give me a second.

Chair: The minister of justice.

Mr. J. Brown: Yeah, so this is the same thing in relation to – oh, you're looking at this one? Okay. It's a parallel provision.

Mr. Fox: Okay, thank you.

Chair: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Roach: Thank you, Chair.

My question is for Mr. Barbour.

Did I hear correctly that you had taken this entire bill out to the PEI association of chiefs of police and all the senior officers and had full discussion and had feedback from them on this bill?

Blair Barbour: We went out with various versions of the content, and, as the minister alluded to as an opening statement, we went to the police training committee which has all those organizations represented, including the chiefs and deputy chiefs and the municipal police forces.

They are part of that group. We had the unions; the police associations; UPEI; and Holland College; APA – that entire group was there and we did go clause by clause through the various pieces in the content.

Chair: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Roach: Thank you, Chair.

I understand that they've all kind of agreed to and made some changes and they've agreed to what's here before us here in committee?

Mr. J. Brown: Yes.

Chair: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Roach: Well, Chair, based on that, I'd give my full support to the abilities of that particular group of people and I believe if they are supportive of this bill, then I certainly am and I would ask to carry the bill.

Chair: We have a couple of questions here and then we will certainly entertain that.

The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: They are just a couple of questions, and it's to do more with the general police review report that was done and I mentioned it, cited it, at the beginning of the questions here.

It was my understanding that you were planning to move forward in two phases with this, that we would do 10 of the 17 within 18 months and then presumably the rest in a second phase. I just want to check that you're still – because this was a large report; very substantial report, presumably an expensive report.

Outside experts were brought in to make recommendations to the government on how to review the police services here on PEI and we've already heard that – and for perhaps, entirely legitimate and good reasons that some of those recommendations are not going to be brought forward in this legislation.

I'm wondering a couple of things: Are you still planning to go forward in the two phases as you had imagined? And in terms of the recommendations – well there's a couple, at least, which are not included here, the legislative changes – are there any other recommendations from that, I think it was 17 recommended, 18 maybe – any others that you plan on not following through on?

Chair: The hon. Minister of Justice and Public Safety.

Mr. J. Brown: So I'll perhaps deal with the last one first.

I'm just trying to remember – there is at least one in terms of a unified police force that we're not planning on following through on.

I'm sorry; I don't have my, kind of, work up of this. I hadn't expected (Indistinct) –

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Sure.

I understand this is legislation (Indistinct) –

Mr. J. Brown: I think that's the only one we do not have an intention to work on and whether it's the 10 – or I had in my mind 11, actually, starting out that we will have – we

have significant progress on and we'll know within the very next, kind of period of time, whether it will be a go or a no-go on them.

And some of the kind of second phase, if you will, we have already begun work on to try to determine where they might go, what the costs might look like; all that sort of thing.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: I'm fine.

Thank you, Chair.

Chair: I have no one else on the list.

Mr. Roach: Carry the bill.

Ms. Biggar: Carry the bill.

Chair: Okay, thank you very much.

Shall it carry? Carried.

Mr. J. Brown: I move the title.

Chair: *An Act to Amend the Police Act.*

Shall it carry? Carried.

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

Chair: Shall it carry? Carried.

Madam Speaker, as Chair of a Committee of the Whole House, having had under consideration a bill to be intitled *An Act to Amend the Police 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.

Orders of the Day (Government)

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

Mr. Gallant: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Member from Tignish-Palmer Road, that the 8th order of the day be now read.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk Assistant (Doiron): Order No. 8, *An Act to Amend the Public Departments Act*, Bill No. 46, ordered for second reading.

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

Mr. Gallant: Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Member from Tignish-Palmer Road, that the said bill be now read a second time.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk Assistant: *An Act to Amend the Public Departments Act*, Bill No. 46, read a second time.

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

Mr. Gallant: Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Member from Tignish-Palmer Road, 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 now call on the hon. Member from Vernon River-Stratford to come down and Chair the Committee of the Whole House.

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

Some Hon. Members: No.

Chair: Do you want to take a stranger on?

Mr. J. Brown: No.

Chair: Want an overview?

An Hon. Member: Yeah, just an overview.

Chair: Okay, minister, can we have an overview?

Mr. J. Brown: So, there's really one section here and it provides that the end of a reign of a sovereign does not affect a person's appointment to a public or provincial office or require retaking of any oath of office or allegiance.

It replaces a provision that required a proclamation respecting the new sovereign and the retaking of oath.

Essentially, if the sovereign Queen, in this place had passed away and we went to a successor, there could be a large number of government employees that would be required to retake an oath of allegiance. This prevents that happening.

Mr. Fox: I understand (Indistinct)

Chair: Any questions on it?

The hon. Member from Borden-Kinkora.

Mr. Fox: Carry the bill.

Chair: Carry the bill?

Mr. LaVie: Carry the bill.

Some Hon. Members: Carried.

Chair: Shall it carry? Carried.

Mr. J. Brown: I move the title.

Chair: *An Act to Amend the Public Departments Act.*

Shall it carry? Carried.

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

Chair: Thank you, minister.

Shall it carry? Carried.

[audio malfunction]

Chair: – having had under consideration a bill to be intituled *An Act to Amend the Public Departments 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 Workforce and Advanced Learning.

Mr. Gallant: Thank you.

Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. Member from Tignish-Palmer Road, that the 7th order of the day be now read.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk Assistant (Reddin): Order No. 7, *An Act to Amend the Highway Traffic Act (No. 4)*, Bill No.44, ordered for third reading.

Speaker: Second.

Hon. member could you repeat the number of the order?

Mr. Gallant: Okay, it's one of our bills.

It's No. 7, *An Act to Amend the Highway Traffic Act (No. 4)*.

Ms. Biggar: It's Bill No. 3, tow trucks.

Mr. Gallant: Bill No. 43.

Ms. Biggar: Order No. 3, Bill 43.

Mr. Gallant: I have seven on my sheet, sorry.

Ms. Biggar: (Indistinct)

Clerk Assistant: Order No. 6, *An Act to Amend the Highway Traffic Act (No. 3)*, Bill No. 43, ordered for second reading.

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

Mr. Gallant: My apologies, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Member from Tignish-Palmer Road, that the said bill be now read a second time.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk Assistant: *An Act to Amend the Highway Traffic Act (No.3)*, Bill No.43, read a second time.

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

Mr. Gallant: Thank you.

Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Member from Tignish-Palmer Road, 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 call on the hon. Member from Vernon River-Stratford to come down and Chair the Committee of the Whole House.

Chair (McIsaac): 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 Highway Traffic Act (No. 3)*. Is it the pleasure of the committee that the bill be now read clause by clause?

Mr. LaVie: I don't think we need clause by clause; we can just do an oversight.

Chair: You want an overview?

Okay, minister of transportation, an overview please.

Ms. Biggar: Could I please ask the indulgence of the House to bring a guest to the floor?

Chair: Is that okay?

Ms. Biggar: Granted.

Mr. LaVie: Oh yes. That's what I was waiting for.

Chair: Great, you're welcome.

Mr. MacEwen: Here we go.

Ms. Biggar: Hon. members, this is amendments to the *Highway Traffic Act* to recognize tow trucks as an emergency vehicle, and a requirement for vehicles to, if possible, when they see a tow truck with flashing emergency lights on the side of the road that they should pull over into the opposing lane if safe to do so, and also slow their speed to half the speed to protect the emergency vehicle that we are asking to be designated, tow trucks, as emergency vehicles.

Chair: We have the stranger – a reminder to identify himself and your position please?

Ms. Biggar: Sorry, Chair.

Graham Miner: Graham Miner, Director of PEI's Highway Traffic Division, Highway Safety Division.

Chair: Thank you very much.

We have a question from Souris-Elmira.

Mr. LaVie: Thank you, Chair.

An Hon. Member: First responder.

Mr. LaVie: First responder, yeah.

Well, first of all, to put the bill on the floor. Pushed them for it.

Question for you: What's going to be different from the tow truck, from the police, from the fire truck? What's different for these tow trucks?

Ms. Biggar: They weren't recognized.

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

Ms. Biggar: These were not recognized as emergency vehicles or required – that drivers were not required to slow down or

pull over in the past. This is to recognize them in the same category as a fire truck.

Chair: Souris-Elmira.

Mr. LaVie: So, anytime I go to a yellow flashing light, whether it be on a school bus, at a stop sign, at a tow truck with yellow flashing lights, I'm to slow down. So, what's changing?

Chair: Minister of transportation.

Ms. Biggar: Do you want to take that, Mr. Miner?

Chair: Mr. Miner.

Graham Miner: Previously, the only vehicles required to slow down and reduce your speed to half the posted speed limit or pull over when safe to do so, was when emergency vehicles were stopped with their emergency lights activated.

Tow trucks were not defined – Only police vehicles, fire department vehicles, ambulances and such were designated under that definition to have the requirement to slow down to half the posted speed and move over. So, what had to occur here was to add tow trucks to the definition without making the tow truck an emergency vehicle. It means when a tow truck is stopped on the side of the road with its lights activated, there will be a requirement to slow down to half the posted speed and move over if safe to do so.

Unlike an emergency vehicle, though, it won't have the same authority to, for example, when lights are activated when they're in motion to go through a red light when it's safe to do so, and the same as when emergency vehicles are in motion with their lights on for traffic to slow down and let them go by.

What this means for the tow truck is only when they're stopped on the side of the road with their lights activated, the public will then be required to slow down to half the posted speed and move over if it's safe to do so or stop.

Chair: Souris-Elmira.

Mr. LaVie: Thank you, Chair.

Will these tow trucks have anything different than a yellow flashing light?

Chair: Mr. Miner.

Graham Miner: Within the changes that were made to the *Highway Traffic Act* was to make the requirement to reduce half the posted speed and move over. The lighting requirement is already in the act, so with discussions with the tow truck operators and also chiefs of police to come to a decision if those lights should be changed and if there's an agreement, let's say move to a red light, then that can be done currently under the act through permit by the registrar.

This deals with the authority part in the act saying it is a violation if you don't reduce your speed and move over, but if it then becomes a question of what is the colour of those lights, for example if there's a request for blue that wouldn't be allowed because blue is designated to police and most police agencies to which we agree we will not change that designation to allow blue lights on anything but police type vehicles, there is a possibility of going to red through discussion and if that seems where it needs to be done, that can already be done under the act.

Chair: Souris-Elmira.

Mr. LaVie: Thank you, Chair.

So, they definitely stop for blue, They've definitely got to stop for blue or slow down for blue. You got to slow or stop for red?

Graham Miner: Yes.

Mr. LaVie: So, now you're going to have to slow down for yellow or pull over?

Graham Miner: For a tow truck.

Mr. LaVie: We got three different colour lights, but you have to pull over for everything. Why not just put one colour out there? Red and blue for everything?

What difference if it's RCMP, fire or tow truck? Stop. Have one colour – don't be confusing.

Graham Miner: Well –

Chair: The minister of transportation

Ms. Biggar: I'll start it and get Graham here.

In regard to police and ambulance, obviously they have, as Mr. Miner indicated, authority to go through a stop sign or go through an intersection –

Mr. LaVie: No.

Ms. Biggar: during an emergency if necessary.

Mr. LaVie: No (Indistinct)

Ms. Biggar: Mr. Miner can certainly clarify that.

Chair: Mr. Miner.

Graham Miner: In discussions we've had with police organizations, they have been adamant with us that they want blue lights to stay for police-type vehicles and they don't want those lights to be used on other vehicles to water down the intent, that the public knows that when they see these types of lights in the province, that's a police agency type of vehicle.

We had consultation with the PEI Chief of Police Association –

Ms. Biggar: (Indistinct)

Graham Miner: – they had said about doing this; we had consultations, or course, with the tow truck operators.

Ms. Biggar: (Indistinct)

Graham Miner: Now, they asked us about red, but we said: the changes connect to the *Highway Traffic Act (No. 3)* won't have anything to do with red lights, because the authority already exists to allow for red through permitting.

And again, the purpose for the tow truck is, that the only time that you abide by their lights is when they're stopped roadside with the lights activated. Not when the vehicle is in motion, nor does it give them any special authority. For example, they can't speed to get to an accident, like an emergency vehicle can, with its red lights going. It can only use

lights on the side of the road when stopped, or when dealing with a specific incident.

I had asked these questions of different organizations, specifically police, because it had been brought up, could they have blue? I told them what my feeling might be, so I did ask police agencies and they would like to try and keep those blue lights specific to police-type vehicles.

Ms. Biggar: And again to add to that, when they are stopped on the side of the road, the lights have to be on.

Mr. LaVie: Oh, yeah.

Ms. Biggar: In order to have this come into effect.

Chair: The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

Mr. LaVie: Thank you, Chair.

It's just that with my experience, when I'm on scene with the fire department, we have red lights and white lights and as soon as people see red and white lights, they automatically hit the brake lights. When they're on the scene with the police and they have red, white and blue – that's an automatic stop. But, sometimes these tow truck operators are on scene with us, but there are a lot of times that they're not. I met them the other morning after the snow, and he was on the side of the road with his yellow lights on, and nothing to protect him.

Red and blue is automatically you stop or you slow down, that's in our head. Yellow is just a caution light and we just don't seem to get it with a yellow truck.

What did the tow truck operators have to say? Would they sooner see different coloured lights, or something?

Chair: Mr. Miner.

Graham Miner: They did speak about different coloured lights; maybe I didn't explain this correctly. Without changes to the act, we can allow for them, for example, to have red lights. We don't have to amend the act to allow for that to occur. What these amendments are to the act is a requirement for the public, when they see emergency

lights activated by a tow truck, to slow down, to half of posted speed and move over –

Mr. LaVie: Chair, just one more –

Graham Miner: – same as they would for other vehicles –

Mr. LaVie: – and I'm done.

Graham Miner: – such as fire departments, and ambulances, and police vehicles –

Mr. LaVie: One more

Chair: You wouldn't be done.

Mr. LaVie: No, one more.

Ms. Biggar: If I could add one more thing, hon. member –

Mr. Roach: Never be done.

Chair: Minister of transportation.

Ms. Biggar: This also allows for us to set up offences under the act that if you don't – at present, you can do basically as you said, whatever you want around – but, it will allow us to set penalties out for not adhering to this act. Now there's not any recourse to make them adhere to it.

Chair: Member from Souris-Elmira.

Ms. Biggar: I believe Mr. Miner has another point to add to that.

Chair: Mr. Miner.

Graham Miner: As part of the answer when you had asked about consultations with the tow truck operators, I told them: there is a provision already existing to go to red. But the importance for them to understand was; there is a lot of flashing lights in usage. The discussion was, if we move to red – and that may be by permit, which can allow it – then your drivers have to know very clearly that after you've put that vehicle up onto that tow truck or you're towing it, you have to turn those red lights off.

Because what's going to happen if they're travelling down that road, the public will

think it's like an ambulance or another emergency vehicle and they're going to be pulling over and doing different things, and they're going to say: oh, that was just a tow truck. We may lose the impact of those lights on the public if there is too much over usage, just like now with yellow amber lights being used far too often. I think the public is starting to kind of miss the use of them right now because when there is no reason for them, they shouldn't be turned on.

Chair: The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

Mr. LaVie: Thank you, Chair, for giving me this extra question.

I'm all for the Bill.

Ms. Biggar: Yeah.

Mr. LaVie: Like, I was for this right from day one. I feel sorry for the tow truck operators. If they can get a red light – it doesn't have to be a red light on a truck, it could be two cones they set up – three cones, same as Maritime Electric does with their cones – with the lights on their cones.

Ms. Biggar: They can do that.

Mr. LaVie: And when they pick up their cones, set them in their truck.

Ms. Biggar: They –

Mr. LaVie: As long as we can get something.

Ms. Biggar: They can do that now. They are allowed to do –

Chair: Go ahead, hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

Mr. LaVie: As long as they can get something that shows that they're in an emergency situation – they could be across the road, like the other morning, they were across the road.

So I'm in support of the bill, but I hope they can get another light on their truck. If they have to shut it off when going down the highway – shut it off – or, it can be a pylon, could be anything. But these fellows are in

danger. We're all in danger at some point, especially at night time, and you have to be extra careful with the lights; we see it with our school buses, lights are just lights. When something happens, it's after the fact, it don't make any difference, the accident happened, and it's bad.

But anyway, I'm in support of your bill, as long as we can get different coloured lights on these trucks, or cones with different coloured lights for them, you'll have no problem with me.

Chair: Do you have a comment, minister of transportation?

Ms. Biggar: Yeah. First of all, thank you hon. member for the support of this bill.

At the present time, they can also put out those cones if they wish –

Mr. LaVie: Red lights?

Ms. Biggar: – the cones. Oh, with the red lights. They can put the cones out though, around the vehicle when they are off.

Mr. LaVie: With lights on their cones?

Graham Miner: We'll have to look into that.

Ms. Biggar: We'll have to – we will take that under advisement, okay?

Chair: Okay.

Ms. Biggar: Yeah.

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

Mr. Dumville: Thank you, Chair.

My understanding of history is that the US was always blue and in fact, the troopers still use blue. We were always red here in Canada, and with the (Indistinct) of the new light bars, we went to blue and red, is that correct?

Ms. Biggar: Mr. Miner –

Mr. Dumville: With the light bars, because we used to use the bubble, you know?

Ms. Biggar: Mr. Miner sits on the international –

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct) light bulb (Indistinct)

Mr. Dumville: Light bulb, yes.

No protection back in the day at all.

Chair: Mr. Miner.

Graham Miner: Well, yes. I am over 60, so you are correct, because back in the '60s and so on, there was just the red bulb on the top of the car. With the advent of the new light bars on the roof, acts and regulations were adjusted to use the blue lights in conjunction with the red. That's true.

Chair: Member from West Royalty-Springvale.

Mr. Dumville: I'm just absolutely amazed the equipment they have today; back in the day, it was pretty minimal.

Anyway, my question, Chair. Whenever we make an adjustment to the speed limit, et cetera, et cetera, we always have a star burst or something to educate the public, like new, on top of a new speed limit. How do you get this message out to the public? Have you given any thought, so they understand the new regulation other than the media? Is there going to be – the agency put out some sort of educational –

Mr. R. Brown: We're not allowed to –

Chair: Mr. Miner.

An Hon. Member: Yes, that's true.

Graham Miner: Yes. We are going to; first of all have the media. We are going to use social media, as well. We'll also do some blitzes where we'll do some setups; we've done this already in the past, and we're going to do some setups where we will have chaser vehicles put in place, we'll have vehicles on the side of the roads with lights activated. What we will do if people aren't following the rules, we'll do traffic stops and we'll give warnings and, information and pamphlets. We may use the electronic signs that we have out there right now where

we're saying slow down for school buses or don't drink and drive.

Again, I'm going to be in contact very shortly with the tow truck operators group to say –

Ms. Biggar: Here it is.

Graham Miner: – this (Indistinct) may have passed and we will start doing some more with you folks to start getting the message out there. We are going to try to do everything we can to make the public aware that this is in place.

Mr. Dumville: Thank you, Chair.

Chair: Okay, thank you.

Member from Charlottetown-Parkdale.

Ms. Bell: Thank you, Chair.

I think this is a great initiative and I absolutely understand the concept. I did just have a couple of questions that are logistical, and they may not need to be in this bill, but just to have them on the record.

What provisions are being made to educate the general public of these changes in terms of the requirement for the slowing down and recognizing these vehicles in this way? Will there be a grace period to allow for that education? Especially if there's penalties for offenses coming through.

Ms. Biggar: We will (Indistinct) –

Chair: Minister of transportation.

Ms. Biggar: – an educational program similar to what we said with having pamphlets at Access PEI, the signage, the social media, of the changes. In addition to that, I know Mr. Miner has some additional stuff.

Chair: Mr. Miner.

Graham Miner: I'll use the phrase that's used in policing. We will be asking in conjunction with police agencies for a period of soft enforcement.

Ms. Biggar: Right, yeah.

Graham Miner: – and that'll mean just kind of warnings, please be aware. Maybe we'll have pamphlets done up that are printed up and handed out. We'll try and ask for a period of soft enforcement as we create awareness on this new provision.

Chair: Charlottetown-Parkdale.

Ms. Bell: Another one, please?

Chair: Yes.

Ms. Bell: Sure. Thank you very much for that response. That makes a lot of sense.

The other question I have relating to that is: Are we also considering educating the tow truck companies themselves to ensure that they are following safe practices and that they also have – we mentioned the lights – that those lights are appropriate. They're used appropriately because their compliance is going to be as important as the compliance of drivers in observing these new regulations.

Chair: Minister of transportation.

Ms. Biggar: I'm going to say certainly –

Ms. Bell: Yeah.

Ms. Biggar: – but Mr. Miner, I'm sure, will be working very closely with the tow truck operators to ensure that they are aware of when those lights need to be activated.

Correct, Mr. Miner?

Graham Miner: No. Very true, minister. Because (Indistinct) –

Mr. R. Brown: (Indistinct) will be.

Graham Miner: Yeah, and that's – if we do a move to reds, the importance, we've already said to them in meetings was if we allow by permit the reds, then you're going to have to make absolutely certain when the vehicle then goes in motion to turn the lights off.

Ms. Bell: Right.

Graham Miner: So that we don't fool the public (Indistinct) –

Ms. Bell: Last question, one more?

Chair: Okay. Charlottetown-Parkdale.

Ms. Bell: Thank you, Chair. This is my last question.

Just, again, in the kind of rolling out the requirements, we've been talking a lot recently about education in terms of driving school buses, actually, and about the need to ensure that new drivers and drivers in driver training are receiving that education as well.

So I'm sure it is on the agenda, but that's just another thought that we'd had when we were reviewing, was asking to ensure that that made its way as quickly as possible into the driver education –

Ms. Biggar: Yeah.

Ms. Bell: – piece, for both new drivers as newcomers and new drivers entering the driving force.

Ms. Biggar: I'm sure that will be added to our educational and our testing portion.

Ms. Bell: Yeah.

Graham Miner: It's in the works right now.

Ms. Bell: Great. That's it. Thank you.

Chair: Thank you.

Borden-Kinkora.

Mr. Fox: Thanks, Chair.

Minister, who all did you consult? Did you consult with all the tow truck companies across the Island with this, or the Women's Institute, or who'd you consult with?

Chair: Minister of transportation.

Ms. Biggar: Obviously, as Mr. Miner said, we have consulted with the tow truck operators. We have consulted with law enforcement. Mr. Miner may be able to expand on exactly what meetings took place and where this was discussed further.

Chair: Mr. Miner.

Graham Miner: This was raised with the PEI chiefs of police association. At their last meeting, I raised this on the subject of the lighting. Also, I had a meeting with highway traffic at the highway safety in Charlottetown with most of the tow truck operators in the province that could make the meeting. We had asked the ones who were there for the ones that hadn't attended, if they will be in contact with them, to discuss what had come out of these discussions.

As you may recall; that this bill was initially going to be introduced in the spring sitting in the House. It was prior to that that we had the meetings with the industry members.

Mr. Fox: These are semi-related questions. Do we provide any special equipment checks to tow trucks to license them? Like, is the equipment standard, is that checked in a different way than when we do motor vehicle inspection?

Graham Miner: I couldn't speak to that because that wouldn't be a provision of highway safety. That may be an industry standard but it wouldn't be a motor vehicle inspection. So it's not under the highway safety division.

Mr. Fox: I'm glad to hear you that you did consult with the tow truck operators, and I'm sort of wondering if –

Ms. Biggar: That's kind of where it came from, actually.

Mr. Fox: Pardon me?

Ms. Biggar: I believe it –

Chair: Minister of transportation.

Ms. Biggar: I believe it was initiated as a concern from industry.

Mr. Fox: Yeah.

Ms. Biggar: You know, that we're trying to respond to the fact that they are –

Mr. Fox: And I agree with you, minister.

Ms. Biggar: Yeah, yeah.

Mr. Fox: Because I've heard it years ago.

Ms. Biggar: Yeah.

Chair: Borden-Kinkora.

Mr. Fox: I'm wondering: You made a statement earlier there Graham about having talks with the industry and with tow truck operators and specifically, that after you get the vehicle loaded, if there's nothing overhanging or over-protruding from the side's, then their yellow lights or red lights or yellow lights should be turned off.

Do we ensure that the tow truck operators are not overloading the vehicle past the capacity of the tow truck? You and I talked about that before when there was an incident where they had a single axle tow truck and they put a huge fifth wheel motor home on top of it which was clearly over width and over height and overweight and they allowed it to go down the road.

So I'm wondering: Do we send them any information that they cannot overload vehicles and they must ensure that the load is secure?

Chair: Mr. Miner.

Graham Miner: Not ours to look at the training side or what occurs in that to what industry standards were; but certainly as the enforcement agency, if you are overloaded and over width and you aren't meeting standards, then from an enforcement point of view I'd say they're not allowed to go down the road and they shouldn't be overloading their vehicle and should need to understand what the weight capacities are of the particular vehicle they're operating, whether it's single axle, tandem axle and so on.

So if there was something overloaded, I assume if highway safety, who does weight enforcement on the highway, saw something like that it would be stopped and then the scales would be brought out and they would be weighed and have to come into compliance.

Mr. Fox: So I don't know. I guess maybe what I'm suggesting maybe, or maybe the minister will take it under advisement, that we provide some drafts and literature or something that we could provide to tow truck companies and operations to give them

some guidelines or best operating practices might be a – also improve their safety, because then they see it, they get talking about it, and it might help them.

Would you consider that?

Ms. Biggar: I think we will be having discussions with them, as we said, to educate them on what this is going to be required. We certainly could have the discussions at the same time, I would –

Mr. Fox: That'd be great, minister.

Final thing is: Can we look at following up on the – Souris-Elmira – can we look at some way of improving the lighting system on them or allowing them – I don't know if it's going to red or not, but going to something that would improve – because I'll tell you what, a prime example is this: Winter time comes and you see everybody running down the road with a snowplow with a yellow flashing light and they're not moving snow, right?

Ms. Biggar: Yes.

Mr. Fox: So I think that has taken away from tow truck operations of now because people see a yellow light flashing, they think: Oh, it's just some guy going with a snowplow or that kind of stuff. I wonder if there's anything we can do to assist them where we would –

Ms. Biggar: I think we can certainly have those discussions on what options are there.

Chair: Mr. Miner?

Ms. Biggar: And Mr. Miner has some – I know there's certainly some more reflective materials out there that can be applied to vehicles as well, so – but I think Mr. Miner also has some other suggestions.

Chair: Mr. Miner.

Graham Miner: Part of the public education that we wanted to come out in conjunction with the same time if this bill was to pass, was also to do public education on the slowing down of the public for emergency vehicles, such as police vehicles.

Because everybody's been aware of the tragedies that have occurred in New Brunswick and elsewhere, and some very close calls and serious injuries on PEI, where vehicles have hit police vehicles on the side of the road and haven't slowed down for emergency lights. So we want to bring those two items together when we do the public education campaign.

Highway safety officers have been directed in terms of commercial vehicles to be stopping them if they have like yellow lights activated when there's with no reason for them, to turn those lights off, if you're not carrying an over-dimensional load. In some cases some of these lights are wired to –

Ms. Biggar: The ignition.

Graham Miner: – the ignition, so as soon as you turn on the key, the lights are coming on, and you may not be carrying any load at all. That becomes the importance after a while. People may not even be recognizing these lights anymore because there's no apparent hazard.

Mr. Fox: Exactly.

Chair: Okay.

Souris-Elmira.

Mr. LaVie: Thank you, Chair.

I just want to make a statement, and I want to thank the minister for bringing this bill forward. Mr. Miner and I had plenty of conversation inside the door over this bill. I had tow truck operators coming to me. So when we give this bill the second reading here tonight, with the snowstorm coming tomorrow, and to keep these tow truck operators safe after the snowstorm, I want to make sure this bill gets to third reading here tonight.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Chair: That exhausts my list.

Any further questions?

Some Hon. Members: Carry the bill.

Chair: Shall it carry? Carried.

Mr. Myers: (Indistinct)

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Ms. Biggar: I move the title.

Chair: *An 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 that the Speaker take the chair and that the chair report the bill agreed to without amendment.

Chair: Shall it carry? Carried.

Ms. Biggar: Thank you, members. Thank you, Mr. Miner.

Chair: Madam Speaker, as Chair of a Committee of the Whole House, having had under consideration a bill to be intitled *An 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 Workforce and Advanced Learning.

Mr. Gallant: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, with unanimous consent of this House, we'd like to revert back to Motions Other than Government, Order No. 91.

Speaker: Does he have unanimous consent to go back to 91?

Some Hon. Members: Yes.

An Hon. Member: Agreed.

Motions Other Than Government

Speaker: Thank you.

Hon. members, when Motion No. 91 was adjourned, the hon. Member from Vernon River-Stratford had the floor.

Hon. member, are you finished or do you want to continue with your remarks?

Mr. McIsaac: Madam Speaker, thank you very much. I really think this is a very important motion. I had pretty well finished my comments for opening comments. I'd like to now move to the seconder of the motion.

Speaker: Thank you.

The seconder of the motion, the hon. Member from Borden-Kinkora.

Mr. Fox: Thank you, Chair.

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct)

Mr. Fox: I'm very pleased actually – pardon me? – I'm very pleased to sponsor this bill with the hon. Member from Vernon River-Stratford.

We had a conversation about this and it's honouring, because I think that any action we can take as a legislative body to stop violence or reduce violence, especially when it comes to children and women and even men, I think we should be doing that.

I want to quote something that's on this little card. It says that: "Wearing this moose hide signifies your commitment to honour, respect, and protect the women and children in your life and to work together with other men to end violence against women and children. Our vision is to spread the Moose Hide Campaign to organizations, communities, and governments throughout Canada."

I think we all have a duty to do whatever we can to eliminate violence against any person; and it's very troubling – I remember being a police officer formerly, the effect of going into a house in a domestic call and dealing with children and women that were abused and beaten and then going home. It's very traumatic. As the hon. member said, a lot of these problems are from addictions or mental health issues, or drug and alcohol

problems, or problems at work that people carry home.

I support this. I believe that we should follow suit with other legislatures across the country and unanimously pass this motion and take a real, firm stand saying that we do not accept violence of any nature towards any person in this world.

Thank you.

Speaker: Thank you.

Are there any other members who would like to speak before I go back to the mover to close debate?

The hon. Minister of Workforce and Advanced Learning.

Mr. Gallant: Madam Speaker, with your indulgence, could we revert back to Bill No. 43 for third reading? There was a request that we did that before the evening finished.

Speaker: Thank you, hon. Minister of Workforce and Advanced Learning.

If we are going to do that, somebody would have to adjourn debate on what we're doing now and then we would have to go into the – have unanimous consent to go into what your request is.

Premier MacLauchlan: Let's finish this motion.

Speaker: Okay.

An Hon. Member: Yeah.

Mr. Gallant: Okay.

Speaker: Okay, thank you.

Mr. J. Brown: We'll leave 10 minutes.

Mr. Gallant: Yeah, okay.

Premier MacLauchlan: (Indistinct)

Speaker: Okay, thanks.

We have the hon. Member from West Royalty-Springvale who would like to speak to the motion.

Mr. Dumville: Thank you, Speaker. I appreciate your indulgence.

I, too, would like to speak to the motion. I think it's wonderful that the hon. Member from Vernon River-Stratford has brought this to our attention.

It's kind of sad that we need symbolism in this day and age. In my former occupation, I've seen a lot of this. I've been in some scraps where the kids were most affected and the lady in the house and I've seen it firsthand. So it's sad that we need symbolism in our day and age; however, symbolism is very, very important. It works, and we cannot not use these tools to effectively help those that are so affected.

So I thank everybody for bringing this forward, and it has my wholehearted support. I'll be glad to recommend this.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you, hon. Member from West Royalty-Springvale.

The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

First, I appreciate the initiative of the hon. Member from Vernon River-Stratford, and seconded by Borden-Kinkora, to bring this motion forward, recognizing it, supporting the Moose Hide Campaign.

Like other members, I was moved by the comments that the hon. Member from Vernon River-Stratford made this afternoon. In moving this motion, I would say a word as Minister Responsible for Aboriginal Affairs to note the origins of this initiative in the really tragic events and on the scale that it took place in the murder of Aboriginal women and children and girls and many of them still missing that led to the establishment of the inquiry and that led to Paul Lacerte and his daughter, Raven, to, in a grassroots movement, start the Moose Hide Campaign in response to the events that occurred on the Highway of Tears.

We don't have to go to British Columbia to find events that move us to understand the need to stand against violence, and in

particular to stand against violence against women and girls.

Each year on the 6th of December, we have our gathering here that was instigated or that found its roots in the massacre at Polytechnique in Montreal. That is then tied to the sad and tragic number of women in our province who have died as a result of violence – much of it partner violence and the silhouettes that are the rock, that are the company that gathering on December 6th, are a grim and a really moving reminder of the importance of the issue that's raised by this motion and by the Moose Hide Campaign.

This afternoon we had in the gallery Gordon McNeilly and he and a number of other men in our community, include my partner Duncan McIntosh, started the Man Up campaign and that has caught on and taken – really really gathered momentum and has translated into efforts to have awareness campaigns – not only awareness campaigns but learning tools in the workplace for example.

It's a reminder that this is work that must go on, on many fronts.

It's work that benefits from the kind of leadership that we can show here in this assembly by our support for this motion and to have the opportunity as Legislative Assembly of the Province of Prince Edward Island to join four other legislatures in the country that have supported this campaign and to add our voices to that and to those of the million individuals who have signed onto this campaign that the Member from Vernon River-Stratford spoke about earlier this afternoon.

In addition to adding our voice to a campaign that has already got some very fine momentum and some real grass roots and some great symbolism, I think it falls to each of us and then to the people that we can influence to ask ourselves and to ask each other what more we can do beyond taking a stand beyond speaking about: what can we do to learn? What can we do to support each other? What can we do to hold each other accountable? And what can we do to be good role models for the next generation?

That's the ultimate work of standing up against violence is to unlearn it or to be sure that whatever are the biases or the privileges – I regret using the word privilege, but in a sense violence is about an assumption or starts in an assumption of power.

What can we do to identify that, to make it something that we are not only concerned about, but that we're opposed to and that we can be sure is not continued in the next generation?

With that, Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to lend my full support and enthusiastic support for this motion and for everything that we can do as a Legislative Assembly and as a people and a province, to ensure that this really important work – and it's not easy work, it's not something that will go away by signing up for something, it's an ongoing endeavor that we commit to and I'm really proud that our Legislative Assembly will be doing that in supporting this motion.

Thank you Madam Speaker.

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

Mr. J. Brown: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

Really I'd get up to speak to this as much to my capacity as Minister of Justice as anything else.

In my past career as a lawyer too, I would have seen unfortunately, I guess, a number of people that would have been impacted by violence in family situations. One thing that really stuck with me through any encounters that I had in that regard, was how it can become a cyclical thing within families and the impact that has on families and communities as we move forward through the generations.

I would say many of us in here would be fortunate to have grown up in the upbringings that we had. Domestic violence does not discriminate based on the typical socioeconomic factors, or really any factors, but it is something that can have a very severe impact and particularly when you start to overlay some of those factors on top violence that does occur in situations in family homes, it can make for a very

difficult upbringings for children and when they don't have a way to get out of that or see that there is a different life – all too often it can be repeated.

I say that as much to say that it is very important and for that reason it's very important that the hon. Member from Vernon River-Stratford did bring this motion, that we, as a society, recognize that folks are enduring this kind of thing and that we stand up when we see this kind of thing happening – or when we suspect it and we do something about it.

Even if it's somebody that would be a friend or a neighbor or whatever – it's our job as members of our community to ensure, particularly if there are children involved, that we do something to break that cycle and to ensure that those kids have an opportunity. Or, if it's a victim of domestic violence, that they have an opportunity to get out of that cycle. Sometimes that's not easy; sometimes the perpetrator of the violence has that power, that hold over the person.

I've seen numerous cases in provincial court settings where a complainant often wouldn't want to testify, probably for fear of retribution and that all too often can be a very complicating factor in the justice system in trying to prosecute and ultimately to deal with, and rehabilitate, folks that have issues with the factors that would lead to committing this sort of violence.

All to say, I think this is a tremendous campaign. I think any campaign that can raise public awareness that can help us to deal with and break this cycle is very important to our community, to the future of the youth of Prince Edward Island. I certainly commend the hon. member for bringing this forward and also the second as well.

I think this is a great collaboration that happened out of, what we would say a collaboration, amongst Legislative Assembly's across the nation and it's particularly great to see that happening.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

and the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women.

Ms. Biggar: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I want to congratulate the two members who have brought this forward, working collaboratively and the importance of this and I'm pleased to rise today to support it.

As the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women, I've spoken of the challenges women face in society numerous times, but its gender inequality, gender bias or violence against women among many others.

There should be no place for violence in our society but violence against women continues to plague us.

Women and children are a segment of the population that are often the victims of these heinous violent acts. Indigenous women and children face disproportionate levels of violence. They are three times more vulnerable to violence and six times to murder.

These numbers are alarming and more importantly, they're unacceptable.

Our government has worked closely with a number of organizations with the goal of creating a safer, better place for all Islanders who face the many forms of persecution.

As we know the impacts of violence against women are immediate and long lasting. The social cost is high on both the individual and society as a whole.

They are far-reaching appearing in our social, health, and justice systems. That's not meant to discourage. In fact it should be viewed as a call to action, just as this campaign about the Moose Hide Campaign.

I commend this campaign for engaging men in addressing violence against women and children, because it's all of us that need to work together on this huge social issue in our society.

Part of the work of my department's Interministerial Women's Secretariat is to support projects and organizations that enhance awareness, education, and social

action on women's legal, health, social, and economic equality.

Last year, I introduced the Violence Against Women Prevention Grants, which are being offered once more this year. The Native Council of PEI received one of these grants last year. Their project focused on creating a women's performance group that will increase awareness of violence against women and empower participants to instigate change throughout the province.

We also support the Aboriginal Women's Association in partnership with the Aboriginal Affairs Secretariat. Their goal is to enhance support, educate, and empower the well-being of Aboriginal women through capacity building, focus groups, prevention, awareness, and equal opportunity.

The Moose Hide Campaign calls on Indigenous and non-Indigenous men and boys to stand up against violence towards women and children, but I think we can all agree that we can all stand up against this pervasive problem together.

I wholeheartedly believe in campaigns like these, not simply because I'm Minister Responsible for the Status of Women, but because it is the right thing to do for our communities and our families. Islanders, men, women, boys, girls, Indigenous people of all walks of life need to take a stand against violence. All of us, whether it's government, community or individuals, we all have a responsibility to help eliminate violence against women in our province.

Our province is small, but it is a size that will allow us to take swifter action. We are nimble and interconnected and that allows us to get things done. Get the things that matter the most quickly, but with lasting impact.

I've had personal experiences in my own family with violence and I know the impact it makes on siblings, on all family members and I wholeheartedly congratulate the members who brought this forward to talk about it. That's part of the problem: it's kept under – behind closed doors because it's a stigma that you don't want to admit that's happening as a woman, as a family, and it's always, we all know, been hush-hushed. It's time, just like the Me Too movement, that

people began to talk about this and be aware that they will have the support when they come forward with it.

Thank you, and congratulations.

Speaker: Are there any other members who would like to speak to the motion before I go to the mover to close debate?

The hon. Member from Vernon River-Stratford, to close debate.

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

I want to thank my seconder, and I want to thank all those who are joining us in the discussion this evening.

There doesn't have to be a whole lot of words said, but I think wearing the little pin will say plenty. It is meant to be a bit of a discussion starter, so if someone stops you and say like happened with us in Iqaluit what's this little leather patch all about? It does start, and everyone that stands up, everyone that's added to that list is one more. It's such a crucial issue that we do, and that we as men take this stand.

I'm glad that we in the Legislature here have agreed to pass this; we're now the third one. Our Mi'kmaq Confederacy of PEI, again, is very supportive of this and they are looking forward to working with our government with mental health and addictions services issues, as well.

I have the pins here, I'll be distributing later. I want you to wear your pins with pride to stand up against violence against men – against women and children. I would encourage more groups and communities across the province to take up the Moose Hide Campaign and stand up against violence. I think we will do great things and expand the number of pins right across this country and really spread the good message that needs to be spread. This is a serious issue.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: Hon. members, are you ready for the question on the motion?

Some Hon. Members: Question.

Speaker: All those in favour of the motion, signified by saying 'aye.'

Some Hon. Members: Aye!

Speaker: Contrary minded, 'nay.'

Motions carried, and it is unanimous.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Gallant: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I look for unanimous consent to bring the bill, the 6th order of the day back to the floor.

Speaker: Does the minister have the unanimous consent to bring it back to the floor?

Some Hon. Members: Yes.

Orders of the Day (Government)

Clerk Assistant: Order No. 6, *An Act to Amend the Highway Traffic Act (No. 3)*, Bill No. 43, ordered for third reading.

Mr. Myers: Colin LaVie tow truck act.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Minister of Workforce and Advanced Learning.

Mr. Gallant: Thank you.

Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Member from Vernon River-Stratford, that the said bill do now pass.

Speaker: Shall it carry?

Mr. Gallant: No? Third reading.

Speaker: Oh, sorry.

Mr. Gallant: Excuse me, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Member from Vernon River-

Stratford, that the said bill be now read a third time.

The Legislature adjourned

Clerk Assistant: *An Act to Amend the Highway Traffic Act (No. 3)*, Bill No. 43, read a third time.

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

Mr. Gallant: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Member from Vernon River-Stratford, that the said bill do now pass.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

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 without amendment, read a third time and it is now moved that the bill do pass.

All those in favour, say 'aye'.

Some Hon. Members: Aye!

Speaker: Contrary minded, 'nay'.

And it's carried, unanimous.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

[Laughter]

Mr. Fox: The Colin LaVie tow truck bill.

Mr. R. Brown: The Colin LaVie tow truck bill.

Mr. Myers: Tow Mater.

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

An Hon. Member: Call the hour.

Speaker: The hour has now been called.

Mr. Gallant: I move, seconded by the hon. Member from Tignish-Palmer Road, this House adjourn until November 16th at 10:00 a.m.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.