

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY



Speaker: Hon. Francis (Buck) Watts

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SPEAKERS RULING	3922
MATTERS OF PRIVILEGE AND RECOGNITION OF GUESTS.....	3923
STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS.....	3927
VERNON RIVER-STRATFORD (Lawrence MacAulay).....	3927
BORDEN-KINKORA (Maureen McMurrer)	3928
KENSINGTON-MALPEQUE (Kensington Monaghan Farms Wild Monctonian Victory).....	3929
ORAL QUESTIONS	3929
LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION (Senior government official and disclosure statements).....	3929
LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION (Ignoring of policy and broken rules)	3930
GEORGETOWN-ST. PETERS (Cost of campaign to Island taxpayers).....	3930
GEORGETOWN-ST. PETERS (Skilled trades' people returning to PEI)	3930
GEORGETOWN-ST. PETERS (Winner of contest and return to PEI)	3931
GEORGETOWN-ST. PETERS (Measures to address housing crisis re: skilled trades' people).....	3931
GEORGETOWN-ST. PETERS (Tax incentives to fill vacancies in skilled trades)	3932
GEORGETOWN-ST. PETERS (Attracting skilled workers back to PEI).....	3932
RUSTICO-EMERALD (Length of time to receive building permits)	3933
RUSTICO-EMERALD (Addressing issue of backlog in permit applications).....	3934
RUSTICO-EMERALD (Filling of position in building permit office).....	3935
RUSTICO-EMERALD (Addressing housing crisis)	3935
LEADER OF THE THIRD PARTY (Shelter rates for family of four on social assistance).....	3936
LEADER OF THE THIRD PARTY (Social assistance clients not eligible for rent supplements).....	3937
CHARLOTTETOWN-PARKDALE (Rent subsidies and wait lists for units).....	3937
CHARLOTTETOWN-PARKDALE (Determining who gets a subsidy)	3937
CHARLOTTETOWN-PARKDALE (Lack of housing re: rent supplements).....	3938
MONTAGUE-KILMUIR (Accuracy of province's surplus).....	3938
MONTAGUE-KILMUIR (Province's \$75 million surplus)	3939
MONTAGUE-KILMUIR (Surplus and support to vulnerable Islanders)	3940
WEST ROYALTY-SPRINGVALE (Disposal of agricultural plastics)	3940
WEST ROYALTY-SPRINGVALE (New technologies for disposal of agricultural plastics)	3941

SOURIS-ELMIRA (Building permit delays)	3941
SOURIS-ELMIRA (Vacant position at Access PEI in Souris)	3942
SOURIS-ELMIRA (Building permit delays and development).....	3943
STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS	3943
EDUCATION, EARLY LEARNING AND CULTURE (National Child Day 2018)	3943
HEALTH AND WELLNESS (International Trans Day of Remembrance).....	3945
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM (Record Season for Tourism)	3947
TABLING OF DOCUMENTS.....	3949
INTRODUCTION OF GOVERNMENT BILLS.....	3949
BILL 49 – Appropriation Act (Capital Expenditures) 2019.....	3949
ORDERS OF THE DAY (GOVERNMENT).....	3950
COMMITTEE.....	3950
BILL 30 – An Act to Amend the Unsightly Property Act.....	3950
BILL 47 – An Act to Amend the Securities Act.....	3955
SECOND READING AND COMMITTEE	3956
BILL 48 – An Act to Amend the Regulated Health Professions Act (No. 2).....	3956
BILL 51 – An Act to Repeal the Physiotherapy Act	3961
BILL 52 – An Act to Repeal the Emergency Medical Technicians Act	3962
BILL 56 – An Act to Amend the Health Information Act	3963
BILL 53 – An Act to Repeal the Truck Operators’ Remuneration Act.....	3964
BILL 54 – An Act to Repeal the Uniformity Commissioners Act	3967
THIRD READING AND PASS	3968
BILL 40 – An Act to Amend the Workers Compensation Act.....	3968
BILL 32 – An Act to Amend the Employment Standards Act.....	3968
BILL 44 – An Act to Amend the Highway Traffic Act	3968
BILL 46 – An Act to Amend the Public Departments Act.....	3968
BILL 45 – An Act to Amend the Police Act.....	3968
POINT OF PRIVILEGE (Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy)	3969
ORDERS OTHER THAN GOVERNMENT	3969
SECOND READING AND COMMITTEE	3969
BILL 117 – Mental Health Court Act	3969
BILL 122 – An Act to Amend the Municipal Government Act (No. 5)	3977
MOTIONS OTHER THAN GOVERNMENT	3985
Motion 90 – Banning conversion therapy.....	3985
LEADER OF THE THIRD PARTY	3986
CHARLOTTETOWN-PARKDALE	3987
HEALTH AND WELLNESS	3987
GEORGETOWN-ST. PETERS	3988
TRANSPORTATION, INFRASTRUCTURE AND ENERGY	3989
RUSTICO-EMERALD	3989
CHARLOTTETOWN-LEWIS POINT	3989
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM	3990
FAMILY AND HUMAN SERVICES	3990
LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION	3990
LEADER OF THE THIRD PARTY	3991

ORDERS OTHER THAN GOVERNMENT	3992
BILL 123 – An Act to Amend the Innovation Prince Edward Island Act.....	3992
GOVERNMENT MOTIONS	3994
Motion 74 – Recognizing those who help students and staff through traumatic events.....	3994
MONTAGUE-KILMUIR	3994
TIGNISH-PALMER ROAD	3995
ADJOURNED.....	3995

The Legislature sat at 2:00 p.m.

Speaker's Ruling

Speaker (Watts): Hon. members, I have reviewed Points of Orders raised last week by the hon. Member for Charlottetown-Parkdale and the hon. Minister of Education, Early Learning and Culture.

In both cases, the hon. members objected to the use of the word 'misleading' during Oral Question Period.

During our first fall sessional sitting week, the word 'misleading' was used in debate. In some of these cases, use of the word was in reference to another hon. member.

Now, I have spoken directly to this matter before in this House and I will do so again, without singling out any one particular person. As members know well, *Beauchesne's Parliamentary Rules & Forms (6th Edition)*, Citation 491, states, in part as follows:

The Speaker has consistently ruled that language used in the House should be temperate and worthy of the place in which it is spoken. No language is, by virtue of any list, acceptable or unacceptable. A word which is parliamentary in one context may cause disorder in another context, and therefore be unparliamentary.

Use of the word 'misleading' in reference to other members in this House is causing disorder. As such, and in keeping with the parliamentary authority cited above, I must insist, as I have done in the past, that members discontinue using the word 'mislead', or any of its variations, in reference to another hon. member. I will be monitoring this closely and will, if necessary, interrupt a member who uses this word in reference to another member in debate.

I trust all hon. members will respect this decision, and each other, in future debates in this Legislature.

Also, on Friday, November 16th, the hon. Minister of Education, Early Learning and Culture and Justice and Public Safety rose on a Point of Privilege to object to the

member's statement given by the Member for Charlottetown-Parkdale. The minister asserted that the statement was 'mean-spirited'; it was 'unfair' and a breach of his privilege as a member of this Legislature.

When faced with a Point of Privilege the Speaker's duty is to assess whether the point was made at the earliest opportunity and whether the matter involves, at face value, the privilege of the House collectively or its members individually.

The minister raised his Point of Privilege immediately following the statement by the Member from Charlottetown-Parkdale, so I am satisfied that it was raised at the earliest opportunity.

Honourable members, privilege may be defined as "the sum of certain rights enjoyed by [the] House collectively . . . and by Members of [the] House individually, without which they could not discharge their functions, and which exceed those possessed by other bodies or individuals" – House of Commons Procedure and Practice (3rd Edition) Chapter 3, page 58.

Privilege takes various forms, such as the freedom of speech in debate, the freedom from obstruction or interference, and the right of the House to regulate its own affairs.

I have reviewed the statement given by the Member for Charlottetown-Parkdale. The essence of the statement is to object to the short time period between the introduction of government bills and the commencement of debate after second reading so far this sitting. I draw your attention to *Beauchesne's Parliamentary Rules & Forms (6th Edition)*, Citation 69:

"It is very important . . . to indicate that something can be inflammatory, can be disagreeable, can even be offensive, but it may not be a question of privilege unless the comment actually impinges upon the ability of [members] to do their job properly."

On review, hon. members, I do not find the statement made by the Member for Charlottetown-Parkdale interferes with the rights necessary for the minister or any other member to carry out their functions. It may well be disagreeable, may well be inflammatory and/or even offensive, but it

does not meet the test of parliamentary privilege.

Thank you, hon. members.

Matters of Privilege and Recognition of
Guests

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

First, welcome to everyone back to the Legislative Assembly for the second week of our fall sitting; to acknowledge Alanna Jankov in the gallery, recently elected to city council.

[Applause]

Premier MacLauchlan: Joe Byrne, Leader of the NDP; Phil Callaghan; Eddie Lund.

A fine delegation here in conjunction with the International Transgender Day of Remembrance, people who have been in leadership roles in Pride PEI or Peers Alliance or various initiatives from activists in a community level.

Let me mention Nola Etkin, Rebecca Condon, Mary Clements, Kandace Hagen, Brittany Jakubiec, Danielle Boudreau, (Indistinct) and Kristen Mckay.

Thanks to all of you for the good work that you're doing, and for the important cause that we recognize on the International Transgender Day of Remembrance honouring, in particular, the memory of trans, two-spirit, non-binary gender diverse people who have lost their lives to transphobic or anti-transgender violence.

Yesterday, Music PEI announced the nominees for their 2019 awards and I'll mention a number of recipients or nominees for multiple awards: Dylan Menzie; Rachel Beck; Meaghan Blanchard; Vishten; and Jennie and the Hummingbird and many others who were nominated. I mention those as the performers or creative talents who were honoured with a significant number of nominations.

Monsieur le Président, il y aura ce soir une réception au Carrefour de l'Isle-Saint-Jean

pour célébrer le 15^e anniversaire du programme PERCÉ.

Mr. Speaker, tonight there will be a reception at the Carrefour de l'Isle-Saint-Jean to celebrate the 15th anniversary of the PERCÉ program.

The PERCÉ program permits young people in the Acadian and Francophone community who are in their post-secondary studies to have a paid clerkship or a paid (Indistinct) on the order of 12 weeks with an employer, and over the period of the PERCÉ program there have been almost 200 post-secondary students who have benefitted from those internships and what's really worth celebrating today is how many of them have stayed on or had reason to come back to Prince Edward Island because of the PERCÉ program.

Many things to celebrate today, and above all, we're back here to do the good work of the people.

Thank you.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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

It's certainly a pleasure for me to rise today as well and welcome everyone back for our second week of the fall session.

I'd also like to recognize a few friends that are in the gallery. Of course, councillor elect Alanna Jankov; Dr. Sarah Stewart-Clark has joined us today; Kevin Arsenaault is here as well as a couple of very good friends of mine: Father Phil Callaghan and Leader of the NDP Joe Byrne. It's great to see you here, gentlemen.

I'd also like to reiterate the words spoken by the Premier with regards to the group that has joined us here today, as well, from the Peers Alliance, to acknowledge the International Transgender Day of Remembrance. I know when I walked into the Legislature this morning and I was coming up the sidewalk, I took a pause to read all of the posters and the signs and reflect on the individuals and the lives that were, unfortunately, lost. I welcome you

here. Thank you very much for all of the great work that you do.

I'd just like to touch quickly on a couple of significant events that happened over the weekend. The first one would be the Stratford and area food drive, which the generosity of the people in Stratford continues to amaze me. Every year we set a benchmark, and every year the great people of Stratford essentially blow that benchmark out of the water.

This year there was over 20 pallets of food donated by the residents of Stratford and its surrounding area. Thank you very much for your generosity. I know there were some comments on social media that that's great, but you know what would even be greater? If people didn't have to rely on food banks.

So, certainly that's a benchmark that we need to work on. All sides of the Legislative Assembly need to focus on that goal, and I know if we work together we can get there, hopefully sooner than later.

Also, this past weekend was the 31st Annual Rotary Youth Parliament. I, like many members in the House, took the opportunity to stop in and view some of the proceedings. The future leaders that I witnessed this weekend it was second to none. I thought that the topics, the resolutions that were discussed in the debate on the floor were tremendous.

Once again, this year there was a little bit of a surprise where one of the government members actually crossed the floor to the opposition. But you know what, those things happen and there are lots of rumours of that henceforth as well.

I'd like to congratulate the students that participated this weekend, and in particular, I know some of the Pages that we have here in the Legislative Assembly took place as parliamentarians this weekend. Hats off to the great work that they did.

I'd also like to shout out to the teachers that are involved and the mentoring that they do for the students that participate. Also, for the Rotarians that get behind this initiative and make it happen every year.

Last but not – Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank you and the Deputy Speaker, as well, for your commitment towards this event and the time that you volunteer towards it.

Last but not least, I had the great pleasure to stop by the Stratford Youth Centre yesterday evening, and make a presentation, a monetary presentation to the Stratford Youth Council on behalf of the Insurance Bureau of Canada. Every year they reach out to me and ask for a deserving non-profit organization. I know before I put forward the Brain Injury Awareness of PEI, and this year I was very proud to put forward the tremendous group of youth from Stratford that do so much, particularly for seniors in Stratford.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

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

I'd like to welcome everybody back for another week, and all of the familiar faces that I see in the gallery today. Welcome to everybody.

I'd also like to pass on my congratulations to my friends in the music community who were recognized with nominations from Music PEI awards just the other day.

I also would like to pass on my congratulations to an Island 4-H veteran, Maddie Stewart. She and her calf, Sasha, just out of a field of hundreds captured the reserve grand champion title at the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair in Toronto; an extraordinary feat. Again, there were hundreds of cattle there, and for Maddie to pick up the grand reserve champion – fantastic job.

Like the hon. Leader of the Opposition, I would like to congratulate all the participants who took part in the Rotary Youth Parliament this week.

I particularly pass on my congratulations to Jayce MacNeill who won the Frank Zakem Award.

My particular thanks to you, Mr. Speaker, and the Deputy Speaker, who put so much time and effort into that year after year after year. It's much appreciated and the young Islanders who are there clearly were very, very grateful for your presence and the mentoring that you've given them over the years.

I'd also like to give special mention this afternoon to Sally and Tim Goddard, the parents, of course, of Captain Nichola Goddard who was killed tragically in Afghanistan in 2006 at the age of 26. Sally and Tim are remarkable Islanders, people who have turned that awful tragedy into a memorable fundraising and an extraordinarily successful fundraising event every year. This was the 10th year. Peter Mansbridge was there as the spectacularly good speaker. Again, the Deputy Speaker of the House was there as the MC and did a spectacularly good job at that, as well.

More importantly, the foundation that the Goddards have put together has raised huge amount of money to bring electric light to rural Papua New Guinea and to provide scholarships for young Canadian women in universities post-secondary education. So, a special shout out to the Goddards.

There are other events today, of course; the International Transgender Day of Remembrance. Later today, if time permits, I will be bringing forward in the House, a motion calling for a ban on conversion therapy here on Prince Edward Island. Conversion therapy, of course is the pseudo scientific practice of trying to change a person's sexual orientation using physiological or spiritual interventions. I think we see the damage done by that by the people who are memorialized outside.

Thank you so much, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you, hon. leader.

I'll call on the hon. Member from West Royalty-Springvale.

Mr. Dumville: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I too, would like to thank you and your staff for such a wonderful Rotary Youth Parliament this weekend. I want to personally thank you for inviting me to take

part; I think I got as much out of it as the young people did. It was just a truly wonderful to experience.

I'd like to welcome all of the transgender supporters here today. I'd also like to welcome Joe Byrne, a great community leader, and the leader of the NDP. Also, our new political people that are coming on the scene: Dr. Clark, J. Kevin Arsenault, and Alanna Jankov. It is good to see you here today, too. It is great to see them all coming out and taking an interest in our political scene here on Prince Edward Island.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. MacDonald: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Welcome everybody in the gallery. Alanna Jankov, new municipal councilor, but more importantly, what you do for tourism at The Guild, I think is just important. Chris Currie, family owned and operated Countryview Golf Course, it's been around – I think his grandfather started Glenn Afton Golf Course as long as I've been around, so he's been in the business a long time.

George and Barb Lowther, my next door neighbours, celebrating their 60th tomorrow.

I had the privilege yesterday to attend East Wiltshire School with the minister of education on Food for Youth Form and I can tell you, it deals a lot with local food, food literacy, and food insecurity. These kids, they are our future, we're in pretty good hands because some of the ideas that they had around the table were extremely important going forward.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I, too, want to welcome everybody here to the gallery. Of note, as already had been mentioned, Alanna, the new councillor in Charlottetown, I'm looking forward to watching you perform here in the next few months. Of course, there is a new mayor here in Charlottetown, one of the good

Brown's is going to be mayor, so hopefully he keeps his reputation as being at least better than his brother.

Some Hon. Members: [Laughter].

Mr. Myers: I'd also like to welcome Dr. Sarah Stewart-Clark and Dr. Kevin Arsenault – both who will be candidates in the upcoming Progressive Conservative leadership. It is a really exciting time for the party as many, many people line up and show interest to lead this great party.

Also Chris Currie welcome here. And to the members of the PEERS Alliance, welcome. As I walked in this morning, I saw the signs but the directions I was walking, the signs where to the back of me, so I had to stop to read them as I went along. I didn't go out that walkway yet, so I'll have to get those at supertime. But, it's a great display for the Transgender Day of Remembrance, so congratulations on the great work.

Of note, too, I want to congratulate the port authority here in Charlottetown for a wonderful cruise ship season; 98,000 passengers and 44,000 crews came to the Island, with an economic impact of \$16.5 million; so that is up 8.2% from 2017 – great job done by those down on the waterfront, taking care of that.

I'd also like to – just to those following along at home, I know that there are a lot of messages coming in these days, and I want to thank you for all of your words of encouragement and all of the great information that you're giving. We will make sure it makes the floor of the Legislature to hold government to account. Thanks to all the people that are reaching out.

And last, but certainly not least, I want to say hello to my mom, who watches faithfully every day and she sent me a message here, just a few minutes ago and said: Dad wants to go to Montague, but I told him that I can't go if you're asking questions in Question Period, what should I do? And I said: you should stay home, Mom.

Some Hon. Members: [Laughter]

Speaker: The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

Mr. LaVie: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'll keep my remarks short, there's enough motions going on here today.

I'd just like to say hello to everyone back home on EastLink and there's one lad I do want to say hello to and that would be my son Shawn, it would be his birthday today and I probably won't mention his age, he'll probably give mine away, so I won't mention how old he is but I just want to wish Shawn a Happy Birthday.

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

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

It's my pleasure to welcome Alanna Jankov again in the gallery. Alanna's a great friend and a great constituent and I'm sure she will be a great councillor. We're very happy to have her as a councillor here in Charlottetown.

I wanted to commemorate the moment as being the national day of the child; we had a great parade for that here today and a gathering outside.

The great thing about children was focused on last night on *Compass* and today again on the CBC and there's a class out at Mt. Stewart – Mrs. MacDonald's class, that's doing the friend-send, where the kindergarten students are sending nice messages off to nice messages off to people basically that are in need.

Leave it to a child to do something that would bring somebody else up. We could all do a little bit of that.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's my pleasure to rise today and welcome everyone who may be watching from District 18 Rustico-Emerald.

I just wanted to mention that I was at the New London Community Complex AGM last night and this is a corporation that takes nine communities together to have this community centre and they do a fantastic job. I wanted to recognize outgoing Chair Phyllis Carr for the great work she does and also Gerry Mawhinney who's been involved with the organization for many years and he just received an award from the volunteer resource council for all of his great volunteer work.

Of course, I wanted to welcome everyone who is here in the gallery, it seems to be growing by the minute, lots of politicians and aspiring politician's out there, so it's great to see you.

I won't attempt to go through and recognize everyone again, but I did want to say hello to Chris Currie, who I'm not sure has been recognized yet. We share a passion for renewable energy as well so it's great to see you here today.

Thank you.

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

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

I want to welcome everybody here today, I also want to welcome the PEERS organization, a great organization representing a vast amount of people and they do great work. By the way, I will be supporting the Third Party's motion today.

I also want to congratulate Alanna here for being elected to ward one, she has big shoes to fill with the councillors that came before her; Richard Brown, Clifford Lee and Eddie Rice, have done a tremendous amount of work down in that area but I know Alanna will continue that work on.

Thank you very much.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque.

Mr. MacKay: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's an honour to rise on this beautiful Tuesday afternoon. I'd like to welcome

everyone to the gallery today. It's good to see a big crowd.

I just want to bring this to everyone's attention. So, today I slipped out for lunch and I went down to grab a sandwich down at Beanz coffee house and when I was on my way back I stopped at the crosswalk and I saw a school bus coming.

So, I watched as the school bus put the yellow lights on and one car went through the yellow lights, then the stop light came out. I watched two cars go through that red light right by the Confederation Centre and the Holman Grand. It bothered me watching these two cars.

So, I came back and I told the hon. Member from Borden-Kinkora, right on the phone he got Charlottetown Police. Sure enough, they got cameras there, so I'm hoping by the end of today somebody is charged for passing school busses.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Casey: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's my pleasure to welcome Gordon McNeilly to the gallery today. As everyone knows, he has been nominated to be the Liberal candidate in Charlottetown-West Royalty. I just want to say: there's money in the bank, there's a good organization to support him and I know he'll keep the seat Liberal in the next election.

Thank you.

Statements by Members

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

Lawrence MacAulay

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

Today I'm proud to stand in the Legislature to recognize Prince Edward Island's longest-serving Member of Parliament, Lawrence MacAulay.

I know his commitment to Prince Edward Island has been documented before in this House, but this month is a bit more special for the Cardigan MP.

Tomorrow, November the 21st, will mark Lawrence's 30th consecutive year as a sitting Member of Parliament.

[Applause]

Mr. McIsaac: First elected on that day in the 1988 general election, Lawrence has served, as of tomorrow, a total of 10,958 days.

This accomplishment is one that only 26 other Members of Parliament since Confederation have reached.

Lawrence is no stranger to anyone in this House, but I will take a moment to remind the House of some of his accomplishments.

The last federal election marked his ninth win. Lawrence's Cabinet appointments have included Solicitor General of Canada; Minister of Labour; Secretary of State for Veterans; and Secretary of State for Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency; and is now serving as Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada.

Malpeque MP Wayne Easter said it best when describing Lawrence's secret to being elected for so long: Lawrence is a really good constituency MP. It doesn't matter if you're the Pope or a lobster fisherman, or a farmer, he'll treat you the same way.

As a constituent of Lawrence's, I tend to agree.

I ask the House to join me in congratulating Lawrence on his milestone, but more importantly, thanking him for his tremendous service to the people of Prince Edward Island.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Borden-Kinkora.

Maureen McMurrer

Mr. Fox: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

This past Saturday I had the opportunity to attend a benefit for one of my constituents, Maureen McMurrer.

Maureen was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer which has spread to her lymph nodes and she'll be undergoing surgery in Moncton (Indistinct) and is looking at many hospital visits in the future.

Currently, she is undergoing an aggressive form of chemotherapy which has left her unable to work.

The total amount raised from the auction, from the benefit and the donation jars, GoFundMe page on Saturday night reached a total of \$19,160.

[Applause]

Mr. Fox: I would like to extend my gratitude to the team of amazing people and businesses who came together to make this benefit so successful.

To the benefit committee of Kendra Noonan; Carol Walsh; Amanda Platts; Deanne Lynn Walsh; Nancy O'Connor; Robert Palmer; and Laurel Palmer Thompson; to the auctioneer, Billy Pickering; to Haley and Nancy O'Connor for their assistance in setting up the items for the auction.

There were over 208 items up front.

To Maureen's sisters, Debbie McMurrer, Wendy McMurrer, and Donna White for helping with everything and anything.

Finally, thank you to all of the businesses and individuals who contributed items for the auction. Without you, this night would not have been made possible.

I can also say that I've attended a lot of benefits over the years and I could not believe the amount of people that were in the legion on that night last Saturday.

This evening was beautiful; full of laughter and sometimes tears. Maureen, you are a warrior. Know that we will be thinking of you and your family as you continue with your treatment.

I have known Maureen since I came to the town 27 years ago. We will support you to the best of our abilities.

Thank you.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque.

Kensington Monaghan Farms Wild Monctonian Victory

Mr. MacKay: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to recognize the Kensington Monaghan Farms Wild as winners of the Monctonian Major Midget Hockey Championship in Moncton on Sunday.

The Wild defeated the Dartmouth Steele Subaru 4-1 in Sunday's championship game of the major midget final. Kensington went 2-0-1 in the preliminary round playing three games on Saturday and two more on Sunday.

They defeated the Ajax Pickering Raiders 5-0 in the wildcard game; the Moncton Flyers 4-3 in the quarter final; and the Markham Majors 3-1 in Sunday morning's semifinal.

This is the first Island team to win the Monctonian midget AAA crown since 2010. Previously, the Wild made it to the final in 2014 before losing to the Okanogan Hockey Academy.

Today, the team is back on the ice preparing to host the Charlottetown Bulk Carriers Pride on Friday.

I would like to offer my sincere congratulations to the players and coaches on their hard earned victory.

Our community is proud to be home to such dedicated athletes and I have no doubt that they'll continue to make us proud.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Responses to Questions taken as Notice

Questions by Members

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: The ethics commissioner flagged in her most recent report a senior government official who repeatedly refused to file required disclosure statements.

Senior government official and disclosure statements

My question to the Premier: Premier who is this senior official?

Premier MacLauchlan: The office of the ethics and integrity commissioner was one of the first steps that we took after coming to government. It was established on March 31st, 2015.

The commissioner has worked closely with senior public servants to achieve the goals of that office and the purpose of the code that was put in place. I'm pleased to report to the House that in her most recent report, the commissioner writes: at its creation, the expectation was that the office of the ethics and integrity commissioner would become a trusted resource for a conflict of interest, ethics advice and direction.

At the three year mark, she says: I believe it is fair to say that this goal is being achieved.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: It's pretty hard to believe that the goal has been achieved if the Premiers own senior officials aren't abiding by the rules set out.

The ethics commissioner stated that she informed both the clerk and the Premier of these repeated refusals.

Again, to the Premier: Premier, which executive division employee repeatedly ignored the requests of your ethics commissioner and thus refusing to file their disclosures?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: I'm pleased to inform the House that the filing in question has been completed, is with the commissioner and I believe that achieves the purpose of the existence of the

commissioner, of the code of conduct in question.

I don't believe it is the proper course for me to disclose the name of the individual, but I'm happy to confirm to the House that the filing has been completed.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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

The Premier is correct in the fact that he did bring in the ethics commissioner and the reason he brought in the ethics commissioner was because of the many scandals of this government and now we find out that senior officials are simply ignoring the policy and his own ethics commissioner. Shame. That's shameful.

Ignoring of policy and broken rules

Premier: why are the rules set up after years of scandal to try and clean up this tired regime repeatedly ignored and broken by senior officials and cabinet ministers?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Any requirements or responsibilities the Cabinet ministers have in this regard would be looked after by the commissioner of ethics.

To my knowledge, I don't believe the Leader of the Opposition has any grounds for making that comment and I think it's most regrettable – although it's not the first instance that we've seen from the opposition to be loading up their preambles to their questions with false accusations.

Leader of the Opposition: Answer the questions, that's all we ask. Follow the rules and answer the question.

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

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

That's quite an accusation from a guy who had to bring in an ethics commissioner to fix

up all the stealing that was going on over there.

This summer the government flooded the airwaves with a campaign called: maybe you should come home – offering to cover a one-way plane ticket to Prince Edward Island.

Cost of campaign to Island taxpayers

Question to the Minister of Workforce and Advanced Learning: How much did that promotion cost Island tax payers?

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

Mr. Gallant: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I thank the hon. member for the question and that was a very good promotion and we had, I think, there was approximately seven people that contacted us and there was over 200 contacted Workforce PEI.

It was a very wonderful promotion to show people what we have here on Prince Edward Island and how –

Mr. Fox: How much?

Mr. Gallant: – the Island has transformed since they left maybe 10 or 15 years ago.

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

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Well I heard that 80% of the 200 were calling to complain about it.

I recently attended a seminar that the Eastern Chamber of Commerce put on and they had a panel speak and they talked about the extreme labor shortages that they were facing here on Prince Edward Island.

Skilled trades' people returning to PEI

Not one single person mentioned this campaign, either positively or negatively. Question to the minister: How many skilled trades' people were successfully attracted home because of your campaign?

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

Mr. Gallant: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Our department is always trying to work with employers to help them with labour shortages and with skilled workers and I must say, this was a very successful campaign in contrary to –

Mr. Fox: How many?

Mr. Gallant: – what maybe the member opposite might say. There is approximately \$40,000 spent on this and it was money well spent and it created a buzz right across the province and right across the country and there was many people interested and checked it out and were coming back to PEI.

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

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm not sure if you could do a nation-wide penetration with \$40,000 so I suspect you just put it for Islanders because you wanted them to believe you were doing something.

Funny thing is, when you go to the webpage – I wanted to know who won the contest – when I go to the webpage I get a: page not found and I'll table that later.

So, I can't even find out who won it.

Winner of contest and return to PEI

Question to the minister: Who won the contest and did they decide to move home?

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

Mr. Gallant: The Employment Journey PEI puts out a newspaper on a monthly basis and they referenced a young couple that moved back to PEI where dreams come true and it's just phenomenal how wonderful this program was. If the member opposite wants to draw negative tones to it, so be it, but there was a contest and there was a winner and we were very happy with the contest and how it went.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Myers: Well I certainly know all my friends are still leaving, so thank heavens seven people reached out to this government because they had a hashtag and they thought they were cool.

It's funny to note that when the minister was trying to answer his question, the answer was in the Premier's book, he took the page out of his book and handed it back. So, the Premier doesn't even trust you with the answer.

One of the biggest road blocks of the housing crisis here on Prince Edward Island that this government has created is the availability of skilled labour i.e. you can't build buildings if there's nobody to build them.

Measures to address housing crisis re: skilled trades' people

Question to the Minister of Workforce and Advanced Learning: What specific measures is your department taking to recruit skilled trades people like carpenters, plumbers and electricians, back to the Island to help address the housing crisis?

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

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

Our department works very closely with the construction association and the truckers association and seafood association and –

Mr. Fox: They can't get workers.

Mr. Gallant: – the construction association came to us a year and a half ago and informed us there was going to be a shortage. We helped them and we have set in programs and there's been about 300 people last summer and another 100 or so enter the construction industry. So, I mean, to the members question: there's all kinds of very positive things happening in the industries and might I add, our unemployment rate was 7.2% last month – that was the lowest since we started keeping records in 1976.

Ms. Casey: Nice.

Mr. Gallant: There's more people working on PEI than there ever has been and we're doing a lot of good positive things and people are seeing the advantages here on PEI.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

So, to all those people that are waiting to have a house built, or to have renovations done on your house, or any of those businesses out there that are trying to expand and can't find anybody to do the work, or want to build a new building to house their employees in – this government's answer is: hey, lots more people are working! That's the point.

The point is, there is nobody to do the jobs – there is nobody here to do the jobs. Call a plumber today, and if your pipes are leaking, your house will be flooded before you find somebody because there just isn't anybody to come and do it. I don't know why this government doesn't understand that and why the minister chooses just to pick out answers out of his book there or read out of a newspaper, instead of answering with real answers.

Islanders deserve to have real answers, not read answers out of your briefing book that some staff made up for you.

Tax incentives to fill vacancies in skilled trades

What tax incentives are you creating to help attract – or help these employers fill their vacancies in skilled trades here on Prince Edward Island?

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

Mr. Gallant: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

You know it's great as I said earlier, you know, for the member opposite to make kind of comments and accusations. We have –

Mr. Fox: They're true.

Mr. Myers: They're not accusations.

Mr. Fox: They're true.

Mr. Myers: (Indistinct) build a house.

Mr. Gallant: – helped employers right across this province. Our department has helped – well I'll tell you –

Mr. Myers: There's (Indistinct) building permit.

Mr. Gallant: – I had to phone –

Mr. Myers: (Indistinct)

Mr. Gallant: I had to phone a plumber Saturday morning, and he was on the house, at the site in half an hour. So don't tell me you can't get people –

Mr. Myers: That's what happens when you're an important Liberal cabinet minister.

Mr. Gallant: – if you've got leaky water or something. Yes, we are having –

Mr. LaVie: I've been waiting for my plumber for six weeks.

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct)

Mr. Myers: I've been waiting for over six weeks, too. I guess we're not as important as you.

Speaker: Next question.

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

So it seems like this government relies heavily on gimmicks to attract skilled workers to Prince Edward Island, rather than lower taxes and better wages here in Prince Edward Island. Two years ago, this government was in Alberta handing out beer and scarves – beer and scarves. This summer, they're handing away a plane ticket to Prince Edward Island – that's their gimmick this summer. Who knows what's next.

Attracting skilled workers back to PEI

Question to the minister: When will this government move beyond gimmicks and questionable marketing campaigns to attract

skilled workers back here to Prince Edward Island to address the labour shortage that we have?

An Hon. Member: That's right.

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

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

I'd just like to inform the members opposite that over the last two years, there were 7,000 full-time jobs created on Prince Edward Island. That's a testament to our business community and the economic boom here on PEI.

Yes, I will admit to this House that, yes, there is issues and people can't get things built when they want to be. We are working at that. I mean, the contractors can only do so much with the people they have –

Mr. Trivers: (Indistinct)

Mr. Gallant: – and we will continue to help our workforce build on Prince Edward Island.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Length of time to receive building permits

A question to the Minister of Communities, Land and Environment: How long does it take for someone to get a building permit from your department?

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

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

As the former minister has said, the province is on a tear and the economic development going on in the Province of Prince Edward Island is phenomenal. We are leading the country when it comes to –

Mr. LaVie: Do you know what a tear is?

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: – development here. It's a testament to the revenue that is coming in –

Mr. Fox: One week? Two weeks?

Mr. R. Brown: – a testament to the amount of people that are working. It should take two to four weeks to get a permit issued. I agree, there are issues with it, but we are working on those issues.

Thank you.

Speaker: Thank you, minister.

The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We've been hearing from a lot of builders and Islanders that are frustrated with long and costly delays and it's obvious that you've been hearing from them as well, and the delays in getting these building permits approved. These delays hurt our economy and are an obstacle to Islanders who are taking real action to help solve this housing crisis.

Question to the minister: Would it surprise you to learn that it takes months – not weeks, not days – but months to get a building permit from your department?

Mr. Fox: That's right.

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

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

I'd have to agree with the hon. member. But you have to understand, these are building permits; we want to make sure that the building permit is properly filled out and that the construction is going to be proper. We want top quality housing built here, and that's one of the reasons the Province of Prince Edward Island is adopting a national building code. This protects house owners. We are working on the issues. I said: there is a boom going here on Prince Edward Island. Sometimes we have to take our due diligence to make sure that the permit is proper.

There are a lot of subdivisions going up. We want to make sure that a permit isn't issued –

Mr. Fox: (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: – that affects another property owner. We are running out of land for development in some areas and we have to do our due diligence to make sure that we don't destroy something that's already being done good.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

So the problem is that these delays are causing builders and developers to lose crucial time during building season.

Addressing issue of backlog in permit applications

Question to the minister: What is your department doing to address this growing backlog in permit applications?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

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

We had these discussions in the last sitting of the House. As I said at that time, we are looking for planning officers. We went out this summer, we advertised for planning officers – no one came with the price we had on the table. We increase the salary range for planning officers –

Mr. Myers: That was the point of my question.

Mr. R. Brown: – we went back to the market place, we had a few applications, we interviewed some people, we asked them to come to Prince Edward Island. But they're – planning is a big, important issue across this country. Planners are in big demand –

Mr. Myers: (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: – in this country. The economy is booming everywhere in Canada. We are working on it; we have reorganized the department in the last couple of weeks to address some of these concerns. As of today, we offered somebody a job to come for the planning; they had another job somewhere else. It is a very competitive job –

Mr. LaVie: I got lots. I got lots.

Mr. R. Brown: – we're working on it, and we're going to solve it.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

That's kind of funny to hear that because in the opposition office, we looked and looked, and we couldn't find all these job postings that are out there looking for people to help staff the office to improve the time to get the building permits.

It is really clear that staff is having trouble processing these large volumes. This takes a toll on the staff that is there.

Question to the Minister of Communities, Land and Environment: Are you not concerned that this backlog in permitting is going to leave distress and burnout for the existing staff you have?

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

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

I want to thank the member for the question. I agree. The staff in the department is working overtime. They are working extremely hard; they are trying to get through the processes. We have a set of processes in place. I want to commend the staff of the department. They are doing a tremendous job in this economic boom, we're trying to help the staff by getting more staff, but as I said, we're in a very competitive market. We are working with the staff

But make one thing clear – we're not going to lower our standards when it comes to building permits. We're not going to lower our standards when it comes to development. We have to have proper development in proper locations and properly done. I have seen too many times where development permits have been rushed, and at the end of the day, they cause more troubles than they solve. I will not lower the standards.

Thank you.

Speaker: Thank you, minister.

The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: So this is an excuse we're hearing from this government in many areas. They can't recruit positions, they can't recruit land planners, they can't get anyone to come back to the Island – they're offering free plane tickets.

Filling of position in building permit office

A question for the minister: Is it because of your mismanagement that you can't get anyone to come and work here and fill your positions?

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

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

You know, the opposition has a rough time getting it. Since Justin Trudeau has come to power, the economy of Canada is booming. This is an issue right across our country. We are one of the best countries in the world, and people want to come to this country. Prince Edward Island's population strategy is working. We are getting a tremendous amount of people coming here to Prince Edward Island –

Mr. LaVie: (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: – is it anybody's fault? No, it's no one's fault. Things are going great, we got to catch up and we're working on catching up to make sure that development is done in Prince Edward Island, but in a proper and a good way.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.

The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Incoming permit applications are stacking up by the dozens. Existing permit applications are taking months to get approved. Extra staff resources aren't being made available to handle the volume. The efforts that this government is taking to help on the staffing side obviously aren't working.

So, Islanders are trying to fix the problems, like the housing crisis here on this Island; the problems that have been created by this government's mismanagement. Ironically, government is standing in their way, by not issuing building permits.

Addressing housing crisis

So a question to the minister: What are you going to do to support local builders and developers to help them overcome your lack of planning and address our housing crisis?

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

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

I want to thank the member for the question, and it's good that we're having this debate.

We have to understand Prince Edward Island is a tremendous success story here. We've never had so much growth here in Prince Edward Island since Prince Edward Island has begun. The growth is phenomenal here on Prince Edward Island. People want to come to Canada and want to Prince Edward Island. –

Mr. Trivers: Beer, scarves, free plane tickets – that's not a plan (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: – our efforts are working.

As the former minister of workforce said: 7,000 jobs have been created. These are new families wanting new homes. Senior citizens want to downsize.

Mr. LaVie: (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: Development is great. We are, maybe, one of the most successful governments in Prince Edward Island's history when it comes to creating jobs, creating development, and growing the economy.

Do we have to catch up to it? Yes, we do and we will be catching up to it.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

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

I want to follow up on questions my colleague from Charlottetown-Parkdale asked last week about shelter rates for Islanders on social assistance.

The poverty action plan will increase the shelter rates for Islanders on social assistance by 6% in the next few weeks – and that's fantastic – in addition to the 3% increase that took effect in July earlier this year.

Shelter rates for family of four on social assistance

Question for the Minister of Family and Human Services: Taking into account these increases, where will the shelter rate be for a family of four on social assistance?

Ms. Biggar: (Indistinct) finally got your facts (Indistinct)

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

Ms. Mundy: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I went back to my office after our little exchange last week and did a little bit of fact checking myself. In fact, compared to other provinces across Canada when it comes to social assistance allowance, which includes shelter, which includes personal, which includes personal comfort allowance, we are above middle of the pack.

When it comes to Atlantic Canada, we are second only to Newfoundland. So we are above Nova Scotia, and we are above New

Brunswick when it comes to all of those things. That's not even taking into consideration all of the other initiatives that we have done across government and across community to help those people on social assistance.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

We're talking here specifically about shelter rates for social assistance, and I understand it's part of a bigger basket of things that are available, but we're talking specifically about shelter rates.

The answer to the question is \$933. That's the rate for a family of four on social assistance, and that's meant to include heat and light. The current average PEI market rate for a three-bedroom apartment is \$1,250, and that often does not include heat and light.

A question to the same minister: Do you think that the shelter rate for a family of four on social assistance is sufficient?

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

Ms. Mundy: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We do admit that there are housing challenges right now, and that's why we have been working hard to implement the first ever housing action plan Prince Edward Island has ever seen with record amounts of investments.

We have been rolling out rent supplements to social assistance clients and to the public in general. We are going above shelter rates on a as is basis. As we take in clients and we assess their needs, if they are needed to go above the shelter rate we have been doing that and we will continue to do that, as well as providing a suite of other services to make sure that Islanders do belong and they do thrive on Prince Edward Island.

Thank you.

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

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you.

Again, I'd like to remind the minister we're talking about shelter rates for people on social assistance. People on social assistance are not eligible for rent supplements. That's an entirely different program.

With a minimum of a \$317 discrepancy between the market rent and the shelter rate provided by this government, it's clearly not enough.

Social assistance clients not eligible for rent supplements

Question to the minister: How and when is your government going to close this gap?

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

Ms. Mundy: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Maybe the hon. member didn't hear my last answer. I said that yes, we are rolling out rent supplements and we are extending them to social assistance clients.

We also, as our clients approach us and we assess them, if they cannot find housing within that rent, we are working with them on a case-by-case initiative to make sure that we are meeting their needs and that they are not incurring any additional expenses.

This in addition, again, to the increases that we made to our asset allowance, our wage exemptions, our \$250 child inclusion allowance. We have to look at this as a government as a whole and a whole of community and we cannot focus on one program, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Parkdale.

Ms. Bell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The poverty action plan provided 275 rental subsidies to help Islanders struggling with housing and this has seen been increased to 490 subsidies this year. This subsidy was

available to those already in housing who were paying more than the recommended 25% of their net income to housing costs.

Rent subsidies and wait lists for units

Question for the Minister of Family and Human Services: How many applicants were there for the rental subsidy and what is the average wait time to get a unit?

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

Ms. Mundy: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We don't have an average wait time, because we deal with clients as they come in the door, as the greatest need. So the client, who has the greatest need when they present themselves to us, will get the rent supplement or will get the unit, or somebody that might have been there for quite some time.

The amount of rent supplements that we have, we have doubled it to actually 500. We have also committed to \$17 million plus an additional \$30 million in conjunction with last year's budget and with the further announcements that my colleague, the Minister of Finance, made a couple of weeks ago. That is a huge investment in housing over the next few years, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

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

Ms. Bell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

So speaking about rental subsidies, there were over 13,000 applicants for the 490 subsidies available. To quote the Director of Housing Services, Sonya Cobb: There are always people waiting.

Determining who gets a subsidy

So minister: How do you determine who gets a subsidy and what do you say to the people who don't?

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

Ms. Mundy: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

When we talk about our applicant list, yes there is a large number of people on it, but not everyone on that applicant list is ready to move. We have offered subsidies to people who are not ready to move, and they say: You know what? Skip over me and go to the next people.

We have been drilling down into our applicant list, and we have come up with a figure of 1% of that applicant list are actually people who are in dire need today. We are able to act and we have been acting and we continue to act to make sure that those most in need are getting the services and supports that they need.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Lack of housing re: rent supplements

Ms. Bell: Given that the rental subsidy does not actually create new apartments, could the minister explain how a rental subsidy helps Islanders in housing need if there are no apartments available to rent today?

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

Ms. Mundy: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Again, the fact is the applicant list does not mean that people are homeless. The majority – and I would say that would be 99% of those people who are on that applicant list, are people that are in safe, appropriate housing.

So, they are not homeless. They have homes in their communities that they are living in. It is just that it is more than the 25% of their income, and that is why they are on the list. So those rent supplements will be helping those people, because they do not necessarily want to leave their communities and the homes that they're in to move to another unit.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Roach: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I was very proud of the results of this government's 17-18 budget.

Last week I heard some comments about our economy from the hon. Member from Charlottetown-Parkdale in the House that, quite frankly, took me by surprise. Over the weekend, I received a lot of questions about some comments made by the hon. member, so I did a review of Hansard to confirm the comments.

My questions today are for the Minister of Finance, in hopes we can clear the air in some of these surprising comments.

The Member from Charlottetown-Parkdale states, as per Hansard: We do not have an increase in the expenditures in pressure places like health care, housing and education.

Mr. LaVie: (Indistinct) I thought they got rid of motions.

Mr. MacKay: (Indistinct) 25 seconds.

Accuracy of province's surplus

Mr. Roach: Minister, what the hon. Member from Charlottetown-Parkdale is saying about our government revenue being up, our expenditures being down, is this accurate?

An Hon. Member: That's a good question.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. MacDonald: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I think absolutely, we're increasing expenditures and we're prioritized on health care, family and human services. Obviously, you just heard some of the initiatives from the minister, and education. Health is up \$26.2 million, family and human services is up \$30 million and education is up \$10.6.

The government's priority areas represent about 60% of our overall expenditures and

for anybody that saw the programs and the announcements that we've been making just in the past couple of months, would be relevant to –

Mr. Myers: Three days. You made like 20 in three days.

Mr. MacDonald: – seeing the increases in our expenditures –

Mr. R. Brown: Liberal times are good times.

Mr. Myers: (Indistinct)

Mr. MacDonald: – over our revenue.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Myers: (Indistinct)

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir, your first supplementary question.

Mr. Roach: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Fox: No preamble.

Mr. Roach: Minister, we have a large number of companies and corporations and hard-working individuals that work day in and day out across this province and they are the people who have made our revenues as good as they are.

Mr. Fox: No preamble.

Mr. Roach: So, the member also called a \$75 million surplus you announced, supported by the independent Auditor General, funny money.

An Hon. Member: Funny money.

Mr. Roach: I remember how tough it was when I was minister of finance, but I was always proud of the work that we did.

Province's \$75 million surplus

Can you please explain to the hon. member, this House, and all Islanders, just exactly how our province got to this positive result of having a \$75 million surplus?

Mr. Myers: She told you: Funny money.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. MacDonald: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I just want to add to that as well.

Our economy since –

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: Sorry.

Speaker: Hon. members, let's have a little bit of respect; just a little bit of respect. I mean, this is got – I know there are members of the opposition; you will not listen to the answers. I don't mind the fact that you don't care about the answers, but at least listen to them anyway.

When somebody is speaking – when somebody is trying to answer a question, be quiet. For God's sake, listen to the answer anyway.

Go ahead, hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. MacDonald: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Our surplus is nothing for anybody in Prince Edward Island to be ashamed about or apologize to. I think it's absolutely tremendous that it's on the back of the small businesses and Islanders. They deserve all the credit.

Our economy since 2014 has grown by \$1 billion and the corporate sector with corporate income tax up \$18.2 million; personal income for Islanders is up \$31.5 million; and the goods being purchased and consumed through sales tax are up \$65 million. That's why that we continue to reduce taxes in Prince Edward Island.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir, your second supplementary.

Mr. Roach: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Minister, I guess it's unfortunate that members across the floor seem to think that saying \$75 million of funny money, that's

the hard-earned and hard-worked hours of every Islander across this province.

Mr. LaVie: Cooked the books.

Mr. Roach: I hope you can go home and tell them you think that their hard work is funny money.

Mr. MacKay: Don't forget the (Indistinct)

Mr. Roach: Minister –

Mr. Myers: (Indistinct)

Mr. Roach: – the member from the Third Party also questioned if our government truly recognize the value of all Islanders.

Surplus and support to vulnerable Islanders

With our strong fiscal position being criticized by the Third Party and now by the opposition, how will this new surplus support Islanders, especially those who are most vulnerable?

Mr. R. Brown: Good.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. MacDonald: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's irrelevant that some of the announcements that we've made in the past in regards to corporation income tax and our personal tax exemption, and also one that I think plays a significant role is the reduction in electricity.

But also, we're starting to make priority investments in housing, which we've talked about earlier today; new schools for Stratford and Sherwood; 230 new rent supplements, which we just finished talking about; 175 new housing units and 20 new transitional housing units, which a tender will go out next week on the demolition of the site that's being prepared for that.

So, \$30.9 million in capital improvements in health care, which is a big one which many people are concerned with, and we'll continue to make those investments.

The hon. minister of health has just announced additional doctors in the past two days.

So, we're going in the right direction and we think it's a tremendous success for Prince Edward Island to have a surplus and we'll continue to worry about our future and those people that are coming behind us.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Dumville: Mr. Speaker, I'll be directing my question to the hon. Minister of Communities, Land and Environment and not the agriculture minister, as this question has an environmental aspect.

Minister, bale wrapping has become a major method of silage storage in this province.

Disposal of agricultural plastics

Is agricultural plastic burned or buried in landfills?

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

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

Some of it's burned and some of it's buried. But, I want to thank the member for that question. I want to thank the Member from Montague-Kilmuir who introduced the plastic bag – the single-use plastic bag ban, the first in the world and this province is working towards implementing that.

We are working with our agriculture community and other organizations to see what we can do with the plastic.

Thank you.

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

Mr. Dumville: Minister, I have been informed that enersave PEI, I'm not sure if that's the exact same today, it might have changed names, will not take the used plastic if it is dirty or has netting attached.

Is this a concern?

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

Mr. R. Brown: Mr. Speaker, we're working with the industry.

We have a meeting with the federal minister on Friday, a tele-conference, and one of the issues on that tele-conference with the national minister is plastics and the detrimental effect it has on our environment.

I must say, the other ministers across the country are quite impressed by this Legislature for passing a bill that a lot of them really don't have the stomach to do. We are taking a leadership role here and we should be proud of it.

We will be working with the federal government, hopefully on going to other plastics and that in particular. There is a company in Halifax that can recycle plastic back into oil, diesel oil, and we are in discussions with that company to see what they can do for Prince Edward Island.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Dumville: Minister, grade eight and nine students in Russell, Ontario, have patented an eco-friendly, biodegradable product called Yay Bale that can be shredded and left on the field or fed to livestock.

New technologies for disposal of agricultural plastics

Minister, has new more environmentally friendly technology been introduced since bale wrapping has been implemented in our province?

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

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

Again, I want to thank the minister of economic development. There are some recruiting aspects going right now on

bringing a company here to Prince Edward Island that is making plastic bags, not from petroleum products, but from starch, and those are recyclable and there are negotiations – he may get mad at me on this, but negotiations are going very well there.

I think with our leadership in passing the first plastic bag ban in the world, companies now are looking here on Prince Edward Island nationally a lot. It's a phenomenal piece of legislation that has been passed in this Legislature, and companies now are looking to PEI with their innovative ideas because they say: That's a government that has a head on their shoulders and we want to work with a good government. And they will work with (Indistinct)

Speaker: The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

Mr. LaVie: Mr. Speaker, the building permit issue just isn't an issue here in Charlottetown. Up in Kings County we have building permits – 30 building permits sitting in an office here in Charlottetown.

Building permit delays

My question is to the minister of communities, land and permits: How are these delays helping develop our rural communities?

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

Mr. R. Brown: It's great to hear, Mr. Speaker, that not only Charlottetown is in a boom, but all of Prince Edward Island and that's because of this good government working hard with the business community of Prince Edward Island.

I also want to take – and thank our staff at the department. They are working extremely hard. I know I get calls every day from people from across Prince Edward Island looking for their permits.

We will be meeting with the contractors over the winter and developers over the winter. In order to help them to say: here's how you fill a permit in properly and here's how you get it fast-tracked or a better process in place.

So we'll be working with the developers and the construction people over the winter to speed up the process.

But again, the things are so booming here on Prince Edward Island, we have some work to do and we're willing to do that work.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

Mr. LaVie: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The minister mentioned earlier in Question Period where they couldn't find anybody to fill the development officer position. I find that very, very difficult to believe when there are so many people across PEI looking for work.

They could have got one out of the many thousands that are looking for work. I'll get them a position, personally, if they're looking for a position.

Vacant position at Access PEI in Souris

My question is to the minister of communities, land and permits: Did you know that the development officer position at Access PEI in Souris is vacant?

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

Mr. R. Brown: Yes and that's one of the reasons we're out looking for people to fill those positions. The member from Georgetown said earlier: we're having a difficult time finding carpenters and plumbers, that's a result of a successful province.

We are working on it; we are working hard on it –

Mr. Myers: Give them a free plane ticket.

Mr. R. Brown: We have been contacting development officers all over the country trying to lure them here, but the demand is so high we're having a difficult time.

We will be improving our processes over the winter. We reorganized the department a bit

and I can guarantee that things will be getting better in the near future.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

Mr. LaVie: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I don't know where this minister was for the last six months because I was at the access building in Souris at my office when his staff came up and took the development officer government rig back to Charlottetown. The last I seen it, it was going across LaVie bridge with the tail lights on.

Mr. Myers: Oh, no.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Mr. LaVie: Question to the minister of communities, lands and permits: Do you plan to fill the development officer position in Eastern Kings that is vacant at the access building in Souris?

Mr. Myers: Good question.

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

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

A definite yes.

Speaker: Final question for the hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

Mr. LaVie: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

What this minister did, he took the position and moved them into another department of government which left that development officer vacant.

When he shifted that person into another position you'd think he would have had somebody at that time to fill the officer position; but no, they didn't have anybody.

Six months, 30 permits sitting right here in the Charlottetown office and people in Eastern Kings waiting to build; waiting to build.

Building permit delays and development

My question to the minister of communities, lands and permits: How are these delays helping develop rural communities?

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

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

Maybe I will have a course over the winter for all the MLA's here in the Legislature. I know you are all getting calls, I know that people are asking for their permits, I know they want permits right away but we have a set of standards we have to abide to, we will abide by those set of standards.

I've seen too many times where developments are rushed and they cause more troubles than they solve.

Mr. LaVie: Rushed? Six months?

Mr. R. Brown: So we will be following a set of criteria here and I will work with each and every member in this House in order to ensure that building permits get issued here across Prince Edward Island.

There's no doubt this is one of the most successful governments here on Prince Edward Island –

Mr. LaVie: Fake news.

Mr. R. Brown: – surplus budgets –

Mr. LaVie: Fake news.

Mr. R. Brown: All kinds of jobs, lower taxes, lower power rates –

Mr. Myers: You set aside (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: This is the Shangri-La of all provinces here on Prince Edward Island.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: If I lived anywhere else in Canada, I'd want to come back to Prince Edward Island because it's the greatest place in Canada – Canada's the greatest place in the country.

Thank you very much.

Speaker: I would suggest that maybe a lot of the members should go and see a doctor and maybe get some hearing aids because you don't seem to be able to hear a thing that I tell you and that's disrespect.

You might think you're funny but you're not, it's very disrespectful.

Mr. MacEwen: It's just one way though.

Mr. Myers: We're shouting in the other direction.

An Hon. Member: That's disrespectful to the Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Speaker: Remember, I hope you understand what the word respect means, somehow I have my doubts.

The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

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

In the efforts of maintaining accuracy of information in this House, twice the Minister of Communities, Land and Environment claimed that Prince Edward Island was the first jurisdiction in the world to ban plastic bags and I just would like to check on the accuracy of that statement please.

Mr. LaVie: Alberta did but they took it back.

Mr. R. Brown: I'll get it.

Statements by Ministers

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

National Child Day 2018

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

If I might beg your indulgence, I'd like to welcome a few folks to the gallery here in relation to the statement.

Speaker: Go ahead.

Mr. J. Brown: I'd like to welcome to Rhyanne Beatty, Bonnie Bell and Sonya

Hooper to the gallery, they're with the Early Childhood Development Association.

As I mentioned previously, it is National Child Day and I had the privilege today to participate in one of my favourite annual events, the National Child Day parade.

This is an awesome event where children march through the streets and they're cheered on by many spectators who are having just as much fun as the kids.

Today, the parade started on Kent Street and wound up here at the Coles Building where educators and officials spoke on children's rights and our collective responsibility to protect them.

National Child Day is celebrated around the world on November 20th to commemorate the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The Convention sets out the rights of children... and asks that all children: be treated with dignity and respect, have the opportunity to have a voice, be protected from harm, be provided with their basic needs and have every opportunity to reach their full potential.

We are pleased to join the Early Childhood Development Association and our community partners today to celebrate Island children just for who they are.

Our early childhood educators and many Islanders who care deeply for our children provide our youngest Islanders with incredible opportunities to learn and grow.

Thanks to the early childhood educators and volunteers for making great events possible today in Charlottetown, Summerside, Bloomfield and in communities across the Island.

Through their caring and commitment, they have created the best early learning and childcare system in Canada and they continue to make PEI a great place for children.

I might note, the music man was unreal at getting all those children to listen out there today, so perhaps we could get him in here from time to time.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque.

Mr. MacKay: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's certainly an honour to rise today and speak about National Child Day.

It was certainly a pleasure this morning walking into the Coles building to see such a large amount of children outside, all full of happiness and laughter, it was certainly a great surprise first thing this morning.

National Child Day is celebrated in so many countries across the world, not all celebrated on the 20th, but I did a little bit of reading up on it and it's quite interesting and if anybody has the chance to do so, it's worth a read.

I read a quote today and I just want to read it here, it says: humanity must give the children the best it can provide.

Once again: humanity must give the children the best it can provide. It's everyone's role to help provide for our children for future generations, we can all help.

Seeing Dr. Sarah Stewart-Clark in the gallery earlier made me think about her being a co-founder of the Island Mothers Helping Mothers, and there are over 4,000 members in that group. How many of them work together and help other children and families throughout. I think all Islanders, and anybody helping out, even though they're not their own children, but to help provide and give and do what they can, I certainly think goes a long way.

Certainly an honour to rise today, Mr. Speaker, and I thank you.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

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

I welcome the statement from the minister, and of course we all deeply are appreciative of the work of all of the teachers and educators across this province – the early childhood educators, teachers, teaching assistants, and educational assistants.

I think we also all agree that children are beyond precious, and they're deserving of all of the love and kindness and every bit of support that we can give them in every area of their lives – again, whether we be parents, whether we be caregivers, whether we be teachers, whether we be people in the medical community who have to care for them when children, sadly, get sick.

For me, children also ground us in what is the soul – the central purpose of our lives, the ultimate meaning of our lives. I know that, for myself, I have learned so much through being a father of children and now am learning again as a grandfather. They give you a different perspective on life, they allow you to project beyond the lifetime that you yourself will live, and it's a tremendous opportunity for learning

And indeed, I concur with what my hon. friend over there said about the importance of looking after our children, caring for them, and making sure that they have the best opportunities they possibly can in order to become the best citizens they can possibly be.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Next ministerial statement, the hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

International Trans Day of Remembrance

Mr. Mitchell: Mr. Speaker today is the International Transgender Day of Remembrance. A day that honors the memory of those trans, two-spirit, non-binary, and gender diverse people who lost their lives to transphobic or anti-transgender violence.

We all were able to see names and pictures of those out in front of the Legislature today that we will be remembering today.

I want to recognize some of our guests in the gallery today. Today we have joining us from PEERS Alliance and the PEI Transgender Network: Nola Etkin (Board Chair for PEERS Alliance); Brittany A. E. Jakubiec; Daniel Boudreau; Rebekah Condon; Rory Starkman; Hannah Geherls; Irshaad Bijan Adatia; Mary Clements and Kristen McKay. Welcome.

Thank you all for being here today and for the work you do with our transgender community across PEI.

Today we remember and mourn all the transgender individuals who have been victims of homicide.

We restore dignity to those who have suffered extreme and humiliating violence, and we become more aware of the stigma and abuse faced by many people because of their gender identity.

Sadly, this violence is happening here in Canada. Just this year the Canadian Trans Youth Health Survey, which included respondents from all 10 provinces, found that more than a third of teenage participants had been physically threatened or injured this past year.

While we acknowledge that violence happens for many unjust reasons, today we honour the lives of those who were victims of violence because of their gender identity and gender expression.

This past year on PEI, we have made great strides in transgender health care. We provide supports through counselling, psychotherapy and hormone therapy. We also enhanced access to gender-confirming services and expanded the scope of surgeries which are now covered by Medicare for Island residents. We are currently establishing the policy and care pathways to support these surgeries and we are also working with experts in Montréal, where many of these surgeries are performed.

We are collaborating with partners to ensure local clinicians have the appropriate training to support the transgender community, and we continue to have meaningful conversations with PEERS Alliance and the PEI Transgender Network to discuss how we may provide further supports.

We know that there are many diverse people living across our province.

Our government recognizes what this day means, and we will continue to work towards creating a policy that elevates equality and human rights.

As individuals, we need to have open minds and open hearts, showing not merely tolerance, but acceptance to all of our neighbors and our fellow Islanders.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid.

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'd like to thank the minister for the statement, and welcome to all those representing the cause here today.

I, too, like many of the MLAs here today was able to reflect on the lives lost by the display that was out front today and we appreciate that. You know, the signs outside are a moving reminder about the atrocities that have been committed to those that identify as transgender.

Education is key and small efforts do work. I want to give you a little example and it has to do with non-binary identification. The Morell and Area Development Corporation did a community survey last spring and we presented the results this fall. When we were coming up with the survey, trying to – we wanted to get a view on our demographics in our area as well, and someone brought up the idea; well we should have male, female, and perhaps non-binary.

There was a good – not a debate, a discussion around the table of exactly what that meant. It was good, because there was people in our group that did not know what that meant. In the back of my mind I knew there might be somebody that might appreciate that.

Sure enough, when the results came back in we had a wonderful – 225 people filled it out, and there was one non-binary. I'd like to think that the person that filled that out had a smile and really appreciated that.

It's those little things – it's the education that matters one by one, and I think we can all do our part.

I applaud all of your efforts, and I'll continue to help raise awareness as well.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

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

The International Transgender Day of Remembrance is indeed a call to mourn those that we have lost in that community. I believe it's also a call to action for us here in this House.

Our province's *Human Rights Act* recognizes that a fundamental principle is that all persons are equal in dignity and human rights regardless of their gender expressions or their gender identity.

We have not always been leaders here on Prince Edward Island. There have been reports of a lack of family doctors who have knowledge and comfort around working with trans people and trans bodies. We were the last province to cover gender affirming surgery, and though I'm very happy and I note that the minister made mention of that in his statement, very happy that the government now covers this. We can't forget that we were the last province to move to that place.

Trans people, of course, have been around forever – for as long as there have been humans walking on this earth. We've often done a really bad job of recognizing them. As the minister said, again, I appreciate the distinction between tolerating and accepting.

Everybody should feel comfortable and they should feel safe being themselves. That's an absolutely critical part of being human, but the world can be a hostile place. Canada can be a hostile place.

Just last weekend there was, I believe, justified outrage after a major political party in Ontario passed a resolution at their party's convention which referred to gender identity theory as, and I quote here: a highly controversial, unscientific – in quotations – liberal ideology. And it called for its removal from the Ontario curriculum.

So there are still challenges, there are still people who are trying to pull us backwards when we have to move forwards. There are, of course, areas for hope and more inclusivity and a more accepting society.

Many provinces have now banned – have brought legislation forward banning conversion therapy. Conversion therapy, as I mentioned in my opening remarks, is a practice of trying to change an individual's sexual orientation using psychological or spiritual interventions. Again, later today if time permits, I'll be bringing forward a motion to encourage our province to adopt – consider adopting such legislation for a ban here on Prince Edward Island.

I particularly want to thank Daniel Boudreau who's with us today for first of all, bringing this issue to my attention, and really encouraged me to bring this forward as an issue in this House.

Thank you, Daniel, for your tireless efforts to push me forward and prod me forward to do this. There are, of course, ways in this – that we can do things in this House to make our society safer and more welcoming for everybody, everybody in our community.

I thank the minister for his supportive statement.

I also welcome everybody from the LGBTQ community who is with us here today.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The Minister of Economic Development and Tourism.

Record Season for Tourism

Mr. Palmer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Numbers released today by Tourism PEI show that 2018 will very likely be our fifth straight record season in terms of total visitation.

Our projections estimate close to 1.58 million visitors spending approximately \$486 million.

The Confederation Bridge is on a record pace. We set a record for cruise ship visitation with 81 ships carrying just over 140,000 passengers and crew.

Long standing events like Fall Flavours, and the International Shellfish Festival saw record crowds, while new events, like Lobster Fest sold out completely in only its second year. And despite a small drop in

overnight stays, it appears likely that we will once again surpass one million overnight stays, just as we did for the first time, last year.

We have staff monitoring and examining the disparity between the projected increases in visitation versus the small decrease we are seeing in total overnight stays. Smaller party size and shorter length of stay are two possible reasons. It's also quite possible the record cruise ship season and the visitors it brought to our shores, helped increase our visitation numbers without a corresponding increase in overnight stays.

Regardless, it's been another successful and in credit for all of this success belongs to the industry. Simply put, we wouldn't be where we are today without hard work, quality service, and world-famous hospitality shown by tourism operators across this province.

Our province's natural beauty is a huge draw, but without operators, we wouldn't have the quality attractions, accommodations, authentic experiences that make our province unique among destinations.

My sincere thanks to all operators, big and small, for all you do to make tourism one of the biggest economic drivers.

Thank you.

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

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Certainly, the success of our tourism industry does belong to the industry, as the minister said, which makes me wonder why he bothers to get up week after week and make announcements about nothing, basically –

Mr. LaVie: Fake news.

Mr. Myers: – he didn't have anything to do with it. We know that the overnight stays are down. I'm hearing it right across the board from people who own those types of operations that overnight stays are way down.

You know what – I know that the labour shortage has put a particular pinch on that industry. There are lots of restaurants that weren't able to stay open for a full slate of hours because they didn't have the kitchen staff, they didn't have the wait staff; this also affected some of the hotels who didn't have the proper amount of staff to keep their kitchens open, to keep their operations running at full-speed.

Certainly, the call is out there for government to rectify this problem. There is a skill shortage. And you guys knew it was coming, because you've known for years that our demographic is aging and we knew for years that this was going to be an issue. Now it's upon us.

We want to continue to have the Island hospitality that we've come to base our entire industry off of; we have to make sure that there is enough skilled labour there to do the jobs that are required inside that industry. I think it's very important.

I think you're going to hear more and more people talk about the skill shortage here, particularly from the business community over the next couple of years, if something doesn't happen to rectify it. We are not Alberta, we can't offer Alberta wages, but something has to happen here on Prince Edward Island to help the wages come up to a point that fewer people would choose Alberta as a destination, versus staying home here on Prince Edward Island – where they're from, where their family is, or in some cases where their immediately family is – their children or spouse.

I encourage government, if we're going to continue to have the type of numbers showing up here year after year in tourism that something is going to have to be done to ensure that our (Indistinct) remains the best as it has been in, at least Atlantic Canada, for a number of years.

Just on a final note, I know that there is a lot of competition in the accommodations industry now, it's been talked about – and the minister perhaps didn't want to talk about it in his statement, but he eluded to it – maybe there's overnight stays that you're not able to calculate into your numbers, and maybe the overnight stays do equal what they did an any other year, they're just not

happening in traditional sources. Personally, I don't think is a bad thing, but at the same time, we have to make sure there is some kind of regulation in there so that we know what is kind of happening on that front.

With that, Mr. Speaker, as we know, tourism on Prince Edward Island is a premier product, we have a premier destination in all of Canada, and it's no surprise that people want to be here.

Thank you.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Parkdale.

Ms. Bell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

These numbers are indeed, great, and I'd like to commend the industry and those who work in and for the industry for their success in providing this massive economic impact to our province and our communities. I think we need to recognize that tourism is not only the tourism providers, but the inherent reason why people come to PEI. It's our culture, it's our creativity, and creative industries – it's the place itself. We need to value and invest in the reasons why people come – what is it that they want to see? What do they want to do when they're here? And those are not only signature events, those are also things like our trails, the beauty of our province, the clean water, the beaches, and the experiences they have when they're here, in terms of music and art, as well as food.

It would be really great to see that as we have this massive impact and economic impact to the province and the provincial funds available, that we also match that increase with an increased expenditure into marketing and support for tourism, and for support for those industries that make this tourist industry a success. Not just for the tourism operators, but for those who actually provide the experience themselves. We're hearing regularly from the industry that they really need more support and this would be a great time to think about from an operational perspective, given that we can show that the successes are coming through on a financial basis.

Congratulations to all of those in the industry for this continued success; we look forward to future success stories.

Thank you.

Presenting and Receiving Petitions

Tabling of Documents

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

Ms. Biggar: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'd like to table November 17th, *The Guardian* article, where the Member from Charlottetown-Parkdale referenced the lack of investments in wind energy.

I'd also like to table the Hansard from November 13th, where speaking myself to a motion, I refer that the PEI Energy Corp. are in fact, investing in 30 mega-watts more of wind energy.

Since the Member from Charlottetown-Parkdale doesn't maybe realize that the wind farms are financed through the energy corp. and likes to make reference to reading material, I would also like to table, for her reference for reading material, the Provincial Energy Strategy 2016/17, that was tabled and offer to give her some lessons on the capital budget.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Do you have a seconder for that?

Ms. Biggar: Seconded by the Minister of Economic Development and Tourism.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Mr. LaVie: Minister of (Indistinct)

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

Mr. Myers: Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, by leave of the House, I beg leave to table the 'Page not found' reference that I made in Question Period today, and I

move, seconded by the Honourable Member from Morell-Mermaid, that the said document be now received and do lie on the Table.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Mr. Roach: That tells the whole thing.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Parkdale.

Ms. Bell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

By leave of the House, I beg leave to table the Office of the Third Party Innovation PEI proposed amendments briefing document with all references and research documents, as well as Canada's economic strategy table report on clean technology for reference regarding our innovation act amendments, and I move, seconded by the Honourable Leader of the Third Party, that the said document be now received and do lie on the Table.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Ms. Bell: Thank you and one more, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Parkdale.

Ms. Bell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

By leave of the House, I beg leave to table a Social Action Plan to Reduce Poverty from the Prince Edward Island government dated May 2012, in reference to the current poverty action plan being the first poverty action plan and I move, seconded by the Honourable Leader of the Third Party, that the said document be now received and do lie on the Table.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Any reports by committees?

Introduction of Government Bills

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. MacDonald: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce a bill to be intituled *Appropriation Act (Capital Expenditures) 2019* and I move, seconded by the

Honourable Minister of Health and Wellness, that the same be now received and read a first time.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk: *Appropriation Act (Capital Expenditures) 2019*, Bill No. 49, read a first time.

Speaker: Hon. minister, what's this about anyway?

Mr. MacDonald: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The *Appropriation Act (Capital Expenditures) 2019* is the legislation accompanying the budgetary plan I put forward last Friday, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Okay, thank you.

Government Motions

Orders of the Day (Government)

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

Mr. Gallant: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. Member from Charlottetown-Lewis Point, that the 12th order of the day be now read.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk: Order No. 12, *An Act to Amend the Unsightly Property Act*, Bill No. 30, in committee.

Mr. LaVie: Pass the bill.

Mr. Gallant: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I move, seconded by the Honourable Member from Charlottetown-Lewis Point, 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 Vernon River-Stratford, to Chair this bill.

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 Unsightly Property Act*.

We were in the middle of discussing this bill when we closed last time.

Would you like to bring a –

Mr. R. Brown: Yes.

Chair: – stranger on?

Mr. R. Brown: Barry back to the floor.

Chair: Would you like to reintroduce yourself to the group, please, and your title?

Thank you.

Barry Jackson: Barry Jackson, Environmental and Regulatory Coordinator for the Department of Communities, Land and Environment.

Chair: Okay, thank you very much.

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

Chair: Are you going to make an opening comment, minister?

Mr. R. Brown: Yes.

There were great questions there and great discussion there and the last time we were to the table and a lot of good comments, and a lot of good discussion came about.

We did draft up a – I'll table a draft-up procedure for filing complaints and how an individual would go about it and I'll pass that around for all members of the Legislature, but I'll table it first.

I want to say, again, I want to thank each and every member for their comments. We've written them down and we're taking due diligence on them.

But, again, to emphasize it, this bill will allow us to collect the money that we pay to clean up properties and hopefully that money will go back into a fund that will then be used to clean up other properties and continuously to grow – because again, like we said there the other day, each and every member in this House – it's important that we have Prince Edward Island as good as we

can because it helps tourism, but it also helps each and every community.

I remember in the early '70s when Gilbert Clements banned all the advertising signs around Prince Edward Island; the 4x8s that were basically visual pollution. I think the banning of those signs was one of the best things the province has done in terms of tourism and in terms of each and every community, because now we have a consistent road signage system across Prince Edward Island.

But, let's get onto further discussion because it's a great discussion.

Mr. LaVie: Sure.

Chair: And you have tabled that?

Mr. R. Brown: Yes, sir.

Chair: Tabled and circulated, great.

We have a question from the hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque.

Mr. MacKay: Thank you, Chair.

Minister, I got a question. So, I guess to my knowledge that I know of, there are two houses that I've had calls on in the past three years in my district of unsightly properties that I was told basically, I think as I remember, they have a year to clean them up and so forth.,

Anyways, since then, nothing has been done over these couple of years and one of those properties, which I haven't been by lately so unless it's been rectified, there's a metal roof that's blowing off the building itself.

My question is: Now that it's been in limbo for two years, the call has come into your department to do something about it, if somebody – because where this is at, it's a busy area and there's quite a bit of people walk by it – if the roof was to come off and actually blow off and hit somebody, whose responsibility is it at that point?

Chair: Mr. Jackson?

Mr. MacKay: The reason I ask that is its near happened.

Mr. R. Brown: Good point.

Chair: Mr. Jackson?

Barry Jackson: Without knowing the specifics of the property that you're speaking of, I would not know for sure whether or not an inspection has been conducted and what the inspectors report said as to the condition of the property.

It is possible at the time of inspection that the property wasn't in a state of qualifying for the act in terms of its condition. But I think my opinion with that issue would be a legal issue between the owner of the property that they would be responsible if something blew off and whether it was the Rails to Trails or something like that, that caused the injury to someone else.

I'm not a lawyer so I can't 100% speak to that, but if there is a case that we've been involved with and done an inspection on, I just need to know the property number, the civic number, and see what status it is as to whether or not an inspection has been completed and what that inspector found.

Chair: The hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque.

Mr. MacKay: Thank you, Chair.

Just my final question, I guess.

Obviously, when the call went in – I do believe it was inspected and nothing – I know the department works hard and whatever, but I'm sure their hands are tied of what can actually happen and the process, right?

So what takes place from when they go out and inspect it and they do say yes, this needs to be corrected and all of a sudden they send a letter out to the property owner and the property owner just basically says: I have no money to do anything. He can't fix it.

What happens from there?

Chair: Mr. Jackson.

Barry Jackson: We can either issue an order and go that route and I guess we have to weigh the options of the severity of the

complaint. Some of this is explained on the sheet that we passed around.

Given the volume of complaints that we have, we have to sort of weigh the severity and whether or not that's something that the department going to walk in with an order and pay to clean up. You know there have been cases in the past – I kind of say more cases of compassion where somebody has identified: look I realize this is a problem, but the house is half-burnt and I have no insurance. The department is getting complaints from a community. We will go in with that order and clean up the property.

Without knowing on a specific case, we just balance that with other priorities – how severe is that case or is that property compared to other ones on our list. Is this a property that's highly visible to the public and we're getting multiple complaints on it.

The time isn't just always step one, two, three, and it's done in six weeks. Because of, I was mentioning last time, of budgetary constraints, other priorities. We kind of float the higher visible ones with multiple cases, like you say, a large structure or something like that, up the list. Eventually, these smaller ones do come around again.

I think I identified there about 80 complaints a year. Not all of those are 80 unsightly properties. That list say filters down to say 30 that meet the criteria, and from that 30, there's sort of a sorting of which ones we're actually going to tackle further action on.

Mr. MacKay: Okay, perfect.

Thank you very much.

Chair: We have a question from West Royalty-Springvale.

Mr. Dumville: Thank you, Chair.

Minister, you referenced the legacy of Gilbert Clements and we all owe Gilbert Clements. He was a man way ahead of his time in terms of crushing automobiles and cleaning up our countryside.

You know, sometimes when we travel through a neighbouring province, and you come back to this province and you look –

you can't figure out: well why does this place look so nice? The fact that it looks so nice is something that kind of sometimes eludes us of the fact – hey, it's not overpopulated with signs.

Minister, has any steps been taken – like sometimes trailer signage, movable signs like on trailers are parked in fields and they try to circumvent our signage policy. Have you taken any steps to try and shore that up? The signage that we all – the non-signage that we have that doesn't kind of enlarge this trailer type stuff?

Chair: Mr. Minister.

Mr. R. Brown: Yeah, it's an issue and that's why we're reviewing the *Planning Act* as we're doing right now. One of those – that issue will be resolved there.

I notice a lot more tractor trailers are being parked in fields and being used as the signage. I personally think it's a sign, and it should be asked to be removed.

Mr. Dumville: Thank you, minister.

Chair: A comment from the Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you.

It's interesting that the Member from West Royalty-Springvale should bring that up.

Earlier this year there was a trailer parked out on – I guess it was the Trans-Canada heading out towards – out past Vernon River. You would have seen it hon. member, quite often. I actually had one of my own constituents in Stratford contact me about it, and I contacted the department of tourism and it was dealt with, within, I think a matter of three days. It was contravening – It wasn't unsightly, but it was contravening the signage law.

Mr. R. Brown: Thanks. No, that's good.

Chair: Any other questions? Comments?

Mr. LaVie: Pass the bill.

Chair: Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Just with regards to unsightly property – So occasionally I get calls from people with regards to government buildings themselves. There was one back a few years ago, there was actually files – medical files being stored in it in behind the Hillsborough Hospital and it was out of sight, out of mind, but there was certainly issues around it.

There's the Prince Edward Home, I know the education minister has brought up that issue several times. What's going to happen with that building?

The longer these government buildings sit empty – the graffiti starts to show up on them, windows are broken. There was a high school in Summerside as well that is still there, and as far I'm concerned, every time I drive by the property I think it's an unsightly property. I think it's been sold to a developer now, but it still sits there but it was in government's control for quite a few years.

Is there a timeframe that government itself has to deal with their own properties when they're finished with them?

Chair: Minister.

Mr. R. Brown: Thanks, thanks very much.

The old Prince Edward Home, as you brought up earlier, there is an allocation – there is a budget allocated for the demolition of that property. I must say that the department of transportation is doing a good job. They're working on preparing some tenders for it now. There is a lot of mitigation that has to be done before anyone tears down the building. So the Premier has set aside money for the demolition of that building, and we're looking into it right now as we speak.

Chair: Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: So, looking into it?

Mr. R. Brown: Yeah, the tenders are being issued. You know, there's asbestos in it and other things. They're lining up a set of tenders to be issued pretty soon within the next year – within this New Year.

Chair: Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Chair.

So, it's not something that's going take another three or four years to take care of. It should be addressed within the next year.

Mr. R. Brown: No, I want to say, yeah, the minister of education has been on this file and he's been working hard on it. There is a budget allocation for the demolition of that property and we're working on getting it done.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Chair.

Chair: Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Chair.

I'm just looking at the unsightly property complaint process handout – thank you for that.

I was just wondering if the inspector deems that the act is not contravened with, then how are the people in the area of the unsightly property notified – or the people that complained?

Chair: Mr. Jackson.

Barry Jackson: That was the one thing I didn't put in there – that's kind of a circle back loop. They are notified.

Often times these complaints do come in, they'll just drop us a civic number or a property number to look at. But if they have identified themselves and they want a callback once an inspection is done, the inspectors will call them, email them or whatever and notify of them of the findings. I mean, to the inspector it's important that that's – they realize what the inspection determined and what things they look for in the act.

I was mentioning last week that there's often times where there are conditions of a property that, you know, there's an untidiness to it. The grass is unkempt, the house is only half painted or things like that. Those don't really qualify under the *Unsightly Property Act*.

So somebody might have that perception or that opinion of a property that they're complaining of, to them it's unsightly. But the inspector will look at and determine those more minor things aren't covered by the act. So they'll relay that information to the complainant. It's typically a follow-up call to the people to let them know the results of the inspection.

Chair: Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you for that.

I do recognize how complex some of these situations can get. For example, I know I have one property in my district where I think really the person doesn't want to comply with requests from the department, but if they were evicted they'd be homeless kind of thing. So, it's a tight, tight, tight rope you have to walk.

I think it's important that people in the area really understand why it is – if there's no action taken, why that is so they can fully appreciate all the factors that come into it.

I guess my next question was: if action isn't taken, is there a way they can sort of appeal the decision or is it sort of look at it –

Barry Jackson: For a complainant.

Mr. Trivers: Yes, for a complainant. Like say you complain and you feel it's an unsightly property. For example, the one case I'm thinking of vermin are coming across the highway onto other people's property this sort of thing. They say well you know we can't do it because –

Barry Jackson: Yeah, we'll – good example there of vermin because I think in your area there has been some properties where we've done joint inspections because there's – people may throw in vermin as an issue and rats and things like that about a property.

We do joint inspections with environmental health officers and there could be actually things on the way the person is, say storing bulk vegetables or storing their own compost or types of fishing gear, things like that that are on the property that are not in contravention of the *Unsightly Property Act*, but the environmental health officer then has

some grounds. That they've gone in and seen, rat nests or rat burdens – I forget what the exact term is – but things like that on the property. They then have some powers under their legislation to direct clean-up orders, as well.

So there has been cases where properties don't meet our criteria for the *Unsightly Property Act* but there has been action that's been pushed from environmental health officers. We have done joint inspections as well.

Chair: Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: So it's no surprise that often complainants will turn to their MLA for help, right?

Do you recommend that as the MLA that you just work directly with the inspectors to understand the process and to advocate, both for the complainant or the person who owns the unsightly property? Or, is it something that you should stay out of which would be to escalate to the minister?

What would you recommend it be dealt with?

Mr. R. Brown: It's been a great discussion we've had in the Legislature over this piece of legislation because there is a lot of reluctance sometimes to pursue the legislation because of economic times or (Indistinct). But I think we've got a clear message from the House, from each and every member in here, that they want this issue escalated a bit further in order to make sure that some of these properties are cleaned up in a timely manner.

I think if you want to work directly with the inspectors as an MLA, I see no problem with that because the MLA is mediating between the two of you and that's a part of your job.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you.

Chair: Any other questions or comments on the bill?

Some Hon. Members: Carry the bill.

Mr. R. Brown: I move the title.

Chair: *An Act to Amend the Unsightly Property Act.*

Mr. R. 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. R. 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.

Mr. McIsaac: Mr. Speaker, as Chair of a Committee of the Whole House, having had under consideration a bill to be intituled *An Act to Amend the Unsightly Property 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: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. Member from Tignish-Palmer Road, that the 10th order of the day be now read.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk Assistant (Doiron): Order No. 10, *An Act to Amend the Securities Act* Bill No. 47 in committee.

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

Mr. Gallant: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. 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 once again ask the hon. member from Vernon River-Stratford to come and continue with chairing of this bill.

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 Securities Act*.

We are part way through this, we have read – we were asked to read clause by clause. We have read section 1 and there were questions on that at which time we adjourned.

We shall carry on from there. Would you like to take a stranger on?

Mr. J. Brown: I would Chair, if I could.

Chair: Okay to bring a stranger to the floor?

An Hon. Member: Granted.

Chair: Thank you.

Can you identify yourself and your title please?

Curtis Toombs: Curtis Toombs, Solicitor in the Consumer Corporate Financial Services Division, Department of Justice and Public Safety.

Chair: Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you, Chair.

Since we last met we've had a briefing from Curtis in our office and I know I requested it clause by clause last time. I no longer require that.

Thank you.

Chair: Great. Are there any other questions on this bill?

Carry the bill? Carried.

Mr. LaVie: Work, work, work.

Mr. J. Brown: Mr. Chair I move the title.

Chair: *An Act to Amend the Securities Act*.

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 that the Chair report the bill agreed to without amendment.

Chair: Shall it carry? Carried.

Mr. Speaker, as Chair of a Committee of the Whole House, having had under consideration a bill to be intitled *An Act to Amend the Securities 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 Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Mitchell: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries, that the 11th order of the day be now read.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk Assistant: Order No. 11, *An Act to Amend the Regulated Health Professions Act (No. 2)*, Bill No. 48, ordered for second reading.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Mitchell: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries, that the said bill be now read a second time.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

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

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Mitchell: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries, 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.

Now I'll ask the hon. Member from Charlottetown-Lewis Point if you would please come and Chair this bill.

Chair (Casey): The House is now in a Committee of the Whole House to take into consideration a bill to be intitled *Act to Amend the Regulated Health Professions Act (No. 2)*. Is it the pleasure of the committee that the bill be now read clause by clause?

Some Hon. Members: No.

Chair: Thank you.

Permission to bring a stranger to the floor?

An Hon. Member: Granted.

Mr. LaVie: We'll get some answers (Indistinct)

Mr. Mitchell: I'm going to bring some assistance to the floor.

Chair: We'll allow her to come in and be introduced.

Ms. Compton: The brains of the operation.

Mr. Mitchell: She's the brains, yeah.

Mr. LaVie: (Indistinct) take some lessons from her.

Mr. Mitchell: I'm trying.

Chair: Good afternoon.

Could you introduce yourself and your title for the record.

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

Chair: Welcome to the table.

Minister do you have an opening statement?

Mr. Mitchell: Yeah, I'd like to make a couple of comments in regards to the act. First of all, hon. members, as health professions continue to transition to this new regulation under the act some technical issues have arisen that do require some amendments.

The purpose of the bill is threefold, actually, and it will correct two cross-referencing errors in the transitions section of this act. It'll clarify how a hearing committee is to be appointed for the purposes of the transition sections and thirdly, it will allow a council of colleges to appoint a leader of public representative appointed by LGIC, or a member of the public to a discipline committee.

Consultations have already taken place with the current and pending college, so we've received unanimous support for these amendments.

Any other questions?

Chair: That's my job.

Mr. Mitchell: Oh, sorry.

Some Hon. Members: [Laughter]

Mr. LaVie: Nice try, minister.

Chair: The hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid.

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you, Chair.

Minister, when you said that they were – I forget how you just said it – but they were all in agreement with the changes. Who is they? Who are we talking about?

Mr. Mitchell: I'll let –

Nichola Hewitt: The college of pharmacy, the college of register nurses, the college of licensed practical nurses, the college of dietitians, the college of occupational therapists – in addition, I discussed it with a current college of physicians and surgeons who is not underneath the regulated health. The support was unanimous.

In fact, this was brought forward at the request of the college of registered nurses, some of these changes.

Chair: The hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid.

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you, Chair.

Just before I forget – can you explain again, why we still don't have the medical doctors as part of this health professions act?

Nichola Hewitt: We're working on it right now. My next meeting scheduled with the college on the 13th of December at 1:30.

Chair: The hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid.

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you, Chair.

It's good to see (Indistinct)

That's good, thank you.

Mr. Mitchell: We had an opportunity to actually go to the colleges AGM within the last two weeks and have some good conversation; as a result, you know, we're face to face doing some of those changes from that meeting as well.

Mr. MacEwen: I'd actually like to ask one more, Chair.

Chair: The hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid.

Mr. MacEwen: When do we expect – or do we expect the medical physicians, the medical doctors to be included in the health professionals act in the near future?

Mr. Mitchell: Yeah.

Nichola Hewitt: Absolutely.

Mr. MacEwen: Okay.

Thank you.

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Thanks, Chair.

My question is about engineering technologists, as well as counseling therapists; I wanted to know if they have applied to be covered under the *Regulated Health Professions Act (No. 2)*?

Nichola Hewitt: I'm not sure who you mean by engineering technologists. Can you –

Mr. Trivers: For example, they act in some other provinces like in Nova Scotia –

Nichola Hewitt: What do they do though?

Mr. Trivers: – it allows them to be –

Mr. Mitchell: Under the health umbrella?

Mr. Trivers: Well, it's a little confusing to me, actually. But I think it could relate to their ability to be employed by the government to do things within the health field, and the same thing with counseling therapist.

Mr. Mitchell: So there are two acts, right? There's the registered health professionals and then there are the regulated health professionals, right?

Mr. Trivers: Okay.

Mr. Mitchell: So, you know, some of what you're suggesting, I would say would fall under the registered – they are a smaller group, smaller bodies, and don't regulate themselves.

Nichola Hewitt: Well, when you talk about engineers, I'm wondering – and I'm not trying to put words in your mouth – but absent of definition, I'm wondering if that includes x-ray technicians, lab technicians, and respiratory technicians. And if that's the case, yes, they have applied and yes we're working towards regulating them under regulated health.

Mr. Trivers: Okay.

Nichola Hewitt: And yes, we've had an application from counseling therapists and they're on the list. So what we've been doing is, as applications came in, we've just added them to a list. And we're just taking them as they come in and dealing with them.

Mr. Trivers: Well, thank you. Oh good –

Mr. Mitchell: My question, if you have a specific jurisdiction that you looked at, we could cross reference to say: that's exactly what that term means in that area, and give you that answer, if you like.

Nichola Hewitt: Yeah.

Mr. Trivers: Well, thank you –

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Chair.

That's exactly what I wanted to find out, if you've been working with those groups. And it sounds like you are, so that's what I wanted to know.

Of course, you said you have the big list. Do you have any timelines as to when those might be incorporated?

Nichola Hewitt: What I've always said to the applicants is from the time we receive your application, we expect it's probably two years until you're up and running. We've stayed pretty true to that. I mean, this year we've done occupational therapists, dietitians, LNPs, nurses, we're updating the pharmacy regulations, I'm working with optometry, working with the docs – so there is a lot.

Mr. Mitchell: We'd like to let Nichola will have at least one week off a year.

Some Hon. Members: [Laughter]

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: So, for counseling therapists – how long have they had their request in?

Nichola Hewitt: I don't remember off the top of my head. I don't know where it is on the list.

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you.

I'm thinking it must have been a couple of years ago, based on my correspondence. But – so they should be very close to being done.

Nichola Hewitt: It could be getting close, yeah.

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Okay. That's good for me.

Chair: Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you.

So as I read the bill, it's to do with restrictions on the number of committees that certain people can sit on. So, what was the rationale for that? Why bring this forward?

Nichola Hewitt: That was my mistake. When we originally drafted the bill, we limited public representatives to sitting on just one committee, and that wasn't appropriate, because you may want somebody on a membership committee, you may want them on a discipline committee. So it was unduly restricting the participation in college affairs by public representatives. So, we've undone that restriction.

Chair: Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: It's refreshing to hear somebody makes a mistake in this House, thanks.

Nichola Hewitt: I can admit to a couple of others, if you'd like in here.

Some Hon. Members: [Laughter]

Mr. Mitchell: I'll admit to mine, too.

Nichola Hewitt: They're just numbers – they're cross referencing errors, in terms of numbers, but –

Dr. Bevan-Baker: So can you give us some examples of the responsibilities that these committees would have within a college?

Nichola Hewitt: It would vary from college to college because the colleges have the ability to set up various subcommittees within a college, so depending on the profession, they may have a need for more committees than some. Some colleges will have the need for more committees because the profession may be more complex, so you may have – well, we've got, for example, we've got disciplinary committees and hearing committees; that kind of ties in nicely with the real thrust of this amendment.

You could sit in on an investigation committee for Mrs. Jones, but on a hearing

committee for Mr. Smith; with that restriction, you couldn't do both. What we had found was the college of nurses brought this issue to the forefront. Both the investigation committees and the hearing committees required one public representative to sit on these committees; 1,600 plus members in their college and only four public representatives – you can appreciate the burden.

What we've done here is said: there will be either one public representative or a member of the public who has not practiced a health profession, which will sit on those committees.

Chair: Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thanks, Chair.

And I see that by the definitions here, one of those that you just described is appointed by LGIC.

Nichola Hewitt: Yes.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Can you explain the difference between the member of the public and a public –

Nichola Hewitt: Yeah, sure.

So the council of a college is comprised of a minimum of six persons, one third are public reps appointed by LGIC through the Engage PEI process, the other two-thirds are nominated from the membership according to the bylaws.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Yeah.

Nichola Hewitt: So, if we've got – say the nurses have got 12 discipline issues – if it was only public representatives because that term is defined in the act as somebody appointed by LGIC, the workload on those individuals would be prohibitive and just overwhelming. Well, they just couldn't do it, simply.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Yeah.

Nichola Hewitt: So what we've done, and we've looked at other jurisdictions and what they will say is either – there would be a public representative as defined in the act appointed by Cabinet, or a member of the

public who has not practiced a health profession. Because what you want is somebody who represents the public interest sitting on these committees, somebody that is impartial.

So we came up with this as a way out of what was quickly becoming a real problem for the college of registered nurses.

Chair: Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thanks.

So that second category, the member of the public who has not practiced a health profession, would they also be appointed by LGIC or – so how would that person or those persons be chosen?

Nichola Hewitt: It says right here: a council shall appoint an investigation committee composed of three persons, including at least one member of the college and at least one of either a public rep, or a member of the public who has not practiced a health profession.

And again, that's consistent with what they do in the other provinces.

Chair: Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: So, just so I'm clear – that would be chosen by the college themselves?

Nichola Hewitt: That's correct.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Okay, great.

Nichola Hewitt: And the limitation we're putting on them is they'd not practiced any health profession. That's so important.

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

Chair: Hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: A comment Chair, to acknowledge the good work you're doing, Nichola, of course, as a neighbouring constituent, but notably a fine member of the public service. You're here helping us to make sure that the legislation that we have in place is able to do its job.

And one question that maybe the Chair would ask if she weren't in the chair, just by way of a for instance, because essentially the change that we're making today is to respond to what I mainly think of as the advantage of scale in Prince Edward Island so we have to try to find enough people to do all the jobs that are to go around.

Let's say we were to have more midwives than we currently have in PEI, would they fall under this legislation or the other?

Mr. Mitchell: No, they're under the registrations act.

Premier MacLauchlan: Okay, great.

I just wanted to make sure (Indistinct)

Thank you.

Chair: Thank you for that, Premier.

I appreciate it.

Shall the bill carry? Carried.

Mr. Mitchell: I move the title.

Chair: *An Act to Amend the Regulated Health Professions Act (No. 2).*

Shall it carry? Carried.

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

Chair: Shall it carry? Carried.

Mr. Speaker, as Chair of a Committee of the Whole House, having had under consideration a bill to be intitled *An Act to Amend the Regulated Health Professions Act (No. 2)*, I beg leave to report that the committee has gone through the said bill and has agreed to same without amendment. I

move that the report of the committee be adopted.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Mitchell: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. Minister of Finance, that the 16th order of the day be now read.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk Assistant: Order No. 16, *An Act to Repeal the Physiotherapy Act*, Bill No. 51, ordered for second reading.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Mitchell: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Finance, that the said bill be now read a second time.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk Assistant: *An Act to Repeal the Physiotherapy Act*, Bill No. 51, read a second time.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

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

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Lewis Point.

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

An Hon. Member: An overview, Chair.

Chair: Thank you.

Would you like to take somebody to the floor with you?

Mr. Mitchell: Well, I'll do my little talk there first and then see if they need – if I need her (Indistinct) call upon her.

Chair: Okay, minster you have the floor.

Mr. Mitchell: Hon. members, this bill is presented – it'll repeal the act in preparation for the transition of regulated health professional act from the physiotherapy act. So because we were able to get the previous bill passed, we will do a repeal so they can come in under the new act for physiotherapists.

Chair: Shall the bill carry? Carried.

Mr. Mitchell: I move the title.

Chair: *An Act to Repeal the Physiotherapy Act*.

Shall it carry? Carried.

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

Chair: Shall it carry? Carried.

Mr. Speaker, as Chair of a Committee of the Whole House, having had under consideration a bill to be intituled *An Act to Repeal the Physiotherapy 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 Health and Wellness.

Mr. Mitchell: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Finance, that the 17th order of the day now be read.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk Assistant: Order No. 17, *An Act to Repeal the Emergency Medical Technicians Act*, Bill No. 52, ordered for second reading.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Mitchell: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Finance, that the said bill be now read a second time.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk Assistant: *An Act to Repeal the Emergency Medical Technicians Act*, Bill No. 52, read a second time.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

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

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Member from Vernon River-Stratford.

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 Repeal the Emergency Medical Technicians Act*. Is it the pleasure of the committee that the bill be now read clause by clause?

An Hon. Member: Just an overview.

Chair: An overview?

Do you want to bring an expert on or not?

Mr. Mitchell: Well, it's –

Chair: Just an overview?

Mr. Mitchell: Yeah, I'll do an overview and then we can determine whether we need the extra brought on, but this is exactly the same as the previous bill.

It will repeal the act in preparation for the transition to the regulated health professional act and of course, this is for emergency medical technicians.

Chair: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Parkdale.

Ms. Bell: This is more of a procedural question, Chair.

Is there a reason why we can't do these – these aren't together as an omnibus bill? Do they have to be done separately when they're (Indistinct) –

Mr. Mitchell: I believe they are individual acts, they could have been done omnibus but the preferred method is not omnibus.

Ms. Bell: Okay.

Chair: Further questions?

Ms. Casey: Carry the bill.

Mr. Mitchell: I move the title.

Chair: *An Act to Repeal the Emergency Medical Technicians Act*.

Shall it carry? Carried.

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

Chair: Shall it carry? Carried.

Mr. Speaker, as Chair of a Committee of the Whole House, having had under consideration a bill to be intitled *An Act to Repeal the Emergency Medical Technicians 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 Health and Wellness.

Mr. Mitchell: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. Minister of Finance, that the 18th order of the day be now read.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk Assistant: Order No. 18, *An Act to Amend the Health Information Act*, Bill No. 56, ordered for second reading.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Mitchell: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Finance, that the said bill be now read a second time.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk Assistant: *An Act to Amend the Health Information Act*, Bill No. 56, read a second time.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

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

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

I will ask the hon. Member from Charlottetown-Lewis Point to come and Chair the bill.

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

We're going to have an overview.

Permission to bring a stranger to floor?

Some Hon. Members: Granted.

Chair: Thank you.

We'll allow her to come and get set up.

Good afternoon, could you introduce yourself and your title for the record.

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

Chair: Welcome to the table.

Minister, you have an opening statement?

Mr. Mitchell: Yeah, so hon. members the purpose of this bill, once again, is to correct several minor administrative amendments identified during the review process.

Once again, these amendments would include modification of definitions, clarification of the application of the act, and two additional substitute decision makers, and adding a 10 year record retention period. And, also deleting any incorrect references.

Chair: Shall the bill carry?

Some Hon. Members: Carried.

Sorry, Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: It surrounds section six, which is subsection 36(2) of the original act. Allows the custodian of a record text (Indistinct) – basically their own judgment about whether or not to notify the individual or the commissioner when a data breach occurs. Seems to me that allows an awful of discretion to the custodian.

I wondered what the rationale for that change is and who requested it?

Nichola Hewitt: The rationale for the change is the existing provision is inconsistent. So, the existing clause (2)(c) says: does not apply if the custodian reasonably believes that the theft, loss, disposition, disclosure or access will not lead to identification of the individual to whom the personal health information relates. By virtue of that being personal health information it would relate to an individual.

So all we've done is removed a redundant provision – nothing else has changed.

Chair: Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: No, I'm sorry. I'm just not grasping this properly, obviously.

Mr. Mitchell: If you had the old one, it would jump right out at you.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: I don't, unfortunately.
Nichola Hewitt: Okay, I have it here.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Can you take another run at that, Nichola, it's my fault.

Nichola Hewitt: Sure. No, no it's nobody's fault.

So, what we're saying is clause (1)(c) says: a custodian shall notify an individual of the loss of data, but it will not apply if the custodian believes that the theft, loss, or disposition, disclosure or access to that information will not have an adverse impact on the provision of health care or the benefits or anything else.

You know I mean there could be something that's been destroyed that's not going to have an adverse impact, because it's been destroyed and that would be reasonable in the circumstances.

Again, it's a reasonable test. Remember they always have to report it to the commissioner. Right?

Dr. Bevan-Baker: The breach? The loss?

Nichola Hewitt: Both. Well, the breach would be a loss.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Right, okay.

And is that sort of provision consistent with other jurisdictions, Nichola?

Nichola Hewitt: Again, that was my mistake in that I've put in something that shouldn't have been in there. It was just an oversight on my part.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: I'm good.

Thank you, Chair.

Chair: Shall the bill carry? Carried.

Mr. Mitchell: I move to title.

Chair: *An Act to Amend the Health Information Act.*

Shall it carry? Carried.

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

Chair: Shall it carry? Carried.

Mr. Speaker, as Chair of a Committee of the Whole House, having had under consideration a bill to be intitled *An Act to Amend the Health Information 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 Health and Wellness.

Mr. Mitchell: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. Minister of Finance, that the 14th order of the day be now read.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk Assistant: Order No. 14, *An Act to Repeal the Truck Operators' Remuneration Act*, Bill No. 53, ordered for second reading.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Mitchell: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Finance, that the said bill be now read a second time.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk Assistant: *An Act to Repeal the Truck Operators' Remuneration Act*, Bill No. 53, read a second time.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Mitchell: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Finance, that this House do now resolve

itself into a Committee of the Whole House to take into consideration the said bill.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

I'll ask the hon. Member from Vernon River-Stratford to come and Chair this bill.

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 Repeal the Truck Operators' Remuneration Act*. Is it the pleasure of the committee to read the bill clause by clause?

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Chair: It is Bill No. 53.

Would you like an overview?

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Please.

Chair: Minister, would you give us an overview, please?

Mr. J. Brown: Yeah, sure.

This bill repeals the *Truck Operators' Remuneration Act*, which was originally enacted in 1941 as a means to control wages and rates in the trucking sector during the Second World War.

The department has determined that the act is no longer relevant to the regulation of the trucking sector, and therefore proposes it should be repealed.

An Hon. Member: Carry the bill.

Chair: Any questions? Carry the bill? Good.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Chair: Question?

The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Chair, I just wonder if the minister could give us any idea of how much – or how recently – this bill would have been used to set or regulate truckers or truck operator's remuneration.

Mr. J. Brown: Well, Mr. Premier, Legislative Counsel office identified that regulations were made under the act in 1941,

but they were unable to identify any amendment or revocation of those regulations and they were effectively revoked in 1974, I think it was, by government and there was a regulations revision process at the time that they used to do that.

There are a few records associated with the operation of this regulatory regime and LCO has speculated that the regulations were still likely enforced in the 1951 statutes revision, so a long time ago, in short.

Chair: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: I'm supposing, Chair, that this would have been done in the time of regulating wartime prices and indeed our premier of the day, Thane Campbell, sat on or may even have chaired the national wartime prices board. It was an entirely different climate from the one that we were talking about earlier today in terms of the boom times that were in. This was more to ensure that the resources available to the country were going to the war effort; I think is likely what was the context in which this would have been enacted and likely why we haven't heard too much about it for a while.

Mr. J. Brown: Yeah, I'm going to give some insight.

Chair, for what it's worth, the act was enacted by the Legislative Assembly in 1941 to authorize regulations fixing standard or minimum rates of remuneration in the trucking sector, and the department has determined that the legislation was part of the national initiatives to control wages and pricing during the war, as I had mentioned.

The regulations provided for a minimum rate of remuneration for truck operators of four-cents-per-ton mile for the first 20 miles, and three-and-a-half-cents-per-ton mile after that. For trips of less than 10 miles, the parties could contract for an hourly rate of not less than \$2 per hour for a truck carrying six tons.

We do well to get those rates back, I guess, Mr. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Don't say too much.

Chair: Okay?

Mr. J. Brown: Road construction might go a little further if we had them around (Indistinct)

Premier MacLauchlan: There you go (Indistinct)

Chair: We have a question from the hon. Member from Borden-Kinkora.

Mr. Fox: Thank you, Chair.

Was there any analysis, given what the rates were back then, was there any analysis done to what their rates would be in 2018 dollars (Indistinct)

Mr. J. Brown: No. We did not do that analysis, hon. member.

Perhaps we should have but we did not and – I don't know. I don't know what would be entailed in doing that given the different kinds of vehicles that perhaps would have been in play at that point and the cost of fuel and all that kind of stuff, whether you could compare apples to apples, or whether we'd be looking at apples to pears or something different.

Chair: The hon. Member from Borden-Kinkora.

Mr. Fox: Can we have the department look at that and do an analysis of it?

Mr. J. Brown: Well, if you ask I'll see what information I can find.

Mr. Fox: Can we carry the bill?

Chair: We have another question.

The hon. Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy.

Ms. Biggar: Yeah, minister of transportation here.

Have you had any consultation or discussions about this with the truckers association?

Mr. R. Brown: I think Ronnie MacKinley passed this bill. You should go back to him.

Ms. Biggar: He probably was born then.

Mr. J. Brown: No, we have not, Mr. Chair.

The bill has been inoperative since at least 1974. We presume that they would not be in favour of it continuing on.

We did consult with Highway Safety and, basically, there was a confirmation through your department that, as you're likely aware, that it was not something that would be thought to be applicable in this day and age.

Chair: Okay, thank you.

Any other questions, comments?

Some Hon. Members: Carry the bill.

Chair: Okay.

Mr. J. Brown: Mr. Chair, I move the title.

Chair: *An Act to Repeal the Truck Operators' Remuneration 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.

Ms. Biggar: Carried. Third reading.

Chair: Mr. Speaker, as Chair of a Committee of the Whole House, having had under consideration a bill to be intitled *An Act to Repeal the Truck Operators' Remuneration 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: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. Member from Charlottetown-Lewis Point, that the 15th order of the day be now read.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk Assistant: Order No. 15, *An Act to Repeal the Uniformity Commissioners Act*, Bill No. 54, ordered for second reading.

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

Mr. Gallant: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Member from Charlottetown-Lewis Point, that the said bill be now read a second time.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk Assistant: *An Act to Repeal the Uniformity Commissioners Act*, Bill No. 54, read a second time.

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

Mr. Gallant: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Member from Charlottetown-Lewis Point, 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.

Chair (Casey): The House is now in a Committee of the Whole House to take into consideration a bill to be intitled *An Act to Repeal the Uniformity Commissioners Act*. Is it the pleasure of the committee that the bill be now read clause by clause?

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

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct)

Chair: Minister, would you care to give an overview of this bill?

Mr. J. Brown: Sure, Madam Chair. This bill repeals the *Uniformity Commissioners Act* which was originally enacted in 1918 to appoint commissioners to attend meetings of what is known as the Uniform Law Commission of Canada.

The department has determined that the act is no longer required in the context of the commission's current constitution. Therefore it proposes that it should be repealed.

Ms. Biggar: (Indistinct) a bit more about that (Indistinct)

Mr. J. Brown: Sure.

Chair: Hon. members, I'm having a hard time hearing the minister, I'm looking for your cooperation, thank you.

Minister?

Mr. J. Brown: So I guess it might help to know this, the Uniform Law Conference of Canada is an intergovernmental organization that researches, promotes and develops uniform legislation for adoption by provincial and territorial governments.

The organizations members include jurisdictional representatives from each provincial and territorial government, the federal government, law reform institutes, academics and representatives of the legal profession.

Many of the provinces statutes are based on uniform legislation developed by the ULCC and I've mentioned that our representatives are Blair Barbour on the civil law side and Jeff MacDonald, who's in the Crown Attorney's office on the criminal law side.

Ms. Biggar: Thank you (Indistinct)

Ms. Casey: Shall it carry? Carried.

Premier, did you have a question?

Premier MacLauchlan: I wonder if the minister could confirm for us that – of course the Uniform Law Conference itself is going to continue doing its work, it's this 1918 that is no longer considered necessary in terms of our participation, is that correct?

Mr. J. Brown: That's right. Sorry, Madam Chair.

Chair: Yeah, go ahead.

Mr. J. Brown: I think the way the legislation was set up was based on an old constitution of the ULCC in terms of how it was linked in with the constitution and how the members were appointed.

That constitution changed to the body that we have really only a tangential connection to, allowed for, or I guess (Indistinct) the deed for this legislation.

Premier MacLauchlan: That's fine thank you.

I just wanted to confirm that we were going to continue the good work of the conference – just that legislation is not in.

Chair: Shall it carry? Carried.

Mr. J. Brown: Madam Chair, I move the title.

Chair: *An Act to Repeal the Uniformity Commissioners Act.*

Shall it carry? Carried.

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

Chair: Shall it carry? Carried.

Mr. Speaker, as Chair of a Committee of the Whole House, having had under consideration a bill to be intitled *An Act to Repeal the Uniformity Commissioners 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.

Mr. Gallant: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. Member from Tignish-Palmer Road, that the orders 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 of the day be now read.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk Assistant: The following bills were ordered for third reading.

Order No. 5, *An Act to Amend the Workers Compensation Act (No. 3)*, Bill No. 40;

Order No. 6, *An Act to Amend the Employment Standards Act (No. 4)*, Bill 32;

Order No. 7, *An Act to Amend the Highway Traffic Act (No. 4)*, Bill No. 44;

Order No. 8, *An Act to Amend the Public Departments Act*, Bill No. 46;

Order No. 9, *An Act to Amend the Police Act*, Bill No. 45.

Mr. Gallant: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Member from Tignish-Palmer Road, that the said bills be now read a third time.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk Assistant: The following bills were read a third time:

An Act to Amend the Workers Compensation Act (No. 3), Bill No. 40;

An Act to Amend the Employment Standards Act (No. 4), Bill 32;

An Act to Amend the Highway Traffic Act (No. 4), Bill No. 44;

An Act to Amend the Public Departments Act, Bill No. 46 and;

An Act to Amend the Police Act, Bill No. 45

Mr. Gallant: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Member from Tignish-Palmer Road, that the said bills do now pass.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

These bills are introduced by leave of the House, read a first time, read a second time, committed to a Committee of the Whole House, reported agreed to with or without amendment, read a third time and it is now moved that the bills do pass.

All those in favour signify by saying 'aye'.

Some Hon. Members: Aye!

Speaker: Contrary 'nay'.

Bills are carried.

Ms. Casey: Call the hour.

Speaker: The hour has been called and this House will reconvene this evening at 7:00 p.m.

The Legislature adjourned until 7:00 p.m.

Speaker: You may be seated, relax.

The hon. Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy.

Point of Privilege

Ms. Biggar: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Tonight, I'm rising on a point of privilege. Last Thursday, November 15th, the Member from Georgetown-St. Peters accused me of breaking the law during Question Period. He also used the word 'illegally'.

I think that these phrases are very unparliamentarily and unbecoming of a member of this House. I understand from research that has been done, that suggesting an hon. member has done something 'illegal' has been ruled out as such in the House of Commons in the 1970s.

I ask you to look at this and rule accordingly.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I have a copy of the Hansard.

Do I need to make a motion to do that or can I just –

Speaker: No, I will just take that under advisement.

Ms. Biggar: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

On the point of privilege that the hon. member's making, what I had said on that night and it proved to be true through the media through the – the Premier's communications advisor, Mary, went out and told the media that they did in fact extend the contract and hand it to another company. I am pretty sure that that has broken the procurement rules that government has.

So I would ask the hon. member to prove that she didn't commit something illegal. I think that would be important for this House to prove that's the case.

Speaker: Hon. member, I have already said that I would take her point of privilege under consideration. I will also take yours under consideration.

Mr. Myers: Thank you.

Motions Other Than Government

Orders Other Than Government

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

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Opposition would like to bring Order No. 33 to the floor.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk: Order No. 33, *Mental Health Court Act*, Bill No. 117, 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.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

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

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 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.

Hon. Member from Borden-Kinkora, you're the promoter?

Mr. Fox: Yes.

Speaker: Yeah, okay.

I'll ask the hon. Member from Georgetown-St. Peters, if you wouldn't mind chairing this bill.

Mr. Myers: The House is now in a Committee of the Whole House to take into consideration a bill to be intitled *Mental Health Court Act*. Is it the pleasure of the committee that the bill be now read clause by clause?

Would you like to do an overview?

Mr. Fox: Yes. Thank you, Chair.

The creation of the mental health court in our province is essential and it is needed. A mental health court is not a trial court, but an alternative. Participants must accept responsibility for their criminal actions. This is a holistic approach to ensuring Islanders suffering from mental health conditions who commit crimes of a criminal nature are provided with care and treatment to address their mental health issues in an attempt to avoid reoffending.

This is a voluntary program, and one championed by many other provinces, including the province of Nova Scotia and also the province of Ontario. I will point out that the one in Nova Scotia was actually brought in by the Liberal government.

It involves cooperation from a team professionals, including health professionals, legal professionals, and correctional professionals. –

Mr. LaVie: Chair, I can't hear. Chair, I can't hear.

Mr. Myers: Hon. members over there, can you keep it down on that side. I know you may not be interested in the proceedings this evening, but for those that are, they'd like to be able to hear.

Go ahead.

Mr. Fox: It actually touches all parts of the justice system. (Indistinct) understand the scope of the program; we can look at the Nova Scotia criteria. To be eligible for consideration in the Nova Scotia Mental Health Court Program, applicants must have a mental disorder.

“The Mental Health Court defines a mental disorder as a significant disturbance in an individual's ability to think and/or problem solve, their control over their emotions and/or their ability to control their behavior. Examples of mental disorders that clearly fit this definition are schizophrenia (or other psychotic disorders), bipolar disorder, and major depressive disorder.

Applicants whose sole diagnosis is substance related will not be considered, nor will applicants whose diagnosis falls within a spectrum of paraphilic disorders. [...] The Mental Health Court may consider individuals with neurodevelopment disorders or brain injury on a case-by-case basis.

The program may review other cases where there is a diagnosable mental disorder that does not clearly fit the above criteria (e.g. personality disorders or attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder). However, these cases will only be reviewed under exceptional circumstances where there is a clear nexus to the offending and reasonable expectation that the intervention of the Mental Health Court will be of benefit. Individuals whose sole diagnosis is Antisocial Personality Disorder will not be considered.

In all cases, an applicant's acceptance to the Mental Health Court Program will be considered with respect to the Program's ability to support the individual within the community.

Mr. Fox: This new approach for our province is supported by many stakeholder groups, as members of the government are aware. There is a real public support for this program and it requires leadership of the Assembly to consider and support through legislation.

I will say again, that this is actually in place in the Province of Nova Scotia and Ontario.

This bill represents a first for many reasons, including the need for a royal recommendation, which requires a Cabinet minister to support funding this important program, which would benefit a person suffering from mental illness involved in a criminal offense. This procedural hurdle means a Cabinet minister must formally submit a resolution called a royal recommendation, committing to funding this initiative prior to the bill getting third reading, and passing.

So, I formally ask the minister of justice: will he give royal recommendation and fund a mental health court program within the province of Prince Edward Island?

Chair: Would you like the floor minister of justice to answer that?

Mr. J. Brown: I don't want to get into pre-empting debate on this; I certainly have a number of questions that we would like to ask on the bill. But, in saying that, I will say that on a first read in particular, our department would have a number of issues with the bill. I have already advised the MLA from Borden-Kinkora of that fact, and I'd be happy to go through them in some more detail here tonight. So, however we wish to proceed.

But I think the net result is, as things stand right now, we would not be inclined to. And I'm happy to talk more about that, if you wish. We need to address that point particularly.

Chair: Okay.

Mr. Fox: I'm thinking –

Mr. Myers: Take your time.

Mr. Fox: So, thanks Chair.

I guess the question would be to the minister of justice: what is the department prepared to look at, or – what are you prepared to look at in matter of this bill?

Chair: Minister of justice.

Mr. J. Brown: I'm not looking at anything. But what I'll say is this – we have, and we have objectively been determined to have the best justice system in Canada, particularly, in terms of serious crimes, confidence in our justice system, time to trial, and all those various things.

I do just want to correct you on one point. There are no – to my knowledge, and this is the department that's done the research and is telling me this – there are no other mental health courts that are enshrined in legislation.

So the first issue we have – and it's a pretty big hurdle – is a constitutional issue that you can't get into, basically superseding the jurisdiction of the Legislature in directing courts as to how they are going to carry out their court. You and I have had this discussion in particular in relation to Bill No. 110, at some significant length. The discussion is not all together different in this case then it is in that case.

So starting from that – hear me out on this – starting from that point, that's a big issue, obviously, for our department in relation to this, and for me as Attorney General in relation to it. But the secondary piece of it is – tell me if I'm wrong on this, I guess – but, we would not see – typically what would happen in a mental health court in other jurisdictions would be the mental health court affectively enables folks that have a mental health issue to skip a waiting line to get through the court system, in the hopes that they get on sooner to the steps to getting well. We don't have that issue here.

Like, we would see a trial set sometimes as quickly as three or four weeks from when a charge has been laid. There are diversionary programs here that are run through the

Crown office, or through police, I'm sure you're familiar with. Alternative measures being the primary one and the Crown's got a procedural manual on how that's to work, and that includes a lot of what I suspect, would be included under this bill.

I think what I'm saying, really, is we have a substantive issue in terms on constitutionality of the bill. There is also a practical question I have though, as well is: where there is a court such as this in other jurisdictions, it's set aside to basically skip the waiting line, if you will, to borrow the name of the act that's used at the doctor's office – it's the same thing, basically, and to get you quicker to the end result. We don't have that problem here, so there wouldn't be a net gain, in our eyes, in setting up a separate court to deal with it. And then you have on top of all of that, the money issue that you'd have to look at in terms of a justification to spend it.

Chair: Member from Borden-Kinkora.

Mr. Fox: So, in understanding what you're saying there, minister, our research is showing that if you take the alternative measures that was brought into place many years ago within the justice system, the mental health court in other jurisdictions has been set up to actually, basically run parallel, or in the same manner as alternative measures does. That if a matter – if an individual is involved in a criminal act, and a charge is laid, then if there is an agreement recommended by the Crown Attorney's office, then that matter can be dealt with through a mental health court almost the same as alternative measures, instead of being put through the court system.

With that, then there is a community involvement between the Crown Attorney's office, the prosecutor, the victims office, the chief of provincial court judge, or a designate from that individual, basically as an arbitrator to bring some kind of measure in place where the offender accepts responsibility and is capable of doing that if he/she falls under one of the categories listed; thus, not putting the offender before a court system. It's an (Indistinct) measure or an alternative measure that actually putting the individual before the court that might not actually go before the court.

But yes, we are lucky that matters going before the court is in some cases are very speedily, as you have alluded to, but there are items when: does this individual actually have to go before the court or is there another way that they could be dealt with?

Researchers found that both in the Province of Ontario and also the Province of Nova Scotia, that this is what they found. That is actually a clear backlog, or not actually a backlog, but taking matters out of the court that, don't necessarily have to go before the court, and put them through a program the same as alternative measures.

And I'll just say, Chair, I don't mind us talking about this for a while either before we ask some questions, that's fine.

Chair: Absolutely, it's apparent. Go ahead.

Mr. J. Brown: And so, I don't disagree with that in the context of Nova Scotia and Ontario, but I guess what I'm saying is, and I do think the term used, backlog, is appropriate there. They have significant – significant issues in those jurisdictions. I don't want to say significant – significant in Nova Scotia, but Ontario, they do have very significant issues in terms of their time to trial in provincial court related matters, in particular, in a lot of jurisdictions, they'd have a lot more jurisdictions than we would.

We here, on Prince Edward Island, are quite fortunate, we have three very senior judges who have been around – well, I don't want to start trying to age them, here – but anyway, they have experience on the bench, they have taken training that's relevant to this, they have advocated, actually, for increased mental health interventions consistently.

But again, I guess what I'm saying is, there is not an issue here. So the first thing I want to address is we do have an alternative measures program that does address all of these issues and it had a connection through to the court, where, typically what would happen, would be a diversion would happen.

Usually what would happen if there's a diversion, is that there would be an agreement reached between Crown and defence counsel and the accused person where they would acknowledge responsibility for the offences that they have

committed and then they'd sign or enter into an undertaking, usually to do certain things. When they've completed those things, the matter will be called back and the charge would be stayed.

If they don't complete them, then the Crown proceeds with the prosecution as they would have before; and then, quite often what would happen would be the court would implement whatever sentence they would have implemented in the first place, and off you go.

We, in effect, have all the parts of this here. It's just not designated, you know, mental health court. Maybe to say it a different way – I had heard a statistic at one point in time – don't quote me on this, please, although I do recognize it's in Hansard – but that there would be some percentage, like 60% of all matters that would appear in provincial court would involve some level of a mental health issue, whether that be an addictions issue or something more ongoing, we'll say, in terms of a clinical diagnosis or whatever.

So it's a big part of what the court's work is already, there's no question about that. But where there are mental health courts, usually as you said, what they do is they provide like a side stream, where if there's a recognition the person's got a mental health issue, they get them out of the normal stream and the effort is to get them help so that they don't get into trouble again, and to do that as quickly as possible.

Here we don't have that backlog. Here we are through the system. Like if you're three months waiting to get through the court system here, it's a long time. It's not usual. So we don't have the problems that a lot of other jurisdictions in Canada have right now and we're very fortunate for that to be the case.

Chair: Go ahead if you're –

Mr. Fox: Thanks, Chair.

And I understand what you're saying there –

Chair: Consider it a conversation.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Mr. Fox: So I can understand what you're saying, but just because we have no backlog or the court's not backlogged in some manner, doesn't mean that we still should be putting people in front of provincial court for a mental health issue.

That was one of the reasons when they brought in the alternatives measures act, was that yes, the very first appearance was before a judge and then it was adjourned to see if alternative measures would work in some way.

This is basically the same thing than that. There was – why should we be putting – just because there's no backlog, do we need to be putting people in front of an actual court system? You are right, there are different steps to diversionary their program and they basically – from finding the supports needed for the individual charged, what diversion treatments or crisis support services are available? Are there post charge diversion supports available after that? Is there capability of having a fitness assessment? And also, if not, are they maybe possibly not criminally responsible? And then from there, into a treatment centre or discharge planning with continuing keeping on supports. That's one thing we found.

On the constitutional side, we have three levels basically, of government, within the constitution. And what a constitutional lawyers told us is, is that we have the executive branch, which is actual government, the ministers, Lieutenant Governor in Council, we then have the legislative branch, which is the MLAs, which the executive council do make up, they are MLAs; where bills are debated and brought on to the floor. Then we also have a judiciary, which is separate from the executive branch and the legislative branch.

But clauses that are brought into effect or passed by Parliament or an Assembly are then turned over to the judiciary to basically manage or operate which then, from what we've been told, is that there is no constitutional conflict after that because it's not actually the legislative branch of the government that's actually running how the judiciary is making the decisions or how they deal with the matter.

Judiciaries are independent, but us as legislators, must ensure we give the tools to the judiciary to make their decisions.

Chair: Okay I'm getting quite a list here so we should start going through at least some of them.

Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Chair.

When it comes to mental health courts, is my understanding of this bill is that they would sort of be ad hoc in nature in that it would be the judicial system that would actually decide when the courts were formed and they wouldn't be always existing.

There would be a structure there that was only employed as needed, is that right?

Mr. Fox: Yes.

Mr. Trivers: So, that means that there shouldn't be a lot of extra over head costs associated with having that mental health court structure in place because it involves the same players that are already there, is that correct?

Mr. Fox: Yes, it involves the same players that are already there and it involves them coming together as basically as – I want to use the picture of a round table – where the accused individual acknowledges the criminal offence that he or she was involved in, accepts responsibility of that and then accepts recommendations or a guidance or a path forward to basically deal with the matter that was before the courts.

So that could be counseling or some kind of restitution or program of treatment that's acceptable by all parties involved.

I will say that research has shown that the majority of time, these are actually recommended by the Crown Prosecutor's office who, basically, are key in making sure that the conditions are there set out.

Chair: Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: I don't know if he's actually done his answer yet.

Mr. Fox: I can tell you, hon. member, that the determination of eligibility into mental health courts in the Province of Ontario, over 90% of the time it was recommended by the Crown, 12% of the time or there about, is recommended by the judge. The defense council or duty council is used in recommending over 20-30% of the time, justice of the peace's there was no recommendations, psychiatrists and also mental health court workers were also involved in recommending that an individual be put through a mental health court system.

Chair: Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: So I remember when you were on the floor with Theo Fleury when he was here and there was a lot of talk about how trauma often leads to some mental health problems that can lead to addictions that in turn can lead to crime.

That's definitely a concern of people I talk to here on Prince Edward Island, that crimes are being committed because people are trying to feed their addictions because they have some sort of mental health problems.

Would a mental health court – the eligibility criteria for people to be put into that structure – would it help those people address their mental health concerns that are related and end the addictions that come from them so we can reduce that type of crime, or is that the wrong application?

Mr. Fox: Well it has been proven that people with mental health problems or disorders have a different understanding and therefore, possibly, more being dealt with in a different way to successfully deal with the disorder or to ensure that that is taken into consideration with the matter being before the court.

Mental health courts, if the addiction or if the disorder is solely addiction-based, then it doesn't fall under the mental health court program, it goes into – what we're basically talking about is, I guess, the best practices is that the mental disorder has to be one of the disorders listed previously.

Chair: Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, member; that does clarify it for me.

I was wondering if you have any stats available based on, say the cases over the last number of years, how many might actually fall into the mental health court eligibility criteria that might come forward, even just an estimate. Like, we've had 300 cases over the last 10 years and 10% of them might benefit from having a mental health court.

Mr. Fox: No I have no stats on that and I think it goes to the point from the hon. minister that presently – or for the last number of years – any matter involving an individual who suffers from a mental disorder, the only avenue to be dealt with is through the provincial court system, unless it's a matter that was referred to a Supreme Court judge.

So we have no stats on, my understanding, kept by the province.

Mr. Trivers: I understand, it really would be an estimate that you'd have to make because it would be a judgment call without knowing what the eligibility criteria are and you'd be allowing the professionals to set that under the act. I do appreciate that, this was trying to understand the volume that might go through a mental health court structure.

Mr. Fox: I think it might be important to know that the main goals of the mental health court: one, would be to approve the client access to the community services and supports, improve the general wellbeing of the client himself, improve community safety, identify somatic issues, reduce stigma and also provide rehabilitative alternative to incarceration.

Mr. Trivers: I just wanted to make a comment that I think that those outcomes are really important things and if there's really not a lot of additional cost to implement this and there's a chance it'll have those excellent outcomes, then I'd have to say I'd be in support of this bill.

Mr. Fox: See that, hon. member that's one of the reasons why we need the minister to consider to get a royal recommendation to

have the funding available for a mental health court program.

Chair: Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Mitchell: Thank you, Chair.

I'd just like to make a couple – I guess several comments in regards to – obviously as the minister responsible for mental health on Prince Edward Island.

When I saw this come forward, I immediately checked with justice folks to kind of see – my initial question was: how does this work today?

So it came back to me, that basically, if there's somebody in the court system that it is a view that mental health may be an issue or an assessment is required, they are directed by the court to have this assessment done, they leave the system, it goes back, basically, to the bottom of the pile, for lack of a better term, and all of that process is allowed to proceed the way it normally should and does.

There's no pressure put on, there's nothing that says you need to be incarcerated while this goes on. They remain as normal a citizen in life as possible. Which is to me, and as the minister said, it works really well for PEI.

So obviously the next question was: do you have concerns about this? As the minister said, yes there are concerns.

The other question that I did ask: would the judiciary have concerns about this?

There was an implied answer that there would be concerns at the judiciary level. So I guess, in support of the minister, the system that we have on Prince Edward Island works pretty well for Islanders.

When you look at other jurisdictions: how's it work in Ontario or New Brunswick or even Nova Scotia? And you relate that back to Prince Edward Island and you mention stigma – I see this as negative stigma.

If I am going to court and it's mental health court, that's a stigma added to me, it's a stigma added to Islanders.

Of course we know on Prince Edward Island – pretty small province – we all know each other, we all know who's doing what. We've done a tremendous amount of work as a province to destigmatize mental health. We try to run programs, you know that aren't mental health driven. When you go to the doctor, you're in with everybody else. We've done yeomen's service to try to destigmatize mental health.

This, I see, as a complete opposite to that. I see you're going to have people in a mental health court, probably being reported, I assume, like every other court. Well, I mean, that's just one aspect of it. Depending on the severity of the mental health or the part of that into it, yes I think that will be reported if it's determined that that mental health issue is not supporting the crime.

So, I mean I see this as a step backwards personally for Prince Edward Island. May work well in Ontario, may work well in British Columbia, may work well in Nova Scotia or New Brunswick, but on Prince Edward Island I think it's going to add a layer that – right now people go through the court system, it's unfortunate that that occurs for Islanders, but it does, and we all know that. So I see the system that's here today works really well, it doesn't pinpoint any issues like that. It destigmatizes and it works well for what we need here.

I just want to make those comments, because when I saw this instantly I had to determine is it good or bad?

Mr. Fox: I can understand, minister, your point about stigma.

You know, the word or terminology about being in front of a court and is it going to be reported in the media or is going to be an actual formal hearing the same that as you see down at the provincial court. Our understanding of it is that no, they're done in a protected environment where the people making the decisions or the people working with the client or the accused – you know that's a (Indistinct) –

Mr. Mitchell: I think personally, I'd have to do a lot more investigating on it to say you're right. I just see what we have now kind of works for us. So I'd have to put a lot more research into – based on concerns that

the department has, based on concerns that are implied that the judiciary would have, I'd have to spend more time investigating that.

Mr. Fox: Given the concerns by the minister of justice and the minister of health, I think it appropriate at this time to ask the minister, if he would consider a royal consideration of funding the mental health court program.

Ms. Biggar: (Indistinct)

Chair: Minister of health.

Mr. Fox: Minister of justice.

Chair: Sorry, minister of justice.

Mr. J. Brown: So, the answer is no. I still have significantly more questions in relation to the legislation as it's prepared (Indistinct)

Mr. Fox: Thank you.

I ask the Minister of Health and Wellness: will you consider royal recommendation to fund a mental health court in the province of Prince Edward Island.

Mr. Mitchell: I don't fund judiciary measures that falls under the other ministries, so –

Mr. Fox: I'm asking a question minister.

Mr. Mitchell: I think I gave you an answer, quite clearly where I (Indistinct)

Mr. Fox: Okay.

I ask the Minister of Family and Human Services, will you give royal recommendation and fund a mental health court in the province of Prince Edward Island.

Ms. Mundy: I think I would echo the comments of the minister of health at this point.

I have some questions, you know, just even around the whole terminology around what is mental illness. What is an intellectual disability? There are definitions there that can be pretty broad. We have the whole issue right now surrounding

intergenerational trauma and the effects of that. Is that something that would be considered as well? Although the spirit, I think, of the bill – I can appreciate it.

I do have some concerns as well, moving forward.

Mr. Fox: Thank you.

I ask the Minister of Finance: Will you give royal recommendation and fund a mental health court in the province of Prince Edward Island?

Chair: Just for audiovisual, I'll recognize the Minister of Finance if he chooses to answer.

Mr. MacDonald: I think I can give you credit for taking it to the floor hon. member.

I think I'll echo some of the concerns relevant to family and human services, minister of justice, minister of health. To make a decision on something that's this important, I think there needs to be some more research and investigation done on our behalf.

Mr. Fox: Thank you, minister.

With the government failing to support a mental health court program at this time, I'm asking you that the bill be pulled at this time.

Mr. LaVie: What about the minister of education?

Chair: Yeah go ahead, minister of justice.

Mr. J. Brown: Just on his point. I make the simple point that we haven't even – you asked the question: Would we fund it. Nobody's even postulated what we – how much the price tag would be on it. Is it \$1, is it \$10 million, is it \$1 million? I don't know.

Pretty tough to answer those kind of questions, separate and apart, as I said when we started, from all the issues that we've brought up and I have a lot more. That's a pretty fundamental question that before somebody's going to sign off on a money bill we'd need an answer to.

Mr. Fox: Thank you, minister.

Mr. Mitchell: Chair, if I might as well?

Chair: Yeah, go ahead minister of health.

Mr. Mitchell: I agree with the spirit of what you're trying to do here, but I think we need to dig a little deeper and get a better evaluation related to Prince Edward Island. I know you're relating to other areas, but I need more time to relate it to here to say: is it the right thing to do for clients of mental health that find themselves in the court system on Prince Edward Island? That's going to take some time.

Chair: So are you ready to take it off? Read this one here.

Mr. Fox: Mr. 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 intituled *Mental Health Court 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 Belfast-Murray River.

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I move, seconded by the hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid, that the 31st order of the day be now read.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk Assistant: Order No. 31, *An Act to Amend the Municipal Government Act (No. 5)*, Bill No.122, ordered for second reading.

Mr. Myers: Are we going (Indistinct)

Speaker: The hon. Member from Belfast-Murray River

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Member from Morell-Mermaid, 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. 5)*, Bill No.122, read a second time.

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

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

I will ask the hon. Member from Georgetown-St. Peters, if you wouldn't mind chairing this bill.

Mr. Trivers: I'm going to bring Google over here on the floor. Mr. Google, Mr. Google.

Chair (Myers): Are you good?

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 Municipal Government Act (No. 5)*. Is it the pleasure of the committee that the bill be now read clause by clause?

Ms. Biggar: Yes.

Chair: Sure, would you like to go with an overview?

Mr. Trivers: Yes, I would.

Chair: Do you want the bill?

Mr. Trivers: I would like to see the bill.

Mr. LaVie: Pass the bill.

Mr. Trivers: Yes, so what we're looking at here is changes to section 86 of the *Municipal Government Act* and really, it's a section that allows the minister to appoint a chief administration officer for a

municipality if they fail to appoint their own.

Under the current legislation, if the minister does that, the municipality has to pay for the CAO that they appoint. And so the point of this bill is to add another option for the minister in the case where the municipality doesn't have the funds to pay for the CAO they appoint or they don't want to raise the taxes to make that happen.

In other words, they don't want to have to be forced to raise taxes or amalgamate with another municipality or just dissolve. So the option for the minister means he can choose to actually pay for the remuneration of the CAO, pay the salary. That way it allows the municipality to continue to exist. They have a CAO. They're meeting the regulations and legislation for the municipal government. And really, everyone is happy.

And, again, it's meant to add another option for the minister and add another option to allow the municipality to continue to exist so they're not dissolved.

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

Ms. Biggar: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We just went, actually, through an interesting process in my own communities where Ellerslie-Bideford and Lady Slipper municipality joined to make Central Prince. It was a great process.

And I know the minister has assured municipalities that they can pool their resources to have a shared administrator and to even not have – and I think something that would be good to look at and the minister may want to comment – is whether or not they actually have to have a physical office in a separate location or can that administrator have a home office with access to the municipality, to residents?

But, have you done any further investigation on that side of things? Municipalities do have a tax rate that they can pool money and save money. So I think given the context of what it said, they can share resources between municipalities. We just went through this in Linkletter, actually, where they had to find a new administrator, and I

think something that is a possibility of sharing the administrators from other municipalities together.

So have you explored that and what's happening? Or looked at that possibility? I don't know if the minister wants to comment on that. But where do you stand on that?

Chair: Yeah, go ahead.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, minister.

It's clear to see that you do understand this bill and the bill prior to, as well, that you reference.

The previous bill that was on the floor talked about actually being able to hold a municipal government office, municipal office outside of the municipal boundaries and be able to be open less than 20 hours a week, for example. This one is just, again, adding more flexibility in this case with payment of the CAO.

So that's really what it's all about. It's allowing for that flexibility that the municipal government act right now does not allow the minister flexibility to do.

Now, when he says he's going to allow them to share a municipal office, that's only allowed if it's actually in the municipal boundaries according to the letter of the act. And that's why I wanted to amend it so that right now, today, they could actually share an office and it's very similar with sharing a CAO, right? This is to add more flexibility so that they do – if the minister does want to appoint a CAO, instead of them having to have a dedicated CAO, they can share, and instead of having to raise taxes to pay for the CAO, the minister can choose to pay for it.

So it's adding flexibility. It's a win-win situation for everyone. And it's not restrictive in any way. It just gives more options to the minister to help do their jobs and gives more option to the municipalities so they don't have to resolve.

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

Ms. Biggar: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I, as a former administrator and as a former councillor in my community and as the MLA for Richmond who did dissolve their municipality, my question would be, though, what kind of a safeguard do you have in that bill that ensures that everybody is just going to throw up their hands say: I can't get a CAO hired, so the minister is going to have to pay for it.

So we're going to end up with – they do have a tax base that they can pool their resources, So what safeguard do you have there that would say: Well, oh, jeez, the minister is going to pay for the CAO if we say we can't afford it even though we might have taxes to support it.

So what kind of safeguard have you got in there to prevent that?

Mr. Trivers: Well, that's a really good question and really good point.

That's why the bill is structured the way it is, as an option. So the minister can, if he chooses to, have the province pay for the CAO, but the option, if you check out the bill, he can still direct that the remuneration established under clause B be paid by the municipality.

It's all about giving the minister more options. I know the minister wants to help municipalities. He wants to do the right thing. He wants to make sure that our communities across Prince Edward Island thrive. And so this bill, it helps municipalities. It helps the minister. It helps our Island and our island communities. That's what it's all about. That's why I'm proposing it.

I should have said that, perhaps when I gave an overview of the bill, like the last bill I introduced to amend the *Municipal Government Act*, this is offered in the spirit of cooperation to help make the act better; to give every one more option and to allow us to work together to make the Island a better place.

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

Mr. Dumville: Thank you, Chair.

Hon. member, I think the minister asked the question that I was going to ask because I was just wondering that, okay, it's great that you – okay, this municipality, we're going to pay for the CAO, what happens if other municipalities said: We are going to play poor mouth here, he's getting it, we want it too.

I think she asked that question.

Mr. Trivers: Yes.

So once again, the minister has the option to either ask the municipality to pay for the CAO or to choose that the province pay for the CAO.

So they're able to really – the minister now has the option to look at a municipality and say: Wow, you know this municipality is doing great things for their community. They're effectively managing things. It doesn't make sense for this particular municipality to raise taxes so I'm going to say the province should pay for the CAO.

But in other cases, he can make the decision and say: In this case, it makes sense for them to pay for their own CAO and do that.

So it's up to the minister and they can make that choice on a case-by-case basis.

It may be that the minister says: Well, while I'm minister I'm choosing that almost every municipality is going to pay for their own CAO because that's the way I think things should go.

But again it's about giving options, right? And this allows – I mean, we saw what happened with some municipalities that have been dissolved recently. It wasn't necessarily the choice of the municipality to dissolve. But they did because they couldn't meet some of the demands of the *Municipal Government Act*.

If one of those demands happens to be paying for a CAO and they can't meet that, then the minister has flexibility and he can work with them and say: You're right. This is not really a good reason for you to have to dissolve. I'm going to allow the province to pay for your CAO and then you won't have to resolve.

It's about giving options, is what it's about.

Mr. Dumville: Chair, through you to the hon. member.

Chair: Sure.

Mr. Dumville: Do you see this as, say you had two or three that were getting the freebie and another seven or eight or whatever paying their own way, do you see this as kind of like a permanent thing? Or, like where the minister would investigate to see that they're duly entitled and would you see it more like a bridging gap? Like a bridging till a municipality gets strong enough to do their own, or do you see like a permanent thing, or should it be reviewed?

Mr. Trivers: I think that's an excellent point and the beautiful thing about the legislation is it doesn't put any restrictions on that. It allows the minister the freedom to set a plan and set a future direction, and negotiate with the municipalities to do what's best for them and what's best for the province.

So, if you're in a situation where you have a number of smaller municipalities that you want to have a province pay for a CAO to manage them, while feasibility studies are being done, for amalgamation, then he could do that. But right now, the legislation doesn't have that flexibility. That's why I'm saying, this is an improvement for the legislation and it's a way to help the minister and help the communities work together to do what's best for the province.

Mr. Dumville: Thank you, Chair.

Chair: Member from Charlottetown-Lewis Point.

Ms. Casey: Thank you, Chair.

Hon. member, I was just wondering which stakeholders you met with to develop this bill and what is the opinion of the federation of PEI municipalities?

Mr. Trivers: Okay, well thank you.

I really met mostly with small municipalities on this; I didn't discuss the bill directly, per se, it was more of a requirements gathering exercise, attending community meetings and

that sort of thing. I did not ask for input directly from the federation of municipalities on this.

Chair: Member from Charlottetown-Lewis Point.

Ms. Casey: No farther questions.

Thank you. No farther questions.

Chair: Minister of Communities, Land and Environment.

Mr. R. Brown: Thank you, Chair.

What do you think of the federation of municipalities, do you think they're a good bunch of people?

Mr. Trivers: I'm not sure what this has to do with the bill, but yeah.

Mr. R. Brown: I'm just asking if you think the federation is a good organization.

Mr. Trivers: I think the federation of municipalities – I think they serve a good purpose here on the Island, yeah.

Mr. R. Brown: So, what you want to start out – breaking the legislation. This legislation was developed in consultation with the federation of municipalities. And you know one of the biggest sections in there; do you know section (9) of the act?

Mr. Trivers: Yes, I believe so –

Mr. R. Brown: Consultations; the minister shall consult with the federation of municipalities respecting any substantive amendments that the minister proposes to this act or any regulations under this act?

So there's a – requires me to consult with the federation of municipality. You have no respect for the federation of the municipalities because you're overriding this section of the act that says: we shall consult with them. This is their legislation. It's developed for them, with them in mind and I'm going to honour – and I'm going to ask my colleagues to honour, the spirit of the legislation that says: section (9) consultation: the minister shall consult with the federation of municipalities, respecting any substantive amendments that the

minister proposes to this act, the regulations under this act. So I'm going to honour that.

Ms. Biggar: So am I.

Mr. R. Brown: And if you're not going to honour it, that's Conservative party's approach –

An Hon. Member: It is what it is.

Mr. R. Brown: – not going to honour the act, and not going to honour the municipalities and the federation of municipalities. I have respect for the federation of municipalities. I sat on the federation of municipalities for a number of years, they do excellent work, and I'd rather work with the federation of municipalities then try to act like a big brother to them. Because, you know what? The people that sit on that board are pretty smart individuals; they don't need any advice from you, at this point in time.

Thank you very much.

Chair: Thank you for that, hon. member.

I'll go to the Member from Rustico-Emerald for our response.

Mr. Trivers: Well, I think I'd like to respond to that.

I'm not sure I kind of like the tone here, I mean, this was brought forward in the spirit of cooperation.

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

Mr. Trivers: – and in fact –

Mr. R. Brown: (Indistinct)

Mr. Trivers: Chair, do I have the floor, Chair?

Chair: You do have the floor, hon. member.

Like I said the other day, I know everybody hot under the collar over some of these issues, but if you could all just respect one other for a few minutes, we can get this bill over with.

Mr. R. Brown: Thank you, Chair.

Chair: Thank you.

Mr. R. Brown: (Indistinct) good, Chair.

Mr. Trivers: And so, the minister has been at some of the meetings that I've been at with these small municipalities and he has clearly stated that he is willing to tweak the legislation and to move forward and try to make it better for everyone. I think he should also look at section (9) that he's invoking with his accusations that clearly are untrue. That –

Ms. Biggar: Watch your language.

Mr. Trivers: It says here: the minister shall consult with the federation of Prince Edward Island municipalities respecting any substantive amendment that the minister proposes.

So in my mind, this amendment is a tweak to the legislation. It adds another option, it does not substantially change the intent of the legislation and in fact, all it does it help all of the parties involved.

And of course, I'm not the minister, either. I don't pretend to be.

An Hon. Member: You sure?

Mr. Trivers: I'm just trying to bring an amendment to the floor here for some civil debate so that we can improve the lives of municipalities because these are the sorts of things that the municipalities that I have talked to, have asked for. And I think this is being achieved, because I think we're really getting this debate out on the floor of the Legislature as well. There have been some really good questions here, so I'm kind of satisfied with the debate so far. I'm not sure we need to go through with accusations about skirting the spirit of the act and trying to say that a particular group is not liked by another member of the Legislature.

That's the way I feel. It's a tweak; it's not a substantive amendment. It's adding another option, it's a win-win for everybody, and it should benefit the minister the most.

So I mean, feel free not to vote for it, if that's the way you feel, but I do take a little bit of objection to the accusations you are throwing my way.

Chair: Member from Charlottetown-Lewis Point.

Ms. Casey: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Hon. member, when you were doing your research and talking to the stakeholders, you identified earlier, what is your prediction for how much this is going to cost to implement your changes for CEOs for small municipalities? What would be the cost?

Chair: Go ahead.

Mr. Trivers: Yes, so I'm not sure the member understands the bill that's on the table right now –

Ms. Casey: Oh, I absolutely understand the bill.

Mr. Trivers: Because right now, it is just an option for the minister if they care to take it. So the cost could be zero dollars, if the minister decides that there are no municipalities where the province should pay for the CAO.

Ms. Casey: Sure.

Mr. Trivers: And this is the beautiful thing about this bill, because it allows the minister to look at every situation on a case-by-case basis, and decide whether it's in the provinces best interest to provide a CAO that is paid for by the province. And if he decides that it's not appropriate because it costs too much, then he won't have to. At this point, in terms of a cost estimate of, you know, the CAOs that would be paid for by the province – that's totally at the discretion of the minister. The question doesn't really make a lot of sense in the context of this bill.

Chair: Member from Charlottetown-Lewis Point.

Ms. Casey: Thank you, Chair.

I'm fully aware of the bill, thank you very much. And I just wanted to know that if the minister were to say yes, this is what we are going to do, do you have a dollar figure as to how many municipalities might be involved in taking the minister up on his offer to look after them?

Chair: Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: So, first of all, it's at the minister's discretion. I don't want to speculate how many municipalities the minister would want to make that offer to, because I respect the minister and I also respect his need to negotiate and communicate with, and hear parties like the federation of municipalities.

So, I mean, it could be zero, it could be a hundred, again – I'm not the minister. I'm not privy to a lot of the information the minister has access to.

Again, this bill is to give an option, so that if there is a municipality where it's appropriate for the minister to pay for the CAO, then they can, because right now, he can't. That's what it's all about, it's about options. It's a good chance to talk about this issue.

Chair: Member from Charlottetown-Lewis Point.

Ms. Casey: So if the minister has an option, obviously when you're preparing your research, you must have had a dollar figure though in mind, even if he – you can't ask the minister to take this on without connecting a dollar figure to it.

Mr. Trivers: You can if you're in the opposition.

Chair: Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Yeah so, and again, I'm not sure the member understands my point –

Ms. Casey: No, I fully understand it, hon. member.

Mr. Trivers: So, if the minister were to use this option, the minister who actually controls the budget of the department would be able to decide how much money, if any, they spend. Right?

So if they decide they're going to appoint – if the minister is put in a position where they have to appoint a CAO, and they decide the province is going to pay for it and its one CAO, then it would be the cost of that CAO's salary; which may vary depending on their experience, and where they're located, and everything else.

So, the sort of calculation you're asking for doesn't make sense. It's up to the discretion of the minister. He could say: You know what? This never makes sense, and I will never, ever invoke this clause because I don't think that the province should ever pay a salary of a CAO.

An Hon. Member: That's what he's saying now.

Ms. Biggar: (Indistinct)

Mr. Trivers: If he says that, that's fine. Then it would be a zero cost.

It gives him the flexibility because I know when I've been at some of these meetings, he's made promises to do these sorts of things and it gives him the flexibility to deliver on those promises.

That's why I'm bringing this forward. It's in the spirit of cooperation to give the minister more options so that he can help municipalities and he can help Islanders and Island communities.

Leader of the Opposition: Potentially fulfill his promises.

Mr. R. Brown: What's that?

Leader of the Opposition: Potentially fulfill his promises.

Chair: Member from Charlottetown-Lewis Point.

Ms. Casey: Hon. member, when you were doing your research and speaking to the smaller municipalities, what was the fee they said that they would need to pay for a CEO of a small municipality?

Chair: Go ahead, hon. member.

Mr. Trivers: So you're talking about CAO, right?

Ms. Casey: Or CEO, CAO or administrator?

Mr. Trivers: Yeah, chief administrative officers.

Again, this is coming back to the legislation, because it's one thing to play loosey-goosey with promises and what you're going to do

and all the flexibility, but it's another thing if you're going to follow the letter of the legislation. The fact that it's CAO is actually pretty important, it's not CEO.

The dollar figure there, again, it absolutely depends on the municipality and it depends what they're going to do.

So in the case of a shared CAO, it could be half the cost of one that needs a dedicated CAO, right? It really depends on the municipality. If you're talking about St. Nicholas for example, it might be a lot less than it could be for another small one.

I hope that makes sense.

Ms. Casey: No. It doesn't, but I probably will agree to disagree.

Chair: The hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid.

Mr. MacEwen: The line of questioning is interesting, because I know the point that the member from Charlottetown is trying to make about what the significant cost it could add up to if he or she said yes to everybody. It's also the point that what we'd be making about the municipal act for a long time is that it's a significant cost to these small communities. So you're making the point sometimes.

To the hon. member: Is that one of main reasons is the significant cost to the communities? Is that why you want to bring this option forward?

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Well thank you, member.

In fact, that's why municipalities want the minister to be able to have that option because it is – depending on the size of the municipality – it is a significant cost to them and they would have to raise taxes in order to look after that cost. Absolutely.

In some cases, municipalities are considering dissolving instead of trying to raise taxes to take on that cost. So this gives the minister the flexibility – and, as the member pointed out earlier, even if it's only temporary – to allow the municipality to

continue to exist. The province can provide that support so that they can meet the legislation and the best plan can be made to move forward for that municipality and for the province.

Chair: The hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid.

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you, Chair.

I guess that's what I mean. It seems like a big cost for the provincial, you can imagine what it is for a small community.

I know when we were debating this bill, the current minister and the former minister as well said: We don't want to force anybody to amalgamate; we don't want to do that. But you're right. You're forcing them to either significantly tax their neighbours or to fold or to join forces, which is exactly what the minister said we don't want to do if they don't want to do it.

You had a – I don't know if it was in the spring or a year ago – Dave Pizio down as kind of an expert with you. Is this something that he had concern with?

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Yes, absolutely. Unfortunately, it was on short notice tonight otherwise I would have had Dave Pizio on the floor with me.

There are certain times tonight that I would have loved to have Dave here to help me out, definitely. –

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Chair: That's my fault.

Mr. Trivers: He is one of the people that I reviewed the legislation with, and he said that this is definitely a significant concern.

Chair: The hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid.

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you, Chair.

Are there any other examples of municipalities that you know personally that

are considering either de-amalgamating or collapsing versus having to raise taxes?

Mr. Trivers: Well, the meeting at St. Nicholas would be the prime example I would use. That was one of the issues that came up there that night, was having to pay for a CAO along with the other issues of not being able to have a municipal office outside their boundaries that's open for less than 20 hours a week. Those were all contributing factors to having to raise taxes.

So, again, this is one small amendment that doesn't take away, really, from the spirit of the act. It doesn't away from the minister's powers. What it does is it gives the minister more options so that he can make choices that he's promised, as you mentioned really. He says he doesn't want to force amalgamation, so this allows him to take another step if he deems it necessary so he doesn't have to force amalgamation.

Chair: The hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid.

Mr. R. Brown: Good question.

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you.

To put it – I like the thought of this, because I've heard a lot of these communities are trying to – not figure out a way around it – but they don't want to have to increase rates for needlessly costing them things. The only choice is, you're right, is to fold or to amalgamate with a whole bunch of places they're not necessarily in favour of.

But I have a question for you: What do you think of the fact that – what happens if a minister plays politics with it? Are you concerned about that? About giving the minister too much power?

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Mr. Trivers: Well you know honestly member, that's not something that I really had thought about – the fact that the minister could use that for political gain. They could say this is a municipality in my own district I'm going to pay for their CAO, to help me elected.

Mr. MacEwen: We've seen worse.

Mr. Trivers: It's a tight election here.

I'd be interested to hear other member's thoughts on that; even the minister's thoughts on that.

Mr. MacEwen: Me too.

Mr. Trivers: But at this time, I've been asked to beg leave to sit again for this bill.

Mr. R. Brown: Whoever gave you that advice, it was smart advice.

Mr. MacEwen: (Indistinct)

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

Chair: Shall it carry? Carried.

Mr. Speaker, as Chair of a Committee of the Whole House, having under consideration the bill to be intituled *An Act to Amend the Municipal Government Act (No. 5)*, 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.

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

Motions Other Than Government

Ms. Bell: Mr. Speaker, I now call motion 90 be read.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk Assistant: The hon. Leader of the Third Party moves, seconded by the hon. Member from Charlottetown-Parkdale, the following motion:

WHEREAS the practice of conversion therapy attempts to change one's sexual orientation;

AND WHEREAS the Canadian Psychology Association affirms “[s]cientific research does not support the efficacy of conversion or reparative therapy”;

AND WHEREAS the Canadian Paediatric Association states “[c]onversion or reparative therapy, where attempts are made to turn gay males or lesbians into heterosexuals, are clearly unethical and should not be provided by physicians, nor should physicians refer patients for such therapy”;

AND WHEREAS it is widely accepted that conversion therapy has had damaging impacts on members of the LGBTQ+ community and youth;

AND WHEREAS jurisdictions across the country and continent have taken action to prohibit the provision of conversion therapy and referral to conversion therapy services;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly urge government to prohibit the provision of conversion therapy on PEI;

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly urge government to referrals to conversion therapy services on PEI or in an out-of-province jurisdiction;

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly urge government to prohibit the use of public funds to provide access to or otherwise support conversion therapy services on PEI or in an out-of-province jurisdiction.

Speaker: Thank you.

I will now call on the mover of the motion, the hon. Leader of The Third Party to speak to the motion.

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

I want to start by thanking the Opposition for making time in order for this to be debated today on this special day and in the presence of many friends in the gallery who are here specifically to hear the debate on this motion. I very much appreciate that, thank you.

You cannot cure an illness that does not exist.

In 1990, the World Health Assembly which is the decision-making body of the World Health Organization, removed homosexuality from the list of mental disorders when it approved a new version of their international classification of diseases. That was less than 30 years ago homosexuality was still considered to be a mental health disorder.

Since then, we have experienced, slowly but steadily, an increasing acceptance of individuals from the LGBTQ+ community – thanks in large part to advocates from that very community who often risked their safety to make the world a better place for everybody.

We’ve seen the expansion of marriage rights; we’ve seen the inclusion of gender identity and gender expression as protected grounds in human rights legislation everywhere. As we were mentioning earlier today, our province has allowed for the provision of gender-affirming surgery.

Yet despite the progress we’ve made, some would still prefer to treat certain sexual orientations and gender identities as illnesses needing a cure.

You cannot cure an illness that does not exist.

Conversion therapy is touted as one such harmful cure. Conversion therapy attempts to alter the sexual orientation of an individual through various means, including counselling, behavioural change and medication.

Health organizations and associations across the board have loudly and assertively denounced the practice.

The Canadian Psychology Association and the Pan American Health Organization have opposed the practice. The Canadian Pediatric Society has said the practice is and I quote: clearly unethical and should not be provided by physicians, nor should physicians refer patients for such therapy.

Kevin Alderson, the president of the College of Alberta Psychologists, has said this and I quote: in over 100 years of research in the field of psychology, there has never ever been a report that says that conversion

therapy is successful. It has been a dismal failure. He adds: It would be better that people embrace their sexual identity and their gender identity at a younger age, so that we can relieve their psychological suffering. And let us never forget that when people are unable to accept themselves, that is the leading cause of suicide.

Some Canadian jurisdictions have already taken action to address conversion therapy.

Ontario banned the practice with all-party support in 2015 with the Affirming Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Act, a bill dedicated to Leelah Alcorn, a transgender teen who was sent to conversion therapy and consequently took her life.

This fall in Nova Scotia, legislation prohibiting the practice was passed after all parties brought forward bills after the media reported a pro-conversion-therapy group was invited to speak at an event in the province. Alberta is currently developing legislation on the issue.

The health community and the LGBTQ+ community have been clear: this practice is harmful and this practice is unethical.

I believe our government should lend its voice to the fight against conversion therapy. I ask this House to urge government to do several things: prohibit the provision of conversion therapy on Prince Edward Island; to prohibit referrals to conversion therapy services; to prohibit the use of public funds to provide access to or otherwise support conversion therapy services; and finally, to issue sanctions against individuals or groups who provide access to conversion therapy services.

You cannot cure an illness that does not exist.

I look forward to this House's support.

Thank you very much.

Speaker: I will now ask the seconder of this motion to please speak to the motion, the hon. from Charlottetown-Parkdale.

Ms. Bell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

My comments are brief.

All Islanders should be able to live their lives in security and dignity, valued by their community and respected for who they are. I call on all members of this House to support this motion and send a clear message to the LGBTQ community and to all Islanders: we see you and we care.

Thank you.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Mitchell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Conversion therapy is very serious issue. I'm pleased to report that Health PEI and the provincial health system does not practice conversion therapy.

Additionally, we are not aware of any conversion therapy being practiced on PEI.

Three Canadian provinces and several US regions have established laws specifically prohibiting the use of practice that would try to change the sexual orientation or gender identity of a person; in many cases specifically those under the age of 19.

It has been said that conversion therapy is not a legitimate service. Just because it isn't happening right now, it doesn't mean that we shouldn't be taking action and asking the hard questions like: are we doing enough to protect our friends, neighbors and family members in the 2SLGBTIQ+ community, and those still exploring and discovering their sexual orientation and gender identity.

Can we do more? And what is happening across the country?

Conversion therapy can be harmful to both, the mental and physical health, of young people. It has been widely condemned by human rights incredible health organizations, quite literally, all around the world.

The World Health Organization, the American Psychiatry Association, the American Medical Association, the Canadian Psychology Association, as well as many others, have spoken against conversion therapy.

Prince Edward Island is a proudly diverse and inclusive province. We are a province that cherishes and embraces the uniqueness of every individual.

We want our youth to be proud of who they are and to know they have their community and their government standing directly behind them.

I will be supporting this motion today and we need to ask the big question and see what is happening across the country and move towards prohibiting people in a position of authority from providing conversion therapy.

We want to do everything we can to protect the emotional and psychological health of our citizens and particularly, vulnerable groups in our society.

As the government in particular as a department of health, we need to protect services that are aimed to council and help people work through their gender identity.

We have enhanced access to gender confirming surgeries and associated services because this is the right thing to do.

While our society is becoming more inclusive of gender and sexual minorities, some individuals, particularly children and youth, still experience oppression and discrimination.

These experiences can contribute to mental health problems for some gender diverse and sexual minority youth.

Young people are often still judged or excluded from activities, bullied at school and face violence at home or in their communities. They may experience intense pressure to look like, act like, the gender they were labeled with at birth.

For these reasons, according to the Canadian Mental Health Association, gender diverse and sexual minority youth are more likely to experience depression or anxiety; use drugs or alcohol in a way that causes problems for them; attempt suicide; leave or be force to leave school early; have unstable housing or be homeless.

Being part of the 2SLGBTIQ+ community does not mean a person has mental illness. But we do know that a percentage of the 2SLGBTIQ+ community members are struggling with their mental health and that number is high.

Our new Capital Budget has committed to invest \$100 million into mental health infrastructure. We are building our system to support all Islanders as we work through the issues of mental health.

We are building new community hubs to support more Islanders closer to home. We are adding tele-mental health services. We are enhancing ER supports for mental health, and ensuring acute care support is there for people that need it the most.

I support today's motion.

And in closing, I want to briefly share with you an article that a US therapist wrote in *Psychology Today*, and it reads: Therapy must be evidence-based and empirically verified in order to be a best practice. Conversion therapy is neither.

Many analysis of studies on the treatment have found it simply doesn't work. Qualitative reports have detailed all of the suffering and pain that it leaves behind. Conversion therapy is something we don't currently practice on PEI, and we have absolutely no interest in establishing this practice in this province.

Thank you very much.

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

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I will be very brief on this topic.

I support the motion and I think that it's something that we have to be all on the same page of as legislators in this province because it only takes one rogue government to do things that are inhumane or that shouldn't be done to people.

I look at my own life and I've had some great opportunities and I was always able to be who I wanted to be and who I was inside, and it's sad to think that there are people out

there who, when they finally come to grips with who they are inside and they tell someone and someone suggests that they have conversion – like who they are is somehow wrong. It's completely ridiculous.

As humans in 2018, we should be supportive of one another and be supportive of who people are regardless of who they are. It's completely ridiculous to think there are places in the world that these practices actually exist. It's something that we shouldn't have here on Prince Edward Island and I will definitely be supporting this motion for those obvious reasons and I hope everyone else does the same.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Biggar: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

I want to stand to support the motion and also to congratulate the work of Peers Alliance that's been happening and the great work that they've been doing in the community to support and to educate our larger community on the concerns and the issues that is are being faced.

I think we need to do more work within our schools to support students. We know that there is still a lot of bullying going on and that is not acceptable, no matter how you look, no matter who you are, no matter what you believe, no matter the colour of your skin, or your sexual orientation.

I think we still have a lot of work to do. But, I think ensuring that community is supportive of moving things forward and ensuring – as the minister said, a lot of changes have taken place to move things forward which is a big step for PEI to come out of the dark ages, I'm going to say.

We know it's hard for PEI to change, but these are the lives of our brothers and our sisters and our children that we are talking about here. So as a community, as a Legislature, we need to show Prince Edward Island that we are not in support, first of all, of conversion therapy, but also in support of ensuring that we support those that need that support and are there to help.

I thank everyone for being here tonight, and I thank my colleagues for their words and in supporting in motion.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I do rise tonight to support this motion as well.

Really, I mean something like conversion therapy doesn't make sense, and it's only common sense that it should be banned. We have heard a lot of from others about the sort of negative, to put it mildly, negative impacts something conversion therapy has. And like I said, it's common sense that it should be banned.

I also want to thank PEERS Alliance for the work they have done, and really people across Canada, who are bringing practices like this to light because there's a lot of people, let's face it, that wouldn't even know what conversion therapy was or that it was happening. I must admit, I was one of those people but because of your work – and thank you to the Third Party as well for bringing this motion here tonight – now we know about it and we can condemn this practice.

In fact, I went online and I signed a petition, E1833, the Government of Canada right now as well, to put this forward so that it can be banned at the national level officially.

It's very important. This to me is a good use of a motion here in the House to bring attention to this sort of thing. So I do support the motion. I thank you all for bringing this forward. And let's hope that we don't see any sort of conversion therapy happening going forward, and people can be treated for who they are inside.

Thank you.

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

Ms. Casey: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As a proud Islander, I am so proud of our diversity and our inclusivity and I am happy

to lend my voice to prohibit conversion therapy on Prince Edward Island, and I'd like to go on record.

Thank you.

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

Mr. Palmer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise today in support of this motion as well. And like some of the folks across here, I wasn't aware of conversion therapy until this came to light. So I'm very happy that this came to us today so that we can really understand, I guess, the ridiculous nature of having this. Like, I'm so surprised.

It shocks me that this would be thought of as a treatment for something that doesn't exist. So I'm very glad that we are able to be here today to talk about this; to make sure that this can never happen here.

People should get to be who people are. So again, I'm still very confused, I guess, by this to think that was something that some governments would allow and I'm very proud to hear that our government does not. I think it's a great opportunity for us to put support behind this to make sure that no one can in the future, because we need to make sure that we embrace all Islanders and we have to make sure that we're all there to protect one another, Mr. Speaker.

In conclusion, I just want to thank all the leaders that are here today with us that helped bring this to the forefront for us so that we can all educate ourselves on something that we probably wish we didn't know about.

So I think it's really important for us to make sure that this is something that cannot happen in PEI, and I am in full support of this, and again, thank you very much for bringing this to us.

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

Ms. Mundy: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I, too, will be brief because I want to make sure that this does get to vote this evening.

I, like the hon. Member from Charlottetown-Lewis Point, want to go on the record in loaning my support to this motion.

Conversion therapy is a barbaric practice and even though Prince Edward Island hasn't – conversion therapy hasn't been happening here, as the hon. Member from Georgetown-St. Peters mentioned, it doesn't necessarily mean that it never will. So this motion and voting for this will ensure that this barbaric practice never, ever again will happen on Prince Edward Island as we go forward.

Prince Edward Islanders are proud of our diversity and our inclusivity, and we want our youth to be proud of who they are.

I will leave you with a Margaret Mead quote because I am so very, very proud of you. You're a small group, but you're very mighty. In her quote Margaret Mead said: We should never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world for indeed it is the only thing that ever has.

You're changing the world and please continue to do so.

Thank you.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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

It's certainly an honour for me to rise in the Legislative Assembly and speak to this motion that the Leader of the Third Party and his associate has brought forward and it's an important motion for us to bring to the floor for discussion and see the great support in the House so far that we have heard tonight.

I was also very pleased to hear from the minister of health with regards to the research that he has done within his own department, his own government, which didn't shock me. I would only assume – and I know one should never assume that this government or any government on Prince Edward Island would support conversion therapy, but I would guess, where I go to with this motion is not so that the

government would support it, but there are organizations, whether a certain faction or religious organization or what have you, that maybe working with groups, within individuals to do believe in conversion therapy, so I guess I have more questions with regards to what is out there.

I know and I applaud the group that's here tonight for bringing this forward and supporting Islanders, all Islanders, because that's what you're doing.

So although we as legislators here in the provincial Legislature, I would suspect is going to support this motion unanimously. If an individual is out there and they are being coerced by family, friends, by associates, by a religious sect, those individuals need to know where they can turn for help because even though we stand in this House in support arm in arm against conversion therapy, as long as there is a possibility that this can happen to any individual is fundamentally wrong and they need though know where they can turn.

I leave that as sort of an unanswered question, but knowing that I do support this motion 100%.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Are there any other members who would like to speak to this motion?

If not, I will go back to the mover of the motion to close debate on the motion.

The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

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

I want to thank all the members of the House who spoke to eloquently and passionately about this important issue.

This is a special day for a community that's had lot of hard days, a lot of challenging days for a very long time. It's a special day because the trans-flag flew for the first time in the Legislature here in Prince Edward Island and it's a special day because we were able to debate on international transgender day, a motion in this House calling for the banning of conversion therapy. I'm going to call it Daniel's motion.

I can think of a more fitting way to celebrate international transgender day than to pass with all-party support motion 90 in this House.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

[Applause]

Speaker: Are you ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Question.

Speaker: All those –

Ms. Biggar: Standing vote.

Speaker: A standing vote?

Okay, Sergeant-at-Arms, a recorded division has been requested.

You can ring the bell.

[The bells were rung]

All those not supporting this motion or voting against this motion, please stand.

All those members who are voting for this motion and supporting the motion, please stand.

Clerk: The hon. Minister of Communities, Land and Environment; the hon. Minister of Economic Development and Tourism; the hon. Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy; 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. 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 Charlottetown-Parkdale; the hon. Leader of the Third Party; the hon. Leader of the Opposition; the hon. Opposition House Leader; the hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque; the hon. Member from West Royalty-Springvale; the hon. Member from Tignish-Palmer Road; the hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald; the hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid; and the hon. Member from Georgetown-St. Peters.

Speaker: Hon. members, this motion is passed and it is unanimous.

[Applause]

Speaker: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Parkdale.

Orders Other Than Government

Ms. Bell: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. Leader of the Third Party, that the 29th order of the day be now read.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk: Order No. 29, *An Act to Amend the Innovation PEI Act*, Bill No. 123, in committee.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Parkdale.

Ms. Bell: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable 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.

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 Prince Edward Island Act*. Is it the pleasure of the committee that the bill be now read clause by clause?

Mr. Roach: Yes.

Chair: Yes, you may. Would you care to give an overview of the bill? I think you can just say it was in committee.

Ms. Bell: Yes, this bill was in committee last week where we had a discussion on the two amendments that are being proposed.

Briefly, this adds cultural and creative industries as a strategic sector to ensure appropriate level of economic development and operational support is allocated. It amends and expands the definition to renewable energy and clean technologies,

which will broaden the sector scope to better align with federal and regional priorities.

Chair: Are there any further question?

The hon. Minister of Economic Development and Tourism.

Mr. Palmer: Thank you very much.

This is really interesting. I really like this.

What do you think the impact of making those changes would have on the department?

Ms. Bell: On the department? Effectively very little, initially.

The inclusion of the cultural and creative industries is one of the recommendations from Euro cultural action plan, so it is basically to try and accelerate that into the legislation. As I said in here, to sort of enshrine that as a strategic objective.

The expansion of the clean technologies is actually one that could expand the potential projects that could be included in future business development and project activities, particularly, in those that require federal or regional partners. So, what I expect will happen, is it increases the capacity for the province to access and expand greater economic activity in that area, which is a positive.

Chair: Minister of Economic Development and Tourism.

Mr. Palmer: So by expand that capacity, do you mean we'll have more supports say from the feds?

Ms. Bell: Correct, yeah.

The document I tabled earlier today showed quite a lot about some of those economic projections, specifically around this sector, which are really leveraging a lot that support. Minister, those are ones I think will be a great value to the province.

Chair: Minister of Economic Development and Tourism.

Mr. Palmer: Thank you, Chair.

So when you identified those couple of sectors based on the report, I guess, that you had tabled today, was there other sectors in there that were identified or how did you come up with those two as the two that should be added here?

Ms. Bell: Well, we already have economic sectors that have been in place since the prosperity strategy, sort of over 10 years ago. Adding cultural and creative was identified because of the Cultural Action Plan.

The expansion of renewable energy to add clean technology was because of the recommendations and the changes in direction that have come through from the ACOA, Atlantic Growth Strategy, and the – I said – new direction around including clean tech as a primary sector at that level.

We didn't see any other sectors – we don't want to have like a basket of everything. So it was really about what would be the most impactful at the legislative level to be able to match those other programs federally and regionally.

Chair: Minister of Economic Development and Tourism.

Mr. Palmer: Yeah, I agree with you. I'm just looking for clarity on those that would be more impactful at the legislative piece that you just said.

What do you mean by that?

Ms. Bell: Because it's been quite clear that having sectors specifically identified in legislation in the *Innovation PEI Act* has been fundamental in them having that long-term strategic direction.

So, the best example is, we've spoken about before around biotech, and that that long-term vision that has sort of outlived changes in government and changes in policies and priorities happens because it's set at the legislative level. It allows long-term visionary investment, and really for the bulk of these sectors they're both sectors that can benefit from that same long-term vision that comes from it being at the strategic level.

Chair: Minister of Economic Development and Tourism.

Mr. Palmer: Yeah, I think those are good and you're right on the cultural side. That was a recommendation that we had in our five-year action plan –

Ms. Bell: On page 14.

Mr. Palmer: – which was identify creative industries as strategic sector on Prince Edward Island. That's good you helped us to get that piece in the legislation for us. So thank you.

To extend that, do you think there's other sectors that we should be looking at to have that legislative push on inside of the department, because – I assume that that would be a little bit of trying to forecast where we think growth could potentially happen here on PEI, and then that would give us the opportunity to rally the supports around those things like we've done with the Cultural Action Plan.

Some of those things that have really helped us to focus down on like the cultural industry supports, as an example, where we've helped Music PEI and FilmPEI to further expand their silos inside of this.

Chair: Sorry. Hon. members, we've reached our allotted time for this bill. So, I'm going to have the member read this and we'll come out of committee.

Ms. Bell: I move the title.

Chair: *An Act to Amend the Innovation PEI Act.*

Shall it carry? Carried.

Ms. Bell: 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. Bell: Madam Chair, I move the Speaker take the chair and that 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 intituled *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.

I call on the hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Government Motions

Mr. Roach: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'd like to bring to Motion No. 74 back on the floor and continue with the conversation on that.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Mr. Roach: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Where I left off the last time was, we were talking about our students, and our families, teachers, and school staff, and those who deal with traumatic events that happen in our communities. We had also talked about the extra support that even teachers and staff receive from our mental health providers and grief counsellors.

There's also – anytime any of these traumatic events happen, we always hear and know that our clergy, various religions and staff from those organizations that come forward, not only times in traumatic events, but they're there every day – each and every day for our community, for people on Prince Edward Island.

I did refer to a number of events that have happened just in my district alone over the last number of years. Unfortunately, we seem to get hit down there relatively hard over the last number of years with traumatic events. I've had the conversations, and I've been to counselling sessions, I've had the conversations with teachers, with families, with grief counsellors, certainly with other providers that come together to provide that support and that physical presence that means so much to those people who are going through these events.

We only have to look back to last year, it's not just in Prince Edward Island, but you look to Humboldt, Saskatchewan, and the event that took place out there. We look at everything that was provided in that instance, and that one stands out more so because it was so public.

We all went home that night, we turned the television on, it was always on the news, or there was a special. I think at that time, we had a tremendous insight into what takes place during traumatic events, and I would have preferred to never have seen anything on television. I would have preferred that that event never would have happened.

Nonetheless, I think it is an education for each and every one of us when we go through this and we see it. I'm sure, like many others, our hearts were very saddened when we saw the families, when we heard the stories. It is absolutely no different then what takes place in PEI. Only, sometimes in PEI, if you're not in the community, if you don't attend, you don't see it like we did as the larger community in that event. I just bring that up to draw the analogy that happens.

I think it is important that the Legislative Assembly of Prince Edward Island recognize the vital role of our teachers, our school staff, our counselors, students, staff, clergy, community members that are there to help our tired community get through a crisis situation, a traumatic event.

I encourage that the government continue to support these value professionals, who provide needed support and guidance in difficult times. And reduce the potential severe effects of traumatic events. We have had a lot of conversation in here tonight, talking about mental illness. In these situations, when it is so traumatic, the impact that that has on an individual person, is phenomenal.

In my past life, I have certainly attended many traumatic events. I have had to go knock on doors at two or three o'clock in the morning and bring terrible news to parents, brothers and sisters, and families. I think if you have to opportunity to go through that a few times, it really tells you how important it is to have all of these providers there.

So, I would encourage the government – not only the government, but every person in this Legislature– to support those professionals that I know we can rely on. They are professional. They make an incredible difference and we need them, they are valued, and they are right in our communities.

So for now, I will close my remarks.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Next, speaking to this motion, the seconder, the Member from Tignish-Palmer Road.

Mr. Perry: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I am happy to stand up and second this motion brought forward by the hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

I support this motion because I understand the pressures that are put on our students and on the staff during tragic events in our schools and in our communities.

I come from a small community; we are a tight-knit community as the best of times, but we got that much closer at the worst times.

If I can take a second look past the schools; when someone from our community is having health concerns or dealing with a death, it is very common for benefit events to happen. We have a way of uniting to make sure that no community member is left behind or left without.

That same sense of compassion can be found can be found in our schools when there is a traumatic event. Students are that much more susceptible to negative effects of a tragic event because they've yet to learn the same coping skills as adults do. When dealing with school-age children, there is an extra layer on complexity when trying to guide them through their emotions.

As an adult, I find it hard sometimes to fully grasp a situation, so I can only imagine what goes through the mind of a child, who may not fully understand things like death or illness.

The teachers will always have my respect. They do great work to educate the next generation of Islanders. Those teachers on the frontlines are not immune to traumatic events; our teachers need support too –

An Hon. Member: Call the hour.

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

I call on the hon. Minister of Workforce and Advanced Learning.

Mr. Gallant: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I move, seconded by the Honourable Member from Montague-Kilmuir, that this House adjourn until Wednesday, November, 21st at 2:00 p.m.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

The Legislature adjourned.