

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY



Speaker: Hon. Francis (Buck) Watts

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The Legislature sat at 2:00 p.m.

Matters of Privilege and Recognition of
Guests

Speaker (Watts): Hon. members, as Speaker and on behalf of the Legislative Assembly of Prince Edward Island, I am very pleased to be welcoming representatives from the House of Assembly of the Turks and Caicos Islands.

[Applause]

In July of 2016, a Parliamentary Partnership Agreement was signed between the Turks and Caicos Islands House of Assembly and the Prince Edward Island Legislative Assembly.

This agreement aims to promote a sharing of best practices and expertise between our parliaments on areas of common interest, including Hansard services, training to promote parliamentary development and expertise, the operation of Legislative Libraries, quality assurance and management services, facilitating parliamentary exchanges as a means of fostering links between parliamentarians and parliamentary staff and hosting youth parliaments.

The representatives here today from the Parliament of Turks and Caicos Islands include: The Honourable Dwayne S. Taylor, Speaker of the House of Assembly of Turks and Caicos Islands, along with Opposition Appointed Member, the Honourable Royal S. Robinson.

[Applause]

Hon. members, please join me in welcoming them to Prince Edward Island and our Legislative Chamber.

[Applause]

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Good afternoon, everyone, and welcome to those in the gallery and those viewing from afar.

Let me reiterate your welcome to the hon. Dwayne Taylor and the hon. Royal Robinson from the Turks and Caicos. You're here at such a prime time of our tourist season; an indication of how attractive our Mighty Island is to visitors and the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of the Turks and Caicos extended to me an invitation to come for a return visit and as you might say, I'll take that under advisement. Thank you, gentlemen.

This is the International Day for Persons with Disabilities. We have a number of people in our gallery today in that connection, Marcia Carroll, executive director of the PEI Council of People with Disabilities; Judy Hennessey, executive director of Harbourview Training Centre; and Joel Dennis from Tremploy Inc. Welcome to the three of you.

I see Kenneth Murnaghan is here, who has done a lot of great work on this and related causes, and it's great to see you with us, Kenneth.

We have Lorne Yeo, a regular visitor but first time we needed to keep the sitting going, Lorne, so that you could make it in. I saw Lorne at a wake on Sunday and he informed me that he'd be making an appearance and it's great to see you here, Lorne.

A couple of representatives from the new district 2, Kevin Doyle who is the nominated Liberal candidate in Georgetown-Pownal; and Dale Hickox, who is the president of the district there and involved in the community in other ways including, active leadership in the snowmobile association. And so, we have that to look forward to, too, Dale.

I just wanted to acknowledge, as well, that Tara Roach and Shauna Wright are here in the primary care field, and it's great to have them in the audience, and everyone who is here today.

On Saturday I had the opportunity to welcome a group of very close to 200 municipal leaders, newly-elected councillors and mayors, from right across the province; from Tignish to East Point to Murray Harbour – take part in an orientation session at the North Shore community in my home

community, and it was a very impressive event.

I asked the group how many of them were in their current role for the first time and roughly a third of them put up their hand, and it was a great indication of the vitality and the commitment that we have in this province to a good local government and that the voters took part, and that so many people are involved and have put their names forward as candidates, and that councils will be sworn in, or have been, in this immediate period and that it's a great setting of the clock going forward with leadership throughout our province.

I congratulate everyone who's taking on those new roles, everyone who has served, and everyone who took part in the democratic process.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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

It's a pleasure for me to rise as well on behalf of the official opposition and to welcome those who may be viewing in via Internet or EastLink today, and especially to welcome the two distinguished individuals that have joined us here from the assembly in the Turks and Caicos.

Of course, the speaker, Dwayne Taylor, and the member of the official opposition, the hon. Royal Robinson. Gentlemen, it's wonderful to see you here and I look forward to having a dialogue tomorrow morning.

On behalf of the official opposition, I'm sure all Members of the Legislative Assembly, I'd like to pass on my condolences to the family of Greg MacDonald, one of our entrusted friends and colleagues here in the Legislative Assembly. Greg sort of works behind the scenes, but in a lot of ways we couldn't do what we do without having Greg's support. Greg's mom passed away yesterday morning, so I'm sure, not only myself, but all members would wish to pass on their condolences to Greg and his entire family.

As the Premier said, it's also great to see Lorne Yeo here. Lorne, I haven't received a letter for a little while from you, but I know all of your correspondence that you send me, I take it to heart and I read everything that you send. I look forward to some written dialogue here in the very near future, I'm sure.

As well, as it is the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, I'd also like to welcome Marcia Carroll with us today; Judy Hennessey with the Harbourview Training Centre. You do incredible work up there in Souris. I had the opportunity to visit many times and purchase many of the items that your clients produce there.

And of course, Joel Dennis from Tremplon; again, it's a facility that I visit as often as I can, especially around election time because it's a great place to buy stakes to put signs up and things like that. But as well, I have many friends and clients that work there and I applaud the work that you do as well.

And of course, Kenneth Murnaghan who has joined us here today and does yeoman's work in advocating for brain injury awareness here on PEI.

I wanted to bring special attention to the promotion that was just held by Marcia and her organization in Summerside with regards to bringing awareness to accessibility and the challenges that some people have. I saw the news story and I read all about it, and I applaud you for the great initiative. I'm sure, and I'm confident and I'm hoping, that it certainly has opened up the eyes to many people and they'll take heed.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

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

Welcome back, everybody, for another week here in the Legislature. I want to welcome everybody to the gallery.

I had the great pleasure this morning of already having a chat with the two gentlemen who are with us from Turks and

Caicos, so lovely to see you officially here welcomed in the gallery, hon. Dwayne Taylor and hon. Royal Robinson. Thank you for being here, and I look forward also to chatting with you tomorrow.

As those who preceded me have already mentioned, yesterday was the International Day for Persons with Disabilities and I want to welcome Marcia Carroll and Ken Murnaghan here. I know we'll be talking a little bit more about that particular day later, but it's lovely to see you here in the gallery today.

Last evening the results of the bi-election in Ontario were made public in Leeds Granville, which is my old stomping ground, I ran there many times.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Dr. Bevan-Baker: I personally know a number of the people who were candidates there. So, I want to congratulate everybody who put their name forward. To Michael Barrett, who, again, I know personally and was the eventual winner. I note that the turnout was just over 35%; a little bit less than our plebiscite two years ago.

Saturday also marked World Aids Day, December 1st marked World Aids Day; a day where we raise awareness about that disease which is still a pandemic, of course caused by the spread of the HIV virus. It's a time of course to mourn those that we have lost and particularly, for many of us who may have seen the recent movie on the life of Freddie Mercury, the devastation that that caused to a community. Of course, its spread way beyond that community now, and AIDS, of course, is no longer a death sentence. Treatment is available and people live long and very full and meaningful lives with the virus. But prevention, obviously, is the most important and the best option when it comes to diseases like AIDS.

Later today we'll be tabling a motion from the Third Party entitled, Improving the Sexual Health Curriculum, which talks about good sexual health and promoting safe sex and things like that.

I want to, also, make mention of the Confederation Centre choir who performed on Sunday the Messiah. That used to be an

annual event that I would participate in. Life does no longer allow that. But I know what a lovely thing that is and for me, there's nothing that gets me in the festive spirit more than hearing music associated with the holidays. I didn't hear the performance on Sunday, but I understand it was the usual fantastic show. So congratulations to Don Fraser and to all of the singers and the orchestra members of the Confederation Centre.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Dumville: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'd like to welcome everybody back for another week and also like to welcome the delegation from Turks and Caicos. I wish we had of had you join us awhile back because we could the warm weather and a place to go from up gentlemen.

I'd like to welcome the Leader of the NDP, Joe Byrne is with us. It's good to see Eddie with us and Kenny Murnaghan and Marcia Carroll. Also, it's good to see Lorne Yeo with us today. Lorne, I thought I was the only one that you were writing letters to save our wildlife on Sundays, but now I got competition from the Leader of the Opposition, so maybe I can lighten up a little bit.

It's good to see everybody here today and hope we have a wonderful session.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Borden-Kinkora.

Mr. Fox: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I just want to talk about on Sunday night a group is continuing to meet the Cape Travers memorial monument, the group on the ice boat. The next phase is being worked with right now with Parks Canada on the establishing of an actual shelter over top of the monument. It's great to see this committee and Parks Canada – and I'm on that committee – and continue to work to get this monument back put into a great light.

I also wanted to say hello to the grade nine class at Kinkora High School where I attended yesterday. I was invited in for 8:30 and we had a great hour together talking about some different things in government and different bills and how that procedure was. I just want to give a shout out to Ms. Jessica Reeves and her whole class of grade nine math.

Thank you.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

Mr. LaVie: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'll keep this short.

I'd just like to welcome everyone back after the weekend and especially those in the gallery, especially our media. Our media gets a message out for us, so we need the media for sure.

While we're saying hello to everyone in the gallery, I'd like to just say hello to Judy Hennessey from the Harbourview. I had a chance, actually yesterday, to go up to Harbourview and have a chat with Judy and they do great work up there. I seen how hard she works and I'm glad she came in just to see how hard I work.

Mr. R. Brown: She hasn't seen it yet.

Mr. LaVie: Actually, while we were having a conversation, I didn't know she was coming in until today. So, Judy, just keep an eye out and you'll see actually what I really do.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. LaVie: Easy question boys, easy question.

Ms. Casey: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I too, would like to welcome all those visiting in the gallery, especially Joel Dennis from Tremplay, which is in my riding. Many of my constituents are employed at Tremplay and I always feel very, very welcome when I visit.

Also, I would like to welcome as everyone has the guests from Turks and Caicos, and as your Deputy Speaker, I would be happy to do a return visit with you should the time arise.

But really I'm here to stand and offer my congratulations to all Island students who yesterday received their coveted X ring at St. Francis Xavier University. So to all of those Island students who are now wearing some new bling I say: hail and health.

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

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

I just want to recognize Marcia Carroll. I was out to see Marcia last week, and I'm going to do a little bit of advertising for her today. The council of the disabled helps people fill out their Canada Pension Disability application forms. I understand Marcia over the last year has brought in over \$1 million to Islanders in need. I want to thank you.

Statements by Members

Speaker: The hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque.

Grant MacDonald

Mr. MacKay: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

On November 23rd, the Kensington community lost a long-time popular custodian at Kensington Intermediate Senior High School. Grant MacDonald worked as a custodian at KISH for 15 years before taking medical leave. He passed away after battling a brief illness.

Grant was well-loved in the community. He always put in the maximum effort for his school, and did it with a smile on his face.

Students and staff fondly recall Grant's dedication to his work and his cheerful, easygoing nature. He lent a ready hand, no matter how big the task, and was always willing to take time out of his day to stop and chat.

The funeral for Grant was held on November 27th at St. Paul's church in

Summerside. KISH cancelled classes the day of the funeral so that the staff and students could go and pay their respects to their favourite custodian. Many who attended the funeral said that it was the greatest turnout they had ever witnessed at St. Paul's.

Today I'd like to express my condolences to Grant's family and the KISH community. Grant's smiling face will be clearly missed around the school, but his impact on the students he interacted with will certainly be remembered for years to come.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Consensus Governments

Mr. Dumville: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

There are many challenges as we consider casting off the old and moving to something new. The notion that the two principle parties are too deeply entrenched in Island political history to be seriously challenged.

Mr. LaVie: Oh.

Mr. Dumville: It is not too long ago that religious denomination was a big part of our political life. It is no longer an issue, and it is not inconceivable that the elimination of the party system is also possible.

New social media, younger voting millennials, and existing voter apathy are conditions for a revolutionary change in Island politics.

The voting public is tired of giving parties a four-year mandate to govern as they please.

Mr. Trivers: Bring it into the fourth dimension.

Mr. LaVie: (Indistinct)

Mr. Dumville: Costly, million dollar campaigns ensure it's the status quo protecting the financially privileged, leaving the majority of Islanders without a voice.

Islanders are not happy with today's adversarial politics and would be accepting

of a cooperative, consensus model that benefits everyone.

Responses to Questions Taken as Notice

Questions by Members

Speaker: Questions will begin from the hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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

Back in February of 2016, I submitted a written question asking for a breakdown of the number of Islanders on the patient registry.

Delay in responses to written questions

Question to the minister of health: Why did it take 29 months to get a response to that question from your department?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

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

I don't recall the question, per say. So I'll check into that – why there was such a lapse in time.

I get regular updates on our patient registry on a monthly basis. I just happened to get that yesterday, so that we know where we stand on patient registry.

The number is hovering around the 11,000 mark and if you put that in the percentage perspective it's around 8% of Islanders that do not have a doctor – family physician. Conversely, 92% of Islanders do have a family doctor.

This number is concerning. We will work on recruitment efforts to bring physicians forth for all of those 11,000 Islanders.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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

The response I received in late July of this year contained two noteworthy pieces of

information. First, the response said that as of March 2016 there were over 8,400 Islanders on the patient registry. Second, the response began by saying: As of today, March 21st, 2016.

Info between Health PEI and Legislative Assembly

Question to the health minister: Does it normally take 29 months for information to travel from Health PEI to this House?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. LaVie: (Indistinct)

Mr. Mitchell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Certainly that is a lengthy time period, and as I told the hon. member, I will check into that. But currently we do know there is about 11,000 Islanders that are on the registry waiting for a doctor.

I do encourage any Islanders that may be listening in today that do not have a family doctor and are not sure whether they're on the registry or not to definitely call forward to ensure that their name is there.

We will work with all Islanders that are on that list to try to provide a physician to provide that timely primary care need that all Islanders should and must have, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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

As of March 21st, 2016, there were 8,408 Islanders on the patient registry according to the government numbers.

We know since then there have been doctor retirements and departures, and we know that up to 3,000 orphan patients in West Prince were advised by government to not even put their name on the patient registry.

Islanders on patient registry

Question to the health minister: You stand here today and say there's 11,000 Islanders

not on patient registry, but yet we also know that your department told over 3,000 patients not to even put their name on the registry. Minister, can you tell us what is the real answer?

Mr. LaVie: Shame.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Mitchell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Out of that 11,000, which I identified from an updated list I received yesterday, there are three physician vacancies at the moment. Two have panel sizes of 1,500 each for a total of 3,001 and the west end of PEI has a patient panel size of 800. So that's 3,800 out of that 11,000, so that brings it a little closer to the number that the hon. member speaks of.

We do know that this is a concern. We are working very closely with recruitment and retention to, not only recruit physicians, but to recruit NPs. We recently were able to add NP numbers to our list, and we were out recruiting.

Hopefully that through collaborative practice we will be able to pick up a lot of this panel size. I have had conversations with the Medical Society of PEI who were very supportive of looking at collaborative practice with nurse practitioners and physicians, and helping us with that panel size.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Borden-Kinkora.

Mr. Fox: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Over the last year, South Shore residents have been working hard to fill the gap in the local health access created by this government when the area family doctor relocated their practice to fill another doctor vacancy in the province. Twenty-three hundred people lost their doctor.

Replacement doctor for South Shore

Question to the health minister: Can the minister give an update on efforts to recruit a replacement doctor for South Shore

residents that have lost their family doctor last year?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Mitchell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The hon. member is correct. We've had a lot of good conversation with a community group out there that are out, I'll say, actively recruiting on their own for a family physician.

We've had meetings in my boardroom and in their boardroom at the rink facility out there. Excellent meetings, I must say, by a group of community individuals who are very focused on ensuring their primary care needs for that community are being well met.

We are looking at recruiting together. We are also, as I just alluded to, looking at adding new nurse practitioners to our complement on PEI. That's a potential something in the works for Crapaud and that area, which they were very receptive of if we could get that done.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Borden-Kinkora.

Mr. Fox: Well, Mr. Speaker, this community has really come together and stepped up in response to the loss of the local –

Mr. Mitchell: – new nurse practitioners to our complement on PEI and that's a potential something in the works for Crapaud in that area, which they were very receptive of if we could get that done.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Borden-Kinkora.

Mr. Fox: This community has really come together and stepped up in response to the loss of the local doctor, affecting thousands of patients.

They put together a plan for a collaborative health clinic, including nurse practitioners; allied health services and yes, even a doctor.

Timeline for family doctor at South Shore

Question to the Minister of Health and Wellness: Is there an estimated timeline to when residents can see a family doctor working back in the community?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

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

Those conversations have been ongoing and certainly we are working with the community group on recruitment efforts for a physician. They've had some opportunity within their own group based on physicians they know in other areas of Atlantic region that might have interest to come.

We've encouraged them to reach out to them and we'll support them through our recruitment and retention team.

We are working diligently to try to find a physician for that area; we've posted that position openly and are waiting for some responses back.

In the meantime, we will work with that community – if we get our nurse practitioners in place to see if that's a possible solution, at least in a short term until a physician is recruited.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Borden-Kinkora.

Mr. Fox: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The community went out and they raised the money to build the space for this plan. Currently, a walk-in clinic is open on a site in Crapaud with some nurse practitioner services available.

Increasing hours for nurse practitioner

Question to the Minister of Health and Wellness: Is the province looking at increasing the hours of nurse practitioner coverage to help fill the gap of patients having no family doctor?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Mitchell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

In conversations I've had with the committee, when we do identify the health professional to come, that's when discussions of that nature would take place to determine what kind of hours would be there.

I've actually been in that clinic and I do know that they have a number of health allied professionals that come in there and run services out of that facility all through the week.

I applaud them for the work they've done to get health professionals to come in to do that and I'll work very closely with them in the future on ensuring their needs are met, either with a physician or a nurse practitioner.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Borden-Kinkora.

Mr. Fox: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The community's vision is to have a collaborative health clinic providing a range of integrated services for the thousands of orphaned patients all along the South Shore area.

Replacement doctor for South Shore (further)

Question to the Minister of Health and Wellness: Do you agree that having a doctor practicing in the community as part of the team would compliment this model?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Mitchell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I don't think it's any secret that I'm very supportive of collaborative practice, I've indicated that many times off the floor of the Legislature here, as well as in conversation with the medical society of PEI.

We have been working very closely on identifying that these patient registry sizes and individuals – Islanders all across PEI that do not have a health care provider is an important issue for our government and the med society will work with us on that.

Collaborative practices, I believe would be the way of the future on Prince Edward

Island and I will work with any physician or any nurse practitioner that wants to work on the collaborative practice.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Borden-Kinkora.

Mr. Fox: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We've heard many concerns expressed locally about how the doctor vacancy is being promoted.

Question to the Minister of Health and Wellness: This is a clinic that is literally right on the county line, literally, of Prince Country and Queens County.

Advertising of area for doctor vacancy

Can the minister explain, why the doctor vacancy is only being advertised as part of the Queens West Primary Care Network, instead of the vacancy for Crapaud?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Mitchell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

When it comes to physician recruitment, they are done in regions across our province. I don't as Minister of Health and Wellness dictate where our physicians are, we have committee's in place that determine that and I work with them to ensure that they are fulfilling the needs in areas.

When it comes to the Crapaud area, it does fit into the region which also includes Cornwall, so if we can recruit a doctor that's willing to Crapaud that would like to work in that Crapaud area, we will certainly support that.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Borden-Kinkora.

Mr. Fox: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The concern I've heard about this approach is that not including the community where the doctor would be working doesn't give them a clear picture.

I've also heard concerns that it gives government the flexibility to place new

doctors out of smaller communities and into urban areas.

Question to the Minister of Health and Wellness: How does this approach help rural communities effectively recruit new doctors and health professionals?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Mitchell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I often get asked the question: whose job is it to recruit physicians to Prince Edward Island? Short answer is it's all of our work to go out and talk to physicians, recruit physicians.

When it comes to the area of Crapaud and when it comes to that committee that was struck a couple years ago, they are doing wonderful service.

I heard recently that as part of their recruitment efforts, they are indicating to physicians that are willing to come to that area that they will either provide a piece of land so they can build a home on, or they may even provide a home for that – this is how doctors get recruited to specific areas.

I applaud the committee for doing that and will work with them on that in the future.

Mr. R. Brown: Great job.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque.

Mr. MacKay: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Between the English and French school boards, there are 62 schools in the province.

Solar panels in provincial schools

Question to the Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy: How many of our provincial school have solar panels in place producing local, renewable energy?

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

Ms. Biggar: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I do know there is one specifically that has solar panels on their roof; I applaud the Elliot River Elementary School and the community in Cornwall. I was out and visited that school with the Minister of Finance.

The kids every day, they check what's happening with their solar energy and how much is being produced and I really think it's a great project that we have helped out with through efficiencyPEI.

Thank you.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque.

Mr. MacKay: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Adding solar to biomass systems already in our schools would certainly cut down on the fuel bills.

Having solar arrays in place at our schools would also provide a great chance to inspire students and help them learn about renewable energy, science and technology.

School infrastructure review re: solar to power schools

Question to the Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy: Will the upcoming school infrastructure review look at the potential to look at solar energy to help power our schools?

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

Ms. Biggar: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As I mentioned with Elliot River Elementary, the students actually went out and raised money themselves to put the solar panels on and we were happy to partner in whatever way we could.

With all of our new facilities that we're building, it's always a consideration of the most efficient type of heating that we can put.

For instance, in the new manor in Tyne Valley instead of oil we have propane there heating the facility and we are always cognizant of what type of energy that we can

provide that's going to be reliable, that's going to be the cheapest, that's going to be the best way that we can ensure that the energy being produced is clean.

Biomass is certainly a renewable energy that is a very clean source of heat.

Thank you.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque.

Mr. MacKay: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

If we're going to do a compressive review of school infrastructure, it only makes sense that we also look at whether there are opportunities to use solar energy to power our schools.

Question to the minister: Why wouldn't we be doing it?

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

Ms. Biggar: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Again, as I mentioned, we want to ensure that the heat that's being provided is consistent to the school and the requirements that is required there on a daily basis.

Our biomass infrastructure has proven to be a reliable source of energy.

We are looking at all forms of energy as we go forward with all of our new construction and we certainly will be looking at all areas where we can make sure that we save GHG's, we have clean energy, we're making sure that the source of heat is reliable and we'll continue to do that.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque.

Mr. MacKay: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The former SCI fabrication yard in Borden Carleton continues to sit idle in government's hands. For years the hon. Member from Borden-Kinkora has urged government to not let this strategic infrastructure asset go to waste.

SCI fabrication yard potential for solar farm

Question to the Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy: What work has government done to look at this potential for a solar farm to be developed on this site?

Mr. Fox: Nothing.

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

Mr. Fox: Nothing.

Ms. Biggar: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We meet regularly with a lot of different companies –

Mr. Fox: (Indistinct)

Ms. Biggar: – who come to us with innovative ways of producing energy and we are always looking for those opportunities to look at what is out there in the market place.

Mr. Fox: (Indistinct)

Ms. Biggar: We will certainly continue to work with companies that come into Prince Edward Island to increase opportunities for manufacturing and opportunities for energy, and we will continue to do that.

Mr. R. Brown: Great.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque.

Mr. MacKay: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The industrial yard was previously used by SCI to build the pilings for The Confederation Bridge. Government bought this site in 2009, and little has happened since.

Mr. Fox: Nothing!

Solar panels for industrial property in Borden

Mr. MacKay: Question to the energy minister: Wouldn't solar panels generating megawatts of renewable energy be a better use of this property than sitting idle?

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

Mr. Palmer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

That yard in Borden is a strategic asset, and yesterday, actually, I spoke with the incoming mayor in Borden, and it wasn't a priority for us to look at things to develop in Borden. There are other places where they would like to spend their energy –

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct)

Mr. Palmer: – and their effort to make improvements in Borden.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: Great.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Speaker: The hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque.

Mr. MacKay: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

There are 112 acres of south-facing land in this industrial setting. It also is one of the first things people see crossing the Confederation Bridge.

Question to the energy minister: Wouldn't solar farms generating megawatts of renewable energy be an inspiring thing for visitors to see when they come over the bridge?

Mr. Fox: Yes!

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

Ms. Biggar: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

When we're talking about forms of energy, PEI is second in the world to our wind energy production here.

We already have –

Mr. Fox: (Indistinct) in solar.

Ms. Biggar: – we already have wind farms that are producing.

Mr. Fox: You haven't done nothing in solar.

Ms. Biggar: We announced today that we are starting environmental impact on looking at three different sites across –

Mr. Fox: Solar.

Ms. Biggar: – Prince Edward Island. For 2020 we will be installing 30 megawatts –

Mr. R. Brown: Great.

Ms. Biggar: – and going forward –

Mr. Fox: Solar.

Ms. Biggar: – in 2023, there will be another 40 megawatts.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Ms. Biggar: We are always looking at ways that we can produce more energy for Islanders and we are opened to all forms of energy –

Mr. Fox: Solar!

Ms. Biggar: – and we're working on biomass, we are working on wind –

Mr. Fox: Solar!

Ms. Biggar: – we're working with other companies, and we will continue to do that.

Thank you.

Mr. Fox: Solar!

Mr. R. Brown: That's forward thinking.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Speaker: The hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque.

Mr. MacKay: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Minister, you just discussed about the three wind sites that are currently being looked at, and I've had numerous calls today coming from an article from CBC that a site in my district, out in Irishtown, was one of these potential sites out of the three.

Potential wind site in Irishtown

I'm wondering why I received 20 phone calls today, and there has been no public consultation done with any of my constituents down in Irishtown.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

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

Ms. Biggar: Mr. Speaker, we have had meeting out that area and this is part of a whole assessment process. Any part of the process will involve public meetings. What we're doing now is studying the wind data in those areas. As the project goes forward, any assessments will require public consultation, and we will continue to do that.

Thank you.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque.

Mr. MacKay: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

This is typically, doing the work and then going to public meetings after, and asking for consultation –

An Hon. Member: Yes.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Mr. MacKay: – if you have had numerous consultations –

Mr. J. Brown: Do you want them or not?

Mr. MacKay: – from what I can hear, no one in Irishtown has known, and me as the MLA, have not got a phone call to attend any of these meetings.

So, I'm curious as where these meetings were, and when they look place, minister?

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

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

Ms. Biggar: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As I noted, we are doing wind data collection on those three sites –

Mr. R. Brown: (Indistinct)

Ms. Biggar: – and I don't think the member over there wants anything good to come to his community.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Ms. Biggar: These wind farms benefit the communities. We lease the land from individuals, the money from those goes back into the community; we just need to talk about some of the other communities –

Mr. Trivers: (Indistinct)

Ms. Biggar: – that are benefiting from that. We are in the middle of starting an environmental process and we will continue to do that, and part of that will be public consultation.

Thank you.

Mr. R. Brown: Great.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Parkdale.

Ms. Bell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

On July 3rd, our office sent three FOIPP requests, one to each of the Executive Council, the department of justice, and the Premier's Office, requesting records around the drafting of the *Electoral System Referendum Act*, an act that was so bad it needed over 20 amendments during committee of the whole.

It has been over five months now, and all we've received are increasingly absurd excuses.

We were told the justice were told the justice records were sent to the deputy minister on October 24th, and that she then sent them back for further review, and that the Executive Council and Premier's Office records were sent for sign off a couple of weeks ago, but still no records.

Delay in release of information

A question to the Premier: How can you have confidence in our access to information system when government officials are clearly working together to delay the release of potentially damaging information?

Speaker: Hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker.

I'm sure the hon. Member is aware that I as Premier would not be involved, or even aware of those requests. But, let me say that we spent the better part of, what was it, a total of 11 weeks, in the House, dealing with this very matter last spring; a number of weeks of working together.

I think the part that stands out to my mind is that after all those weeks of working together to produce a fine piece of legislation, the Third Party voted against it.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Bell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

On August 9th, we sent a request for records on the hiring of Clifford Lee as special advisory on housing, and I have just been informed records won't be available until December 15th – a four month delay.

Delay in FOIPP requests

Again, to the Premier: Why do FOIPP requests take so long when they are on politically sensitive issues?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker.

As the hon. member may be aware, this is the first I have heard, actually, that a FOIPP request has been made in this matter. It sounds like you're about to get a – like the answer is about to be provided, so that will be coming imminently by the sounds of things.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Bell: We've recently asked the commissioner to review a redaction from a FOIPP request for budget information on the Maybe You Should Come Home campaign.

We cannot understand how a budget figure could be advice to officials.

Budget information re: advice to government

Again to the Premier: Can you explain to me how a budget line – literally, information indicating tax dollars spent and who received it – could be considered advice to government?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, there is a reason under our legislation why the Premier is not involved in a) being aware of requests, and b) providing responses, or c) reviewing or offering further option on how officials have dealt with requests.

I do though, have access to Hansard. I was pleased to note that when the announcement was made of Clifford Lee's appointment, the Member from Charlottetown-Parkdale said, and it's on record that: I would like to extend congratulations on behalf of the Third Party – so, I take it you're speaking for your Leader, as well – to Clifford on his exemplary service in the last 30 years in municipal roles; (Indistinct) to recognize the work that Charlottetown has done being a leader in activities, et cetera.

So that's something I do have access to, and I'm sure that when the hon. member gets her answer on the appointment of Mr. Lee, she'll share in the sentiments regarding the merits of the appointment.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

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

Many times I have stood in this Legislature and called on the Premier to create an office of the child advocate, as has my colleague from Stratford-Kinlock.

Yet, each time it was mentioned, the Premier informed the House that he was confident that Prince Edward Island does not need a child advocate. This is in spite of the recommendations of the Campbell-Hennessey inquest jury, the Advisory Council on the Status of Women, both opposition parties, and the collective wisdom of every other province in Canada – with the exception now, of course, of Doug Ford's Ontario.

Yet, as my questions concerning oversight of private schools earlier this sitting have shown, the Department of Family and Human Services, education and justice, actually have very limited capacity to step out of their mandates and advocate independently for children.

Independent oversight body for protection of children

A question to the Premier: When will you finally relent and give children of Prince Edward Island the protections that can only be provided by an independent oversight body?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, since we've come to government we've created a bridge program; a very effective collaborative – we keep hearing across the floor about collaboration – collaborative body of community, of various departments of government, of public service leadership working weekly, working together to deal with the interests of children, to identify systemic issues, to deal with tough cases.

That is only one of many steps and investments that this government has taken, to not only look after, but to promote and to ensure that the children in our province do well.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

Previously, the Premier has said and I quote: First things first – when asked about a child advocate. Yet, here we are in a uniquely-blessed situation with a \$75 million surprise surplus and a government apparently not unafraid to spend taxpayers' dollars. Surely some of that money the province could invest in a child advocate.

Introduction of a child advocate

Again to the Premier: Wouldn't this be the perfect time to bring forward a child advocate?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, at no point has it been said by government that our approach to dealing in a comprehensive way and in a collaborative way, in a caring way, and in a prioritized way, with the interest, and in particular, the interest of vulnerable children in this province, has anything to do with fiscal considerations.

If you look at the work that has been done to create a Children's Lawyer, and indeed it's been on the floor again in this sitting to expand the power of the Children's Lawyer, and reference made there to the workload and the response and the great work that's being done there; with the supervised access sites; with the alternative dispute resolution, with a number of other measures that we've taken.

This government has made it a priority, has devoted resources, and is dealing with the interests of the children, and in particular, with vulnerable children of this province, as a matter of high priority.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

Well actually, the government tabled a document which suggested that the cost of a child advocate office would be more than the combined cost of the Auditor General's office, the conflict of interest office and a

number of others; more than the combined cost of them.

So actually, you have put forward an argument that this is an economic barrier.

Cost to establish an office of a child advocate

Once again to the Premier: Is your refusal to establish an office of the child advocate here on Prince Edward Island the result of fiscal constraint, or your continued aversion to independent oversight?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, what I have just said in response to the previous question and have said on many occasions, is that we believe that the public servants who have the jobs – the jobs, plural – and who are making the collaborative effort to protect the interests, to serve the interests, to be dealing with the tough cases, to be dealing with systemic issues that affect children and that affect vulnerable children in our province, are doing a great job, have got the resources and indeed, when you look at what's been done over a period now approaching four years, this has been a priority. And, the work is getting done, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

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

Ms. Casey: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

My question today is to the Minister of Family and Human Services.

Minister, I have been pleased over the years with the development that's taking place in Charlottetown-Lewis Point. Now, Charlottetown-Lewis Point is predominantly a residential area, but with the electoral boundaries changes we will welcome a large retail area.

I think one of my most proudest moments has been the development and the redevelopment of Charlotte Court, a subsidized seniors housing. Charlotte Court was actually the first seniors housing unit

built on Prince Edward Island, and that has opened in the last few years.

Also in Charlottetown-Lewis Point, the Prince Edward Home; the new Prince Edward Home has a beautiful location out there and—

Mr. LaVie: Is this a motion, Mr. Speaker? Is this a motion?

Ms. Casey: – efficiency PEI is there, and the new cannabis store.

Minister, I noticed that in the capital budget 20 transitional housing units for the –

Mr. LaVie: Question.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct) question.

Ms. Casey: – Beach Grove Road area in Charlottetown-Lewis Point are being proposed.

An Hon. Member: Question.

Purpose of transitional housing

Ms. Casey: Could you explain what these units are for and what needs will be addressed?

Mr. R. Brown: Great question.

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

Mr. Fox: (Indistinct) only took 20 minutes to get there.

Ms. Mundy: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Yes, hon. member, the Department of Family and Human Services are indeed building 20 homes to support survivors of family violence, including individuals and children who are aging out of the child protection system's care.

These homes will offer a safe place for them to stay, as well as supportive services for clients that are transitioning back into their communities and to a more stable environment.

We have done this through consultation with both frontline organizations and support

workers, and through that consultation two groups were identified and those were women without children in their immediate care and also children who are aging out of the child protection system.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Transitional housing for family violence survivors

Ms. Casey: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Minister, what access to transitional housing do survivors of family violence have today?

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

Ms. Mundy: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Currently, government supports several community organizations, NGOs, who deliver emergency services to both women and children who are fleeing abuse, as well as support services to women who are experiencing violence within their relationship.

Through child protection services, we also provide support and care to children who are no longer able to live with their parents in their home, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

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

Transitional housing for children aging out of system

Ms. Casey: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Minister, can you update the House on what progress you've made to date on the construction of these transitional units, and when can survivors of family violence or children aging out of the system move in?

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

Ms. Mundy: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

In collaborative effort between family and human services and the Department of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy, a tender has been issued to remove the surplus building that is on the land currently and following that site remediation, construction is anticipated to begin in the spring of 2019.

When that construction is complete, we will have 20 new homes for survivors of family violence.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Dumville: Mr. Speaker, my question is to either the Premier or the Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy, whichever would prefer to take the question.

Ministers, the economic engine of Alberta, indeed all of Canada, is in an economic crisis.

The new premier of New Brunswick believes Energy East is possible with the new premier in Quebec and plans on discussing this with him at the next First Ministers' Meeting.

PEI support for other provinces re: energy

What steps are we taking as a province to support our friends in Alberta which is in our own self-interest?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, I will be attending the First Ministers' Meetings on Thursday and Friday and take part on a conference call with the premiers this afternoon.

It's always Prince Edward Island's view in approaching our relations with our provincial counterparts to assist in collaboration, to assist in the development of national initiatives, and Prince Edward Island would be supportive of the initiative that the premier of New Brunswick is taking in this matter.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Dumville: Premier, have you been in discussions with both premiers since they've changed and become premiers on this topic?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, the premier of Alberta has been in office since May 5th 2015, indeed one day after our own election so we've had many opportunities to discuss matters of national importance.

One of the first files that was on our joint table indeed was the early initiative of that government to combat climate change. So, of course, we've discussed energy and climate change on many occasions. I did speak with Premier Higgs – he was premier-designate Higgs at the time – on Saturday the third of November.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Dumville: So Premier, in your opinion, do you believe the political climate in Quebec has changed enough that the pipeline east could become a reality?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Since in the past four years or within the past four years, we've had quite a few changes on the political scene and around the first minister's table as members will be well aware a number of new premiers and indeed the Prime Minister has joined us in the period that I'm talking about.

One has to be continuously engaged with colleagues, has to be continuously assessing the political climate, including the issues that may be raised or the positions taken by premiers right across the board. I'm sure that the Premier of British Columbia – while not on the route that you're talking about or that has been spoken about – may indeed have views on this.

My job as Premier of Prince Edward Island is to build personal relationships, to build a following for the issues that are of primary interest to the people of Prince Edward Island and to do our best to contribute to the success of the Canadian Confederation.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

According to the front page article in today's *Guardian*, the *Municipal Government Act* is forcing councillors at the town of Charlottetown to and I quote: "take control of naming standing committee and their chairs out of the mayor's hands."

In that article the Deputy Mayor of Charlottetown is quoted as saying, quote: "For time eternal, it's been done by the mayor, but it definitely was not the call of the city council, it was the call of the provincial government".

Sometimes the *Municipal Government Act* feels like something out of the George Orwell novel, *1984*.

Changes to council re: *Municipal Government Act*

Question to the minister responsible for the *Municipal Government Act*: Why are you playing big brother and forcing councils large and small to make questionable changes with tight timelines?

Mr. LaVie: Ooh.

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

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

I can assure I'm not playing big brother. As the Premier indicated earlier –

An Hon. Member: That was good.

Mr. LaVie: You standing?

An Hon. Member: Little brother.

Mr. R. Brown: – we had a great Saturday at the municipal government review at Covehead where over 180 municipal councillors from across Prince Edward Island came together, willing to work together, and I think it was a great day.

Last night, I had the opportunity to go down and see the swearing in of the new mayor and council in Three Rivers. I looked around the room on Saturday, and I looked around the room last night, and I think we have very capable people that can deal with these issues internally.

Thank you very much.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Even councilor Bob Doiron, this government's candidate (Indistinct) record in District 11 by-election said: it's an underhanded move for the current council to do days before Brown takes office.

The Premier and Cabinet are sitting over there like the dystopian ministers of truth, love, peace and plenty, when really they are the ministers of power, control, corruption and patronage.

Mr. LaVie: Ooh.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Mr. Trivers: Experienced councillors have been elected for decades. The devil is in the details, and it's clear that councillors don't agree with the broad reaching controls of the *Municipal Government Act*.

Mr. LaVie: Truth is hard.

Mr. Trivers: A question to the Minister of Communities, Land and Environment, and big brother: Minister, did you consult directly with longtime municipal councillors – like those in the City of Charlottetown – about the *Municipal Government Act*?

Speaker: Hon. member, you used the word 'corruption' and I think you should withdraw that word. It is unparliamentary.

Mr. Trivers: Yes, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Okay, thank you.

The hon. Minister of Communities, Land and Environment.

Mr. R. Brown: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and the hon. member.

I thank him for the question, because if he did sit in council, he'd know how hard councils work. If he took the time to go to a couple of council meetings and meet with councillors throughout Prince Edward Island, he'd see how hard they work.

I've sat on the city council for 14 years, and I did go through an amalgamation. At the end of the day, it works and it works good.

As I said to the members at Covehead on Friday, you'll have some tough meetings, you'll think you're separated and will not come back together, but as Peter Kays used to tell me: say it in the meetings, but leave as friends and continue to be friends.

If they follow that advice, we'll have a great council right across Prince Edward Island here. What I saw Saturday, we will have a great set of councils right across this province.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's this government that chose to put specifics like timelines directly in the *Municipal Government Act*. In this case, it was dictated that councils have to have committee bylaws in place 12 months after the act came into effect this December.

This has continuously put the minister in a position where he needs to use the sledgehammer of his overriding authority to overrule law.

The official opposition has recognized these unnecessary limitations and has taken action. I have three bills on the floor of this Legislature that are meant to amend the *MGA* to give the minister and municipalities more flexibility in complying with the act. Yet, this minister has vowed to vote these bills down.

Mr. LaVie: (Indistinct).

Power and flexibility in municipalities

Mr. Trivers: A question to the minister, mister big brother: Minister, why do you want to strip municipalities of power and flexibility in governing their jurisdictions?

An Hon. Member: Yes!

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

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

I want to take the opportunity to thank the staff of municipal affairs. They put on a great event on Saturday. They work extremely hard. They go the extra mile, my staff.

Upon recommendation of my staff just yesterday or the day before, the extension – I'm giving a six month extension to municipalities to put those bylaws in place. So I do have the authority under the act to make changes, and I will exercise those authorities, but only on the advice from my staff and from the advice of municipalities.

Thank you very much.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald, your final question.

Mr. Trivers: Well thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It used to be that the duly elected mayor of a municipality was given the responsibility to set up standing committees, and name their chairs as they saw fit. In yet another example of the *Municipal Government Act* overstepping its bounds, we see that power stripped from the mayor.

A question to the minister: What's wrong with the old way of appointing committees?

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

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

In order to have a great council, you have to work together, and you have to work together on some real tough issues. You

can't be one person going out and controlling the whole situation.

I believe what is occurring now in the City of Charlottetown is a minor blip. They'll get over it and they'll go on to make Charlottetown a better place to live, work, and play. I can see it throughout the municipalities in Prince Edward Island. If you would have been there on Saturday – the hon. member would have come out and saw Saturday – over 185 councillors getting together, first and foremost to make their communities a better place for their residents.

Mr. LaVie: We just had ours last night.

Mr. R. Brown: We owe it to these councillors, the opportunity to govern.

What is the member from the opposition talking about? He wants to be the big brother.

Some Hon. Members: Yeah, yeah.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: He wants to be the big brother, and he wants to tell everything what should happen. Matter of fact, I think he wants to be the mayor of Prince Edward Island.

So I say just cool down, take a breath.

An Hon. Member: Cool down.

Mr. R. Brown: Have a good Christmas.

We'll be back in April. We'll have discussions with the federation of municipalities and with the new councillors.

Mr. Trivers: You're the minister of truth.

Mr. R. Brown: And if changes have to be made, changes will be made.

Have a great Christmas and enjoy yourself.

Some Hon. Members: [Laughter]

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Statements by Ministers

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

International Day of Persons With Disabilities

Ms. Mundy: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I am so very pleased to rise today to recognize that yesterday was International Day of Persons with Disabilities, which was celebrated throughout our province and around the world.

This day draws attention to the need for awareness of persons with disabilities and to celebrate a more inclusive society that advances full citizenship for all. It also allows us to reflect on the many ways we can work alongside persons with disabilities to embrace their full social inclusion and economic participation.

Our government is very proud to partner with and support our community partners that promote the well-being and respect for Islanders with disabilities.

We share a common goal of making life more inclusive for people living with a disability by providing programs and services to support them.

I want to recognize today in the gallery, we have: Judy Hennessy who is the chair of our AccessAbility Advisory Council, Marcia Carroll with the PEI Council of People with Disabilities and also, an advisory council member and Joel Dennis with Tremploy; a community partner and an advocate for inclusion.

The strong voices you bring to the table and the amazing work each of your organizations do supporting Islanders and their families every single day is deeply appreciated.

The AccessAbility Supports program was launched recently to be a more inclusive and person-centered program for persons with disabilities. It was created both, for and by Islanders, with disabilities.

Offering the support of government resources, the AccessAbility Supports program welcomes clients with all disabilities through a single point of entry,

utilizes new functional assessment tools for both adult and children and takes a strong collaborative case management approach.

Shortly we will have new Community Connector staff to help develop personalized support plans that will involve the individual, their support team and community at large.

I want to recognize that this enhanced program was made possible through the collaboration with our Accessibility Advisory Council. Their strong commitment and cooperation helped guide these monumental changes and improvements.

I would like to thank all of our community partners, for the wonderful work they do which makes a real difference in the lives of many and helps create more caring communities for everyone.

Prince Edward Island is considered a forward looking province in terms of its programming that seeks to empower persons with disabilities to be active in all aspects of Island life.

I urge members of this Assembly and all Islanders, to continue celebrating and advancing full citizenship for all Islanders.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's a pleasure also to rise and recognize that yesterday was the International Day of Disabled Persons. Welcome in the gallery to Marcia, Judy and to Joel and thank you for the work that you do.

It's, I think, a great way for all of us to pause and to look at inclusion, ensuring that people with disabilities are included in our everyday lives. It's also an opportunity to support the dignity and the rights and the wellbeing of persons with disabilities and a way of gaining awareness that we, as a culture drive, from having people with disabilities included in society in political, social, economic and cultural ways. I want to thank everyone here in the gallery for the work that you do.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Parkdale.

Ms. Bell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The United Nations 2030 agenda for sustainable development pledges to leave no one behind.

The 2018 theme for the United Nations is empowering persons with disabilities and ensuring inclusiveness and equality as part of that sustainable development agenda.

Persons with disabilities as both beneficiaries and agents of change can fast track the process towards a more inclusive and sustainable and resilient society for all – including in the context of disastrous reduction in humanitarian action and urban development.

The inclusion of requirements for accessibility in a provision of housing, for example, is an aspect of inclusivity that allows us to reflect on how we can ensure that no one is excluded from our community in any facet.

Governments, persons with disabilities and their representative organizations, academic institutions and the private sector need to work as a team to achieve both those long term sustainable development goals, but also that commitment to inclusivity, equality and ensuring that no one is left behind.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Orthopedic Intervention Clinic

Mr. Mitchell: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to announce a new orthopedic intervention clinic for Prince Edward Island.

This new clinic is improving patient flow, speeding up access and providing added supports for both our orthopedic patients and our physicians.

Over the past few years we've seen an increase in orthopedic referrals, particularly for hips and knees. It has created a

bottleneck for individuals needing to see an orthopedic surgeon. However, the evidence shows us that 76% of those referrals will not require surgical intervention.

Based on this evidence, our five orthopedic surgeons identified the opportunity to establish an orthopedic intervention clinic designed specifically for pre-surgical and non-surgical care.

The clinic was launched last month and has already supported over 80 Islanders. Shauna Wright is our new orthopedic nurse practitioner who oversees the clinic and I'd like to welcome Shauna to the gallery today.

As well, I'd like to welcome Tara Roche to the gallery. Tara is a registered nurse and clinical lead for the orthopedic intervention clinic as well. Welcome to you both, ladies.

I also want to recognize Dr. Stephen Miller who couldn't join us today because he is seeing patients this afternoon.

Dr. Miller has been instrumental in bringing this initiative forward and leading the collaborative approach on behalf of the orthopedic surgeons. So thank you to Dr. Miller for his leadership.

Our new clinic is helping patients with severe joint pain to lead healthy and active lives.

It is providing patients with access to intensive non-surgical interventions, helping to manage their conditions sooner with the specialized care they need when they need it.

In some cases, these added supports are helping to delay or defer the need for surgery. For patients who do need surgery, the clinic is helping to ensure they are healthy as possible and prepared for surgery.

I know Shauna and Tara and their team work collaboratively with many other health care providers to ensure patients receive all of the supports they need including; physiotherapists, dietitians and chronic disease clinicians.

This is a terrific new service and I want to thank all of those who worked with us to make it happen.

Thank you all, very much.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid.

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'd like to thank the minister for the comments and the announcement and I'd liked to welcome Shauna and Tara to the Legislature today. The minister is very lucky to have both of them involved in this project, especially Tara – I've been able to have a number of good conversations with Tara over the years as well.

The orthopedics is an extremely important specialty and very happy to hear this is happening.

It's vital that government and ortho's do not work at cross purposes though and the investment in this clinic is a good sign towards this. We talk a lot about a full scope of practice and working collaboratively through different health professionals and I know that the physiotherapists could help complement the ortho staff to reduce the acuity of patients through those in the wait list and through improved outcomes.

I also hear that in the ortho community they are pushing to add another ortho to the complement as well, so I encourage the minister to push for that as well.

Again, just to reiterate, it's good news and I hope things are going really well.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

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

I, too, welcome the minister's announcement and I welcome Shauna and Tara to the House today and it's nice to see you.

This sort of collaborative multi disciplinary clinic, that's been shown to be the best practiced when it comes to providing health care services, whether that's in the orthopedic realm or any other. This is a

really good approach and I welcome it heartily.

As the previous member stated though, physio's here on PEI are not being utilized to the full scope of their potential practice. I hope that this is an avenue through which they will be able to expand their scope of practice and provide the sorts of things that they really can do well to support and complement the work of the ortho surgeons that we have here.

The benefits of a really robust pre-surgical program – I think it's sometimes called pre-habilitation – not only does that better prepare people for surgery, but it can drastically, as the minister said, reduce some of those people who may be in place for surgery can be sidetracked and may avoid surgery all together. Obviously, better for the individuals, but in terms of health care dollar savings – an enormous step forward.

So, I welcome this, I really love the idea. We will be better off pre-op, we will be better off post-op, dollar savings, and Islanders will be better served, so it's a great announcement.

Thank you, minister.

Presenting and Receiving Petitions

Tabling of Documents

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. MacDonald: Mr. Speaker, by Command of Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor, I beg leave to table the report of temporary borrowing pursuant to section 47 of the *Financial Administration Act*, and pursuant to section 30(1) with respect to all loans and advances and any defaults in payments since the last reported date, March 31st 2018, and I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Health and Wellness, that the said document be now received and do lie on the Table.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

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

Ms. Biggar: Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, by leave of the House, I beg leave to table answers to written questions No. 143, 144, 145, by the Member from Rustico-Emerald in regards to 911 services, and I move, seconded by the Honourable Member from Tignish-Palmer Road, that the said document be now received and do lie on the Table.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Ms. Biggar: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Borden-Kinkora.

Mr. Fox: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

By leave of the House, I beg leave to table proposed conceptual drawing of the Cape Traverse Ice Boat Monument Shelter and the landscaping improvements, and I move, seconded by the Honourable Member from Kensington-Malpeque, that the said document be now received and do lie on the Table.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

By leave of the House, I beg leave to table a written question regarding radio communications during emergency outages, and I move, seconded by the Honourable Member from Belfast-Murray River, that the said document be now received and do lie on the Table.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Mr. Speaker, by leave of the House, I beg leave to table timely, but late response, to a written question that I submitted back in February 2016, which we just received the reply in July 2018 – unfortunately 29 long months after – 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.

Reports by Committees

Introduction of Government Bills

Government Motions

Orders of the Day (Government)

Speaker: 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 17th order of the day be now read.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Committee Clerk: Order No. 17, *An Act to Amend the Gasoline Tax Act*, Bill No.58, in Committee.

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 said bill.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Lewis Point and the Deputy Speaker, I will ask to 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 *An Act to Amend the Gasoline Tax Act*. Is it the pleasure of the committee that the bill be now read clause by clause?

Hon. members, we were in discussion of this bill the last time we were here, and we have read and passed section one, two, and three.

We've read section four, and there is actually an amendment on the floor for section four. There is an amendment in section four and section five, and they have been circulated.

Permission to bring a stranger to the floor before we get started?

Some Hon. Members: Granted.

Chair: We will allow her to get seated and introduced before I open the floor for discussion on the amendment.

Good afternoon.

Could you introduce yourself and your title for the record?

Beth Gaudet: Beth Gaudet, Provincial Tax Commissioner.

Chair: Welcome to the table.

So, hon. members, there is an amendment on the floor for section four and the amendment has been read, as I said, and – Premier, you're on my list.

Premier MacLauchlan: Thanks, Chair.

In fact, I was in the course of responding to a question about the regional context and the extent to which their efforts are made to achieve alignment within the – among the four Atlantic Provinces. This is something we've been discussing, as I'm sure members will appreciate going back to 2015-2016.

It's certainly been a priority for our approach to this matter, to be alert to the positions of our neighbouring provinces, with an understanding or with an appreciation of the integration of our economies, of our transportation systems, of our tourist traffic in other ways, and of course to be alert to the fact that Prince Edward Island relies heavily on truck transportation to participate in the Canadian and International economy.

Prince Edward Island is pursuing a very high level of success, so it's really to indicate that this is something that's been on our minds and has been over the time that this matter has been under discussion.

Chair: Thank you.

Shall the amendment carry? Carried.

Shall this section carry as amended? Carried.

Section 5

Hon. members, there is also an amendment to Section 5: The Act is amended by the addition of the following after section 16.

I'm going to have the minister read his amendment.

Mr. MacDonald: This motion amends Section 5 of Bill No. 58 to delete an incorrect reference to a tax under the *Climate Leadership Act* and substitute a correct reference to a levy under the act in the proposed section 16.1.

Section 5 of Bill 58: amended by the decision of the proposed Section 16.1 and the substitution of the following:

Enforcement

Evidence that a person has contravened the *Climate Leadership Act* by failing to pay the levy on fuel under the Act may be deemed to be evidence that the person has contravened this Act or the regulations by failing to pay tax on fuel under this Act or the regulations.

Premier MacLauchlan: Carry the amendment.

Ms. Biggar: Carry it.

Chair: Borden-Kinkora has a question on the amendment.

Mr. Fox: Just a quick question on it. Does that have anything to do with, say, using marked fuel in relation to unmarked fuel?

Mr. MacDonald: No.

Mr. Fox: Okay, thank you.

Chair: Shall the amendment carry? Carried.

Ms. Biggar: Carry the bill.

Chair: Shall the section carry as amended? Carried.

Thank you.

Section 6. Hon. members, Sections 6, 7 and 8 – I don't have any amendments to those.

Do I have any questions?

I'll read the sections hon. members.

6. The Act is amended by the addition of the following after section 21:

22. Schedule adopted

The Schedule to this Act is adopted and forms part of this Act.

Hon. member, is your question to Section 6?

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Six, seven and eight there, I think (Indistinct) through them all, Chair.

Thank you.

Chair: Thank you.

7. The Act is amended by the addition of the following Schedule after section 22:

Schedule

Table - Rates of Tax from 2019 to 2020

The table is included there.

8. (1) Subject to subsection (2), this Act comes into force on January 1, 2019.

(2) Sections 4 and 5 come into force on April 1, 2019.

The Leader of the Third Party has a question.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you.

So as we know, the provisions of this bill that decrease the excise tax come into effect January 1st, several months before the federal plan is imposed on Prince Edward Island.

I'm wondering what the anticipated loss in revenue is in that gap where we will not be collecting the federal money, but we will be offering the discount?

Mr. MacDonald: Approximately \$3 million, maybe a little less than that.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Okay.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: So currently the excise tax varies from province to province, of

course. Where do we fit in the level of excise tax that we currently have in Prince Edward Island compared to the other provinces?

Beth Gaudet: Our taxes would be fairly comparable in the Atlantic region, however, quite a bit higher than Quebec west.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you.

So, we're comparable with the Atlantic region. With the reduction in force in three point – I'm sorry three or thereabout cents – will that make us considerably less in terms of excise tax than our Maritime neighbours?

Mr. MacDonald: So presently we're third highest in the country right now. After this we will be –

Mr. MacDonald: We can get it for you.

When compared to Canada average, we have \$22 per tonne carbon tax today. When compared to Nova Scotia, Manitoba and Saskatchewan, we have \$44 per tonne carbon levy today. Basically we will be in better parity with the other provinces with the reduction.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Yeah, maybe I'm not sure if I was specific enough in my question, but we were talking about the excise tax on gasoline, not dollars per tonne of – because that's what's being reduced with this bill.

So I'm wondering where we sit; I have a table in front of me, I can't say for sure whether this is absolutely up to the date, up to the minute correct, but it doesn't suggest to me that we are the third highest. In fact, we're lower than the Canadian average and towards the low end.

It's the excise tax I'm talking about here and where we fit in with the other provinces.

Mr. MacDonald: We're talking pump prices. We can bring that back.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Yeah, pump prices, of course, are a reflection in part of excise tax, but that's only a part of it. Again, if I look at the figures across the country, we are towards the low end.

I know the Premier's mentioned a couple of times that we're lowering this tax, because we have room to do that or there's space to do that – I can't remember exactly the phrase that was used. It strikes me that at least from the figures that I have in front of me – and I'd appreciate if you could table a document if you could refute this – that actually our excise tax is absolutely in line with the other provinces and isn't excessive at all. I stand to be corrected.

Again, if you have any information, I'd appreciate it you tabling that, minister.

Mr. MacDonald: Sure.

Chair: Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: There are tables in the September submission that I tabled last week that lay that out directly by province and Prince Edward Island is fourth or fifth from the top. Everyone from Ontario west is lower than Prince Edward Island. That information is on the table in front of us.

Chair: Thank you for the intervention, Premier.

Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: I don't want to sit here and argue figures, because I'm looking here at a table here that suggests we're very much better off than that. I realize those were numbers in September, but this is December. Maybe things have changed substantially, maybe they haven't.

Let me move on to another topic here. You mentioned – minister, if you could explain to the House what your understanding of the term revenue-neutral is?

Mr. MacDonald: Revenue-neutral is basically what we bring in through the carbon is exactly what goes back out.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you.

When you say goes back out, goes back to Islanders. Is that –

Mr. MacDonald: That's correct.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Yes, okay.

Last week when I asked where the revenues that were collected from the carbon tax were going, you said that general revenues. In other words, that government is getting it, not Islanders.

So do you still feel after the definition you just given me that your plan here is revenue-neutral?

Mr. MacDonald: Yes, I do actually. Yeah.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Okay. So to me, a revenue-neutral plan is when Islanders get all the money back and you've just – in your own definition – I think that's true.

Or, another plan might put that money back in general revenues. In fact, it goes back to government. I mean, I don't care which you choose, but I don't think it can be both. I don't think that we can put the money in general revenues and claim that it is revenue-neutral.

Could you tell us which it is?

Beth Gaudet: So the incremental increase in revenues will be going directly back and the non-incremental revenues will be going to general revenue.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Could you just explain for the House what you mean by non-incremental revenues?

Beth Gaudet: The revenues associated with the reduction in gas.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: So those monies will not be going back to Islanders then, they will be going into general revenue?

Mr. MacDonald: Yeah, so the 9.4 is what you're referring to?

Dr. Bevan-Baker: The funds that will be collected and used to reduce gasoline excise tax.

Mr. MacDonald: It all goes back to Islanders, and I think we stated clearly, that anything that is brought in through the carbon levy will be looked at through the Auditor General's eyes and ensured that it is returned to Islanders.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you.

The plan that we brought forward and indeed the federal backstop returns money directly to individuals.

Here on Prince Edward Island, the highest number of people who don't own an automobile would be people who are low income Islanders in the lowest quintiles, and the Green Party plan was specifically designed to make sure that those people would not be worse off because of a carbon tax.

So, I'm wondering how you could explain how your plan is good for those low income Islanders who do not own an automobile. How are they going to recover the costs of increased goods and services which are going to flow through the economy, and they will it be impacted by?

Mr. MacDonald: Well, if you have additional information on how those are going to be impacted, it would be great for you to share them.

But, I think we've made great strides in reducing personal income tax exemption or increasing it, we've also increased the corporation business tax for small businesses which you're talking about, we've also did HST, we've also did electricity, which I think would be a direct relation to this.

So I'm not sure – and having a home heating exemption, I think, would be most beneficial to any low income Islander.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: With all due respect, we did share exactly all of the data and research behind our plan several months ago so that absolutely has been out there and it's unfortunate you didn't read it, minister.

Again, I applaud many of the measures that this government has taken to improve the lives of low income Islanders, absolutely. But, I think we need to be clear that this carbon tax, the way your plan is structured, offers no benefit to low income Islanders unless they own an automobile.

In fact, they are going to shoulder the burden, the tax burden of this through the increased cost of all goods and services with no benefit of a rebate cheque, which would have happened had we signed up for the

federal backstop or if you had implemented the program that the Green Party had brought forward.

Thank you, Chair.

Chair: Shall it carry? Carried.

Ms. Biggar: Carry the bill.

Mr. MacDonald: I move the title.

Chair: *An Act to Amend the Gasoline Tax Act.*

Shall it carry? Carried.

Mr. MacDonald: 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. MacDonald: Madam Chair, I move the Speaker take the chair and that the Chair report the bill agreed to with amendment.

Chair: Shall it carry? Carried.

Mr. Speaker, as Chair of a Committee of the Whole House, having had under consideration a bill to be intitled *An Act to Amend the Gasoline Tax Act*, I beg leave to report that the committee has gone through the said bill and has agreed to same with amendment. I move that the report of the committee be adopted.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Minister of Workforce and Advanced Learning.

Mr. Gallant: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. Member from Charlottetown-Lewis Point, that the 1st order of the day be now read.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

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

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 consider the Grant of the Capital Supply to Her Majesty.

Hon. members, when we last left the discussion on the capital expenditure, we were on capital expenditure for finance on page 15, and the budget for finance has been read.

Any further questions?

Shall that budget carry? Carried.

We'll now move onto Health PEI on page 17.

The hon. Member from Tignish-Palmer Road is going to come down and chair this section.

Chair (Perry): Do we have permission to bring a stranger to the floor?

Some Hon. Members: Granted.

Chair: I would ask that you please state your name and position, please.

Jim Miles: Jim Miles, executive director of fiscal management for the Department of Finance.

Chair: Thank you.

This is capital expenditure for Health PEI.

Equipment

“Appropriations provided for the purchase of hospital equipment.” Hospital equipment: 15,256,000.

Total Equipment: 15,256,000.

Capital improvements

“Appropriation provided for Capital improvements, planning and redesign of Health Infrastructure.” Health Facilities: 2,884,000. Long-Term Care Facilities: 30,700. Mental Health Facilities: 10,244,600. Capital Repairs: 2,500,000.

Total Capital Improvements: 15,659,300.

Total Capital Expenditure

Health PEI: 30,915,300.

The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you.

If we look at the mental health facilities, clearly that's an enormous jump up from previous years and I just want to check where that money is going. Is that all for the Hillsborough mental health campus, or is that for other facilities as well?

Mr. Mitchell: Yeah, so – Chair (Indistinct)

Chair: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Mitchell: So under the mental health increase in budget this year, it will be used in several different areas for improvement there: 450,000 budget for master planning will be a part of that this year, as well the structured housing is 277,000 budgeted for there. There will also be some capital repairs, I believe – 2.5 million that will be part of that for this year, as well; those are this year's identified numbers for mental health.

Chair: Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you.

Looking just above that at long-term care facilities, conversely that number has gone down to almost zero. Does that mean that all of the capital improvements to long-term care facilities are now complete in the province? For the mean time?

Chair: Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Mitchell: As far as long-term care facilities go, we're wrapping up our Montague Manor so that will (Indistinct) this year, to Tyne Valley and the Montague. As far as long-term care needs this year, we've invested in 100 new beds, so there is no new manor build for this fiscal.

Chair: Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you, Chair.

As the Member from Borden-Kinkora asked during Question Period this morning about the situation of the doctor in Crapaud – clearly, health care facilities are very expensive, high-ticket items. The community there, one particular private individual, is footing the entire costs of building a clinic there; clearly, helping out the province's bottom line substantially.

So I'm wondering, when an individual or a community comes forward and makes that sort of commitment – monetary and commitment in terms of their community – whether you take that into account when you look at placements of doctors; well, we saved ourselves \$2 million here, or whatever the figure is – because the community has built the facility.

Chair: Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Mitchell: So, when we are recruiting physicians to particular areas, depending on the master agreement provision that they fall under, whether they are fee-for-service or a salary doctor; if you're a salary physician going to a particular area – and I can use Friendly Pharmacy or I can use Parkdale Pharmacy or any of those places – the individual owns the facilities, they do these equipments up, and then we pay them for that service. If it's a fee-for-service physician that goes in, they will quite often cover their own costs, as would've been the case for Dr. Giordani in the Crapaud area. Before he was a fee-for-service; he can establish his own office, which he used Dr. Visser's office, and he took that on originally.

It depends on the relationship with the physician, whether what part of the master agreement they fall under. But, quite often, if it's a salary physician, we do pay for their office equipment, their staffing, or we pay

the owner of the facility to supply those services. That's the typical arrangement.

Chair: One more question? More questions?

Yeah, Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you.

So just going back to the mental health campus, and I know there's a five-year plan, and I see we have most of the 10 million, from what I heard from you in next year's budget, will be going there.

Can you give us a sense of how much money is going to be dedicated over the next five years and what it will be spent on?

Chair: Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Mitchell: Total amount that's been dedicated is 100 million; a lot of that, well obviously we know there is going to be a campus constructed at the end of it, but a lot of that will be on the footprint of the Hillsborough Hospital, today. That will be an Island campus, so we will need facilities all across the Island. Those are the community supports in years one to four; we expect that a lot of that won't be new infrastructure, we will either work with what's available in communities to either lease, rent, but some of that, you'll have to make investments to make it meet your needs. So, we've indentified that.

We've also indentified that a dedicated ER will be a part of the first three years, as well, and that will be an – I think it's an eight room, basic facility. I think it's six rooms for emergency initially coming in with – for four rooms then for continued care over the next, however much time is there. So, that's an investment.

As well, the mobile crisis teams – to establish and get them on the road and equipped. Those are all the first, I'll say, three years of fairly significant investment, and then wrapping up with, basically, a structure in years four and five.

However, when I say that, the other part is the adult day program; so part of that will be a new structure on the grounds of the Hillsborough Hospital, with some structured

housing, plus an adult day program, which it's been identified as a gap on PEI. We have tremendous programs in our student well-being, with our youth insight and Strength Program, with our seniors program – but a gap has been this adult day program, dedicated for adults, so that's been coming as raised as a initial priority, so that will be a part of structuring in, I guess year two, on the grounds there, as well.

Chair: Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Good, thank you, Chair. Thank you, minister.

Chair: Okay, hon. –

Mr. R. Brown: (Indistinct)

Mr. Mitchell: (Indistinct) if you'd like to get more (Indistinct)

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Sure, thank you.

Chair: Hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque.

Mr. MacKay: Thank you, Chair.

Quick question: Last summer as an MLA, and I'm sure lots of MLA's in this room had the calls, as well. With the amount of heat and hot temperatures we had, there was a lot of the seniors homes that didn't have any air conditioning and I guess it was a real struggle; not only with the people living there, but with the staff members as well. Is there anything being done in the capital budget to make sure that doesn't happen come another year?

Chair: Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Mitchell: Yeah, so the facility that got the most attention, I guess, is the Wedgewood in the Summerside area. Part of that system was an air system that had been installed, but part to be installed this year. So, that work is ongoing, but as I said last week on the floor of the Legislature, when that came to the attention, we were able to reach out to see what could we do in the short-term and identify that we did have some refurbished units that transportation, infrastructure and energy had in storage. We were able to work with staff and the minister

to get them loaded on a truck, get them up as quickly as we could to alleviate that process.

In the new builds, though – in Tyne Valley and Montague – the systems are built into the new buildings, obviously, but it's not – and this was interesting for me to learn – that they're not an actual air conditioner type of a system because residents find that very cold. When you're older, you know, you find that you like the warmth better. But what that does, is it's a dehumidifying system that takes the moisture out of the air, which makes it comfortable for both staff, and residents alike.

That's the system that we would be moved forward to in the new builds. They are state-of-the-art systems, but we will continue to work – personally, a personal opinion, I think those warmer temperatures could become more of the norm, so we have to be proactive to identify several things that need upgrading or need work in that area, because that was unprecedented record temperatures July and August for last year.

We were able to respond quickly to those needs initially; there may be other private facilities that had concerns as well, but this was the one that we were able to work on very quickly.

Chair: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Parkdale.

Ms. Bell: Thank you, Chair.

I understand that addiction services are a part of the mental health campus provision, is that correct? Perhaps the minister could answer that?

Mr. Mitchell: That's correct.

Ms. Bell: Thank you.

So the question is regarding the provision of services. We currently have Talbot House, which is a residence for men that provides a structured environment while they are coming after an addictions program, and we also have Lacey House, which is the equivalent for women. We then have Deacon House, which is an overnight shelter for men who are still in the space of substance abuse – we don't have an equivalent for women. So, there is a gap;

when you talked about gaps, there is a significant gap for an equivalent overnight emergency shelter for women who are in a situation of mental health and potentially addictions. Has that been identified as a priority gap in your planning, in terms of the investments that are being made through this capital budget?

Chair: Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Mitchell: I think it's fair to say that that has been identified. So, that would be part of our community enhancements, that if you can have those needs met close to where you live or where you come from, or close to your family, we want to establish them there. That's not to say that there wouldn't be aspects that would be on the footprint of the campus as well. We do understand that that's an area of concern that we have to address, and I think we have a couple of opportunities to address that.

Your point is well taken.

Chair: Charlottetown-Parkdale.

Ms. Bell: Thank you.

I think the piece to sort of really emphasize here minister, is the absence of that, particularly for women. So whether it's coming on a campus or in a community or wherever it comes from, is that it's not there at all; is it a significant space in our provision of services.

The follow-up piece, I guess, from that is one of the pieces that we also have heard from community partners is – and that relates in terms of the expenditures here – is the additional staff inclinations that we need to sort of do things like community support and outreach work, whether that's on the campus – what kind of costs are you anticipating as these services ramp up from that aspect, and which ones are done internally and outside the department?

Chair: The Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Mitchell: Yeah, so that's all part of the figuring out. As I said last week, we were at the point now where we're going to move forward with the blueprints, if you will. We know what we need; now we got to design

how we implement that. Staffing will certainly be a big part of that.

As it was brought to my attention there as well, when you speak about women's housing – it doesn't come under my department right now, but there is a new 10-unit transitional housing that's developed out in Beach Grove area there.

Something like that – if we can work with that in the future and work to enhance it as a community, that's what we're looking to do. That one can be in Beach Grove, but we could look at any other community – O'Leary, Souris, Murray River, wherever is the best to do that.

So those are things that will be part of that program, as well.

Chair: An intervention from the Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy.

Ms. Biggar: Yes, and I just wanted to recall from today that the Minister of Family and Human Services has mentioned that TIE has put out the tender to clear the lot out in behind Beechwood. That will be where the transitional – the 20 beds for transitional for women victims and certainly more clients that need housing – I guess I'll put it that way. I don't know if the Minister of Family and Human Services wants to add anything, but –

Chair: I have Charlottetown-Parkdale.

Leader of the Opposition: Just a quick question on the minister of transportation's intervention. You said Beechwood? Where's Beechwood?

Ms. Biggar: Beach Grove, I'm sorry.

Leader of the Opposition: Okay, no thank you.

Chair: Charlottetown-Parkdale.

Ms. Bell: Thank you, Chair.

I appreciate the reminder of that great housing announcement, which is one that's desperately over needed for transitional housing.

I'm going to be really clear, minister, there is a specific section on the mental health and addictions around Talbot House, Lacey House, Deacon House and St. Eleanor's House, which are provisions of services for mental health and addictions. The gap is that there is not – three of those four are for men. The one that is in most urgent need is a women's equivalent to Deacon's House, which is part of the mental health and addictions campus.

So it does come under, in this case, mental health and addictions services, versus women's shelter.

Mr. R. Brown: (Indistinct)

Chair: Minister of health.

Mr. Mitchell: If there's an opportunity to partner there, whether it's that one or some other one that's between now and when we're ready, we'll look at those opportunities. I guess that's all I brought that up for.

If there's an opportunity to partner there in the future, and they have the room or can add it, then we would certainly look at something that exists already.

Ms. Bell: Thank you, minister.

Chair: You're welcome.

The Minister of Finance.

Mr. MacDonald: Basically, if you're a patient for a few days, we may have some action on the item that you're talking about. So we've been working on it.

Ms. Bell: (Indistinct)

Thank you, Chair.

Chair: You're welcome.

The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Thanks, Chair.

The Grassroots and Cowboy Boots fundraiser held every year in Summerside is a fantastic event. I mean, particularly Warren Ellis and his family do a fantastic

job of raising millions of dollars for the Prince County Hospital Foundation.

Now, there's a bunch of the Cabinet members got together and presented a great big novelty cheque of \$1 million dollars that the minister of transportation posted about on Facebook.

She said and I quote: our Cabinet members were proud to be on hand tonight at Grassroots and Cowboy Boots fundraiser to present \$1 million donation over four years to support the PCH equipment fund.

Now we all know it wasn't a donation – it's government money, and it was clearly an attempt to buy political favour with taxpayer dollars.

So my question is: How much money is in the capital budget – and I believe it would be here on this page – that you pretended to donate to the PCH fundraiser?

Chair: Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Mitchell: So what we have budgeted for this year when we look at equipment and we look at supporting, not only PCH but QEH as well and in the near future we'll be supporting others when we have opportunities to talk.

This year alone for 2018-2019: Prince County Hospital \$1,350,000 towards them. That money is often used to leverage expensive equipment that the foundation – you know it would struggle on their own. That's the PCH commitment this year (Indistinct) is \$2,591,000, as well. When it comes to equipment we're looking at doing automatic dispensing units for our pharmaceutical needs at an additional 1.4 million. We'll be putting a significant investment for this year, and add it to next to year of our diagnostic imaging MRI replacement at the QEH, which is like \$4.1 million investment there for that type of equipment.

Foundations struggle with equipment of that significance, so we offer help for them to leverage their funds so that we can get more on most cases, and then there's some that we take a standalone approach.

Chair: Hon. members, I want to remind you to please wait until the Chair acknowledges you before you speak so we can get all your very important words in Hansard.

Thanks.

Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy.

Ms. Biggar: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Yes indeed we did attend, as did the opposition members – The Grassroots and Cowboy Boots.

I remember the year before, the opposition caucus members had bought a ticket out of their government members' account and won the jeep. I don't know if they called that donating back or not, but I think it's all a great cause that anytime we can assist in leverage dollars for capital equipment, I think we're all happy to be there.

Chair: Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Chair.

I'm not sure that's a very good comparison, but that's not what my next question's about.

So the minister of health was talking about 2.591 million – that was in the 2019-2020 budget and that's all going to the PCH. Is that correct?

An Hon. Member: That's in the 2018-19 budget that's been spent on (Indistinct)

Mr. Trivers: You had said 1.35 million, as well.

Mr. Mitchell: PCH? You said QEH. Do you mean PCH?

Mr. Trivers: PCH.

Mr. Mitchell: PCH is 1,350,000 of 2018-2019 dollars.

Mr. Trivers: How much is going to PCH in 2019-2020?

Chair: Minister of Health and Wellness, please wait until I acknowledge you. So

make sure that the microphones are on and the Hansard can get what you're saying.

Mr. Mitchell: That was directed to me, was it hon. member?

Chair: Yes.

Mr. Mitchell: I'm sorry, I didn't have the floor.

Chair: Minister of health, you have the floor.

Mr. Mitchell: So, what I have indicated for basically, I'll say 2019-2024 is \$6.5 million would be dedicated towards that.

Chair: Rustico-Emerald, you're finished?

Next on my list – I have no one else on the list. My list is exhausted.

So total Capital Expenditures: \$ 30,915,300.

Shall it carry? Carried.

Chair (Casey): Hon. members, we're on page 19.

Capital Expenditure

Justice and Public Safety

2019-2020 Budget Estimate

Equipment

“Appropriations provided for equipment”
9-1-1 System Upgrades: 150,000. Vital Statistics: 110,000. Court Technology: 500,000.

Total Equipment: 760,000.

Capital Improvements

“Appropriations provided for capital improvements to properties”
Correctional Centre Improvements: 285,000. Correctional Centre - Women's Unit: 580,000. Building Improvements: 255,000.

Total Capital Improvements: 1,120,000

Total Capital Expenditure Justice and Public Safety: 1,880,000

I have a question from the hon. Member from Borden-Kinkora.

Mr. Fox: Why is there an upgrade in 2018-2019 – the 600,000 what's that entail?

Mr. MacDonald: Which one are you –

Ms. Biggar: Can't hear.

Mr. Fox: I don't understand why you've got a 2018-2019 budget forecast of 600,000 but you've got nothing for the 2019 budget estimate 600,000. My understanding that the PIC System in need of repair but there's nothing being done with it.

Chair: Okay, Jim has it, Jim.

Jim Miles: That was for Repeaters Network maintenance costs for the entire PICs contract.

Mr. Fox: Okay.

Chair: Member from Borden-Kinkora.

Mr. Fox: One further question –

Chair: (Indistinct)

Mr. Fox: In the correctional centre improvements, is there an of their money being allocated for security fence upgrades for unloading and loading of prisoners – which has been a concern by the police departments that they've been putting forward for unsafe place?

Chair: Minister of Education, Early Learning and Culture.

Mr. J. Brown: We have actually budgeted for a sally port in the upgrade to the facility, so there will be an actual bay as we go forward?

Mr. Fox: Thank you (Indistinct)

Chair: Member from Charlottetown-Parkdale.

Ms. Bell: Thank you, Chair.

It's a question regarding the corporate registry; I don't think I've heard that asked?

Is that upgrade complete, the corporate registry project?

Chair: Minister of Education, Early Learning and Culture.

Mr. J. Brown: Thank you, Madam Chair.

It's not totally complete. There's nothing additional budgeted but the term of the contract has been extended. Off the top of my head I'll tell you, I can't remember what the final date is but they're basically in the final phases of getting it ready to go and testing it so that they can turn it on live.

Chair: Member from Charlottetown-Parkdale.

Ms. Bell: Thank you, minister.

Is there a timeline for that and how, if there is, ongoing work – you're still expecting that to finish within the 2019 budget year, is that the anticipation because it's not showing up in the estimate.

Mr. MacDonald: Jim's got that there.

Ms. Bell: Oh okay.

Jim Miles: Yeah so that's scheduled to be completed by March 31st, 2019.

Chair: Member from Charlottetown-Parkdale.

Ms. Bell: And do we expect it to be turned on by March 31st, 2019?

Mr. J. Brown: (Indistinct) It has recently been extended, as I say, I couldn't remember the date off the top of my head but whatever it was it's three months longer than what it was before as they've been kind of running through with the beta test phase of the actual (Indistinct)

There's a piece too that – you have to go out to the community and have all of the law clerks and everybody that will interface with it, trained to be able to use it.

So, there's a piece of work that goes along with that as well. They're in the process of getting ready to – kind of make it the go live product.

Chair: Shall the total capital expenditures –
Oh sorry, Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: One more thing, I'm wondering whether there's anything in this budget line for the lobbyist registry – the development of the lobbyist registry.

Mr. MacDonald: On capital?

Chair: Minister of Education, Early Learning and Culture.

Mr. J. Brown: So as I recall, the lobbyist registry has been budgeted for and I can't remember off the top of my head whether that was operational budget this year or the capital budget from last year, but it is actually the same company that's doing it and when that work is done and it's ready – the software itself is ready to go on right now.

In order for the whole system to be turned on, there was a – we have implemented, we'll say, an information period where folks will have an opportunity to look at what the requirements are and to come into compliance with them. So in other words, people are going to have to figure out: okay, I'm one of the three types of lobbyists, or I'm not and I'm going to have to get signed up and I'm going to have to – and some would form time to time be or not be – so you can be a consultant lobbyist today and then, not necessarily tomorrow.

So, with the different definitions, we have allocated a period of time to get signed up and for people to familiarize themselves with the legislative scheme.

Chair: Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you, Chair.

I'm moving down to the women's correctional unit, I see that we under spent on that considerably last year so was the work on the women's unit pushed back or?

Chair: Minister of Justice and Public Safety.

Mr. J. Brown: The first year what we had done was a – and I can't remember what the exact wording that was used but there was a

study done to determine – a needs assessment, we'll say for a lack of the exact term and it may actually be that.

When that came back, there was a number of different pieces determined that were required to adjust the budget going forward. The kitchen would be one that stands out in my mind, we need to improve the kitchen service as we go forward to accommodate the kind of renovation that we want to do.

There was an actual study that was done to determine what facility requirements would be put in place to further define what the budgetary requirements would be to go along with that project.

Chair: Shall the total Capital Expenditures Justice and Public Safety carry? Carried.

Hon. members, we are going to move on to the next budget on page 21.

Capital Expenditure Tourism PEI 2019-2020
Budget Estimate

Capital Improvements

“Appropriations provided for improvements and upgrades to the provincial parks, confederation trail and golf courses.”
Provincial Parks: 300,000. Confederation Trail: 50,000. Golf courses: 400,000.

Total Capital Improvements: 750,000.

Total Capital Expenditure Tourism Prince Edward Island: 750,000.

Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: So I'm wondering what's happened with the provincially owned golf courses and why spending is down there last year?

Jim Miles: So what they did was, they bought a bunch of golf courses the year before –

Mr. MacDonald: Carts.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: That was a few years ago Jim.

[Laughter]

Jim Miles: Sorry, carts the year before and they used some of the parks money to do that so then last year they transferred that money back from the golf cars and put it back in parks.

Chair: Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thanks.

So looking at the shoreline protection, I'm sure many of the members of the household look at the pictures of what happened in the North Shore just last week. I see that not a huge amount of money was budgeted last year but we spent over half a million dollars on shoreline protection and I see that there is nothing budgeted for this year.

I know we have a lot of vulnerable provincial parks – in my own district I can think of Victoria and Canoe Cove for example and Argyle Shore, all of them. I've seen it in Victoria myself where half of – because of an agreement with halibut company there – half of the shorefront of the Victoria Park there had riprap put in and was protected and half didn't.

You can actually – it's very evident when you don't protect the shoreline, what affect that has. So I'm wondering why there's nothing in the budget for shoreline protection.--

Jim Miles: So these –

Chair: Minister of Economic Development and Tourism.

Mr. Palmer: Thank you, Chair.

That shoreline protection was a special project that we had done in a particular section and as we investigate through our parks, we'll identify those pieces and we don't have anything in, I guess I'd say, dire need, that needs any protection at this point.

We did do a lot of investigation last week because there was (Indistinct) the wave action at Basin Head. We've all seen those videos I think and we were lucky in that situation that there wasn't any significant damage done to our piers that are there. There was a little bit of shoreline, but we didn't sustain any significant damage on that

one. That's something that we continue to monitor and allocate funds as we need them.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thanks.

I see the Confederation Trail last year was budgeted 50,000 and we spent 182 and now we're back down to 50. So what was the extra \$132,000 spent on?

Jim Miles: The additional capital money was used to develop a specific section of the trail in Fullerton's Marsh.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Sorry?

Jim Miles: And we would have gotten revenue from the Trans-Canada trail –

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Fund.

Jim Miles: – folks.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: I just didn't hear, Jim, where that improvement was done.

Jim Miles: I believe it was Fullerton's Marsh.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Oh yeah.

That's (Indistinct)

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct)

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Right, so do we have – is that connection in that area now complete then? Do we have – is the trail contiguous there?

Jim Miles: No, it's not complete yet.

Mr. MacDonald: No.

Jim Miles: There's still some more work to be done.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Any sense of when or if that work will be completed in the near future?

Jim Miles: Hopefully Trans-Canada trail will come through with some more money and we'll be able to do some of that work in 2019-2020.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Okay. I'm fine.

Thank you, Chair.

Chair: The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

Mr. LaVie: Thank you, Chair.

Do we have a disaster fund set up on PEI?

If the Charlottetown bridge is wiped out, do we have a plan? Do you have a plan to replace that?

Jim Miles: If there was a significant problem with – like the floods that were up west a few years ago, what would happen is transportation would come in and get a special warrant to cover the costs of that.

Mr. LaVie: So what's the special – yeah, that's just to cover the cost.

Say if the Charlottetown bridge is wiped out – the Souris bridge is wiped out – we had a storm, an ice storm, flattened everything that we have. Do we have a disaster plan? Do we have a plan?

Mr. MacDonald: (Indistinct) EMS.

Mr. LaVie: Yeah.

Jim Miles: I mean, that would be the planning that the emergency measures organization does on an ongoing basis.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Jim Miles: No, nothing to do with the capital (Indistinct)

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

Mr. J. Brown: Jim is right.

EMO does planning for all of these sorts of events – or, I shouldn't say necessarily all of them –

Mr. LaVie: Who's that?

Mr. MacDonald: Emergency measures (Indistinct)

Mr. J. Brown: Emergency measures.

Mr. LaVie: (Indistinct)

Chair: The hon. minister has the floor.

Mr. J. Brown: There are mechanisms by which we can set budgetary allocations in place or that we can call upon funds with the provincial government that might be set into place. It would depend on what the issue might be, basically, as we go forward.

Mr. LaVie: So you don't have a plan for disaster (Indistinct)

Chair: The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

Mr. LaVie: Thank you, Chair.

So we don't have a disaster plan?

Mr. J. Brown: That's not what I said, actually. I said the opposite, but anyway. You can choose to construe it however you wish.

Mr. LaVie: (Indistinct)

Chair: The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

Mr. LaVie: Thank you, Chair.

Can you get him to repeat that, please?

Chair: Sure.

The hon. Minister of Justice and Public Safety, could you repeat your response?

Mr. J. Brown: I just said that's not what I said.

In fact, I had said the opposite, but however he wishes to construe it, he can.

Mr. LaVie: Thank you, Chair.

Chair: The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

Mr. LaVie: I'm just asking if the – no, seriously.

Do we have a disaster plan if something – if the Confederation Bridge is down the boats are down. Do we have a disaster plan in place on PEI? Do you have a plan? Are there any funds – if every pole was wiped out on PEI with an ice storm, what do we have? Right over there now it's in the Magdalenes, right? There were 23 rigs that just went to the Magdalenes to help them out.

Do we have a plan?

Chair: The hon. Minister of Justice and Public Safety.

Mr. J. Brown: Madam Chair, there are plans for events of this nature and as an example, if you ended up in a situation where the bridge was down and the boats were unable to go, we would still have air as a third option that we might consider.

I don't have the plan for each eventuality right here in front of me. But, I would say –

Mr. LaVie: So there's no plans in place.

Mr. J. Brown: – there's a good part of the work that you could think of would be done at this point in time.

Mr. LaVie: I have one more question, Chair.

Chair: The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

Mr. LaVie: Thank you, Chair.

If the oil tanker in the Charlottetown Harbour sinks, what's your plan?

Chair: The hon. Minister of Justice and Public Safety.

Mr. J. Brown: Thank you.

So, an oil tanker in the Charlottetown Harbour would have a very large component that would be done by the federal government because it would be in navigable waterways, as you would well know, and Transport Canada would have the responsibility for any ships that would be sailing through here and the safety of them, and then the resulting oil spills, actually, I

think are presided over by the National Energy Board, if I recall correctly.

So, in any event, there are pieces to that. I can't sit here and dictate to you what exactly the plan would be if that did occur, but there would be a number of different agencies that would come into play.

Mr. LaVie: Thank you, Chair.

So we don't have a long-term plan –

An Hon. Member: Carry the bill.

Chair: The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

Mr. LaVie: – or a disaster fund on PEI.

Is that correct minister? Minister of Finance, is that correct? We don't have a disaster fund?

Mr. MacDonald: Basically, what we're doing here is dealing with capital budget so it could be an operational budget. It would fall under emergency measures right across the Island and they do have plans relevant to any types of disasters.

Mr. LaVie: Thank you, Chair.

So, where would the disaster fund fall under?

Mr. MacDonald: It would be under an operational budget.

Mr. LaVie: Under an operational budget?

Chair: You good, hon. member?

Mr. LaVie: Yes.

Chair: Thank you.

Shall the Total Capital Expenditure of Tourism PEI carry? Carried.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Chair: Oh sorry, did you have your hand up?

Mr. Trivers: No, I didn't. I just –

Chair: Add your name to the list now?

Mr. Trivers: Yeah.

Chair: Awesome.

Mr. Trivers: Just a quick one.

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: So, out in the North Rustico Harbour, which is outside of the town boundary, there are lots and lots of tourists that go there and we've got our own issues with land-use planning and that sort of thing. We've got industry. We've got residences and we've got businesses.

One thing that people ask for a lot is a public washroom and I was wondering if you would consider putting in a capital expenditure to build a public toilet there that you'd pump out on a year-over-year basis.

Mr. MacEwen: What's the depreciation on (Indistinct)

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

Mr. Palmer: We'd be happy to talk to them to see if there is something that we can do in our capital budget for them in the future.

Mr. Trivers: (Indistinct) provincial land (Indistinct)

Mr. Palmer: Oh, the town doesn't want –

Mr. R. Brown: Oh, he's the mayor.

Ms. Biggar: Oh, you're the dictator.

Chair: Excuse me, come through the Chair.

The hon. Rustico-Emerald, do you have another –

Chair: Do you have another question?

Mr. Trivers: I think that's great. I'd love to continue to talk about that with the minister (Indistinct)

Chair: Thank you.

Shall the Total Capital Expenditure carry? Carried.

Hon. members, we'll continue on on page 23.

Capital Expenditure

Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy

As in all of the other budgets, I will read the budget and total and then open the floor for discussion.

2019-2020 Budget Estimate

Land

“Appropriations provided for land purchases.” Land Purchases: 365,000.

Total Land: 365,000.

Equipment

“Appropriations provided for acquisition of Capital equipment.” Light Fleet: 1,000,000. Heavy Equipment: 1,500,000. Charging Stations: 730,000.

Total Equipment: 3,230,000.

Capital Improvements – Highways

“Appropriations provided for highway and bridge construction.” Bridges: 5,000,000. National Highways: 13,400,000. Collector Highways: 12,600,000. Trans-Canada Highway Extension: 17,000,000. Provincial Paving: 8,000,000.

Total Capital Improvements – Highways: 56,000,000.

Capital Improvements – Buildings

“Appropriations provided for the renovation, retrofit, and construction of Government-owned buildings and properties.” Buildings: 12,655,000.

Total Capital Improvements – Buildings: 12,655,000.

Total Capital Expenditure

Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy: 72,250,000.

Mr. Fox: Question.

Chair: The hon. Member from Borden-Kinkora.

Mr. Fox: Thank you.

Minister, when we look into equipment on the heavy equipment size –

Ms. Biggar: (Indistinct)

Chair: Excuse me, hon. member, could you just hold for a sec?

The hon. Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy, did you have a question?

Ms. Biggar: Yes.

Are we starting at the top of the budget?

Chair: No. I read the budget and then I'm opening up –

Ms. Biggar: Or (Indistinct) the budget? Okay.

Chair: – thank you – as I did in every other budget.

Ms. Biggar: Thank you.

Chair: Thank you.

The hon. Member from Borden-Kinkora, you have the floor.

Mr. Fox: Thank you, Chair.

Chair: Excuse me – excuse me, hon. Member, could you just hold for a second?

Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy, did you have a question?

Ms. Biggar: Yes. Are we starting at the top of the budget?

Chair: No, I read the budget and then I'm –

Ms. Biggar: (Indistinct), okay.

Chair: – opening up –

Ms. Biggar: Thank you.

Chair: – as I did in every other budget.

Thank you.

Member from Borden-Kinkora, you have the floor.

Mr. Fox: Thank you, Chair.

In equipment, under heavy equipment, last – I think it was two years ago or a year ago – we bought special boxes from the Province of Ontario, which have the capability of putting brine down the road. But yet, I've learned this year, that we contract out to a company from Nova Scotia to come over here and put calcium on our dirty roads.

Mr. LaVie: No, no!

Mr. Fox: Yes!

Mr. LaVie: No!

Mr. Fox: So, my question is –

Mr. R. Brown: Yes, (Indistinct)

Mr. Fox: – why are we buying equipment out of Ontario –

Mr. LaVie: No!

Mr. R. Brown: (Indistinct)

Mr. Fox: – and we have had it sitting during the summer time that are capable of putting calcium on the road –

Mr. LaVie: Are you serious?

Mr. Fox: – but yet, we go over to Nova Scotia, and we rent or pay a contractor to come over –

Mr. LaVie: No, no, no. You'll get the truth here in a minute.

Mr. R. Brown: (Indistinct)

Mr. Fox: – and put calcium down when we could be using our own equipment?

Mr. LaVie: No, no, no, no.

Mr. MacDonald: (Indistinct)

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

Ms. Biggar: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Hon. member, I certainly will get you some details on that. It's not in the capital budget, but I can tell you we have an under light fleet – 368 vehicles – and under heavy fleet – 295 pieces of heavy equipment. So, this is –

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: There's the truth.

Ms. Biggar: – this is an annual purchase to keep our fleet up to date.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Chair: Order! Order!

Ms. Biggar: Thank you.

Chair: The Member from Borden-Kinkora has the floor.

Mr. Fox: Thank you, Chair.

I've heard over and over how many vehicles are in the fleet, and I've heard how many vehicles we are purchasing – I don't care about that. It's very specific. Why are we going to a company in Nova Scotia and getting them to put calcium down, when we have our own fleet –

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct)

Mr. LaVie: They wouldn't do that.

Mr. Fox: – here, that is now capable of doing it, but yet we're not doing it.

Mr. LaVie: Got a company in District 1 did it last year.

Ms. Biggar: Madam Chair.

Chair: Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy.

And everybody is going to get a chance to speak to this –

Ms. Biggar: Everybody calm down.

Chair: There should only be one person's voice at a time on the floor, and if you could

help me out with that, that would be appreciated.

Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy has the floor.

Ms. Biggar: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Hon. member, that would be under our operating budget, so I certainly will go back to our Director of Highway Maintenance –

Mr. LaVie: Question (Indistinct)

Ms. Biggar: – and get those details for you.

Mr. Fox: I would appreciate that (Indistinct)

Chair: Thank you. Do you have another question?

Mr. Fox: Yeah.

Chair: Member from Borden-Kinkora.

Mr. Fox: Why is – we know our rural roads in PEI are deteriorating, we know that we are putting recap over recap and patch over patch, and more long patch than we know what to do with –

Mr. LaVie: Disaster.

Mr. Fox: – but, our actual recap budget is not increasing in the province when there is a need for it.

Mr. J. Brown: Where have you been?

Mr. Fox: (Indistinct) question.

Chair: Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy.

Ms. Biggar: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Actually, because of our new agreement with the federal government, which this province actually negotiated with Justin Trudeau and his government since 2015, we are now eligible for funding on those roads that have 1,000 cars or more. So, we are able to invest more, we are investing more in our – this year we will be doing 95 kilometers of recap, which is up –

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Ms. Biggar: – we will be doing 50 kilometers of highway rehabilitation, plus finishing off a 7.5 on the Trans-Canada Highway, as well.

We will be able to budget more on those connector roads, which are very important to our rural industries, and certainly keeping that in context of where we can make the best use of those funds.

Mr. R. Brown: Liberal times are good times, just remember that (Indistinct)

Chair: Member from Borden-Kinkora has the floor.

Mr. Fox: We must be going into an election. I guess thanks, minister, and I appreciate that. You and I have talked about –

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Mr. Fox: – we've talked about rural roads before, and I do appreciate that. So, is it safe in saying that recap for districts across the Island will see an increase this year?

Mr. LaVie: (Indistinct)

Chair: Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy.

Ms. Biggar: Thank –

Mr. Roach: (Indistinct)

Mr. Henderson: (Indistinct) districts that needed that.

Chair: Minister has the floor.

Ms. Biggar: Thank you, Madam Chair.

We do have a specific budget, and when spring comes, one of the things that does impact on how much we can do is the price of liquid asphalt, certainly. But we do plan to invest more in our connector roads, yes.

Mr. Fox: I appreciate that, minister.

Thank you.

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

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I see that paving was 9 million this past year and we're going back down to 8 million. Can the minister explain that to me?

Chair: Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy.

Ms. Biggar: Again, as I said, price impacts what we do, and so there were higher costs on that liquid asphalt that we have to use to put towards our budget. Price does impact, we budget and then obviously if the price is higher than we think, then we do. Plus, if you just give me a minute here – I know we did also do an extra section on the Trans-Canada Highway because we were ahead of schedule, so that would be some additional cost.

On the recap specific, it is determined by what the price happens to fluctuate, so we have to put a specific budget in and then go from that.

Chair: Member from Belfast-Murray River.

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Chair.

So, I was under the impression that if the price of asphalt was up, you didn't get the recap. That's basically what was shared with me –

Ms. Biggar: (Indistinct)

Ms. Compton: Okay, so –

Ms. Biggar: (Indistinct) find it in other areas, so we have to show it on that line. Sorry, Chair.

Chair: Member from Belfast-Murray River.

Ms. Compton: So, the total capital budget for Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy is going to be 72,250,000 for the coming year, and then we're going back down to 480,585 –

Mr. LaVie: That's after the election.

Mr. Fox: Cornwall Bypass.

Ms. Compton: – yeah, I guess –

Mr. LaVie: After the election.

Ms. Compton: – so, I guess we'll just say it's going to be an election year.

Thank you, Chair.

Chair: Thank you.

Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you very much.

So, just back to the provincial paving, as the hon. Member from Belfast-Murray River was saying, 2018-2019 it was estimated to commit a budget of 9 million. Now, the government is forecasting an addition million dollars. I know the minister said it's due to the higher cost of liquid asphalt, but would it have anything to do with the excessive paving that was done in District 23 this summer, as compared to other districts?

Chair: Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy.

Ms. Biggar: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I think regardless of what district any MLA lives in, all of the residents in those areas certainly have access to different funding portions through our program, and so as an MLA, I think if there's a certain area of the District 23 that the opposition does not want to see paved, they can go out and tell those residents that they don't deserve paving.

Thank you.

Ms. Compton: You got to tell all the residents; (Indistinct) tell (Indistinct) own residents.

Chair: Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thanks, Chair.

Just wondering if the minister could actually bring back the total paving and/or recap that was done in each district this past fiscal year?

Mr. Fox: Yes!

Leader of the Opposition: By kilometer, or let's say by meters, because I know Daniel MacDonald had to fight tooth and nail to get

500 meters paved in front of his property, where a road was completely –

Mr. Fox: (Indistinct)

Leader of the Opposition: – torn apart.

Chair: Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy.

Ms. Biggar: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Certainly, we table every year our annual report, but generally those are done by zones in the region; so, if the opposition would like to go back and look at the form of the previous years, we always table our transportation report. They are welcome to do that, but we do break them down by regions for work done.

Thank you.

Chair: Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Chair.

So, I guess the minister didn't understand my question. What I'm asking for is not region, what I'm asking for is a break down district by district. Can she provide that? A simple yes or no.

Chair: Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy.

Ms. Biggar: I'll have to go and check with how the department allocates and how they look at their zones. Usually, it's by zone.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Chair.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

Back a short while ago there was an announcement made by this government there was \$6 million being set aside for Province House. Would that be under the total capital improvement buildings budget line?

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

Ms. Biggar: I'm trying, I'm trying.

Chair: Well done.

Ms. Biggar: Thank you, Madam Chair.

As part of the interim report that we presented to the legislative management committee, one of the areas was to address some of the extra capital that would be needed and to estimate what that might be. That is targeted in the buildings part of it, but it's not as – it is targeted, but we are still in negotiations with Parks Canada and with our federal partners as to, maybe there'll be some cost share in that, but we did have to put some money, the same as we do with any other budget, Madam Chair.

If we're going to be fixing up buildings, we have to estimate what we need to budget and have it in the budget to be able to spend.

Chair: Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I, as well as many other members of the legislative management committee, were kind of blindsided when this announcement was made, because LMC wasn't actually given the information in advance, although we had been requesting for some time to have a much more fulsome discussion on the needs of Province House so that this Legislative Assembly, at some point in time, can move back to Historic Province House.

But with regards to the needs and assessments – so when this announcement was made, I don't know if there's any members of legislative management committee that were privy to this information coming forward, although apparently some MLAs were consulted. I think it came out in the media.

So again, what I'd be looking for is just a little more detail around what actually is earmarked for the \$6 million rather than just a guesstimation.

Chair: Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy.

Leader of the Opposition: Surely there's some kind of evidence or research done to identify what the cost would be.

Ms. Biggar: Yes, I want to take this please.

Chair: Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy.

Ms. Biggar: Because there seemed to be a misconception that legislative management have not been advised by my department.

On November 2nd, we presented the interim report to the Legislative Assembly office. We offered to come in and do a full briefing to the legislative management committee and that offer still stands.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

Chair: Thank you.

Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you.

So, in actual fact then, the legislative management committee was not briefed, although the minister had previously said that we were given all that information. We were not. I just want that clarified.

Ms. Biggar: Madam Chair.

An Hon. Member: Some MLAs (Indistinct)

Chair: Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy.

Ms. Biggar: The report was presented to the clerk's office and it's not up to us then to – It was presented for the legislative management committee.

Beyond that it's out of our hands, but there was a report presented and an offer made to come to the legislative management committee.

Chair: Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: So I'm correct then that LMC was not consulted or briefed.

Thank you very much, Chair.

Ms. Biggar: Chair?

Chair: Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy.

Ms. Biggar: I want to make it perfectly clear to Islanders, because this is their House not the legislative management committee House. It is the Islanders' House, Madam Chair and I want to make it very clear that we have, as a department, been consulting weekly with Parks Canada and with the Legislative Assembly through the clerk's office.

We are in weekly communication, so I do not want any misconception that we are not communicating with the Legislative Assembly, Madam Chair.

Thank you.

Chair: Thank you.

Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you very much, Chair.

I appreciate you coming back with that, minister.

So I guess what I'd ask for again, can you give us a detailed plan of what the \$6 million that has been announced by this government – that was not in advance told to the legislative management committee who is responsible for the running of the Legislative Assembly.

Can the minister table a detailed plan as to what the \$6 million is for?

Chair: Minister of Finance.

Mr. MacDonald: Operational enhancements include improved security measurements and equipment, improved in-house audio visual service for the Legislature, improved ventilation and climate control, and improve accessibility. 2019-2020, 1.5 will be spent; 2020-2021, 1.5; and 2021-2022, 3 million.

Leader of the Opposition: Can you table that, minister?

Mr. MacDonald: Sure.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you.

Chair: You're good?

Leader of the Opposition: For now, yeah.

Chair: Thank you.

Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thanks, Chair.

Really happy to see the charging stations receiving some money this year – \$730,000. That's great, and as I understand it that's for six level three fast chargers and 12 level two chargers.

I know last year the department applied for funding from the federal government for EV chargers, but that application was not successful. So I'm wondering whether this year's application has been approved yet?

Chair: Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy, are you taking this or is Minister of Finance taking this?

Ms. Biggar: Madam Chair, I'll take it.

Chair: Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy.

Ms. Biggar: We did submit the application and we have – we're under the understanding that it will be approved.

At the present time, we're doing the locations to put the charging stations. So we have to have those in place, certainly. We also have – just I know you're interested in what other things we may be doing, but we do have two carpool lots and we have 17 others throughout the province. That's, I think, very important too.

In regards specific to the EV, we're moving forward with that and put that in the budget. We did make that application and we expect to be successful.

Chair: Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: So what I hear minister is that it's still pending – approval is still pending, which is fine. But what will happen – let's imagine that the federal funds are not forthcoming either in their entirety or in part. Is this government committed to 100%

of these EV chargers if we don't get the federal money?

Chair: Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy, can you repeat that?

Ms. Biggar: Yes.

Chair: Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you.

So the \$730,000 that we see here as budget line, is that our provincial share of the cost or is that a mitigated cost if we don't get the federal dollars?

Jim Miles: That's the total cost of the chargers.

Chair: Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: So it strikes me if we do get the federal dollars that would be a zero line item in terms of the provincial budget?

Jim Miles: It'll stay at 730,000, but we'll have revenues that offsets it for probably half of that.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Right, an in-out situation, right.

Chair: Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thanks, Chair.

So I mean that's a really good start and six level three chargers because we have none on the Island currently and 12 level two, that's good. I look forward to seeing the locations where the minister is suggesting these go.

I see that in future years, if we look forward five years there's no further expenditure of funds, which suggests to me there's no plans to expand that EV charging infrastructure any further than six and 12.

Is that indeed the case?

Chair: Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy.

Ms. Biggar: Certainly, you know depending on the further development of EVs, we're

always going to be needing to increase our infrastructure. This is a five year capital plan. So within those next few years we'll know what the uptake is and what the other demand is going to be for more charging stations.

I think all innovations are going to be increasing going forward. Right now it's five years.

Chair: Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thanks.

So I'm just going to go a little further down to the bridges. I'm wondering if there's any update from the minister on the bicycle lane on the Hillsborough Bridge – where we are. I should say active transportation lane, I shouldn't restrict it to bicycles.

Ms. Biggar: Do you have that in (Indistinct) minister?

Chair: Minister of Finance.

Mr. MacDonald: I'm just looking here. No, I don't have it.

Chair: Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy.

Ms. Biggar: Thank you, Madam Chair.

We have been working with the transportation committee. We do have some plans for the approaches to the bridge. Those are the kinds of things that have to be first addressed before you actually put the bicycle lane on.

We have ongoing discussions with – we have a committee in place with Cycling PEI, with our transportation committee and a number of other – with Stratford and Charlottetown sitting on that planning committee and putting a plan together – what that would actually look like.

So we do have a draft plan that should soon be done. We'll be having some public meetings on that.

But in terms of this particular capital budget, we have some plans there for the approaches to the bridges.

Chair: Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: I'm really happy to hear that because of course, the bridge is only one part of what has to be an interconnected system. The cyclists that I have spoken to have identified those connectors on and off the bridge as the most (Indistinct) part of the trip from Stratford into town, so I'm really pleased to hear that minister.

As I understand it, the engineering of the bridge is sufficient to carry an active transportation lane. Can you give us an update also on the other thing that might be carried across that bridge, the sewage line from Stratford, whether that's included in any of the budget here?

Chair: Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy.

Ms. Biggar: It's not. It's not in this particular capital budget but it is being funded under Infrastructure Canada, yes, which is operating.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: So it's in the operating budget, can you give us an update on where that project is, if you wish.

Chair: Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy.

Ms. Biggar: I know that they are just – they are working underneath the bridge right now to upgrade the different standards that are there in order to hang the pipe so, I can get you further detail on that.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: That's great, thank you Chair.

Chair: Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Chair.

Good roads are really important to the constituents of District 18 Rustico-Emerald and of course, I'll be updating my list of roads that need resurfacing and sending that to your office.

Church Road, Smith Road, Trout River Road, (Indistinct), Mill River Road et cetera et cetera. But, one road that has had an ongoing concern for many years really, much before my time is Hazel Grove Road.

The reason I'm asking about it is, in the operating budget it seems that the repairs require capital budget type work – I've heard in the past that: in the capital budget, no it's operation budget.

Hazel Grove Road really needs to be looked at; I think it needs some major work with drainage and culverts, ditches and all kinds of things. Not necessarily resurfacing but to make sure that it stays solid year round. I was just wondering if you could commit to bringing that back to your department, to make sure that we do something to make some major changes in Hazel Grove Road so it stays firm and drivable year round.

Chair: Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy.

Ms. Biggar: We will certainly work with the community and look at those concerns and take it under advisement.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you.

Chair: Member from Borden-Kinkora.

Mr. Fox: Thank you, Chair.

Just to be clear, both ministers I guess. I think it was in 2015-2016, one or the other, the department did provide a detailed list per district of what recap was actually allocated per district or laid down.

I'm interested minister of transportation, was any parking lot or completely non-government parking lot paved this year outside of provincial roads?

Chair: Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy.

Ms. Biggar: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Hon. member we get requests all the time from churches, from Lions Clubs, from Legions, for millings and gravel and we have done that right across PEI as in-kind. We do that as a service to those non-profit service communities.

So we have. We've done the church down in Tryon, we did the west. I don't know, we did a lot of church parking lots this year, a lot of other parking lots, community halls asked for some work to be done. Usually it's

a pretty thick level of millings as opposed – so it looks like paving but it has certainly been a service that we provide as in kind.

Mr. Fox: Thank you.

Chair: Member from Borden-Kinkora.

Ms. Biggar: In all districts I might add.

Mr. Fox: Thank you.

These charging stations that you plan on putting up, how are you going to figure where they will be placed across the province to ensure that they're right across the whole Island?

Chair: Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy.

Ms. Biggar: Thank you.

What we've done, we want to make sure it goes from Wood Islands – it's on the main highway obviously, because if you're travelling, you want to be able to pull into a location that's open 24 hours a day, so that even 20 minutes, you don't want to be – you might want to go in for a coffee or whatever.

So we are looking at different locations where those charging stations – you can usually go a couple of hundred, 400 kilometers on a charge depending on the car. They will be positioned so that you can go from place to place without having to worry and to be able to pull in if it's 2:00 a.m. and you're just coming off the bridge and you're heading to Mill River but you might need a charge up, right?

So we will have them in those locations, yes.

Chair: Member from Borden-Kinkora.

Mr. Fox: That's great minister, is there any charge to this for the travelling public to fill up their car with electricity?

Chair: Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy.

Ms. Biggar: No.

Mr. Fox: So they're free?

Chair: Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy.

Ms. Biggar: Yes.

Chair: Shall the Capital Expenditure Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy carry? Carried.

Mr. MacDonald: Madam Chair, I move the Speaker take the chair, and that the Chair make report to Mr. Speaker.

Chair: Shall it carry? Carried.

Mr. Speaker, as Chair of the Committee of the Whole House, I wish to report that the committee has gone into capital supply to be granted to Her Majesty and has come to certain resolutions there on which said resolutions I am directed to report to the House whenever it should be pleased to receive the same.

Mr. MacDonald: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Member from Charlottetown-Lewis Point, that the report of the Committee be now received.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Chair: Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of the Committee be now adopted.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Minister of Workforce and Advanced Learning.

An Hon. Member: Call the hour.

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

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

The Legislature adjourned until 7:00 p.m.

Speaker: You may be seated.

Motions Other Than Government

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

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Mr. Trivers: One moment, we're – we've got to call the right bill there.

Ms. Compton: I know which one is on the list, but –

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Mr. Trivers: One twenty – 122.

Speaker: Actually, it's Orders Other Than Government.

Orders Other Than Government

Ms. Compton: I know, but thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque, that the 35th order of the day be now read.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Committee Clerk: Order No. 35, *An Act to Amend the Municipal Government Act (No. 5)*, Bill No. 122, in committee.

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

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Speaker: No, it's –

Ms. Compton: Oh, sorry.

Speaker: It's committee of the whole.

Ms. Compton: Committee of the whole, yeah.

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

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

I will call on the hon. Member from Borden-Kinkora. Would you please come and chair this bill?

Chair (Fox): The House is now in a Committee of the Whole House to take into consideration a bill to be intitled Bill 122, *An Act to Amend the Municipal Government Act (No. 5)*.

Mr. Trivers: I'd like to bring a stranger on the floor.

Chair: Sure. Granted.

Mr. Trivers: Hello, stranger.

Chair: Good afternoon.

If you could introduce yourself for the record, please?

Dave Pizio: David Pizio, the CAO of the municipality of Greenmount-Montrose.

Chair: And for the – if any questions are directed to you, if you'd just please state your name for the record prior to making any comments.

It's my understanding this bill has been on the floor twice before in committee. Do you have any new information to provide on the bill?

Mr. Trivers: I think that we had some good debate on this bill before, and I think that the House is well aware and the committee of the whole house is well aware that, really, this doesn't change the intention of the act at all. All it does is add additional options to the minister so that, you know, he can continue to serve the constituents of Prince Edward Island the best way he can. It really is – are changes that should strengthen the act and they're put forward in good will.

I don't know, Mr. Pizio might want to make some comments, since he hasn't been on the floor with this amendment yet.

Chair: Mr. Pizio, would you like to address that?

Dave Pizio: The aspect of the small communities and the purpose of the CAO, what we've seen over time – and I'll speak in regards to my own municipality – that the cost of a CAO is one of the financial burdens being placed upon these small communities as a result of the MGA.

I was very disappointed when the bill amendment to take the office and allow it to be outside the municipality again at the end of the five-year transition, the aspect of a CAO and an office 20 hours a week is a great financial burden as well, and these seem to be the crucial points of the MGA for the smaller communities. The financial encumbrances being placed upon us is going to financially cripple us to the point that we have to make a decision: either we substantially increase our municipal taxes to meet the administrative requirements of the MGA or we're going to perform annexation, amalgamation, another possibility, or dissolve.

Again, the history that we have, we're enjoying quite well to hold the decisions within our municipalities for the things that are ongoing; and when I see the amendments that were coming, I was pleased to see that these things were coming with a thought that they're looking at the impact upon the small municipalities.

So, Mr. Chair, what I see here is the act itself, these amendments that are being brought forward are providing a recognition of the small communities and in the end, what's going to happen is to maintain their health financially, I see these amendments, Mr. Chair, as a means to give opportunity with the act to meet and recognize the small communities.

Chair: Thank you.

The hon. Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy.

Ms. Biggar: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'm just curious; we've just gone through our municipal elections; was there anyone that ran in your municipality for election? If I might ask the guest?

Dave Pizio: Mr. Chair, all my council members and the mayor were by acclamation.

Ms. Biggar: Okay. So you feel you have a strong council there?

Dave Pizio: Mr. Chair, yes.

Ms. Biggar: Good, good. Just wondering, with your tax base, do you feel you have a large tax base or – just curious?

Dave Pizio: Our tax base for Greenmount-Montrose is \$17,670,000. So it provides to us, Mr. Chair, a very good tax base; however, the income from this simply meets the basic needs of our municipality. Mr. Chair, our municipality has no assets. The only service that we provide is by purchasing fire services from Alberton, so we are able to pay those out of the property taxes that we have, plus our equalization.

But I will state right now, Mr. Chair, that the remuneration for the councillors, the mayor and myself is \$1 a year.

Chair: Thank you, minister.

Ms. Biggar: Just curious because I know, having been an administrator myself on a small council and also a councillor at one time, does your council keep a reserve fund?

David Pizio: Mr. Chair, we tried to at the end of the year, somewhere between \$5,000 and \$10,000.

Chair: Minister?

Ms. Biggar: No, that's great.

Thank you.

Chair: Seeing how there are no more questions on the list, would the wish of the committee to go –

Mr. R. Brown: (Indistinct)

Chair: Do you have a question, minister?

Mr. R. Brown: Yes.

I was out to the municipal orientation meeting on Saturday at Covehead, and you know, it was well, well attended; I think close to 180 new councillors and I'd say one third of them were brand new.

You could see the enthusiasm in the room there that they want to get down to business and they want to start making their particular part of PEI a better place to live, work, and play. There was a great discussion

all day about how improvements can be made in different areas and that.

There's a section in the legislation here, section nine, consultations: The minister shall consult with the federation of municipalities respecting any substantive amendments that the minister proposes to this act or regulations under this act.

So, the spirit of the – the legislation was developed with the federation of municipalities, with municipalities across Prince Edward Island. We made a commitment to all these municipalities that we'd go back to them and consult them. And that's out of respect for them. We didn't want to act like big brother to them. That's out of respect for them.

With us coming in now and starting to change the act, without consulting them, I think that's disrespect for the people that ran in the last election. There's well over – I've signed over 500 letters in terms of congratulations to people, and I'm just looking at those 500 people that are now elected, ready to get to work to make their communities better, and the first piece of legislation we're going to put in – by the way, councils all come in effect on Friday – the first thing we're going to do is override and start governing their ability to govern.

To me, I consider the municipalities a form of government under the constitution. They're a creature of the province. But me as minister and the government considers them an equal partner in developing PEI and I think this is very disrespectful the way we're treating an equal partner in Prince Edward Island here.

They're the ones that ran; they're the ones that got elected. There's ample opportunity to consult with them. These things do not have to come in to a force until three or four years, so there's lots of time to make these amendments.

So I'll make a commitment to you today that I will take these amendments to the meetings with the federation and I'll put them in as part of a package that says: here are some proposals that has come from the opposition. We will consult with them and then come back with their concerns and

questions and answers and then see if we can put a total package together.

You know, if I was a councillor that worked really hard the last couple of months getting elected or a mayor that worked really hard getting elected under this act, and then having somebody coming in – I'm not even in office yet – well, I was down to Georgetown last night, the Three Rivers, and I witnessed the swearing-in, and, you know, you could see in the people that were elected, they wanted to do good for their community. They were ready to put their time into it, and they were willing to take criticism, make new policy, but they wanted to make their part of Prince Edward Island a better place, but also not only that, some of the discussion around there was the bigger picture of PEI.

They're not only saying that: We want to make our place better, but we want to make PEI better.

You know, you think – if I was a councillor that just ran and got elected or a mayor that just ran and got elected and three days from now I'm going to take office and at the same time there's going to be changes made to a piece of legislation that governs how I and my municipality works, I'd be offended by it.

But, as I made the commitment to you here tonight, I'll take these amendments back to the federation of the municipality – and at the meeting in Covehead, I made it quite clear to all of the municipalities – the ones that aren't even members of the federation, that we will work with the federation, that the federation will represent all municipalities for the first couple of years in this. We are willing to help subsidize the federation a bit in order to do that role.

So, basically, everybody will be represented through a transition stage, and we will, through the federation, do the discussions on that. It's their order of government, it's their responsibility. If you don't want them to have the responsibility, then just abolish the act and do it yourself. But, for many, many years, the City of Charlottetown used to own the city schools and they used to run the social assistance services. Times have changed.

But I'm disappointed that the opposition is coming in with a piece of legislation that is contrary to the act, which is section nine of the act – we'd be breaking the act, by the way, if we did this. Just let's make that clear, we'd be breaking the legislation.

So with all due respect, like I made the commitment to you, I will be passing them onto the federation of the municipality and over the next few months, we'll discuss them. We'll even have you at some meetings, I guess, to explain why you want these changes, and I think that would be the best way to go.

Why wouldn't you think that? Like, if you just got elected as being an MLA and somebody comes in and said: No, you sit in the sidelines for a while, we'll run it for a while because, you're just brand new. You're just brand new. You'd be pretty offended yourself.

So what I saw Saturday and what I saw last night in Georgetown, you know what? I think we're fortunate in Prince Edward Island to have the caliber of people that I saw at the meeting and I saw last night in Three Rivers to come forward with their names. It's hard work. It's hard work.

And like I told them on Saturday, some of the things I had to deal with when I was a councillor was fence wars, people got over a fence war, and when two neighbours fight over a fence, or two neighbours fight over a dog barking or two neighbours fight, that's hard, hard work. That's a lot of hard work.

When you're making bylaws, in terms of planning or police or fire or things like that, that's hard work and you spend a lot of sleepless nights thinking: Am I doing the right thing for my constituents?

You guys can sit in opposition. I sat there. You can make all the criticisms you say, but at the end of the day you don't have to take responsibility for it. So when you get in a position that you have to take responsibility, you'll see how hard it is. You should have spent some time in municipal politics because it's –

Mr. LaVie: I did.

Mr. R. Brown: – (Indistinct)

Chair: Does the minister have a question?

Mr. R. Brown: Yes.

No, that's it.

Chair: Promoter?

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, minister.

You make some very reasonable suggestions there and I, first off, wanted to speak about, as I have many times in the House before, the amazing dedication of municipal councillors in our province, especially as we heard from Dave Pizio tonight, the stranger on the floor, that really the vast majority have no remuneration at all.

These are really community volunteers that are stepping up to make their community a better place. They do amazing work and they're in politics for all the right reasons. They're in there to help their communities, to make their communities a better place.

I think I mentioned before when I was in the community of St. Nicholas, and you were at that meeting, minister, they were in a position where they might have to dissolve if they didn't have councillors come forward to fill all the spots and it really, literally, brought a tear to my eye to see the appeal go out during that meeting and people step up from the floor to support their community and to work, again, as volunteers to make sure their community continued to thrive. So, I think we can agree on that, that we do agree there.

I did want to respond to the thought that section nine of the MGA requires consultation with federation of municipalities for – I think it's key that it says for substantive amendments. I think it's really important to note that the amendments, in this bill in particular, are being proposed is just adding another option. It doesn't change the intention of the act. It gives you, the minister, another option. It doesn't infringe on the councillors or the municipalities at all.

It just means that if you're working with them, see that it might be better that the province pay for the chief administration officer instead of the municipality, and then you actually have that option.

So I think we'll have to agree to disagree on that part, but I do appreciate your offer and I am agreeable to move forward that way. I think that it's really important, though, that it's not just the federation of municipalities, but as you said, it's all municipalities, because in particular, I believe, it's the small municipalities that we've most impacted by this.

The other thing, I wanted to comment on something you said. You said, instead of working with the act or if we don't agree with the act, we should abolish it and start again. I think that's really important to note, that that's not, at least, what I'm suggesting here. I'm saying that I think I understand the intention of the act in many ways and we're trying to work within the framework of the act and its intent to make it better without having to start from scratch, because we appreciate and I appreciate all of the tremendous work that's gone in from the former minister, from the civil service, from the federation of municipalities, and really, everyone who has been involved with bringing the significant piece of legislation forward.

I think you would be hard pressed to find people who would disagree that we needed to bring the former municipalities act up to date. Now, what we're talking about is amending the act to make it better, to help small municipalities, to make sure they can continue to exist.

Like I said, I would definitely like to take you up on your offer and would love to move forward with that because I'm confident that when we hear the voices of small municipalities, it will strengthen amendments to the bill, will come up with new amendments and will do the best for the Island and small municipalities as a whole.

I don't know if Mr. Pizio has anything to add to that.

David Pizio: Mr. Chair, last year the Federation of PEI Municipalities presented a presentation to the standing committee.

Their entire presentation was focused on amalgamation and annexation of the Island. I was listening to the entire presentation. There was nothing in there that I understood,

Mr. Chair, of the idea of maintaining the small communities.

I then went and looked at what the Federation of PEI Municipalities put out in, an amalgamation annexation toolkit, and as I read through that, they follow along different lines; the strategic studies, the different possible money sources to do all these things, but part and parcel in it, one of the recommendations right out of their toolkit was in the amalgamation annexation process was not to engage with the unincorporated areas in the beginning. And we saw that that caused a lot of conflict.

So, what I see is with the amendments, we're not changing the aspect of what I see of the MGA. It's to see that there is a better voice for all those concerned that are affected by the MGA. So asking the federation – and I know back at that time, the federation said that they were speaking for all the smaller municipalities when it came to the new funding model, but our six communities up west that I spoke with each one, we were never approached by the Federation of PEI Municipalities.

Chair: Thank you.

The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Mitchell: Yeah, I'm just going to make a couple of quick comments there.

During the construction or the creation of the municipalities, the MGA, I was pretty well immersed in all of the work that went through there. As Dave said, we worked closely with the federation. We worked closely with the existing municipalities, big and small, to try to come up with something that we can move forward with.

I'm pleased to hear the minister offer the fact that he will take your amendments forward to be looked at in a different way, and that's all well and good, and that's probably the way that should work; but I guess for my question, as I said, I put a lot of blood, sweat, and tears during the process of how this was unfolding and I guess to Dave's point, I can ask the question with him thinking about his own community and I can ask the question again thinking about other small communities, but do you see,

Mr. Pizio, do you see any value-added piece to having a 20-hour staff?

When I say value-added, I mean working progressively for your community rather than being regressive, and spending that 20 hours either identifying projects, identifying funding, working with federal governments or municipal governments, spending the 20 hours on the phone, but when one of your residents comes through the door or your constituents of the community comes through the door, assist them in their needs and build the relationship locally because obviously the goal of the MGA is to strengthen and make bigger and stronger all municipalities, whether you're small starting out or large starting out.

So I guess, you know, do you see a value-added piece to that, that if you have somebody in office or some location working 20 hours, that could be really utilized for the good of the community to improve the community and not to be looked at as a burden financially, but to look at it as good investment for my community? Has that ever been a part of you or your council's vision on it from your perspective of your community?

Chair: Mr. Pizio.

Dave Pizio: Mr. Chair, with this aspect with the Greenmount-Montrose, myself as a CAO, all of the aspects, the paperwork, everything is regarded to possible money sources for the projects, the GTA, the community development program. I'm able to do all that; but if I go back to see the aspect of permits along those lines, so I went and checked because as we know at this time, anything to do with permits, if there was going to be subdivision, everything went to Access PEI.

In Greenmount-Montrose, over the past 10 years, we've had approximately 17 to 25 transactions over 10 years. So having somebody sit in an office for 20 hours a week at that level of interaction when we are dealing right now with no problems – we were very fortunate with the gas tax, we got that. We were very fortunate. We were able to do all of the paperwork in the community development program. We received funds that way, so all those things are possible.

Again, I think as it was put out that the volunteer aspect of the small communities, one of the things that's occurring, there's a lot more paperwork, but it's strictly administrative in aspect. So, the idea of 20 hours a week for a person to be there, is there a possibility that's going to add value to the municipality? At this point in time for Greenmount-Montrose and the other smaller communities up west, the six that we got together, we saw no value-added to pay out approximately \$20,000-\$25,000 a year for an office being manned 20 hours a week.

We do realize that it's at the end of the five-year transition that we would be seeing this office because that's part of the legislation; and we will adhere to the legislation as it exists because it's law. There's no such thing as going around it. It's there. But it's a five-year transition and I see the opportunity that we can see how we can recognize the small communities and how strong they have been, how they've operated through volunteerism and now with this new MGA, the push for – they want better accountability, which we've done now, and the aspect of the governance to change whether you are a small community of 258 people as Greenmount-Montrose, or you're 34,000 people as Charlottetown. The numbers don't equate. The level of requirements don't equate.

Right now, everything – as we know, the unincorporated areas, if they want anything done in the way of permits or that, they can go through Access PEI which our smaller municipalities that do not have land-use planning will use Access PEI as well. So this has been working quite well. We've had no problems.

I think one of the problems that came up at one point was something could occur in an unincorporated area or possibly in your own municipality of which it wasn't brought to the attention of the people noticing it was being done. Yet, all fire districts have a fire district president and so there's the point of contact. All permits are registered, show people how to go online; you can see any permits that have been asked for in your area. All those things are there and we fall back to the land use plan which the province has in place.

So my long-about answer for this, Mr. Chair, is that right at this point in time, I do not see any value for Greenmount-Montrose to have a 20-hour a week person when we are meeting all of the demands through administrative aspects of the MGA at this point, meeting the transition things.

We have a larger cost now for our audits because this next upcoming audit can't be a review (Indistinct). It must be a full audit. So we're adding more value to that, whereas in the past, under \$50,000, you asked for an exemption and you didn't have to do an audit. But I understand there's an accountability aspect. That is one of the key things for governance, is accountability. So we're meeting that.

But is there a value-added for such a financial encumbrance upon a small community at this point in time as we move forward? Down the road, maybe there's going to be an actual meeting of the minds for amalgamation/annexation. I'm not against amalgamation/annexation. What I'm against is the fact that as that process as it's set by the MGA and as things are coming about, it seems to leave out key components in the population of the small communities and the unincorporated areas.

Chair: Thank you.

The hon. Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy.

Ms. Biggar: Thank you.

I guess I just wanted to make an observation. Actually, Eilerslie-Bideford and Lady Slipper councils have amalgamated and we're now called Central Prince, the rural municipality of Central Prince; however, I know there's always been angst about that amalgamation. Would you keep your same community name?

I know we went through this in Summerside. St. Eleanors is part of that annex that Summerside went through. St. Eleanors is still retained its distinct community name. Eilerslie-Bideford, Enmore, Victoria West, have all retained their name in the process.

I guess I want to make a comment, first of all, that the process itself, to thank those community members that worked together

because it's a fairly stretched-out municipality now and yet we've been able to come together for the larger good of what we might be able to accomplish; but you know, the Member from Rustico-Emerald, I just want to say thank you for bringing this to the table. I think it's good that we can work together and have the minister bring this back to the federation of municipalities with concerns from the smaller municipalities and be able to work through those.

I don't think anybody wants to circumvent the act because it's pretty spelled out there that we really can't make these changes without going back to the federation, and I know Bruce MacDougall, the president of the federation, and I know Bruce MacDougall is going to keep in mind the smaller communities. He's from a small community. I know at their heart that they work on behalf of all.

As minister who administers the gas tax for all the municipalities, I know having had those discussions that we're very cognizant of government, of what the small municipalities get for their gas tax, as is the federation in their discussions.

It may seem like the smaller communities weren't considered, but I know in those discussions that they were. So I want to make that known as well, because not to think that the federation is only there for the larger communities; but I think it's a good move – a good suggestion – that the minister made, and that we can continue working on this and get more input, and maybe the minister will have an opportunity then to have that discussion.

It's not really a question, but I wanted to make those comments, and thank you for your –

Mr. Fox: (Indistinct) promoter.

Ms. Biggar: – indulgence.

Mr. Trivers: Yes, and thank you, minister.

I do appreciate your support in this.

Really, this is the way the Legislative Assembly should work, where there is a bill on the floor, and it's been brought together

in the best way that it could be. But now, as the official opposition, we're hearing about the short-comings of the bills, and that's our job, to criticize.

We can work together and we can look at how the bill can be changed to make it better and to give more options to small communities; give more options to the minister and make sure we get the best path forward.

Yes, Bruce MacDougall, is a fine person and in fact, he's a very good singer, as well. I don't know if you know that.

Ms. Biggar: I know he is.

Mr. Trivers: He's got an excellent single I think he's about to release very soon (Indistinct)

Ms. Biggar: It's already out.

Chair: Minister of Workforce and Advanced Learning.

Mr. Gallant: Thank you, Chair.

Thank you for bringing this forward again.

The last time it was on the floor, I mentioned that I was at that meeting as well in St. Nicholas, and that was a testament of democracy working at its best. They had three choices. Number one, increase their taxes; number two, dissolve; number three, join another municipality. Well, after some great dialogue and some very serious questions and some very good answers, they decided that they would reoffer, form a new council, and look at their options.

The minister at that meeting told them that: We have four and a half, almost five years where you have to have this 20 hour person in place; we will have a look at it, I hear you that it could cause you some difficulties. But, they agreed to stay on, some very capable people stepped up, and they're going to look at this, they're going to meet again now, this fall – in the new year – and they'll decide to put their taxes up a little bit to stay afloat.

They are a small community with not a lot of growth, which is unfortunate, but in five years or four and a half years, a lot of things

could happen. Somebody could sell a field, somebody could make a subdivision, or build a few duplexes; I know they don't have municipal water, but a lot of things can happen in five years. This new legislation is a road map, and yes, there will be some bumps along the way. But, the minister has already made it clear that he is willing to look at things.

I have a question for Mr. Pizio; you said the federation never contacted you folks. Did you folk contact them, or did you just think they didn't want anything – like Mr. Pizio, in your words, they said: if you weren't a corporation –

Chair: Mr. Pizio.

Dave Pizio: Mr. Chair, the tool kit that they put out – well actually, I'm sorry Mr. Chair, to answer back, I sent emails to Mr. MacDougall stating what the issues were that I would like to meet, and nothing ever happened.

Mr. Gallant: Okay.

Dave Pizio: One of the things that what I see is, how can I maintain our small community knowing what is coming down?

If my choice is to remain as I am, as our community has been run, our own destiny, we raised our taxes as we saw to meet certain things. But, with the MGA, as it is stated right now, at the end of the five years, there is only going to be – as Mr. Chair, as was said, either you're going to raise your taxes. In our particular case it's either double, and in some cases, triple your municipal taxes for only administrative purposes, two – you amalgamate annex, which is going to cost more. Along the lines, yes, you can save here or save there, but if you have three communities that never had a CAO being paid so much per week and things – that's an additional cost. Or, you're going to dissolve.

What I would ask is that as a small community, I am left with the ability to maintain as I am now, without looking down the road at the end of the five-year transition saying: I'm going to have those three options, and that's it – one or the other. Whereas, if I am operating right now, keeping our head above water, meeting the

criteria as it is, especially on the aspect of accountability, okay we keep going. But, if I have this waiting for me at the end of the five-year transition, then there is going to be that aspect, you would have to make one of those three decisions. You don't have any other decisions to make.

Chair: Thank you.

Promoter.

Mr. Trivers: Yes, and I just wanted to thank Mr. Pizio, again, for being on the floor, here, tonight to provide that perspective from someone who is a community volunteer and a CAO.

But, I wanted to point out that yes, it is important that we work together, and we listen to the criticisms, because there is some serious – very serious – shortcomings in the *Municipal Government Act*. I don't want to downplay the seriousness of that and the fact that these are going to be some very important, very passionate discussions that take place. We can't shy away from that. This is not going to be like a one-meeting, news conference, walk out and yay, we just solved all the problems. It's going to be a tough process and we have to be prepared for that.

Like the Minister of Workforce and Advanced Learning said, that night in St. Nicholas, there were some very tough questions, and there were some heated discussions. The only reason they agreed to move forward was because the minister promised that we would make changes to the *Municipal Government Act*. We have to make sure we are really prepared to listen and make some potentially tough changes.

Mr. Fox: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: My first point is about the time frame that we're in.

Like the minister, I attended the – at least the beginning – of the orientation session at the North Shore community for councillors from across the province – councillors and mayors, CAOs – on Saturday. There was a real feeling of, I would call it, 'can do' in that room; people were getting to know each other. I actually asked the question in making some welcoming remarks how many

were first time in their roles? And it was roughly a third, which everyone got a lift out of that by itself.

These folks have got a four year mandate, as do you, in your reelection or re-return into office. There is a five year window of the transition or of the introduction and how different communities will find their kind of equilibrium or what works for them with the new MGA.

I feel that this would be, at best, premature; to be changing or for that matter, for the province to take an active role in some of the ways – well, in particular, paying the CAO – I think you could probably have a fair amount of debate about whether that's a good idea, in terms of independence and so on. But, I'm not arguing too far down that path. It's more that we are definitely in a time when the leaders in communities throughout the province are working together with the public service and the minister, and with government and with their communities, will be finding the new way. It will involve different choices for different communities.

I also participated on Saturday morning in the swearing in of the new council in my own community, North Shore, which is newly amalgamated – two new communities, Grand Tracadie and Pleasant Grove have joined. The five communities have come together, and that's a big achievement in itself, was done constructively and peacefully.

Good people have come forward in some cases with contests to service on council, but when you look at the time frame – when you look at how things have evolved, I mean I was born in that community on a dirt road with a one-room school. Today, I'm just trying to now determine where it is in population and tax base among the communities in the province, but it's got a good heft to it. Still lots of things to deal with and to keep learning and issues that come with growth, of course.

My main point then is at this very, very early stage with these new councils in place where things are, I'm quite inclined to say with things having moved along quite far from where we probably thought they were when we were talking about it last spring.

The agreement to have this kind of tested out or to road test it and work along with the federation seems to me like the best approach to take to – in that spirit of can-do – figure out what’s going to work best for what will likely be a landscape that continues to evolve.

Chair: Promoter.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Chair.

Thank you, Premier, for that as well.

Again, these amendments are about increasing the options, and giving the minister the option to do things. I think we’re going to have to agree to disagree perhaps on that process and whether these are substantive or not in section 9, and whether they’re in contravention of that.

One thing I do want to bring up – and perhaps I should ask the Minister of Communities, Land and Environment this – is you mentioned that you wanted to take these amendments and bring them. I wanted to make sure that also includes the amendments that I brought forward in the spring that were voted down with the unincorporated areas, because I think the issues with unincorporated areas are probably even more serious than the ones with the small municipalities. It’s really important that we have those discussions.

Minister, maybe I can ask you to confirm that?

Mr. R. Brown: Everything is going to be on the table. Everything and anything and any proposal you come up – Mr. Pizio will present your proposals or any community can present your proposals – you could present your proposals through the process, you know?

Section 8 of the act is quite clear. “A council may, in writing, apply to the Minister for an extension of time for the doing of anything required under this Act and the Minister may, in writing, extend the time subject to any conditions the Minister considers necessary or advisable.”

Some municipalities contacted the department over the last week and they asked for extensions.

I’m extremely fortunate to have an extremely good staff that I think goes over and above their duties in terms of making sure – they’re committed to this piece of legislation. They’re committed to the communities. I see that in my staff, and they will prepare orders, prepare notes, and you know. They’re not – some interpretation was this is control, command and control legislation. No, and they work extremely – They’re saying yeah, you know, let’s give some extensions here. We’ll work it out.

You were there in St. Nicholas, and that was – the minister of workforce said: that was democracy in action. We went in there and there were a lot of mad people and I can understand why. There was a new era coming or there was a way of changing things and there was some hesitation of going, but you and I and the Chair was there. There was no fighting. You had some good questions. The Chair had some good questions. The minister of workforce had some good questions.

I was extremely impressed by the community, like I thought I was going to go in and you were just going to hear no new taxes, no new taxes, no new taxes, but they sat there and said: well maybe if we went two cents, we could do this or maybe if we went three cents and do this. What I saw that night was the residents of that community coming together and saying: if it costs a little bit more money to make our community better, let’s do it. We, as politicians, think everybody wants a cut in taxes, but that night it was clearly demonstrated that –

Mr. Trivers: Aside from (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: And the nice part about it, I think they saw the cooperation among us, the community saw the cooperation. You and I weren’t fighting or the Chair wasn’t fighting. You brought up some good arguments, we weren’t –

And I can honestly say I don’t think you were there because of politics or the Chair was there because of politics. We weren’t there because of politics. We went there in the middle (Indistinct) smaller community (Indistinct)

Also, I want to take some time to review the act. We also have a land review going through too. We have IRAC reviewing some things.

Islanders are concerned about land ownership, Islanders are concerned about communities, Islanders are concerned about development in their communities.

So we have quite a bit of big piece of work going on there that we're going to be going back to PEI. I think PEI is, with the population growth we have with Canada being recognized as the best country in the world, PEI being the best province in Canada, so therefore we're the best province in the world and I'll defend that at any time.

We have a lot of people wanting to come to PEI, and anyway, I'll leave it at that.

Thank you.

Chair: Thank you.

It was my understanding listening to the conversation by the promoter and the minister that –

Mr. Trivers: They would like to respond to that.

Chair: Did you want to respond or?

Dave Pizio: Yes.

Chair: Okay, go ahead.

Dave Pizio: Mr. Chair, the thing that keeps coming back and I understand extensions all these possibilities are there, but the aspect that the legislator aspect of the *MGA*, *MGA* as it stands right now, is at the end of the transition time even if you extend there is a sense among the small communities that you are either going to amalgamate and axe, or you're going to dissolve. That's our feeling.

Mr. R. Brown: Yeah. I sat in the federation of municipalities, the small one and the big one – the national one, and I can tell you – I think I spent four or five years there – I learned a lot.

I learnt one thing in the PEI Federation of Municipalities: rural PEI is important and I know I've said it 100 times in this House,

but mayor Spy Ready used to say: If rural PEI is doing good, the city's doing good. I've learnt one thing: we need all of PEI to be working together. We don't need to be divided.

I think that's – I'm not going to breach that. I'm not going to come down, and I don't think this government's going to come down and say: it's our way or the highway. You don't work that way in PEI. We're not United States or anything like that with the heavy hand. First of all, my colleagues would come on me also if I come out with that kind of attitude. That's not going to happen, guaranteed.

Chair: Thank you, minister.

Mr. R. Brown: Thank you.

Chair: Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy.

Ms. Biggar: Yeah, and coming back to those rural communities of which I've been born and raised and still live. I know the great work that's going on in St. Louis, and in Miminegash, and Tignish, and Alberton area, Greenmount area.

I guess my question is – like you said, you have a \$17 million base there right now – there's a lot of growth going on in some of those smaller communities. Tyne Valley just elected four out of six new councillors and they're gung-ho to get going. It's a small community. They're looking to the future of how they can grow the community, and looking at putting plans in place of what they can do within their council.

I'm not sure what kind of future like your council sees for your area – do you see it growing or do you see it staying as it is, like progression? Do you see your communities still always being the same as it is or do they envision that there may be something new come there or a new opportunity come there?

Chair: Do you have a question?

Ms. Biggar: That's the question.

Chair: Mr. Pizio.

Dave Pizio: The opportunities that we see for Greenmount-Montrose, as we are right now, Mr. Chair, as a municipality who holds no assets, no equipment, no land, anything like that, by choice.

We see down the road – again the majority of Greenmount-Montrose is agricultural and fishing. So the use of the land with the farming and all those things, what do we see down the road – well can we bring other things in we're not sure. All those things are – it's down the road.

We are the same as any other small community. We like to see growth, more people move in, but the whole aspect here is at this point in time, everything that we've done up to this point, we're able to do everything we wanted to do. If we are going to grow, then we would see, we would raise taxes if we were going to do something along the lines, more services, or whatever it is.

However, at this point in time raising taxes is for administrative purposes only. It is very difficult to say to anybody – if you're going to raise my taxes and I say to you: You are going to get this, this, this, I don't believe there will be any problem. But when we sit, we want to grow, but we say the whole aspect that we're going to raise our taxes for administrative purposes only, I'm not going to add any services to it; it is a very hard thing to sell.

So what I'm asking here is let things as they are. Yes, we can evolve. Yes, down the road, maybe there will be annexation and amalgamation, but with this hanging over our head at this point in time, regardless that we can ask for extensions and that, we see that it's a dead end and it's an aspect – and I'm not saying that this is what the government wants to do.

What I'm saying, there is a perception in the minds of the small communities because of how the legislation is stated with the transition, the perception is that either you're going to do one of these three things at this end, and that is a heavy weight of anxiety created because when you go talk to people, there's so much trying to understand what the impact of things are, but this whole aspect at the end of this transition, it's either this, this, or this and that's it.

I don't believe the government wants to force any of this. Maybe it's perception, but what's happening at this point in time is exactly that. We're heading to a financial crippling of the small communities.

Chair: Thank you.

The hon. Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy.

Ms. Biggar: Just, I guess, a hypothetical question for Mr. Pizio; being a farming and fishing community, if there was a company or a business related to that industry that wanted to set up in your community, that would bring jobs to your community, that would bring more tax base to your community as a value-added to what's happening in your community, do you not see that as an opportunity for the community and therefore have the tax base to cover what's required to have a strong presence as a community and have a council with an administrator that would ensure working with – and this is hypothetical, but it could very well happen.

So I'm just saying, it may seem hypothetical, but if somebody is setting up business in your community, it might be more work for the CAO, but, yet, you're going to bring more taxes in by that happening, which will offset the cost of having to do the work of the CAO, 20 hours a week.

I'm just saying – do you agree with that analogy that if that's a possibility that it may seem you have to pay out that money, but yet if you're out there scouting for something related to come to your community, be it, maybe it's a seniors unit that somebody's going to come in there and build and then you have more people in your community, and yet you need to work as a CAO to work through that development.

I'm looking outside the box. I'm looking at the cup half full, what's possible for your community, and I guess I'm trying to get a feel. I know you're representing your community and I assume as a council, is their attitude or their vision, I'm going to say, for their community to stay as it is or to be open to growth in those kind of instances that would relate to more tax base for your

community, to be able to handle having someone on staff?

That's my question.

Chair: Mr. Pizio.

David Pizio: Mr. Chair, that is a hypothetical and it is absolutely a wonderful hypothetical.

That's exactly what any community would want, to bring in what would be more people, more tax base, companies and business? Who would not want – our tax rate right now is 12 cents on the 100, and that's commercial and residential.

Now, the aspect is that all land in Greenmount-Montrose is privately owned except for 62 acres which is provincial. So, the potential is all there.

One of the things, though, is when all these things come together for a perspective of a nursing home, a seniors home, any type of industry in that, there's a great cost associated with that, of course. One would have to figure out who's going to pay. There are lots of different projects, project money and all those things.

I don't see that as a problem. All that is there, we can go out and reach out to it, but at this point in time there's the aspect of a CAO doing this, is not a problem. It's not. I'm a CAO, I can go out and do that, but the thing is though is right now for business entrepreneurs and that to come into our area, it's very limited; very, very limited.

Because it's privately owned, all the land is privately owned; perhaps they're going to sell to build something larger. All that is possible, but at this point in time because of the demographics of our small community, it's not – the possibility is not as much as one would want it to be.

So we carry on as we are, and if these things did come about, then we would see talking to the people raising your taxes if we're going to bring in an enterprise of some sort, if they're interested, all of those things. But at this point in time, it's not a feasible aspect for how things are situated for the demographics of our small community.

What are we going to do at the end of this transition in this time? Is that going to be any different when I have somebody 20 hours a week? Because, as I said, the transactions that we've had over the last 10 years is so minimal, and most businesses in that, truthfully, rightly or wrongly, have been in an urban setting because of the services that are available. In order to do all these things, your municipality would have to provide specific services, which is financially not feasible.

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

Mr. Gallant: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Just to go back – I know the municipality live in, Miscouche, had the biggest turn out ever for this last municipal election, and four people, including a chairperson, ran and I know the chairperson very well. They were at the meeting on Saturday, very excited. And the chairperson – I was on municipal politics with him about 15 years ago and he said to me: I have quite a bit to learn and I'm looking forward to it. And he has got the new MGA book and that's what he is going to do.

I guess what my comments would be, but I want to say a little bit more before I get to it is, Mr. Pizio, you followed the new regulations, had an election, and went in by acclamation. So, you did your election thing, you did your bylaws, so you got through that hurdle. The minister is saying he'll watch things and oversee things over the next three years before you have to put this person in place and see where things go.

So my point is, to change the legislation when we have people elected now in an act that was passed, why don't we just wait and see how things unfold into the future for a year or two, or three? Things may change.

Thank you.

Chair: The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

Mr. LaVie: Thank you, Chair.

It's great debate, and it's great amendments. I want to thank the MLA from Rustico for

bringing these amendments on the floor. It's a great discussion here we're having.

What I've learned here in the last seven and a half years is any time the government makes an announcement or anything at all, you don't get the fine print and you got to be careful because we don't get the fine print.

And what the minister is saying though – the minister of communities, land and taxes – is saying over there is that he'll take your three amendments and he'll bring it back to the municipalities in April. Did I hear that correctly?

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Mr. LaVie: I'm going to tell you something, mister minister. I might be the minister next April.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. LaVie: So what I will do, like the communities, land and taxes minister did, I'll promise to take them back in April, also.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Chair: Thank you, member.

Mr. R. Brown: (Indistinct) consensus government.

An Hon. Member: Thank you.

Chair: Do you have a question, Member from Souris-Elmira?

Mr. LaVie: That's my statement.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, member.

Mr. LaVie: (Indistinct)

Chair: Seeing as we have exhausted the list, it is my understanding that the promoter wants to make a statement or a comment.

Mr. Trivers: Yes, I was just going to say, I'm really glad that I brought this bill to the floor we've had this discussion because I'm not sure we would have been able to move forward together the way we are today if we hadn't.

I'm not sure if the Chair has a suggestion on how we deal with the bill.

Chair: Well, it's my understanding that there has been –

Ms. Biggar: Progress.

Chair: – progress has been made, but there has been a commitment by the Minister of Communities, Land and Environment to take this bill and put it before the federation of agriculture.

An Hon. Member: Agriculture? No.

Chair: Put it before the federation of agriculture.

Ms. Biggar: No (Indistinct)

Chair: But there was a suggestion –

An Hon. Member: Municipalities.

Chair: You're getting me all confused here, folks.

An Hon. Member: Well, we'll take it there too, if you want.

Chair: The Minister of Communities, Land and Environment did say that he was prepared to take all of the amendments and it was my understanding that each amendment would have to be moved separately from this amendment –

Mr. LaVie: Prior to the election.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Chair: Only one amendment would be able to be moved at a time. Am I correct on that?

Ms. Biggar: No.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Ms. Biggar: (Indistinct) just report progress (Indistinct)

Chair: Yeah, we just – yeah, that's right.

Mr. Trivers: So, Chair, I think Mr. Pizio would like to make one final statement as well.

Chair: Mr. Pizio?

David Pizio: Mr. Chair, one comment I'd like to make – the Minister of Communities, Land and Environment and his staff, I would like to put on record is they are outstanding staff.

Whatever is asked of them they will go the extra yard, however you want to put it. I have nothing but great praise. All of my interactions with the municipal affairs staff is absolutely outstanding.

Thank you.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Mr. Pizio.

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

Chair: Shall it carry? Carried.

Mr. R. Brown: Thank you.

Chair: Mr. Speaker, as Chair of a Committee of the Whole House, having had under consideration a bill to be intituled Bill No. 122, *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.

The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Parkdale.

Ms. Bell: Mr. Speaker, I now call order number 43.

Speaker: Shall it carry?

Some Hon. Members: No.

Committee Clerk: Order No. 43, *An Act to Amend the Election Act*, Bill No. 128, ordered for second reading.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Parkdale.

Some Hon. Members: Shall it carry.

Speaker: Okay.

Some Hon. Members: No.

An Hon. Member: Carried.

Speaker: Does anybody want to – the hon. Member from Charlottetown-Parkdale would like to address this second reading.

Hon. members, the Third Party House Leader does have to get up and say 'shall it come to second reading'. That's when you say 'no'.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Speaker: Or yes.

Ms. Bell: Mr. Speaker, I now call order 43 for second reading.

Speaker: Shall it carry?

Some Hon. Members: No.

Speaker: Hon. Member from Charlottetown-Lewis Point and Deputy Speaker, you want to speak to this at second reading.

Ms. Casey: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'd like to initiate debate on the principle of the bill at this time, seconded by the hon. Minister of Workforce and Advanced Learning.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Ms. Casey: Mr. Speaker, could I have the podium, please?

Speaker: Yes, you may.

Ms. Casey: Mr. Speaker, I rise at this time to speak to the principle of Bill No. 128, *An Act to Amend the Election Act*.

As all members of this Chamber know, it is fundamental to the functioning of this Chamber and to our democracy that the legislative branch conducts itself according to the spirit of the guidelines and processes in place, and that we respect the functions and work of our legislative committees.

Representatives of the three parties represented in this Chamber participate on the legislative management committee and

the work that it undertakes is of the utmost importance. The very fact that you, Mr. Speaker, chair this committee speaks to the importance of the non-partisan and independent approach of the legislative management committee.

One of the committee's responsibilities includes the recommendation of appointment of a number of independent officers of the Legislative Assembly including the Chief Electoral Officer. As a result, the committee is sometimes tasked with matters regarding legislation related to these offices, an example being the elections act.

I believe it is in the spirit of the mandate of the legislative management committee that amendments to legislation under their responsibility like the elections act be brought forward to the chamber for and after debate at the legislative management committee through the deputy speaker. I recognize that the conversations that take place during the legislative management committee's meetings are confidential and I will respect those conversations that were held on the election act; however, I am concerned by the lack of respect shown by the Third Party toward the legislative management committee.

I believe that in order to respect the spirit of the work of the legislative management committee, discussions related to amendments to the *Election Act* should be first considered by the legislative management committee and brought forward. The Third Party is fully aware of the discussions on the *Election Act* as the Chief Electoral Officer brought some recommendations to all parties of this House, and I believe discussions are still ongoing in the respective caucuses. Because of this, I do not believe this piece of legislation should proceed to second reading.

Beyond these concerns, I have a number of additional concerns for the principle of the proposed bill. Prince Edward Islanders are fully engaged in our political system. We lead the country in voter turnout at about 80% and even and show up at the polls during a hurricane.

It is important to remember that thousands of Islanders are involved in one way or another with election campaigns. Islanders sure know how to run an election. We are the envy of the country with our voter turnout.

As a member of the Legislative Assembly, I am unaware of any public consultation that has been undertaken on this bill, either with Islanders or those directly involved in the electoral process. The Chief Electoral Officer has made a number of suggestions on amendments to the act that aren't contained in this bill.

In my humble opinion, if additional authority and responsibility is placed upon the Chief Electoral Officer, that office is inevitably going to require additional resources. The federal *Canada Elections Act*, for example, requires that the Chief Electoral Officer appoint returning officers in accordance with an external appointments process. What is an external appointments process? Who develop this process? Who administers this process? What are the rules? Who actually runs this process on a day to day basis? Do we have to advertise for returning officers? Who interviews them? What criteria are relevant? What qualifications are required?

Mr. Speaker, everyone in this House has a right to bring amendments to any bill; however, I find the content of this legislation lacking and that it does not reflect the spirit of the work of the legislative management committee. For these reasons, I do not support it going to second reading.

Thank you.

Speaker: Are there any other members who would like to speak to this as per second reading?

Some Hon. Members: Question.

Speaker: Hon. members, are you ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Question.

Speaker: Okay.

All those in favour of the bill being read a second time, signify by saying 'aye'.

Some Hon. Members: Aye.

Speaker: All those against this bill being read a second time, signify by saying 'aye'.

Some Hon. Members: Nay.

Some Hon. Members: Aye.

Ms. Bell: Mr. Speaker, standing vote please?

An Hon. Member: Nay, nay.

Ms. Bell: Standing vote?

Speaker: Sergeant-at-Arms, a recorded division has been requested, so we call for a standing vote.

[The bells were rung]

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Speaker: The vote was unclear as it was stated so for clarity's sake, we're better to go with a standing vote.

Mr. Trivers: Mr. Speaker, the opposition is ready for the vote.

Speaker: Thank you.

Ms. Bell: Mr. Speaker, the Third Party is ready for the vote.

Speaker: Thank you.

Mr. Perry: Mr. Speaker, government members are ready for the vote.

Speaker: Thank you.

Okay, hon. members, all those not in favour of reading this bill a second time, please stand.

Committee 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. Premier; the hon. Minister of Finance; the hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries; the hon. Minister of Health and Wellness; 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 – sorry.

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct)

Committee Clerk: So, the hon. Opposition House Leader, the –

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct)

Committee Clerk: – the hon. Member from Tignish-Palmer Road; the hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid; and the hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Speaker: Okay.

Thank you, members. The –

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Speaker: This bill will not be read a second time.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

[audio malfunction]

Speaker: (Indistinct)

[audio malfunction]

Speaker: – read a –

[audio malfunction]

Speaker: – please stand.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Mr. J. Brown: Mr. Speaker.

Committee Clerk: The hon. member –

Mr. J. Brown: Mr. Speaker, the hon. Member from Borden-Kinkora was not present when the vote began.

Ms. Casey: And now he can't vote.

An Hon. Member: Yes he was.

Some Hon. Members: No he wasn't.

Ms. Casey: He wasn't. (Indistinct) He wasn't in the Chamber.

Mr. LaVie: Okay call for recess.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Ms. Biggar: He came here after (Indistinct)

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

An Hon. Member: The opposition whip said they were ready for the vote –

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Ms. Biggar: He came in after you said you were ready for the vote.

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct)

Ms. Casey: The whip said it.

Mr. Henderson: The whip jumped ahead of the game, the whip (Indistinct) The whip's fault.

Speaker: Okay, go ahead, he's up standing.

Mr. Fox: Can I vote?

Ms. Casey: No.

Speaker: No.

Committee Clerk: Hon. Member from Charlottetown-Parkdale, the hon. Leader of the Third Party –

Mr. MacEwen: Did the Speaker make a ruling?

Mr. Speaker did you make a ruling that the member's not allowed to vote?

Speaker: Well if he wasn't in the Chamber when he –

Mr. MacEwen: No but it's up to you to make that (Indistinct) you can't just listen to a couple ministers, it's up to you to make the call.

Mr. J. Brown: He said he was going to abstain.

Mr. MacEwen: I'm just curious who makes that call. Is it the government –

Speaker: I looked at the hon. member and he said: I'm abstaining from voting.

Mr. MacEwen: Did you tell him that he couldn't vote?

Speaker: I said: were you here or not and he said I'm abstaining.

Mr. Fox: (Indistinct)

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct) consensus government.

Committee Clerk: The hon. Member from West Royalty-Springvale –

Sorry – sorry, the hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque, the hon. Member from West Royalty-Springvale and the hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: Don't worry Joe, it'll get better, it'll get better.

[Laughter]

Mr. Trivers: It would have been nice to debate the bill, but you guys don't want to talk about it.

Speaker: Okay hon. members, to have this bill read a second time, it's been defeated and it won't be read.

Mr. Trivers: See guys, that's what a free vote looks like.

Ms. Biggar: Yes, we know.

Mr. Trivers: I know your whip's pretty strong.

Mr. Perry: Thank you.

Ms. Bell: Order No. 87 now be called.

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 disposable diapers represent one of the largest contributors to landfills,

with each one taking on average 500 years to decompose;

AND WHEREAS during the first year of each baby's life, parents can expect to use approximately 1500 disposable diapers;

AND WHEREAS reusable cloth diaper options are available which eliminate waste;

AND WHEREAS there are significant financial savings for families who choose to use cloth diapers;

AND WHEREAS reducing the amount of waste going to landfills could present significant financial savings for the province;

AND WHEREAS by design this government's carbon tax implementation will have no impact on carbon emissions;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly urge government to investigate incentive and rebate programs for cloth diapers in other jurisdictions and to develop a similar program for Prince Edward Island.

Speaker: I'll now call on the mover of this motion, the hon. Leader of the Third Party to speak to the motion.

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

There is a question, perhaps better answered through a Google search than debate in this House that asks: what do politicians and diapers have in common?

I shall leave that notion hanging in the air just like the pungent odor associated with the subject at hand and I will move on to more serious aspects of why Prince Edward Islanders should be encouraged by their government through programs and incentives to use cloth, rather than disposable diapers.

This is indeed a serious issue. Last sitting, we debated at length the *Plastic Bag Reduction Act* and a motion on the reduction of single-use plastics was also presented by the Member from Georgetown-St. Peters, I believe.

Like both of these initiatives, this motion, the motion before us tonight is at heart, a contribution to the concerted efforts happening everywhere in the developed world to reduce our waste, to cut down on garbage.

There is a growing acceptance that for humanity to secure a long tenure of successful habitation on our planet, we need to recognize that there are limits to growth.

Those limits are showing up in a couple of very distinct areas, firstly, in limits of supply – whether that be fish or forests or fossil fuels, we are pushing the limits of the Earth's capacity to supply these resources to an ever expanding population and economy.

The other area of limits is with the Earth's capacity to absorb our waste that is showing up in the massive floating Islands of plastic in our oceans and in climate change, which is the result of an atmosphere unable to absorb the constantly growing belched carbon pollution produced by our industrial economy.

We also see the result of our waste habit, in the mountainous garbage pits growing in every corner of this earth. In the developed world, one of the biggest contributors to our landfills is disposable diapers.

Diapers are indeed the third largest contributor to landfills. A newborn baby will go through about 1,500 diapers in its first year of life and as many as 5,000 before being toilet trained. Because of the way that disposable diapers are made, they are inherently non-recyclable and they end their short lives in the middle of a garbage dump somewhere.

Every single disposable diaper that has ever been used on the face of this planet, still exists somewhere in a landfill.

We have crafted an economic system that rewards the manufacturer of disposable items, rather than durable products. This tendency that our economic system has of taking precious resources and turning them into garbage is a big part of many of our environmental problems.

While a few goods that we use don't lend themselves to being reusable, diapers absolutely do.

For almost all the time that babies have been making a mess, humans have dealt with it by using reusable materials. It's only very recently – about half a century ago – that this aspect of our lives has been co-opted by disposability.

From humble beginnings, we have gone to using about 500,000 tonnes of disposable diapers in Canada every year – 500,000 tonnes and at great cost in terms of resource use, at great cost for families and at great cost in terms of disposal costs.

Firstly, the cost of the environment. Disposable diapers use plastic elastic absorbent materials and tape and they are impressively sophisticated bits of technology. They unfortunately require vast amounts of two other resources: energy and water to make them.

We chop down about 25,000 trees to make the disposable diapers used in Canada annually and each one of those diapers uses about nine gallons of water to make it; 25,000 trees for all the diapers, nine gallons of water for every single one that we use.

One cloth diaper replaces more than 250 disposable diapers, over the course of about two and a half years. Cloth diapers can be handed down of course to future kids.

So that's the cost of the environment, let's look at the cost of families.

The cost of families is indeed considerable. A family can expect to spend about \$1,500 on disposable diapers for every child that they have and as the cost of waste disposal continues to rise with diapers constituting a considerable portion of our garbage, we can save ourselves enormous amounts of money by diverting them from the waste stream.

So what can governments do to reduce the cost to the environment, the cost to families, and the cost to taxpayers created by disposable diapers? Well, other jurisdictions have introduced simple but effective measures to encourage parents to switch to reusable cloth diapers.

I have to, at this point; commend by daughter Kate and her husband Jim Doxas in Montreal. They live in NDG in Montreal, and it was them that brought my attention to the fact that NDG in Montreal, and it's not the only borough of the city of Montreal which does this, offers incentives to constituents, voters who live in those districts, to help with the cost of buying diapers. So thank you, Kate, and thank you, Jim, for bringing this to my attention.

One of the barriers to using cloth diapers is the significant upfront cost, and it is significant.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Dr. Bevan-Baker: One of the – and this is particularly true, of course –

Speaker: Hon. members.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: – for low income Islanders.

Speaker: Hon. members, I can't hear what the leader is saying. Just keep it to a whisper.

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct)

Dr. Bevan-Baker: I appreciate that, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

One of the barriers to using cloth diapers is the significant upfront cost, and this is particularly true for somebody on a fixed income or a low income. Even though, for the first couple of years of a baby's life, a family can save hundreds and hundreds of dollars over the cost of disposables, you need to stock up on a large number of relatively expensive diapers on day one. That's just the way it works.

This expense varies depending on how many you choose to buy and of course, what quality you choose, but a startup kit can cost as little as \$150. Progressive jurisdictions like NDG in Montreal and many others now offer residents subsidies to overcome part of that upfront cost and set up a win-win solution, a win-win situation that results when people switch to reusable diapers, cloth diapers: a win for the environment, a win for families' pocketbooks and a win for taxpayers. There are other associated costs

with reusable diapers of course: detergents, energy and water for washing them, for example; but studies consistently show substantial savings over the diapering lifetime of each and every child.

Cloth diapers have also been shown to be healthier for baby's bums. They don't contain toxic chemicals like sodium polyacrylate, the absorbent gel that you find in disposables; and – and I speak here from experience, having seen four of my own kids through cloth and now intermittently taking care of our grandson's needs, your baby's skin is happier and healthier in cloth.

This is an easy motion to make fun of, to wash your hands of, to make a stink, to poo-poo it –

Ms. Bell: [Laughter]

Dr. Bevan-Baker: – but I ask members of this House to give this the serious attention it deserves. Don't be late to the potty. Come on, pamper me. Don't be rash, urine for a nice surprise.

Mr. Speaker, in all seriousness, I ask all members of this House to support this motion.

Thank you.

Speaker: Next speaking to this motion, the seconder of the motion, the hon. Member from Charlottetown-Parkdale.

Ms. Bell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I was joking with the Leader of the Third Party that he's had more recent experience with diapers than I have because it's actually been over 10 years now since my daughter grew out of hers; but some of the things that he mentioned I think are really important to speak about from that perspective of a parent who had to make some of these decisions, and at the time the decisions weren't actually motivated as much from an ecological perspective as they were from the perspective of what was best for my child.

My daughter has and still did at the time have hypersensitivity from being premature, and some of the challenges that we had for her were really finding out things that would work best for her skin. It was a lot of time

spent on very expensive creams and visits to doctors and checking and in the end, some of the best solution for her was to either be diaper-free or, you know, to save my carpets, to be in another alternative, but disposable diapers were not actually the best fit for her. Luckily, she grew out of them pretty quickly and we were able to move on.

But that's one of the considerations that we hear a lot from more and more people who are more concerned about what they're putting on their skin, next to their skin, what products they use. So things like plastics, bleach, particularly on brand new babies, directly on their skin, is not only potentially an irritant, but even potentially a carcinogen.

We have new materials available to us now. These are not the diapers that my mom remembers when she had what were called flannel or flannel nappies, which were literally pieces of fabric, cotton fabric, and great big safety pins that you could put your eye out with. Now we have fantastic options like hemp fleece as well as organic cotton and Velcro instead of pins.

One of the challenges is reconciling, as my colleague mentioned, is that initial upfront cost can be significantly higher, but also the cost of the washing and cleaning can be equivalent to the cost of the production of the disposable diapers themselves. So one of the considerations for a family when they're thinking about making this investment is not only what is best for their children, but is it appropriate for their lifestyle.

Often in the same way that we have the same conversations around parenting decisions around breast feeding, we have the same decisions that people can make around what products they use for their children and that is making the best choices for products that best fit their lifestyle.

As a busy parent, for me it was not always practical, and in fact ended up being less often as I would have liked that we did end up using the cloth because it just wasn't practical for anybody else, and those are some of the things that we also need to be comfortable with is people can make their own informed choices and have a balance between what they need to use in their lifestyle, what is appropriate and what fits with their capacity in terms of costs, in

terms of how often they do laundry and all of those other factors.

One of the key things that happens with this, though, for our children, and what I see with my own daughter, is that by modeling behaviour that we think is important because we're making choices based not just about what is the fastest or the cheapest or the most convenient, but also because we're making choices about reducing, reusing, recycling, being mindful, having conversations about why do we do it this way and what impact does it have, then what we're doing is setting an example of what we want to be as we grow up.

When parents have to make decisions about the day-to-day, often we're not thinking about: Gosh, if I make this choice, it's going to mean that I'm a much better parent for my child tomorrow. But we are sending messages very strongly in terms of the decisions that we make and how we demonstrate our behaviour.

For my daughter, this was something that she only knows about now after the fact as she's older, and she'd probably be horrified that I'd be talking about this and I'll probably hear about it later when I get home; but I also know from other friends and colleagues who've raised children and had to make some of these decisions, including the decisions around whether it be breast feeding, whether it's using diapers, that support from the community, whether that be through things like sharing and resources, we even have where some of the materials if they're in reasonable condition can be shared through the community. Those can also go really long way, and there actually is a really interesting and strong network of mothers who help other mothers in PEI through some of this information and sharing and support to try different ways to parent.

It may sound like something that somebody in a big city might do, but there have been a number of actual startups here in PEI, including one by a good friend of mine, Lynne, who have had a cloth diapering company which included not only the provision of the materials for those and the start up kit, but also the cleaning and then the return of cleaned materials. That is, perhaps, a less clean topic than we'd be used

to for a startup, but the startups work when they solve real world problems. This is a problem for one of those things that we don't like talking about but it's a real thing.

When you hear about – I think it was 500,000 tonnes, it was an enormous amount of garbage produced, and the amount of pride that we have in Waste Watch program here and the reduction of waste that goes into landfills, an enormous percentage of landfill waste is diapers and they don't break down. They don't decompose. Those plastic liners and those bacteria will be there for hundreds and hundreds of year.

So again, what are we leaving behind for our children? We have an option to reduce how much goes into that, but it's going into our soil, into our water, and that's something, another consideration that we do need to think about, is this waste, when we dump it into the ground and bury it somewhere does not go away.

Our sewage systems and our water reclamation systems are much better able to deal with that same kind of waste being managed within the cleaning cycle through washing machines, drying things whether by heat or by air, and that also addresses the bacteria of challenges that can come, and that we associate with things being a bit stinky.

So as my hon. colleague mentioned, the impact of this is something that we need to consider; when we talk about making decisions and making choices about things, like how we manage waste, how we reduce our environmental footprint on our space in this place, how we think about the waste that we're putting into the ground and how that's going to impact our children. We think about the quality of the products that we are using in our houses, and we think about what we can do to actually have a different impact on the planet. This is one of those things that may not be first, comes to mind, but does indeed have a significant impact, not only on those who are the smallest in our communities, but on our communities to come.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Biggar: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It was quite amusing that the Leader of the Third Party lumped himself in – it was nice to see him lump himself in with the rest of the politicians and his comparison to politicians and diapers.

I would certainly like to speak to this motion. I am pleased to rise and speak to a topic related to our environment. As minister responsible for Island waste management, I'm extremely proud of our provinces record on how we handle recycling, compost, and waste. PEI leads the country in keeping waste out of the landfill. Thanks to our pioneering Island-wide waste watch program.

In place since 2002, waste watch has helped Islanders reduce waste going to the landfill by 50%. PEI leads all provinces in Canada on the amount of waste we diverge from landfills. The diversion rates, according to Statistics Canada in 2014, are as follows: in PEI, we divert 429 kilograms per person – the Canadian average is 255 kilograms per person – so in fact, in PEI, we estimate that diapers represent approximately 3% of the waste and 65% of PEI waste goes to PEI energy systems waste plant. This includes diapers.

As a result, the majority of disposable diapers in PEI are, in fact, converted to energy that is used to heat and cool the QEH, along with government and private buildings in Charlottetown.

PEI's pioneering waste watch system means that even in the area of disposable diapers, we are minimizing the impact on our environment. IWMC has already done research on the topic –

Mr. Trivers: Minister of burning (Indistinct)

Ms. Biggar: – of how to best handle disposable diapers.

Mr. Trivers: Minister of combustion.

Ms. Biggar: There are biodegradable diapers –

Mr. R. Brown: (Indistinct) you're on fire.

Ms. Biggar: – on the market –

Mr. Trivers: She's on fire.

Ms. Biggar: – but they are most costly and not compostable on PEI. There was a pilot in East Prince, where diapers were composted, but it was not successful. However, IWMC will continue to study best practices in other jurisdictions, and report back with potential solutions that work for PEI.

Cloth diapers do have environmental impacts, as well. In terms of water use, energy use, impact of the cloth diaper liners on the septic systems and other factors. Of course, cloth diapers are labour intensive for parents in terms of laundry, the special soaps to clean the diapers, energy costs, where to get the supplies, cost of supplies and other factors, including diaper covers for them are also very costly.

It's really a choice that parents do make and must make in the best interest of their families. I raised two children, I, in fact, used cloth diapers for both of those children because 45 years ago, you couldn't get disposable diapers. So, I certainly have lots of experience washing diapers. But, my daughter also used a diaper service, recently, when she had her four-year-old, and it is very intensive, very expensive, but – you know, for reasons that people decide to use them – that's great. For this reason, investigating an incentive program might be a good option.

As mentioned earlier, though, I am supportive of asking IWMC to continue their research on this and what other jurisdictions are doing on this, and other recycling programs related to it. I will certainly ensure that they continue their innovative approaches to dealing with waste in our province.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

There are a few others in here that have more recent experience, I think, in this department than I do, but not by a whole lot –

Mr. MacEwen: Not getting his support.

Mr. J. Brown: How do you know which way I'm going with this?

Ms. Biggar: There's one has twins over there.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Mr. J. Brown: We have two boys – two boys that went through diapers – we have used both cloth and disposable diapers for them. We have used just about every different kind of cloth and disposable diapers, I think, for each of them. The cloth diapers worked fairly well with one of our children, and did not work at all with the other child who had reflux and therefore had significant skins issues that went along with the cloth diapers. As the hon. member mentioned, we couldn't figure out a way to get around that, in the end, so the switch to disposable diapers seemed to solve that issue.

More recently, and I can't remember where it was – I was just looking on Google, as they'd say, there, a few minutes ago – it may have been a study out at McGill University, but in any event, there is a recent study on this that would indicate that the environmental efficacy of cloth diapers is actually not more than disposable diapers.

By the time you figure out to heat the water to clean them, the chemicals that go into them, the product that's required to make them, and there is a significant amount of product between the outer part of the cloth diapers, the liner – and I know in our case, we used a couple of liners with each child – and then you can go on, as well, the cloth diapers often don't hold as well, and so you go onto other clothes and bed clothes and things like that, that end up getting soiled.

Generally, there is a lot more work involved and I think it ultimately ends up, as best I

can tell, anecdotally, being a fairly personal decision.

I should note, as well, that there is another obvious piece to this, is that cloth diapers don't travel nearly as well as disposable diapers do. Anytime we would have been on the road, or going anywhere, it becomes very tough to travel with the cloth diapers. There are ways of making do, but it's not always the most aromatic – I'll put it to you that way.

Mr. MacEwen: (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: (Indistinct)

Mr. J. Brown: More recently, there has – and I think the hon. minister of transportation mentioned this too – there has been technology developed recently both to recycle and to compost disposable diapers. That was mentioned in that piece that I had seen, as well. I think it will be interesting over the next couple of years to see what we can do in addition to consuming disposable diapers for energy, it will be interesting to see what we might be able to do by way of recycling or composting the disposable diapers, in the hopes to lessen the impact on our earth.

Finally, I think we all need to take stock again of the fact that it is a very, very, significant upfront cost to go into cloth diapers, particularly not knowing how they are going to work out for your child in your situation. I can't remember the exact numbers off hand, but you're looking at upwards of \$20 per diaper getting into it, plus a number of different supplies.

Yes, disposable diapers are not cheap, but for a package of them would generally run somewhere in that vicinity. I would say by the time you figure it out over the course of time, there's probably not much in the difference, and I don't mind saying that I'm a little bit scotch and I did do that math over the course of our children being in diapers.

So thank you for your time. I do think that we should be looking at ways of lessening impacts on our Earth. I'm not sure about the science on this to be totally truthful, but I do think it's worth looking at.

Thank you.

Speaker: Hon. members, it is now 8:40 p.m. so we'll revert back over to –

I'll call on the hon. Member from Charlottetown-Lewis Point.

Ms. Casey: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. Minister of Workforce and Advanced Learning, that the 42nd order of the day be now read.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Committee Clerk: Order No. 42, *An Act to Amend the Election Expenses Act (No. 2)*, Bill No. 129, ordered for second reading.

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

Ms. Casey: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Workforce and Advanced Learning, that the said bill be now read a second time.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Shall it carry?

Committee Clerk: *An Act to Amend the Election Expenses Act (No. 2)*, Bill No. 129, read a second time.

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

Ms. Casey: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Workforce and Advanced Learning, that this House do now resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole House to take into consideration the said bill.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

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

Chair (Perry): 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 Election Expenses Act (No. 2)*. Is it the pleasure of the committee that the bill – actually, before we get moving, can we have permission to bring a stranger to the floor?

Some Hon. Members: Granted.

Chair: Please state your name and your position, please.

Tim Garrity: Tim Garrity, Chief Electoral Officer for PEI.

Chair: Great, thank you very much.

Tim Garrity: Thank you.

Chair: Did you want to give an overview of it, promoter?

Ms. Casey: Thank you.

Hon. members, I'm here as a representative of the legislative management committee. This was discussed there. This is basically an amendment to the *Election Expenses Act* dealing with anonymous donations and no one shall make an anonymous monetary contribution of more than \$25. This was a unanimous decision of the legislative management committee.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Thanks, Chair.

I'm really intrigued by this bill. I'm trying to sort it out in my mind. I guess my first question is: How did you come up with the \$25 mark or how did the legislative management committee come up with that?

Chair: Thanks, hon. member, for the question.

I think people were concerned with when somebody made a donation to a political party and I think they took into consideration when they – legislative management committee took into consideration like it was a nominal donation. Say you wanted to go to a pancake breakfast with your family, it probably wouldn't cost you any more than \$25 and that's how they came up with that fee and the committee agreed with it.

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: So one thing – one problem I have with these sorts of bills and perhaps

even the *Election Expenses Act* itself, is it has to be policed and it's something that is I would believe be tough to police.

What's to stop an individual by taking \$100 and saying it's for anonymous donations of \$25 or higher amounts. You know what I'm saying? So how would you actually police this?

Tim Garrity: I would be able to answer that question, hon. member.

The reality is it is a bit of a complaints-based system, but also the parties are required to submit receipts at the end of the year. Anything over and above \$25 also is required to be issued a tax receipt. So that takes away the anonymity around that factor. So anything over and above those amounts – and if there are anonymous donations that are made also in the *Election Expenses Act* it says that any anonymous donations are to be directed to the operating fund of the province. So if it is received by the party, it is to be directed to the operating fund of the province.

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: I know that and that kind of answers my first question as well because it has to do with tax receipts, right? Most people make a donation to a political party want a tax receipt for that. Of course, the benefit is capped – I believe around \$550 and if you donate more than \$550 to a political party you essentially above that amount stop receiving any benefit.

Mr. LaVie: (Indistinct) never ask for one receipt.

Mr. Trivers: For example, you could have a situation where you have a big donor – in this case maybe right now they are donating let's say I don't know \$2,000 a year to a political party, but now with this in place they might think oh it's to my advantage I'm just going to donate \$550 get my tax receipt. Then maybe there's just a weekly breakfast that I'm going to go to – to use your example – pancake breakfast where I'm going to donate \$25 each week to make up the rest of my larger donation. Anyhow, this is where I get into these problems around this sort of rule.

Could you answer me, what would stop someone from that scenario that I just named?

Tim Garrity: Well like you said, most people do enjoy getting the tax benefit to making the donation and most people would be looking for that tax receipt in order to do it.

Now when we do this, parties are also required to submit to us what they get in anonymous under 25 donations as a lump sum. We will be monitoring that as we go forward, as well. We are assuming that it should not increase as to what we've seen before for the under \$25 before, because under \$25 before were also basically remained anonymous because there were no tax receipts. There was nothing required to be submitted to us for names or communities or anything like that by the donor.

As well, this is carried through in most jurisdictions across the country. There are different rates that as they go across the country, but when we go through this as was mentioned, if there is a pancake breakfast or we use in the office we call it a cupcake sale. If you make a cupcake and it costs you \$2 to make it and you sell it for five, there's a \$3 donation. We were saying if we didn't make this change in here, you would have to get the name and address of every person who wanted to purchase a cupcake which would be very challenging for the parties and the fundraisers that try to do these things.

We were trying to make it very realistic as well to say this is a reality. The \$25 threshold is there for the tax receipt so we thought that that was very fair for this threshold. We did speak to the other jurisdictions about it and they were in agreement with us on this as well as they have their own limits.

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Chair.

So that makes sense for sure in the context of this bill but in the broader context, I think the idea was to limit donations as well,

especially anonymous donations and in context probably expenses act as a whole.

I just wanted to – I looked up the political contribution of tax credit and at 75% of the first \$100 plus 50% of the next \$450 plus 33.3% of the amount that's more than \$550 – so it's actually significantly more than \$550 someone would have to contribute before they stop getting any tax credit at all.

I didn't do the math but it would be somewhere around \$1,000.

Mr. LaVie: Call the hour.

Chair: Members, the hour has been called.

Ms. Casey: 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 a bill to be intituled, *An Act to Amend the Election Expenses Act (No. 2)*, I beg leave to report that the committee has made some progress and begs leave to sit again. I move that the report of the committee be adopted.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Minister of Workforce and Advanced Learning.

Mr. Gallant: I move, seconded by the hon. Member from Tignish-Palmer Road that this House adjourn until Wednesday, December 5th, at 2:00 p.m.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

The Legislature adjourned