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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
OF  
PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS AND ORAL QUESTION PERIOD  
(PRELIMINARY PROCEEDINGS)

FOR

TUESDAY, 27 NOVEMBER 2018



Responses to Questions Taken as Notice

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

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

On Friday, the hon. Leader of the Opposition was asking me about the time to travel from Stratford –

**Mr. Myers:** Yes, yes (Indistinct)

**Mr. J. Brown:** – into Birchwood School. I often go out to my parents place for dinner on Sunday evening; I took the opportunity while I was out there –

**Mr. MacEwen:** You spend your weekend working on this?

**Mr. Myers:** (Indistinct)

**Mr. J. Brown:** – to go up to Glen Stewart School. I reset the trip calculator when I left the driveway of Glen Stewart School; went in, I caught the first red light at Stratford Esso, waited there for about 40 seconds, across the bridge, caught the tail end of the second red light, and then I followed the rest of the map that I tabled here on Friday and I –

**Mr. Myers:** (Indistinct)

**Mr. J. Brown:** – pulled up in front of the school – four minutes and 28 seconds.

**Some Hon. Members:** (Indistinct)

**Mr. Myers:** Hallelujah!

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

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

**Some Hon. Members:** (Indistinct)

**An Hon. Member:** No speeding ticket?

**Mr. J. Brown:** No speeding ticket.

**An Hon. Member:** (Indistinct) verify that.

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** Mr. Speaker.

This is a longer saga.

**Some Hon. Members:** [Laughter]

**Premier MacLauchlan:** In response to questions from the Member from Belfast-Murray River the week before last, I indicated that I would review correspondence with the federal Minister of Environment and Climate Change and the Premier of Nova Scotia and table any documents that had not been tabled last spring. There were some tabled a series of correspondence January through May.

I wrote on July 6<sup>th</sup> the follow up to minister McKenna and Premier McNeil, had responses from them on August 7<sup>th</sup> and August 16<sup>th</sup>, respectively. I wrote again yesterday to the hon. Catherine McKenna, reiterating and I might say, reaffirming our desire and our specific request that any review of the Northern Pulp project be conducted and led by the federal government.

I'll table these letters during the tabling of documents.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

Questions by Members

**Speaker:** The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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

This week we learned that the province has budgeted \$6 million for renovations to Province House to accommodate the eventual return of this Legislature to the historic building.

**Budget re: renovations to Province House**

My first question is to the transportation minister. Minister: Who did your department consult with when preparing this budget?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

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

**Ms. Biggar:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As part of our capital budget, we submit our expected requirements to the finance department. We did submit an interim report on the parliamentary precinct master plan to the Legislative Assembly, on November 2<sup>nd</sup>.

**Speaker:** The hon. Leader of the Official Opposition.

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

It's actually the legislative management committee that oversees the operation of the Legislature and its all party representation on it.

Question to the transportation minister: Why wasn't the legislative management committee consulted before drawing up the six million dollar budget?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

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

**Ms. Biggar:** Mr. Speaker.

When capital budget is being prepared, it's not the normal practice of departments to consult with the Legislative Assembly, however, I will say that we did offer to go to legislative management committee to offer a briefing on the interim report and that we leave that open to come in any time the legislative management committee wishes us to come.

**Speaker:** Thank you, minister.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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

### **Consultation with MLAs re: budget plans**

Media reports indicated that some MLAs have been consulted prior to these budget plans being drawn up. Question to the minister of transportation: Which MLAs were consulted?

**Mr. Myers:** Good question.

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

**Ms. Biggar:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We reviewed the taping of that particular interview, and unfortunately there was a misquote by the media –

**Some Hon. Members:** Oh!

**Mr. Myers:** (Indistinct)

**Mr. LaVie:** (Indistinct)

**Ms. Biggar:** – in regards to comments made by a member of my department. Again, it's not general practice for our department or any department to consult with the Legislative Assembly on our department capital budget.

**Mr. Myers:** Well there you go folks.

**Mr. LaVie:** There you have it.

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

**Mr. Myers:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I got carried away listening to those answers that I forgot I was up next.

Losing 140 jobs at DME is a big blow to our economy, especially when so many of those jobs involve high-skilled trades – high paying skill trade jobs.

### **DME in receivership**

Question to the minister of economic development: When did you first become aware that this company was in distress?

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

**Mr. Palmer:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Let me start by saying that our utmost concern is with the staff, and the workers there. We really want to make sure that we can do everything we can to support them at this difficult time. To answer the member across the way, I first learned of this over the weekend.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Myers:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

So clearly government had some advance knowledge because they issued a statement in the middle of the night, prior to DME even issuing a statement.

### **Government discussions with DME**

Question to the minister: What discussions did your department have with the company about trying to avoid this terrible turn of events?

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

**Mr. Palmer:** Mr. Speaker, again, we're very concerned with the workers in this situation and we have been reaching out to the workers in the full strength of my department and the Department of Workforce and Advanced Learning are engaged in this file and we're doing everything we can to help the affected workers.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. R. Brown:** Great.

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

**Mr. Myers:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm just going to slow my questions down a little because the minister seems to not be able to understand what I'm asking him. A company was clearly in distress, and I'm asking you – did you have an opportunity to do something about it? If you did, why didn't you? And if you didn't, why didn't you?

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

**Mr. Palmer:** Mr. Speaker, we are engaged in this file, through my department and through the Minister of Workforce and Advanced Learning. We're there to help the employees, we're there to do what we can to

support Islanders in this very difficult time; and we're going to play our role to make sure that we can do everything – everything – that we can do to support these folks through this.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Myers:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

So employees need jobs and probably the easiest way to help them would be to ensure that they had a job. This loss is a significant blow to our economy and to skilled trade's people here on Prince Edward Island. DME was a major exporter out of this province – one of our largest exporters out of this province – selling its products around the globe.

### **Assistance to DME workers**

Question to the minister: Did you or your department discuss any assistance at all with this department or any bailout package to this company when you found out that they were in distress?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Palmer:** Mr. Speaker, we are here to support organizations that need it right across PEI and if there are organizations, if there are companies that need our support, we are open to it.

In this situation, if there are companies that are interested in making an investment in this company we are happy to help with that are we are happy to help the workers the best we can.

We've even reached out to a number of other companies across PEI that can use folks with these particular skills because we know that people in PEI have a great work ethic and we're reaching out to a number of companies to find out who's looking for supports like this for the workers that we have here in PEI.

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

**Mr. Myers:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

So this is a major loss to our economy, the minister here doesn't seem to understand because he's giving me the identical answer four times in a row.

I want to know what, if any, involvement this company has. The Premier over here only talks about GDP everywhere he goes. Do you think that losing a major exporting company isn't going to affect the GDP here on Prince Edward Island?

It's completely unacceptable that the minister's not better prepared to answer the questions.

I'm going to give him one more chance.

### **Government opportunity to help local companies**

Did you have an opportunity to help this company and if you did, why didn't you – and if you didn't, why wasn't your department apprised enough of this file that you weren't out there on their steps saying: What can we do to help keep this great business open here on Prince Edward Island?

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

**Mr. Palmer:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We, again, will continue to support all of the workers that are affected by this and we're not going to make a political show out of this which my friends across the aisle seem to be wanting to do today.

What we are doing is – this is a very difficult situation for the workers and we're there to help them, we're trying to find all solutions that can possibly be found and it's very early days for this but we're certainly doing a lot of work between my department and the Department of Workforce and Advanced Learning to make sure that we can be there to support people when they need support the most.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Myers:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm not sure why the minister over there would interpret me caring about an Island company as being a political show. It's funny that in his very answer he talked about if somebody needs them, they'll be there to help. You just watched a local grown company crumble into the ground yesterday and didn't even lift a single finger.

Last night the government issued a media statement confirming DME was in receivership.

### **Government statement on private business**

Question to the minister: Why would government issue a statement like this about a private business here on Prince Edward Island before the company itself had even made the news public?

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

**Mr. Palmer:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The papers were filed yesterday at noon so it was public information and we are there to make sure the employees are supported and it is very important to us to make sure that at this difficult time of year, that these employees can get the supports that they need and that we can help every way we can to ensure that these employees can find a new job or there's somebody that can take over the business.

We're open to all options and we're there to support in any way we can.

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

**Mr. Myers:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

So I hear the minister saying now that there's a big mess, he's going to be there to support.

I've asked him several times in this House today why he wasn't there to support a local

company when he knew they were going into receivership.

He said he was very engaged in the file, well if he was very engaged in the file, he knew that this was coming.

**Government opportunity to help local companies (further)**

Question to the minister: Where were you before these employees needed help when you could've helped a local company on Prince Edward Island stay afloat?

**Mr. Fox:** That's right.

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

**Mr. Palmer:** We became aware of this situation over the weekend, we weren't currently in any discussions with the company but we have been very active in the file all weekend and coming into this week and we're looking at all options.

We're there to provide support and the company knows we're there for support for their employees and anything we can do to help with either an acquisition by somebody coming in to buy the company or to help those employees find new work – we're there to do that.

It's early days and we're in discovery to find out what's the best approach.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Myers:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

So, one only has to pause and wonder if Kevin Murphy had called on the weekend, if his company would have fallen yesterday. If Tim Banks would have called on the weekend and said they were in trouble, if his company would have fallen yesterday. If Mill River would have called on the weekend and said they were in trouble, if they would have fallen yesterday.

It's funny that some people can walk into this government and get money to buy anything or to do anything –

**Mr. Roach:** Great supporters.

**Mr. Myers:** Great supports, you're right. The minister from Montague has it right, they've got to be Liberal supporters and that's a terrible thing.

Question to the minister: Where were you on the weekend when you had an opportunity to help this company?

Was it because it wasn't Kevin Murphy calling that you couldn't put the money up?

**Mr. Roach:** (Indistinct)

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

**Mr. Palmer:** It's these kinds of antics that we're really disappointed with here on this side of the House.

This is very important, we have workers out there that are at risk of losing their job and we're here to –

**Mr. LaVie:** At risk?

**Mr. Palmer:** – support them and we're going to do that.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

**Mr. LaVie:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Currently winter weather has created havoc for farmers trying to harvest their crop.

**Fall potato crops still in ground**

Question to the Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries: Approximately how many of the fall potato crop is still estimated to be in the ground?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

**Mr. Henderson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It certainly has been a very challenging year for harvest here on Prince Edward Island. Especially for our particular potato crop, there certainly have been other crops that

have been impacted but the information that we've gotten back from the agents out in the field, our crop insurance agencies – there's approximately about 6,000 acres that haven't been harvested yet.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

**Mr. LaVie:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Again, to the Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries. Potatoes are the largest fall crop but they aren't the only crop being harvested this time of year.

### **Harvesting other fall crops**

Question to the minister: Are there any other fall crops which still have a significant amount of harvest yet to come in?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

**Mr. Henderson:** Yes, as the hon. member mentioned, there's certainly different crops and commodities out there that are under the crop insurance program and there's others that aren't under crop insurance, but in particular soy bean harvest is nearly rounding up and also the corn harvest.

There is some hope that those crops could be harvested at some point and time.

I'm also aware that there's a brussel sprout crop – it was on CBC not too long ago, that has not been harvested yet.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

**Mr. LaVie:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

With the weather being what it is much of the harvest fall will likely be lost requiring claims on crop insurance where available.

### **Crop insurance claims**

Question to the Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries: Could the minister outline what the process is for farmers to make crop insurance claims?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

**Mr. Henderson:** That's a very good question, Mr. Speaker.

Actually, we do have a very thorough and extensive crop insurance program here on Prince Edward Island. So when a particular farmer registers and put his crop under the crop insurance program in the spring of the year they are monitored throughout their planting, throughout the growth of the year by our crop insurance agents – we have about 29 crop insurance agents in the province.

Once again, once the crop has been harvested or a claim has been filed, then at that particular time the crop insurance agent will go out and monitor and confirm that indemnity or loss and then would make a payout within 30 days.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

**Mr. LaVie:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Crop insurance is available to farmers with different levels of coverage.

### **Determining of crop insurance rates**

Question to the Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries: How are these rates for crop insurance compensation determined?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

**Mr. Henderson:** Mr. Speaker, when a particular commodity goes under crop insurance, those commodities would lobby our department to determine what the particular indemnities that might be covered. They would also determine what the potential coverage could be, so we do offer various opportunities for coverage to farmers out there.

Some with coverage can be like a low or medium, high coverage for their particular yield; it also could be the same for the price of that particular commodity.

We would then look at going through a process to determine whether that would be confirmed of what that price point would be.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

**Mr. LaVie:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I have heard concerns from farmers that they feel that the rates for crop insurance are artificially low, the thinking goes that large processors are urging government to keep rates low to force farmers to press on with their harvest in poor conditions.

Question to the agriculture minister: Are crop insurance rates subject to outside influences?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

**Mr. Henderson:** As you're well aware, the hon. member, you're well aware that crop insurance is a three-party system here. The provincial government is a component of this, the federal government, as well as the commodities themselves and the groups in particular.

Once again, they do have choices in particular price points on each particular commodity. I know in particular the potato industry we're certainly – they have choices to go up, I think, it's nine, 10 or 11 cents a pound.

Once again, we will be looking at those rates as we move forward into the next crop season.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

**Mr. LaVie:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

#### **Payout of crop insurance in 2017-2018**

Question to the agriculture minister: How much was paid out in crop insurance last year?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

**Mr. Henderson:** When it comes to crop insurance, once again, just to reiterate too, we also have a crop insurance board that also takes those particular requests. They're also an appeal board to deal with any of the claimants if they're not satisfied with the

amount of payout on a particular crop and the indemnities that they have coverage under.

When it comes to – I'm not sure of the exact of last year's, but I can tell you this House on – as of November 22<sup>nd</sup>, the province of PEI, through the crop insurance board, has paid out about \$11 million in indemnities to farmers.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

**Mr. LaVie:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

That \$11 million, is that this year or last year?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

**Mr. Henderson:** That would be this year.

So, for this crop season, as of November 22<sup>nd</sup>, we've paid out \$11 million to farmers across Prince Edward Island for a variety of crops. I know blueberries, there was a payout on that, and there have obviously been payouts already in the potato industry.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

**Mr. LaVie:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Question to the agricultural minister: What did you pay for table stock that's still in the ground?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

**Mr. Henderson:** When there's a particular claim that comes in, once again, we would look at the policy that the particular farmer would have. So if a table stock producer had a low-medium or a high yield return that would be one of the payout triggers. The other would be the price point, which it could be like I said nine, 10 or 11 cents a pound depending on what the policy that they have.

Also, when a particular farmer decides that they do not want to harvest their crop or were not able to harvest their crop, the

payout would be 75% of the claim and they do not have to harvest the crop.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

**Mr. LaVie:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We know from the Public Accounts that there's \$40 million surplus in crop insurance – dues paid, like counted against the provinces bottom line. We also know that more erratic weather is becoming more common due to the impacts of climate change.

### **Restructuring of crop insurance due to climate change**

Question to the agriculture minister: Has the province looked at creating a special fund for restructuring the crop insurance program to better offset losses to producers from climate change?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

**Mr. Henderson:** The hon. member is correct, that certainly in March 31<sup>st</sup> in the statements there was a \$40 million surplus within the department, that crop insurance account. I might emphasize that the crop insurance account is separate from the provincial government account. The province and the department agriculture, our responsibility is to backstop that account.

We also are in the situation where we buy insurance or reinsurance on indemnities that occur that go over a certain amount. So, once again, if that account goes to over – \$39 million is withdrawn from that particular account, anything above that would be covered through reinsurance and we would put a claim into our reinsurer on that particular case.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Parkdale.

**Ms. Bell:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Yesterday, as my colleague mentioned, we heard the shocking news that DME's Island operations have gone into receivership, directly affecting at least 140 workers in PEI. The entire DME group is actually made

up of 400 employees across three manufacturing facilities in PEI, as well as in BC and South Carolina.

They include: Diversified Metal Engineering Limited and General Partner Incorporated, DME Brewing Solutions, NSI Newland Systems in BC and South Carolina, Advanced Extraction Systems – AESI in PEI, and Atlantic Systems Manufacturing Ltd. Food Processing.

### **Impact of companies in receivership**

Question for the Minister of Economic Development and Tourism: Which PEI companies in this group are in receivership, and how are the other operating companies in the group impacted?

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

**Mr. Palmer:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

This is, as I said, it's serious and we're there to support all of the workers that are impacted by this. The papers were filed yesterday at noontime, and we're working to get a better understanding of that. We're working with the receiver, as well, so that we can understand the full scope of the impact that is here on PEI, and we're also looking forward to working with the receiver to help as many of these workers as we can.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Ms. Bell:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Well the companies based in BC and South Carolina were not impacted, neither is Advanced Extraction Systems Incorporated included in the receivership order here in PEI. This company, AESI, was recognized only a few days ago with the Greater Charlottetown Area Chamber of Commerce President's Excellence Award as an Emerging Exporting Business and received \$300,000 in funding from ACOA earlier this year. Its systems, however, are manufactured by DME.

How will this receivership affect those AESI staff, contracts, commitments, and future growth?

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

**Mr. Palmer:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We continue to work with the receiver to get an understanding of what the impacts could be. We're still in early days, and there could be opportunity for other people to come in and buy that company. There could be opportunities for others to fulfill the work orders that were there.

I know that my department has been reaching out to a number of people to see how we can make those things come to fruition that we can do the best that we can, and we want to make sure that through this process that all Island orders are being honoured.

Thank you.

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

**Ms. Bell:** 140 jobs lost today in PEI has a per capita economic impact seven times greater than the recent General Motors losses in Ontario.

What is the PEI government going to do to mitigate the impact on our economy?

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

**Mr. Palmer:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It is early days, but we take this very seriously. We do understand the impact, we understand that this company was an exporter, had quite a volume of work that was leaving PEI with new money coming back in here.

So we are going to do what we can do to help. If there's other organizations that are interested in acquisition and as we already know there are a number of companies across PEI that are interested in the workforce. So, we're there to help.

**Speaker:** The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

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

Recent revelations about sexual abuse of students in a private school in Ontario have shocked many people and led to questions about the degree of oversight of private schools, not only there, but operating here in Prince Edward Island.

Under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, jurisdictions like PEI are responsible to and I quote: "take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse".

#### **Protection for religious schools on PEI**

A question to the Minister of Family and Human Services: Are you comfortable that Prince Edward Island is taking all appropriate measures to ensure that young people in religious schools here on PEI are being offered these protections by your government?

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

**Ms. Mundy:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Protecting the rights of children is everyone's responsibility, and I can assure you that it is this government's top priority.

Buddhists from around the world send their children to Prince Edward Island to study at the monastery, and we have – my department, has a protocol with the monastery that understands and respects the rights of the World Health Organization, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

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

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

The UN, of course.

I want to be clear that as the minister and I discussed earlier this fall, I have no evidence of wrongdoing. I'm simply trying to ensure that our province is providing the degree of oversight that is mandated by the UN convention.

Question to the same minister: What level of monitoring in terms of frequency and exhaustiveness is going on regarding schools recently established by religious communities here on Prince Edward Island?

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

**Ms. Mundy:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Again, I can assure the hon. member that this is something that we do take very, very seriously between myself and the department of education. To date, there have been numerous meetings and numerous visits, not only by myself, but from department staff and we are working collaboratively with the Moonlight Society to ensure that those children that have come many miles away to study and to learn, not only the Buddhist culture, but also Island culture, are protected and safe.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

I understand that some of the children attending the Moonlight International Academy monk school, and who are as young as 10, do not go home between semesters and live on Prince Edward Island all year round.

### **Educating of administrators re: rights of children in Canada**

To the same minister: Has the department taken any steps to sensitize and educate administrators in these organizations on the rights of children in Canada, including their right to contact parents?

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

**Ms. Mundy:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Again, I want to assure this House that safety – children's safety is this government's top priority and as of – in 2017 my department engaged with training with the Moonlight society, on not only cultural practices, but Island traditions as well and they are very aware of the *Child Protection Act* here on Prince Edward Island and we work very closely to ensure that the children that are there are safe.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

**Mr. Roach:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Today my question has to do with the Kings County mental health clinic.

As you know, I currently have a motion before the House on the traumatic events that have happened in my district, so my question is to the Minister of Health and Wellness.

### **Mental health hub in Montague**

With the new capital investments into mental health, will one of these community hubs be in Montague?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

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

The \$100 million capital investment announced last week is the most significant investment ever in mental health and addictions on Prince Edward Island.

**Mr. LaVie:** Be careful.

**Mr. Mitchell:** This will enable us as a province to better serve Islanders where and when they need the services the most.

Part of that announcement, as well, was government committing to four mental health hubs across the province. Obviously there will be one in Charlottetown. There will be one in Summerside. There will be one in the west and there will be one in the east of the Island and I would certainly anticipate that Montague would be a full

consideration for one of those hubs in the east end of the Island, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Roach:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Minister, mental health affects all ages. We hear a lot about student well-being teams which are doing fantastic work in the Montague family of schools, but mental health knows no age limits.

#### **Availability of mental health resources for seniors in Montague**

I'm wondering what mental health resources are available to our seniors and in particular, for seniors in Montague area.

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

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

Our seniors' mental health resource teams serve older adults, the older population of our community all across Prince Edward Island and they're not immune to mental health situations. When you grow older they could have complex emotional issues. They could have functional or behavioural problems as well.

We want to work very closely with seniors, either at home, in community care facilities or long-term care facilities right across the province. That includes (Indistinct) from health professionals such as RNs, LPNs, psychiatrists and we continue to work with Islanders all across PEI.

Last year we were able to open up clinics for seniors in Kings County, in both Souris and Montague.

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

**Mr. Roach:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Minister, over the past year we know you've been establishing mental health walk-in clinics.

#### **Permanent walk-in clinic in Montague**

Is there a plan to establish a permanent walk-in clinic for these residents in Montague, Kings County?

**Mr. LaVie:** (Indistinct) Souris.

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

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

These mental health walk-in clinics have been extremely successful all across the province. Last year alone we had over 600 Islanders visit these clinics and we're seeing great success.

We have them now in Charlottetown, Summerside, Lennox Island and one in the west, I believe, and part of the new (Indistinct) program that we are doing, we will be identifying other areas. As those details and dates come out, I will bring them forward to the floor of the Legislature.

But certainly, Kings County will have what they need in that area, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Dumville:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

My question is to the Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

#### **Trained fisheries officers**

Minister, fisheries officers play a vital role in protecting our fishery. Do we have an adequate number of well-equipped and trained fisheries officers to protect this valuable resource?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

**Mr. Henderson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

That's a really good question in regards to the Department Fisheries and Oceans is responsible for enforcement of the *Fisheries Act* here in Prince Edward Island, as well as it is anywhere in Canada, for that matter.

Currently, we have 22 fisheries officers that are providing that enforcement across the province. I might note that in 1990 that was 36.

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

**Mr. Dumville:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Minister, do we have less fisheries officers as a percentage portion of the industry compared to other provinces?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

**Mr. Henderson:** Yes, Mr. Speaker.

Actually, that's a good question as well because I've actually had conversations with our minister – parliamentary assistant to the minister of fisheries and oceans and when I do the comparisons of the Province of Prince Edward Island, we have actually 1,275 core fishers and 920 non-core fishers. When you compare that to the Gulf Region of New Brunswick, they have 1,058 core fishers and 1,039 non-core fishers, and in comparable we have about a third of the fisheries officers to protect that industry, Mr. Speaker.

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

### **Safety of fishing industry**

**Mr. Dumville:** Minister, I realize you have to deal with your federal counterparts, but are you taking steps with your federal counterparts to ensure our industry is safe and with the same level of protection that is (Indistinct) to the other provinces?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

**Mr. Henderson:** Mr. Speaker, we are very fortunate here in Prince Edward Island to have a parliamentary secretariat to fisheries, to minister Wilkinson here – the hon. MP Sean Casey, and I had a meeting with him recently and went over a number of the particular issues.

**Mr. LaVie:** Sean who?

**Mr. Henderson:** I know we had questions here around the dredging of our harbours as well as – this was actually my number one issue that I brought up to the minister to make sure that they understand that we are not being treated fairly here when it comes to the protection of our shellfish industry.

The fact that we have such a large volume of core fishers, non-core fishers, as well in the complication of shellfish leasing, that's a lot for our fisheries officers to do and I'm hoping that will be addressed in the near future, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

**Mr. Trivers:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We submitted a written question last summer for a list of government checks on high-capacity wells and other commercial water extraction, and it took the CLE minister 11 weeks to respond.

We found out there were 244 inspections on holding ponds, rivers, water courses and wells conducted in roughly 18 months in PEI.

### **Oversight and scrutiny of commercial water users**

Question for the minister: Minister, are you holding all commercial water users to the same level of oversight and scrutiny?

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

**Mr. R. Brown:** Yes, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

**Mr. Trivers:** Mr. Speaker, farmers were subjected to 212 of the 244 inspections carried out by government on this list.

Question for the minister: Minister, why are individual farmers facing higher scrutiny than large corporations?

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

**Mr. R. Brown:** Mr. Speaker, the water issue here on Prince Edward Island is one of the biggest issues facing Prince Edward Island in terms of its population. Islanders expect us to monitor our water systems and monitor our water tables here on Prince Edward Island to ensure that a high quality and a high volume of water is available to all users on Prince Edward Island.

Thank you.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

**Mr. Trivers:** Mr. Speaker, 17 industrial high capacity wells of Cavendish Farms and their processing plants extract to combine 1, 270 imperial gallons per minute 12 months a year; they were not among the 244 inspections carried out by this government.

#### **Public policy on water usage**

Question to the minister: Minister, why is this government working with Cavendish Farms to formulate public policy and water usage, while not holding them to the same standards as the farmers?

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

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

Another allegation this week that we are secretly working with Cavendish Farms behind-the-scenes.

I can tell Islanders right now, all Islanders are treated equally when it comes to the protection of water here on Prince Edward Island. We know that it is our major resource. Islanders want clean, clear, and available water and my department will ensure that they have that constantly.

Thank you.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

**Mr. Trivers:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Only six processing inspections out of the 244 for commercial users were conducted by this government in the time frame of our question.

Our ground water is too important for this government not to take action and show leadership.

#### **Monitoring of all commercial water users**

Question for the minister: Minister, why does it appear that the research monitoring and oversight of all commercial water users is not a priority for this government?

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

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

We passed the first ever *Water Act* here on Prince Edward Island. The former minister spent a number of hours on the table, discussing the *Water Act*; the former member was all across Prince Edward Island and had, I would say, dozens and dozens of meetings with dozens and dozens of organizations. We have a great piece of legislation, one of the best, I would say, in Canada and North America, and possibly the world.

We are in the process of doing regulations; we will be consulting with the industry. I am meeting with the federation of agriculture to go over a number of issues, and that is one of the issues we will be going over with

Thank you.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

**Mr. Trivers:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm glad the minister brought that up because the *Water Act* was passed in fall 2017, and our leader called for an all-party committee to review the regulations and up them together –

**Mr. MacEwen:** Good idea.

**Mr. Trivers:** – and in May of this year, I asked the minister, I said: When are the regulations going to be released to the public for review? And he said that they were

going to be spent to committee so that they can be reviewed at committee.

So, here we are. A year after the *Water Act* had been passed, he says they are still working on the regulations, he says they are still going to go to the public.

**Water Act regulations to be reviewed by committee/public**

I would like to know if he's going to send these regulations to the public for review and/or the committee before the next election.

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

**Mr. R. Brown:** Mr. Speaker.

A couple of months from now, he'll probably be complaining that there too many meetings on this. We have the regulations, we are just finalizing them. They will be going to the committee – an all-party committee – made of legislative members here.

So, his request for an all-party committee, they will be going to the environment committee for review. They are being finalized now; they will be going to public consultations. The committee will have full review of the regulations before anything is passed at Executive Council.

I can assure the member that, I can assure the member of the public because again like I said: water is the most important issue here on Prince Edward Island, and no government will fool around with the water on Prince Edward Island, especially this government.

Thank you very much.

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

**Mr. Trivers:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The fact still remains that it has been over a year since the *Water Act* passed. We still don't have any regulations. And, we find out that of 244 inspections that were done, none were done of 17 high-capacity wells that are being run by large corporations.

**High-capacity industrial wells not inspected**

So, my question to the minister is, again: Minister, why were none of this 17 industrial high capacity wells inspected?

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

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

Up till 2010, extraction permits weren't – or, monitoring wasn't issued here on Prince Edward Island, or permits weren't given to high-capacity wells, in terms of municipalities. I was the minister that first introduced it, the City of Charlottetown was the first one to be given a permit for high-capacity wells, and there is tons of monitoring going on.

We are assuring Islanders that there will be a quantity of water available –

**An Hon. Member:** (Indistinct)

**Mr. R. Brown:** – it will be best quality water –

**Mr. Trivers:** It's your report.

**Mr. R. Brown:** – and there will be an abundance of water.

This government is committed to it, this government committed to protecting Islanders, especially when it comes to the quantity and quality of water they have in their homes.

Thank you.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

[End of Question Period]