

# PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY



Speaker: Hon. Francis (Buck) Watts

Hansard, Published by Order of the Legislature

Third Session of the Sixty-fifth General Assembly

Friday, 27 April 2018

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Matters of Privilege and Recognition of  
Guests

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Good morning, everyone. Welcome to colleagues here and staff and visitors in the gallery. This is our fourth Friday since we started our spring sitting.

An opportunity to have, with us, in the gallery, Rob MacAdam's grade 12, well there are some grade 11's involved, PEI history class from Colonel Gray High school. It's a real honour for us, say each and every one of you, to have you here and to know that you are on a track to be the next leaders, whether it's inside the rail, here, or in other ways in the development of our province.

While we were out in the corridor, I had an opportunity to speak with the students and ask them about their further plans. They've got a lot on the go. It's very encouraging for those of us inside the rails. I know that's exactly where we are as a province. Again, to welcome Rob MacAdam and those students in PEI history.

Wayne MacMillan, a regular. Great to see you, Wayne. I see Rob Oakie over in the corner and behind the scenes of a lot of development in our music sector in the province through Music PEI.

As we all know, and we're wearing our badges, I'll call it, for the Day of Mourning, which will be, officially, tomorrow when we remember the people, who have died or been seriously injured on the job. There will be ceremonies here, as well as in other locations throughout the province to mark that occasion.

Monday, will be the setting day for the spring fishery, as you well know, and many others throughout the province. A lot of activity already geared up for that. It's a great event; one that all Islanders can join in and see what it brings, in terms of confidence, of working together and the

expectation that comes with the start of a new season.

Speaking of which, tomorrow, in my district at the North Shore Community Centre, will be the registration for this year's soccer season. There is a big activity comes with that. In the hundreds, people come from well outside the district to take part in those programs. It's another indication, and it's the kind of thing we've been talking about here in the House – a community that is strong and working together can do a lot well beyond what might be normally thought of as the scope of municipal activity, I'll call it. It's really building for the future.

There are two birthdays I want to mention. One is Lillian Nicholson. A woman, who has a very interesting life, over, now, 10 decades; will have her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday celebrated on Sunday. And today, my grade school teacher, Shirley Lawson, who is still living independently and happily and doing the crossword every day; taught me for four years in a two-room school, grades 5, 6, 7, and 8. I learned a lot and I learned not to say her age. I'm looking forward to having a visit with her later today. With any luck I'll come with May flowers.

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 to rise and welcome a full gallery here, today. It's wonderful to see everybody here. As the Premier indicated, we have a history class, a group of students from Colonel Gray. Mr. MacAdam, it's great to see you here with your students.

Of course, John MacLean, over in the corner, as well, the seat behind me, Rob Oakie from Music PEI, does an exemplary job of promoting Island musicians here, and the many events that take place throughout the year. Dr. Sarah Stewart, it's great to see her join us again today.

Lat evening, during our supper break, I had the extreme pleasure to go back across the Hillsborough Bridge and stop at Andrews of

Stratford. There's an individual, a resident that resides there, and her name is Lillian MacVicar. Lillian actually turned 100 yesterday, so it was a great pleasure to stop over; her family were all gathered around and they were having a group dinner.

I have to tell you: I've met several individuals over my lifetime that had turned 100, and Lillian, probably without a doubt, is the number one as far as being right up on top of things. She had quite a few little political barbs there for me, and we had a great conversation.

I'd also like to extend a warm welcome to the many delegates that are here in Charlottetown over the next couple of days. They're attending the National Council of Deans of Engineering and Applied Science.

As well, I'd just like to highlight a few of the many, many events that are taking place across PEI this weekend. It is a very busy weekend. One is a very signature event for the Confederation Centre of the Arts. Of course, the Friends of the Confederation Centre of the Arts are holding their annual Pinch Penny Fair tomorrow. The Summerside Pride launch is taking place tomorrow evening at the PEI Lobster House at 7:00 p.m. and it's an event I very much look forward to attending.

Also tomorrow evening, I'm going to get back from Summerside in time to attend at least this tail end of this event, and it's being hosted by UPEI student Breanna Ching. The event is titled Raising Up Warriors. This is a fundraising event to bring awareness around mental health. The guest speaker will be Dr. Grant Matheson. It takes place at the Murphy's Community Centre tomorrow evening from 6:30 to 9:00.

Also tomorrow, across the Island at various locations, of course we are going to have the observance of the international Day of Mourning. That, of course, is for workers that may have been killed or injured on the job in the workplace. I encourage all Islanders to get out and show your respect for these observances.

Last but not least, of course I would like to also wish all of the captains and crews and those involved in the spring fishing season

all the best this coming Monday for a very safe and successful season.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

I'd like to welcome everybody to the gallery today and Mr. MacAdam's PEI history class from Colonel Gray Senior High School. Welcome to you all. I would also like to welcome Monica Lacey, a visual artist who I saw come in, does some beautiful work, and to John MacLean, who's been a tireless advocate for workers who are injured in the workplace.

I particularly want to make mention and welcome Rob Oakie from Music PEI. Music has been a large part of my life since I was a very small child.

This morning on Facebook, Mark Parsons, who is the music teacher at Charlottetown Rural – I hope I can mention that in your presence – Mark wrote a beautiful little bit on Facebook this morning and he said this: PEI – he's at the Atlantic music festival in Halifax and he said this: PEI should be proud of hundreds of Island students who participated at the Atlantic Festivals of Music. These students have shown commitment, dedication and perseverance leading to very fine musical performances. These talented musicians must be celebrated.

I join him; no doubt there was a group of students from Colonel Gray Senior High School who went over for that as well, so should celebrate the teachers, and we should also – sorry, celebrate the students and thank the teachers who allow these students to blossom in the way that they do.

I would also like to make mention of the Etsy fair which is happening this weekend, I believe just across the road in the Murphy's Community Centre, an opportunity for Island artisans – we have an incredible depth and breadth of Island artisans here. It's an opportunity for them to showcase their wares and I hope many Islanders take the opportunity to go and visit that.

I would also like to wish all the Island fishers a safe setting day on Monday and of course, we all join in the excitement and the promise of another fishing season.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

I, too, would like to welcome everybody here today and especially the students from Colonel Gray. I'd also like to welcome Lorne Yeo and Dr. Sarah Stewart-Clark back with us again today.

This is the first really fine weekend that we're having, and there will be motorcyclists out today and I want to caution all our drivers to watch out for motorcyclists because this will be their first big weekend and there will be a lot of them out there. We wouldn't want to see anybody harmed over this wonderful weekend.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

It's a pleasure to rise and welcome everyone to the public gallery today, and it's nice to see the students in as well. But, I'd like to offer a warm welcome to my friend, Wayne MacMillan, who is in the gallery today. I would think he's probably downtown getting a haircut today for a big fundraising event that's going on in Sherwood tonight. I expect to see him there, so always a pleasure to have Wayne at that event.

As well, I would also like to recognize 100<sup>th</sup> birthday – that may be the wrong term. I guess it's probably the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Canadian Mental Health Association yesterday; 100 years in existence. That's quite a milestone. I'd also like to acknowledge and recognize our PEI division of the Canadian Mental Health Association who do wonderful work all across our Island for people with mental health needs.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Borden-Kinkora.

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

Welcome to all the students this morning. Welcome to John MacLean sitting there in the back corner, and also to Dr. Sarah Stewart-Clark; glad to see you both.

Thank you.

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

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

It gives me great pleasure to rise today as well and welcome the students to the gallery; Wayne, we'll see you tonight and Dr. Sarah Stewart-Clark at the back of the room, good to see you here again today.

I look forward to attending the PEI pride event in Summerside tomorrow as well, and I'll see the hon. Leader of the Opposition there.

But, there's a special event that's happening tomorrow that I wanted to highlight. It's called Walk the Red Carpet event, and it'll be held at JEMS Boutique. JEMS is teaming up with Island Mothers Helping Mothers and KINLEY, and the event is in support of raising awareness for sexual violence on Prince Edward Island. JEMS will be donating 20% of their sales to Island Mothers Helping Mothers and Share the Microphone. For more information, Islanders can call Julia at 213-1604, and this is another great example of community capacity and collective impact at its best, so I hope all Islanders will attend and we will show the support for ending sexual violence on Prince Edward Island.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

It's a pleasure to welcome Rob Oakie, the director of Music PEI here today and Monica Lacey. I believe there's likely to be

a further announcement on the Cultural Action Plan today and I look forward to that.

Officer Stevie Gallant, always great to see him here, and vice principal Rob MacAdam and his history class. There are a few familiar faces in there as a lot of them are from my district and I welcome them here to the gallery, both in that capacity and as minister of education. Hopefully we can all be on our best behaviour here on Friday and leave them with a great impression.

Thank you.

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

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

It's certainly a pleasure to welcome everyone to the gallery, especially all of the students and I'd like to welcome John MacLean who has been a strong advocate for injured workers.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

It's great to see a full house here on a Saturday and of particular note, I want to welcome the students and Rob MacAdam's class and I think we're going to – you should be entertained today by the proceedings. I'm sure it'll be a lot of fun.

I want to make special mention of Benjamin (Indistinct) who is here and he was on the Rotary bus tour. He's a Rotary exchange student from Belgium and I spent the morning with him the other morning roaming around the schools in around my area supporting a great cause, so I want to welcome him here and I hope he enjoys the show. He's a smart young man and he's going places.

Thank you.

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

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

I'm happy to welcome all of the students here today and also there's two people here today on behalf of the cultural community; Rob Oakie, the executive director of Music PEI and Monica Lacey, a visual artist. They are both very important people in our cultural community in PEI, and I welcome them here today.

Thank you.

#### Statements by Members

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

#### **Charlottetown Islanders Playoff Run**

**Ms. Casey:** Good morning, Mr. Speaker.

I'm excited to rise today to with the Charlottetown Islanders best of luck in game five of their third-round series against the Blainville-Boisbriand Armada. This was supposed to be a rebuilding year for the Islanders, but somebody forgot to tell that to the Islanders.

In the first round, they defeated the Quebec Remparts in a close game seven. The electricity at the Eastlink Centre was outstanding. Prince Edward Islanders are certainly out in full force to support the team.

Nobody expected the Islanders to sweep the Halifax Mooseheads, as they were higher ranked. The team believed in themselves. They dug deep. They kept winning, and have made Islanders believers.

Now, facing the number one Blainville-Boisbriand Armada seemed insurmountable and the first two games didn't go as planned, but games three and four were high intensity and resulted in two overtime wins.

The Islanders have many great players, but I have to give a shout-out to number 20, the rookie Thomas Casey. The only Islander on the team. He has returned home after two years at Athol Murray College in Notre Dame, Saskatchewan. He's now a grade 12 student at Colonel Gray. He's a hometown boy. He's an intelligent player with great skating skills.

You know, there's some debate going on where he gets his skills. Does he get it from his dad? With the dump-bump-leave-a-lump attitude, or does he get it from my teammate on the hockey mamas, Elizabeth Casey.

He's a smart plug with the team. He leads by example through his hard work and dedication. I would encourage Islanders to tune into the game tonight on Eastlink or Ocean 100 or they can stream at [islandileshockey.com](http://islandileshockey.com).

I ask all Islanders to join me in wishing the Islanders best of luck tonight. We'll welcome them home on Sunday with a sold-out crowd. Go Islanders Go.

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

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

**Layla O'Brien**

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

I'm very pleased to have Layla O'Brien write my member's statement today and share her experience with being a student at Georgetown school.

As we know, Mr. Speaker, the government tried to close Georgetown school again, last year. Fortunately, the community fought back and stopped it.

I want to read the letter Layla sent me on her positive experience in her school:

Hi, my name is Layla O'Brien. I'm 10-years-old and a grade 5 student at Georgetown Elementary School. I'm so happy that we have our school. This year at our school it has been so happy. My friends and I like to go to school again. We have so many cool different things this year including a lot of new teachers. Our principal is really funny and he teaches us lots of interesting things, and the rest of our teachers are very nice, too.

I like that our school is safe and I feel like no one judges anyone. I like how our custodian keeps our school really clean. I like that we have a small school so everyone feels like a family. I like that our school gets to participate in badminton, cross country

and track and field at other schools. I like that we have after school activities, like guitar club, drama club, variety show club, French club, go play and cooking club. We have a really yummy breakfast club, too, and sometimes we have pancakes, smoothies and omelettes.

This year we now have two outside recesses and we are able to play together more. It's really fun when we get to have gym classes at the rink in the winter and sometimes we get to go outside for science class.

We also have some new students in our school this year that I've got to become friends with. I love that I can walk to school with my friends and on our way home we can talk about our day.

My school is the best little school there ever could be and we have so many moms and dads and other volunteers to thank for that.

I want to thank Layla for her well-written words. It shows that bigger is not always better.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Toronto Tragedy**

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

Today, I rise to pay tribute to the victims of the recent tragedy in Toronto and victims across the county who suffer in silence every day.

Over the last few days, we have learned that the man, who killed 10 people, by driving a van down a busy street in Toronto on Monday had pledged allegiance to a cause called incel rebellion. An organized online community of men, who objectify and spread messages of hate towards women.

This online community condones violence against women and even goes as far as to blame women for their own shortcomings in life.

It is sometimes hard for us, on Prince Edward Island, to understand the magnitude of some of these groups and movements as

we would like to believe that these types of mindsets and thoughts don't exist on Prince Edward Island, but we know that is wrong.

Prince Edward Island has the lowest rate of reported acts of sexual assault and sexual violence in Canada. But, we also know that sexual assaults and sexual violence are drastically underreported. It's the same with domestic abuse. We know that our statistics on Prince Edward Island are underreported and that there are women and children suffering across the province that need our help.

The reality is that fear, division and hatred are on the rise in this country. Just this week, Statistics Canada released detailed analysis of hate crimes for 2016. Although, the agency says: two-thirds of hate crimes go unreported in this country, there is, nevertheless, a documented increase across various categories including; religion, race, gender, ethnicity and sexual orientation.

We all need to respect and value one another. We all need to stand up to those who do not share these values. These principles deserve more than lip service alone, especially after the tragedy in Toronto, on Monday.

We should all, as elected members and community leaders, take a stand against these senseless acts of violence against women that are happening against this country and across our province.

Feminism is defined as the advocacy of women's rights on the basis of the equality of the sexes. I am a feminist and I invite all hon. members of this Legislative Assembly to take action to promote feminism.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

#### Responses to Questions Taken As Notice

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

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

Yesterday, in the House, the hon. Member from Charlottetown-Parkdale referenced statistics from the Coalition of Women in Government website during a question directed to me. I would like to take a

moment to correct any misinformation the member may have.

The statistic the hon. Member from Charlottetown-Parkdale provided is outdated, and does not include individuals on the ABCs, who are nominated by an institution or of those who were reappointed to an ABC.

As of today, 48% of positions on government agencies, boards and commissions, are held by women. Since Engage PEI was launched in 2015, 55% of the new members on agencies, boards and commissions, have been women.

When Engage PEI was launched in 2015, there were 526 members in total on all 74 Engage PEI ABCs. At that time, 38%, or 202, were women. As of today, there are 590 participants on 76 Engage PEI ABCs, and of those 48% or 281, are women.

By implementing a policy we can ensure that, no matter, who is governing our province, that gender and diversity remain a requirement. A policy has the same functionality as legislation. However, it can happen more quickly and efficiently.

I would like to take this opportunity to encourage all Islanders to submit an Engage PEI application so that when a vacancy is identified, the applicant, who best fits the needs of the ABC, has an application on file.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

#### Questions by Members

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

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

At some point in the not-too-distant future, Islanders will be forced to pay a new tax. That, of course, is the carbon tax that is forthcoming.

#### **New carbon tax**

My first question is to the Premier: Premier, do you still support making Islanders pay a carbon tax?

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** Mr. Speaker, Prince Edward Island is a signatory to the Pan-Canadian framework on climate change, which follows on the Paris accords.

I believe, and I'm pretty confident that this is the case, that Prince Edward Islanders are proud that we are part of those commitments. That we believe that we have done a lot and that we can do more to reduce our carbon imprint, our footprint. I look forward to working with Prince Edward Islanders for that to be the case.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Leader of the Opposition:** Mr. Speaker, in the fall of 2016, the Premier signed onto the framework to establish a carbon tax.

In December of 2016, the Premier actually closed the House early so that he could over the pond to the Paris climate summit. In his year end media interview, that year, the Premier promoted the idea of a carbon tax and actually comparing it to a war effort.

Question to the Premier: If you were so proud of adding a carbon tax back then, why are you and your government so quiet about it, now?

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** Mr. Speaker, this has always been referred to as a price on carbon. There are many ways in which that can factor into other measures, or together with other measures, that will reduce or mitigate, as sometimes said, our carbon emissions. That is precisely where the focus of this has been; should be.

It is not to create fear or to create some kind of a scenario as if this is all about tax. It's about a combination of measures that will include a price signal. There are various ways that can be achieved.

I believe that we had a very important discussion about that here on this floor, two days ago, when we were considering the estimates from communities, land and environment.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

The Premier can spin it anyway he wants, but, at the end of the day, a tax is a tax.

A carbon tax will hit all Islanders in the pocketbook; seniors, low-income Islanders, working families already struggling with a huge tax burden here on PEI. Simply put, people that cannot afford another tax hit.

This government owes it to Islanders to level with them about the carbon tax.

### **Cost analysis on carbon tax to Islanders**

Question to the Premier: Will you table all detailed costing analysis that your government has had on the financial impact that a carbon tax will have on Islanders?

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** Mr. Speaker, I hope members will recall, it's not that long ago, it was Friday three weeks ago, that we had a budget in this House. A budget that, indeed, had tax relief for Prince Edward Islanders. It doesn't seem the opposition wants to talk about that –

**Mr. Myers:** Nobody else does either, do you notice –

**Premier MacLauchlan:** – tax relief for Prince Edward Islanders. Raising the –

**Mr. Myers:** (Indistinct) lead balloon –

**Premier MacLauchlan:** – basic personal amount –

**Ms. Compton:** (Indistinct)

**Premier MacLauchlan:** – and then the –

**Mr. Myers:** Call an –

**Premier MacLauchlan:** – opposition –

**Mr. Myers:** – election.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** – may recall –

**Mr. Myers:** See what they think.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** – that one of the measures announced in that budget was relief, a rebate of the provincial portion of the HST on –

**Ms. Biggar:** \$7 million.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** – electricity. That is – and I hope people here in this Chamber realize it –

**Mr. Myers:** (Indistinct)

**Premier MacLauchlan:** – that is a pricing signal.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

The only people, who seem to be talking about this budget that the Premier references is his own members because of the general public, people see it for what it is –

**Mr. R. Brown:** No, everywhere I go –

**Leader of the Opposition:** – it's just another false document that's put forward, another spin by government.

We, on this side of the floor, know that a carbon tax will increase government revenues. It's plain and simple as that. We know that if a carbon tax is put in it probably will not reduce emissions.

The simple truth is, the daily routine of Islanders will go on, it will just be more expensive for them at every turn.

Question to the Premier: Don't you owe it to Islanders to give them a better sense of the financial impact that your carbon tax will have on them?

### **Financial impact of carbon tax to Islanders**

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** Mr. Speaker, there is a pattern of the way the official opposition has spoken about this from the time of the Paris accord. It's effectively Chicken Little to scare Prince Edward Islanders –

**Ms. Compton:** No.

**An Hon. Member:** No.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** – when, in fact, the whole objective is to work with Prince Edward Islanders to build on our track record; to be proud that we are, among the provinces in this country, the people who have the second lowest per capita carbon emissions.

We intend to build on that to make investments to take a series of measures. Let me say another thing about our budget –

**Mr. Myers:** King of the wafflers, right there –

**Premier MacLauchlan:** – while we have these students, in the gallery, we made big investments. The biggest in history so that these Grade 12 students can go onto post-secondary education –

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

**Premier MacLauchlan:** – with historic support.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Myers:** You couldn't without (Indistinct)

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

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

As we've seen in the media reports, not all provinces are onboard with the carbon tax. Saskatchewan, in fact, has launched a constitutional reference case against this federally-imposed tax that this government has signed on with.

The PEI government actually sent lawyers to Ottawa, recently, to argue on the Comeau case against more free trade between provinces.

**Constitutional reference on carbon tax**

Question to the Premier: Will your government be joining Saskatchewan's constitutional reference on carbon tax?

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** Mr. Speaker, the opposition was asking questions here yesterday about how much we were spending on lawyers and various matters, but –

**Mr. Myers:** Didn't get an answer. (Indistinct) –

**Leader of the Opposition:** That was for the lawsuits against you.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** Mr. Speaker, we're not looking to turn this into –

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

**Leader of the Opposition:** (Indistinct) lawsuits, more every day.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** We don't see this –

**Mr. Roach:** That'll go just like the (Indistinct) case.

**Leader of the Opposition:** Another one coming next week.

**Speaker:** Members, I hoped that I'd get through this week without having to – anyway. Let's have a little bit of order. When a question is being asked, I want quiet. When an answer is being given, I want quite. That shouldn't be too hard to understand.

Go ahead, Premier.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** Mr. Speaker, we are approaching this as a matter of collaborative federalists and we believe strongly in the sovereignty of our province. We believe that we can be proud with good reason, and Prince Edward Islanders can be, of our track record in this area and that we have shown that we can take effective measures and that is the point of this, is to reduce our carbon footprint and we intend to continue to do that.

But we also recognize that as 150,000 people, we have to work with and take the lead from, or make sure that we're not getting out ahead of, what others are doing and that's exactly what we're doing.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Myers:** (Indistinct)

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

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

One thing we all agree on is we need to reduce the carbon emissions in our province. It's for our youth, for our children, and our grandchildren.

**Reduce of carbon emissions on PEI**

A question to the environment minister: How much do you expect Trudeau's carbon tax to actually reduce the carbon emissions on PEI?

**Mr. Myers:** Great question.

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

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

Prince Edward Islanders and Islanders in general, have been reducing their carbon footprint for a number of years now. It has been – you look at the energy from waste plant, taking all that product out of the landfill sites that carbon would be released into the air. Look at our forestry department, replanting forest all across Prince Edward Island to make sure carbon capture. Look at our wind energy product on Prince Edward Island –

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

**Mr. R. Brown:** – and all governments have recognized that, Mr. Speaker. That alone has reduced a phenomenal amount of carbon. The other day, Prince Edward Island was producing 103% of its power from wind on Prince Edward Island.

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

**Mr. R. Brown:** Okay, I'll get up again on another one.

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

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

It's great to hear that response from the Minister of Communities, Land and Environment because indeed, the original environmental party on PEI, the Progressive Conservative Party –

**Some Hon. Members:** Oh!

**Mr. Trivers:** – has put in so much (Indistinct) to reduce our carbon emissions already, but really, the question is: Do we need a carbon tax at all?

After signing on to the climate change framework, the Premier told the House the following quote: To be introduced in January, 2018, the carbon price will not extend to agriculture and fisheries. We know at least one part of the statement didn't pan out.

#### **Industry-wide exemptions from carbon tax**

Question to the environment minister: Has the federal government confirmed to the province that they will allow industry-wide exemptions from the carbon tax?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Finance.

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

Look, we have a compelling case here on Prince Edward Island to talk to about Ottawa. We've done some great things in this province. The Premier mentioned some, the hon. member mentioned some. We're going to continue to have those discussions with Ottawa because we feel that getting out into a public domain and a fight with Ottawa is not necessarily the appropriate manner. If we look at the \$140 million cable, the \$280 million in infrastructure we dealt –

**Mr. Myers:** You owe them.

**Mr. MacDonald:** – and the \$60 million agreement for low-carbon economy. These are things that we've done privately and

jurisdictionally and we've been successful and we're going to continue to have those discussions with Ottawa.

Thank you.

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

**An Hon. Member:** Good work.

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

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

The answer to my question holds great importance for Islanders and unfortunately, we still don't know what the answer is. Agriculture accounts for 23% of PEI's carbon emissions and transportation accounts for 46% of our carbon emissions.

A question to the environment minister: How many other provinces has the federal government agreed to allow industry-wide exemptions from the carbon tax?

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

**Mr. R. Brown:** In the Ways and Means resolution in Ottawa right now, there's 200 pages towards carbon pricing and they do allow exemptions under that carbon pricing legislation, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

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

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

I'm not sure if that was a statement of fact or a statement of hope. I hope they sure do allow us to exempt them. Agriculture, fisheries, and tourism are the main drivers of our economy. I mean, all three sectors depend heavily on transportation.

#### **Contingency plan re: carbon tax to fisheries and agriculture**

Another question to the environment minister: What is the province's contingency plan if the federal government decides to disallow industry-wide carbon exemptions for agriculture and fisheries?

**Mr. Myers:** Good question.

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

**Ms. Biggar:** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member mentioned transportation – actually, it's 42% that transportation makes up, but my department has put together a transportation committee – working across government to work on that. We are implementing an electric efficiency and conservation plan, which will provide carbon reduction incentives.

We are looking towards more electrification on Prince Edward Island and through our low-carbon economy fund we will have over \$12 million in carbon reduction incentives. We're saving Islanders –

**Mr. Myers:** Electric tractors.

**Ms. Biggar:** – \$7 million by having that –

**Mr. Myers:** Electric combines.

**Ms. Biggar:** – HST portion taken off of their electric bills and they'll see that in their bill in July.

**Ms. Casey:** Ah, wow.

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

**Ms. Casey:** Great news.

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

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

I hope the minister of transportation has her facts straight because she didn't yesterday when she came back with her facts (Indistinct)

**Some Hon. Members:** Oh!

**Ms. Biggar:** (Indistinct)

**Mr. Trivers:** If provinces don't bring in a carbon tax that meets federal standards and Ottawa's developing its own backstop plan – six provinces have yet to roll out their carbon tax plans, including Prince Edward Island. According to a 2017 federal briefing document, Ottawa's backstop is expected to

raise \$3 billion – \$3 billion from these six provinces over the next four years.

### Dollars from taxpayers of PEI

Question to the environment minister: How much of that \$3 billion will come from the pockets of Islanders?

**Mr. Myers:** Good question.

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Finance.

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

On a per capita basis and an extreme basis, we do very well and Prince Edward Island, we're going to continue to feel our way along at the federal level with this.

I was watching *Power & Politics* the other night and the minister was on there with Saskatchewan and there was a really genuine discussion. I was reading the hon. member's blog as of March of last year and he was talking about lowering the personal tax exemption to offset carbon and I thought: Gee, that's forward-thinking, but that's exactly what we did, in our latest budget – along with electricity.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**An Hon. Member:** We want a list of them.

**An Hon. Member:** Stop it.

**Mr. Roach:** Facts here, fiction there.

**Mr. Myers:** At least he's reading your blog.

No methane gas on bradtrivers.com.

**Speaker:** Okay members. I notice there's been a lot of sugar consumed this morning.

Go ahead, hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

**Mr. Trivers:** Well thank you, Mr. Speaker, and what a great response from the Minister of Finance.

Indeed, the number one thing we'd like to see over here in the official opposition is no carbon tax because we're already doing

enough on our Island to offset carbon emissions. We've got a history of it thanks to the environmental PC party. Now the second thing was –

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

**Mr. Trivers:** – if you're going to put in Trudeau's carbon tax, if you're mandated, we want to give money directly back to Islanders through a cut in the basic personal tax amount – just like we've always said.

So, I guess, this government's addicted to tax. We've seen over 400 fees increased since they came into power. There's HST, there's gas tax, land tax, land transfer tax, waste watch fees; all kinds of licensing fees.

### **Revenue from carbon tax back to Islanders**

But, I want you to commit today, the Minister of Finance: Will you commit today to giving any money collected by a carbon tax or some sort of carbon pricing directly back to Islanders through a decrease in the personal basic tax amount?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Finance.

**Mr. R. Brown:** We already did (Indistinct)

**Mr. MacDonald:** We started it three weeks ago, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**Mr. R. Brown:** Liberals are the party of the people.

**An Hon. Member:** He's in the fog over there.

**Mr. MacDonald:** Not to forget the wood and wood pellets, Mr. Speaker, but our approach –

**Mr. Myers:** They're partying. They're on a tear.

**Mr. MacDonald:** – will be fiscally neutral.

We will continue to build on a platform to reduce carbon emissions in Prince Edward

Island like we have in the past with our industries right across the province.

I think we've got something to be proud of in Prince Edward Island. When you look around this room today and you see these young people sitting in the gallery, it's them that are going to have the major affect on this. It's them that are going to have to make major changes and major decisions –

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

**Mr. MacDonald:** – so we'll continue to do what good government does and prudence government with our second balanced budget allows us to do this, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

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

**Premier MacLauchlan:** Stick to their three.

**Mr. Trivers:** Zero balanced budgets.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Borden-Kinkora.

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

Our province's energy costs are closely linked to those in New Brunswick. New Brunswick is bringing in a carbon tax, which is planned to bring in an extra \$1.3 billion with those extra costs will be passed on to Islanders through NB Power.

### **Hidden carbon tax costs in NB power base price**

Question to the minister of energy: How much more will Islanders be paying for electricity with the NB carbon tax being hidden in the base price?

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

**Ms. Biggar:** Mr. Speaker, we know we can't control the price of world energy prices here, but we can have control over how much we consume.

Maritime Electric recently negotiated a new five-year energy purchase with New Brunswick. As a result, Prince Edward

Island electricity rates will not be affected by increases in New Brunswick.

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

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Borden-Kinkora.

**Mr. Fox:** They're going to go around that, and I'll tell you how they're going to do that in a minute.

NB Power will be paying a carbon tax at the point of electricity production. This will cause the base price to increase with the cost of carbon tax being buried in the price.

### **Safeguarding carbon tax for Islanders**

Question to the energy minister: What safeguards will there be to make sure Islanders don't get a double dose of a carbon tax?

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

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

In order to ensure the lowest possible rates and rate stability, we put in a \$142 million cable across the Strait.

**Mr. Myers:** Thanks to Gail Shea.

**Ms. Biggar:** We also have successfully negotiated with Maritime Electric to limit annual rate increases to 2.3% in the past three years. We are protecting Islanders. We are –

**Mr. Fox:** No you're not.

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

**Ms. Biggar:** – recently changed legislation, so we are an intervener at Maritime Electric and we will continue –

**Mr. Trivers:** (Indistinct)

**Ms. Biggar:** – to fight for Islanders.

**Mr. Roach:** Great work.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Borden-Kinkora.

**Mr. Fox:** She just confirmed that we do need a public intervener within IRAC.

Glad to hear her say that.

**Mr. Myers:** Yes.

**Mr. Fox:** In 2016, the province –

**Ms. Biggar:** (Indistinct)

**Mr. Fox:** – teamed up with Maritime Electric to get three years of increases to electricity rates approved by IRAC. That three-year run of power rate hikes is up next April. NB Power is now looking to have the same power change ability with unscheduled adjustments, the same as we see in this province. So, they're going to bring in unscheduled power to change electricity rates in New Brunswick.

### **Electricity rate increase to Islanders**

Question to the energy minister: How much will electricity rates of Islanders be increased again before your government brings in your carbon tax?

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

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

**Mr. R. Brown:** (Indistinct) watch Sesame Street (Indistinct)

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

As I mentioned, as part of our government's budget we have committed to saving Islanders over \$7 million this coming year.

**Mr. Roach:** Yeah.

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

**Ms. Biggar:** We are giving them a rebate on their electricity on their residential side.

**Mr. Fox:** (Indistinct) first block.

**Mr. MacKay:** First block (Indistinct)

**Ms. Biggar:** Also, we are going to be investing in over \$12 million in efficiency programs for carbon reduction incentives, and we will have those from low-income

Islanders to businesses, to industry, and we will be working right across the Island through our efficiencyPEI programs –

**Mr. Trivers:** Thanks for listening.

**Ms. Biggar:** – to ensure that Islanders have advantage of those programs.

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

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

Innovation PEI's Ignition Fund is a popular annual competitive program that awards seed capital of up to \$25,000 for business ventures that meet the specific criteria of the fund, including potential for export.

Successful applicants are required to sign a contract with government that includes submitting regular progress reports to Innovation PEI.

#### **Information collected from Ignition Fund grants**

A question to the Minister of Economic Development and Tourism: What information does Innovation PEI collect from recipients of the ignition grants in these ongoing and mandatory progress reports?

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

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

I'm very proud of the business community, and I can tell you one of the stats that we collect is that 2017 was the fourth consecutive record for international exports, at \$1.3 billion in goods and services, which is an increase of 4.6% over 2016.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. R. Brown:** Good news keeps rolling out.

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

**Ms. Bell:** Coming back to the Ignition Fund, with an investment of \$700,000 to-date so

far, it's important that we evaluate the performance of programs like this to ensure that public money is being spent effectively and with accountability.

#### **Evaluation of Ignition Fund investments**

A question to the minister: What outcomes and metrics does the department use to evaluate the overall performance of the Ignition Fund investments?

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

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

Our economy is on a tear. We know that our exports are increasing. We know we've added 2,200 jobs in the last –

**Mr. R. Brown:** 2,200 jobs.

**Mr. Palmer:** – year, which is one of the other metrics we measure.

There is lots of great news happening on PEI, and we're happy to continue to support business so that we can continue to move that along.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**Ms. Bell:** I do hope that the minister, Mr. Speaker, is familiar with the Ignition Fund. It is a great program.

But, on a general basis, the Ignition Fund and other investments seem to be strictly focused on business development and jobs. These sorts of programs, though, can and do have wider effects in our community. I believe greater emphasis should be placed on the social and community impacts of these programs in both their selection criteria and in how they're evaluated.

#### **Adding social and community criteria to grants and loans**

A question to the minister: Will you consider formally adding social and

community criteria to the section and evaluation processes for economic development grants and loans?

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

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

We're very proud of our business community. There's lots of positive change that's happening in PEI from an economic perspective, from a social perspective. We're very happy to continue to that, and we know that PEI businesses are able to respond, and we're happy to support them every way we can.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

My question is to the hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries. If we take a drive through our province right now, you can see that it is coming to life. The fishermen are getting ready to go out on their boats. The farmers are on the land, and before you know it a lot of the plants – you'll see it in the grass, it's greening up right now. But, before too long, a lot of other crops are coming in to bloom like our berries, our apples, those things as well, others like that as well.

### **Safeguarding Island beekeepers**

My question to the minister is: We need pollinators for some of those crops. I understand the department has changed some of the import protocols on that, but I'm just wondering what the department is doing to safeguard our own Island beekeepers.

Thank you.

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

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

Actually, that's a great question because part of the debate here has all been about the

impact of carbon pricing and the impacts that climate change can have on our industries on Prince Edward Island.

Actually, one of the first things I did after becoming minister, I had a meeting with the PEI Beekeepers Association and the blueberry growers association to see what we can do to try to alleviate some of the issues about pollination in the province. In fact, in collaboration with those two sectors, we've implemented a number of restrictions about the import of small hive beetle, potential areas for bees coming into the province.

One of those things is about we've increased the geographical restrictions on where bees can be imported from. We've increased the inspections on bees for the hives for those locations, and we've also added small hive beetle detectors and pollen patties on all of the hives to make sure that we can identify beetles.

We've also done destruction protocols that if small hive beetles were found on any of the imported bee colonies that they can be destroyed immediately, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

There has been talk, around the province, as well, that, perhaps, we could have enough of our bees ourselves, grow those and improve that so that we do not need to import any.

### **New beekeeping program**

I understand there's a new program at the department that is helping to build that. Can you give us a little information with regards to that new program?

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

**Mr. Henderson:** Indeed, Mr. Speaker, this is a challenge that Island blueberry growers are facing in trying to make sure we can increase our pollination in this province.

Actually, the former minister of agriculture introduced a great program called the

Pollination Expansion Program. The 45 beekeepers on the Island, they are able to apply for some supports and funding. In fact, we have approved 17 applications for a total of \$150,000 to assist those beekeepers with introducing bringing in more bees into the province.

As well, we have hired, or recently hired, a provincial apiarist, Cameron Menzies. His focus is to try to grow the bee industry in this province. There's a course starting tomorrow on introduction to beekeeping for Islanders.

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

**Mr. McIsaac:** Mr. Speaker, the apple industry, which is growing here, for sure, and the blueberries, as well, is very important to the economic value of our agriculture community and the province itself.

### **Backlog in blueberry storage**

I'm just wondering, there has been a backlog in the blueberries in storage. I'm wondering what the situation is with regards to that, hopefully, that we can have a better price for our berries in the coming season.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Henderson:** Once again, Mr. Speaker, our government is hearing good news in the agricultural sector when it comes to any production of food in this province. In fact, just checked recently that blueberries are starting to move and there seems to be a focus on promoting blueberries as a healthy food source. I actually noticed a commercial on TV the other night on blueberry production.

In fact, actually on April 23<sup>rd</sup>, the USDA cold storage report actually shows that there is a 30% reduction of inventories over last year of blueberries in cold storage in the US. Very positive news for the blueberry industry.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Tignish-Palmer Road.

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

My question is to the Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy. Minister, as you are well aware, Highway 2 just heading west past the Northam Road has a passing lane. For the last while, I have been hearing from many residents from West Prince, including myself, that the right lane is in serious disrepair.

So many individuals tend to go to the left lane to avoid any of that broken pavement. Then, heading east on Highway 2, there is a broken line, so people have the opportunity to pass. I am concerned that –

**Mr. LaVie:** Join PEI.

**Mr. Perry:** – due to people going on an inside lane, there is potential for a serious accident.

### **Repairs for Highway 2**

Do you plan on repairing that section of highway, this year?

**An Hon. Member:** Yes.

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

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

I am familiar with that particular stretch of highway. It has two lanes going west, plus a left turning lane and one lane going east.

We would be concerned, certainly, any safety issue is one that we look closely at. That's under our capital infrastructure plan. We submit those plans to Ottawa. I know the leader of the Green Party, the Leader of the Third Party doesn't want us to do any work on the main highways anymore –

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** Not what I said.

**Ms. Biggar:** – but that is on our infrastructure plan for next year.

**Mr. Myers:** I think she was paraphrasing.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Tignish-Palmer Road.

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

Minister, I hope that this year, with the repairs on it, at least to hold it over to next year are done as soon as possible.

### **Passing lane between Coleman to Bloomfield**

I also have residents who wish for another passing lane, possibly between the Coleman to Bloomfield area, where they can safely pass another vehicle, as many residents, I know in my district, travel to Slemon Park. Many fishers travel outside of the community to go to work. This is an opportunity to pass a slower vehicle in a safe way.

Is that a possibility?

Thank you.

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

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

As the minister of economic development mentioned, we have over \$1 billion in exports go. Those roads are a very important infrastructure system to our industries across PEI. We will continue to upgrade those –

**Mr. Trivers:** Minister of broken pavement –

**Ms. Biggar:** – hon. member, we will –

**Mr. Trivers:** – minister of potholes.

**Ms. Biggar:** – look at that particular section to see if we can do some patching in that area, for this year.

It is on there, again, though, to assure you for next year –

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

**Ms. Biggar:** – when we look at putting in any passing lanes, we also have to look at where the driveways are located. We would have to look at that area to safely install any kind of a passing lane. We will take it under review.

**Mr. Roach:** (Indistinct) good minister (Indistinct)

**Mr. R. Brown:** Now, that the brains of the operation just walked in.

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

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

It's great to rise and ask questions today and it's great to see young people here. I would like to say, this is called Question Period; no answer. Unless, you're a government backbencher, usually you get a prepared statement –

**Mr. Roach:** A member's statement or a question?

### **Proclamation of whistleblower legislation**

**Ms. Compton:** To the Premier: Why hasn't your government yet proclaimed the whistleblower legislation?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Justice and Public Safety.

**Mr. J. Brown:** Mr. Speaker, thank you very much.

This is something that obviously was important enough to us that we brought it through. I'll look into the answer to that and bring it back to this House.

Thank you.

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

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

We debated that legislation in the fall sitting of the House. It was finally passed, and it received Royal Assent back, December 20<sup>th</sup>.

### **Training for managers and employees**

What training and education plans have been made for managers and employees about this new law, and how widely have they been delivered?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Justice and Public Safety.

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

Again, this is something that our government took very seriously when we came in. An ethics and integrity commissioner was appointed, at the time. Through that process, a great deal of training was put together. As time went forward, policies were developed around this, for the first time, in government. We are very proud of that. That training will continue through the implementation of this legislation, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

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

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

### **Proclamation of whistleblower legislation (further)**

The Premier said it was one of the biggest accomplishments of the fall sitting of the Legislature. If you consider it such a great accomplishment, Mr. Premier, why has so little been done to put it into effect?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Finance.

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

Accountability has been a topic of discussion ever since I became elected. I think our government, from our track record of what we have done since 2015, is pretty substantial, as far as the new changes that we've made. Public interest disclosure and whistleblower legislation that we're doing, a new *Archives and Records Act*, ethics and integrity commissioner, conflict of interest requirements. We amended the *Financial Administration Act*.

These came out based on the Auditor General's recommendations. I can assure you that Islanders are looking back, saying, okay, they're finally getting to it, and we're getting it done –

**Mr. Myers:** (Indistinct) sued 86 times.

**Mr. MacDonald:** – and we're moving forward with accountability and transparency.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

That's a great list that you're giving me there, but we're talking about whistleblower legislation and the fact that it hasn't been proclaimed yet.

Both the opposition and independent experts consider your whistleblower law fatally flawed because it requires employees to report incidents to their own deputy minister instead of an independent third party.

We voted against the bill and we rejected those amendments because it needs to be strengthened for the public servants. How can you report to your deputy minister on whistleblower issues, when they are the person that you have to answer to?

Is your government's slow implementation of a subtle – is a, sorry – is your government's slow implementation a subtle admission that your whistleblower law is really just window dressing?

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** Mr. Speaker, this is a debate that we had in the fall sitting of this House. It was made clear in those debates that the approach that is taken here in our province is consistent with the approach that is taken elsewhere in this country.

It was never the intention that you would have a whistleblower regime that would eliminate the leader, or the person who's the head of the department. This is about building culture, changing culture, encouraging people to follow this whistleblower legislation and that is precisely what is taking place in terms of implementing this law and it will be proclaimed and we will have legislation that follow on the will of this Legislature.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

In December, the Privacy Commissioner issued a scathing ruling about government's treatment of three female public servants who came forward to report wrongdoing. There's nothing in the Premier's whistleblower law that would have prevented that shameful episode from occurring.

### **Protection for whistleblowers**

**Premier:** What extra precautions does this law offer whistleblowers beyond the protections that they already have from the labour law? What is different?

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** Mr. Speaker, this is going back to the discussions that we were having in this House in December and, indeed, it is true that when we got to the end of our six-week sitting with 30 pieces of legislation, the third party, together with the opposition did indeed try to send this all back into committee and I guess we're now sending it back into Question Period.

There are offences, there are reporting divisions, and there is protection against reprisals, which is precisely why you have whistleblower legislation.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Myers:** (Indistinct) would Spencer (Indistinct) be protected again under this legislation?

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

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

The lack of an independent process will doom this law to fail. Anyone who saw how those women were treated by government would find the Premier's version of whistleblower protection rather cold comfort.

Question to the Premier: Do you really expect to get potential whistleblowers to come forward if you control the process?

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** Mr. Speaker, this has been going on in this House, really, since the election. It was in 2015 we appointed a commissioner of ethics and integrity who brought forward a policy, the opposition complained that that was not independent enough. We brought forward legislation – it's been adopted by this House – and Mr. Speaker, we still keep hearing the same question. It may be that the opposition is getting down to the bottom of the barrel in terms of questions. They're asking the same questions they were asking in 2015.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**Mr. Myers:** Call the election, then. We know how popular you are.

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

That's why we're calling it 'question, no answer period'.

### **Whistleblowing of employees**

Do you still feel comfortable having employees whistleblowing to their own boss?

**Mr. Myers:** Good question.

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** We said last fall, and I'm happy to say it again – I don't know how they plan to change a workplace if you take the boss out of it. And really, let's remember this is the public service. These are deputy ministers, these are heads of agencies, and these are people who are public servants.

**Mr. Myers:** All answer to you (Indistinct)

**Mr. Trivers:** What about the commissioners?

**Premier MacLauchlan:** And, there is, in that legislation, a process by which they can go directly to the commissioner –

**Mr. Myers:** (Indistinct)

**Premier MacLauchlan:** – a commissioner who was independently appointed.

**Mr. Fox:** They serve at your pleasure.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** So there are various routes that people can follow and then the encouragement is there to report wrongdoing and to have protection against reprisals and that's exactly what whistleblower legislation does everywhere where it's been adopted and Prince Edward Island is directly in line with that practice.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

Encouragement to report to their own boss. If the PNP whistleblowers looked for justice or redemption against your government, are you going to drag them through the court system, or settle appropriately?

**Ms. Biggar:** (Indistinct)

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** Mr. Speaker, that's a very hypothetical question and it's one that, frankly –

**Mr. Myers:** It won't be soon.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** It's one that frankly – well, maybe the opposition is up to something – perhaps they'll tell us about it, but in any event, Mr. Speaker, I think that's something that's better left for another day.

Thank you very much.

#### Point of Order

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

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

I'd like to rise on a point of order; a couple of comments made by the minister of transportation today. This is not the first time that she's misrepresented my remarks in this House. She said, and I'd have to read Hansard to get the quote exactly, but that:

The Leader of the Third Party is not interested in spending money on our main roads. That is a complete misrepresentation of what I said in this House.

I specifically said that this is exactly what we need to do; the situation that the hon. member behind me mentioned regarding Highway 2 in his district is just one of countless examples of the inventory of roads that we have on Prince Edward Island at the moment that are in serious disrepair and my point was that that is where we should be spending our money, not building new roads. That's my first point of order, that my remarks are being misrepresented.

The second point of order, Mr. Speaker, is that yesterday I heard quite clearly from the same minister that over 50% of the representation on our agencies, boards and commissions were women and today I heard when she rose before Question Period, that, actually, 48% were there. So, I would like a clarification on which of those claims is correct.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** Okay, hon. Leader of the Third Party, on those I will take under advisement.

#### Statements by Ministers

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

#### **Cultural Action Plan**

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

Perhaps what sets our province apart from any other place in the world is our unique Island culture. From the Mi'kmaq to our newest arrivals from around the world, we have created, and continue to create, a diverse and unique Island culture.

Our artists, musicians, crafts people and performers add to that culture by sharing our stories, our imagination with audiences near and far. They make an incredible contribution, not only to our identity as Islanders, but to our cultural and tourism industries. They export products, they produce unique creations, they employ thousands of Islanders and they give us a

sense of pride in our place. They give visitors a taste of Prince Edward Island.

With that in mind, our government recently announced the Cultural Action Plan – Cultivating Growth. The plan sets aside \$3.5 million over the next five years to develop our cultural industries and support artists and cultural groups from one end of the Island to the other.

This support will not only give our cultural industries an opportunity to grow, it will help them build on their existing strengths and create access and belonging. It will encourage more Islanders to join these industries and provide learning, professional development opportunities and to improve their skills. And it will assist our government as we forge greater ties to these industries and the many individuals and organizations that support them. We're already seeing results.

Just last week we announced funding for a new craft centre where Island craftspeople can come together to collaborate, create and present their creations in a new retail space near the waterfront.

We've purchased \$20,000 worth of Island art from 12 Island artists for the art bank. One of those artists, Monica Lacey, is here with us today. Over the next three years we will purchase another \$30,000 worth of Island work for display in public places across the province.

Combine these and many other supports for artists through our Cultural Action Plan with the new initiatives in our 2018-2019 operating budget, like the tax breaks and the investment grants that will benefit our Island's small businesses, and you put artists in our province in a better position to succeed than ever before.

The imagination and creativity of our artistic and cultural communities combined with these supports will give Island artists an even better chance to make those big things happen.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

Much like yesterday, the minister gets up and takes credit for the whole cultural industry here on Prince Edward Island. I think it's been growing quite steadily on its own for some time and then we have a great, vibrant cultural and arts community here on Prince Edward Island.

When I look out – I've talked about my own area here before, but when you look at what's going on with the jewellery shop in Georgetown, and Birdmouse that's down in St. Georges, and the many other people that are into the industry here on Prince Edward Island, they for a number of years have been doing it in spite of you.

I do commend you for coming to the table with something, but I want to point out that you're talking about \$3.5 million for culture for a province that is small and relies on tourism and people coming to the Island. I know from any place I've ever travelled, I always look for the local content and the local artists and the local culture scene as a place for me to kind of get the full feel of the community that I'm in.

\$8 million you gave to Kevin Murphy here this year in comparison to the \$3.5 million you're giving to the whole culture community here in Prince Edward Island; you gave away a golf course up in Mill River, you guys did. Compare that to the whole \$3.5 million that you're giving to a whole industry here on Prince Edward Island. Recently you gave \$7 million to a failed Liberal candidate, and compare that to the \$3.5 million you're going to give to a whole industry here on Prince Edward Island.

While it's good to see finally government recognizing the importance of arts and culture here in this province, there's way more that you could be doing – and if you only took it as serious as you did beer, and if you only took it as serious as you did failed Liberal candidates, what a great community we could probably have if you gave them the type of funding that you're giving away to your friends, basically, here in this province.

For me, I think it's great that government is purchasing art to put in the art bank. I know

upstairs on our floor we have some pieces in the hallway, and I think the Leader of the Opposition has a couple in his office, but I'm going to talk to the member from Morell and the member from Souris who I share an office with and I think we're going to put in a request to have a piece in our office now that you have all these new pieces.

I think it's great to support the industry here in Prince Edward Island and we can only go upwards from here.

Thank you.

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

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

One of the things that's exciting about the Cultural Action Plan is that it actually has a strategy that sets key directions and actions. One of the main things that's in this that sets the foundation is identifying the creative industries as a strategic sector.

By making this statement, we're able to finally recognize the economic impact and the value and validate that work that this sector has been doing in the community for so long, and to see colleagues who I've worked with in the past here in the House today who have been working in this sector for so long, bringing forward and actually being recognized from that strategic perspective, is really fantastic.

I am particularly, though, looking forward in terms of these key directions and actions, to the creation of the creative industry secretariat which will – and the establishment of a Prince Edward Island arts commission providing guidance on those priority areas and overseeing funding for cultural activities, ensuring that Islanders' interests and investments are maintained and protected; that arms-length, peer-driven oversight is something that we could do more of across our other sectors. So, to see this creative sector being the groundbreaker in that is not unexpected, but it's also really refreshing.

Again, I would reiterate my request that is actually as one of the action items in the strategy document: That we work with our community partners to ensure that

government policy emphasizes and increases the use of Island music, film and art in its promotional and marketing material and expenditure.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### **National Immunization Awareness Week**

**Mr. Mitchell:** Mr. Speaker, this is Immunization Awareness Week in Canada. The National Campaign is Get Vaccinated! Vaccines Work!

Vaccinating our children is one of the most important things we can do to help protect them from serious diseases such as measles; whooping cough, and pneumonia. However, immunization goes beyond childhood. At every age immunization provides the longest-lasting, most effective protection against disease.

In Prince Edward Island we are dedicated to improving immunization rates and protecting the health of our residents. Our department has been taking a proactive approach to improve vaccination rates and prevent the spread of disease through two initiatives this past year.

The first is The Adult Immunization project which is aimed at raising awareness about what vaccines adults need and where they can access them. Through this program, over the past six months hundreds of additional Islanders have been screened for their immunization requirements. We found that almost all of those screened were under-immunized and now we have the opportunity to work with these individuals and remind them of the lifesaving benefits of immunization.

To find out what immunizations you may need, a new self-assessment tool, developed specifically for PEI, is now available online. I urge everyone to utilize this tool, and help protect themselves and our greater community here in Prince Edward Island.

The second initiative undertaken this year was the launch of a Universal Influenza Immunization Program. This year, for the first time in history, every Islander over the

age of six months could receive a free flu shot at the location of their choice. Getting the flu shot every year is the best strategy for preventing hospitalizations, complications, and deaths from influenza.

I am pleased to report that we successfully distributed over 53,000 flu vaccines this season, helping to protect Islanders and provide access where and when they need it the most.

I want to encourage all Islanders to talk to public health nursing, their doctor, a nurse practitioner, or a pharmacist about immunization. Immunization protects families, communities and vulnerable Islanders and our government is taking action to help prevent illness and protect the health of all Islanders.

Thank you.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid.

**Mr. MacEwen:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the minister for his statement.

It was interesting, yesterday we just had the conversation around the scope of practice for pharmacists and I encouraged the minister to extend that as much as possible, especially with immunizations.

The Leader of the Opposition has talked about this for years. The seniors' federation has talked about the shingles vaccine for years too, about getting that covered for the seniors' federation. But, bottom line, I can't – when I was a new parent, immunizations and vaccines, it just seems like second nature and we should be doing it as much as we can to encourage all those to make sure that they do vaccinate and get that as early as possible.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

Of course, immunization is one of the greatest global health achievements and the UN estimates that two to three million

deaths are averted every year because of the immunization programs that are out there.

We've had tremendous successes; the eradication of small pox, polio virtually eradicated, and I think Rotary International is to be commended, specifically, for the work that they did to make that a truly global effort.

But, we're slipping backwards in some respects. Where measles used to be a disease that you almost never came across, it's now starting to reemerge because, unfortunately for a lot of dubious reasons, people are disinclined to have their children immunized.

On the announcement that the minister made specifically, I'm really glad to hear about the adult vaccination screening program that you have, minister, and I do hope that adults take advantage of that. I certainly plan on doing so. I just discovered the other day that I'm the only child out of five in our family who has not experienced shingles and so before my time comes; I'm going to check into that.

Also, the universal influenza program, it's something – even though this year's vaccination was not as efficacious as we would have liked, I think it's a very important program even if it offers less than complete coverage.

I thank the minister for this announcement, and I hope Islanders take advantage of these great programs.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### Day of Mourning

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

Tomorrow, April 28<sup>th</sup>, is the National Day of Mourning.

This is a day set aside to honour the memory of workers who have lost their lives in the workplace, or have experienced life-altering injuries and occupational disease.

We offer our deepest condolences and our thoughts to the families, friends and colleagues who have lost someone through a workplace tragedy.

Even the loss of one worker is one too many. We need to work together to ensure that safety and prevention is a priority in all workplaces.

Tomorrow night, the PEI Federation of Labour will be hosting the annual Day of Mourning ceremony at St. Paul's hall in Charlottetown. The ceremony is open for all to attend and will begin at 7:00 p.m. followed by a reception.

We will come together to honour those lost too soon and commit to a future where accidents are prevented and everyone arrives back home safe.

Islanders may also mark the day by lighting a candle, lowering workplace flags at half mast, observing a moment of silence, or wearing a Day of Mourning lapel sticker. Lapel stickers are available at the workman's compensation board office.

Tomorrow, let us all take time to honour the lives, forever changed, and renew our collective commitment to workplace health and safety.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid.

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

Thank you to the minister for the statement. We recognize the international Day of Mourning each year. I encourage everybody to attend the ceremony tomorrow, as the minister said.

We talk about workplace injury and we know that that's evolving. We know that there are many ways to be injured in a workplace right now. We talk about bullying. We talk about a number of things. It doesn't matter what kind of workplace you're in. That can have a devastating effect. We've heard stories of suicide. We've heard stories of people going on long mental health leaves. That's a workplace

injury, as well. I think we need to also recognize that type of thing.

John MacLean was in the gallery here with us earlier. John has had a long road of recovering from a workplace injury. He has faced a lot of barriers, a lot of hurdles at every turn. Even with that hard road. John has stepped up. He's been lobbying government hard for changes for years. More importantly, John has been a real resource for others in the province that are going into that situation, that have had a workplace injury. Knowing how to navigate the system, knowing how to do appeals.

I know many of the MLAs in here have referred constituents to John to help out. He is a good resource. John is doing great. He's in school. He's got a wonderful family. I want to recognize the work. That's a tough road, as all the MLAs know. We've all dealt with that and navigating that system and understanding it. He's been an excellent resource for many of us here. I'd like to give him a shout-out today for that.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

Every year on April 28<sup>th</sup> we pay respects to, and remember the thousands of workers, who have killed, injured or suffered illness. We also honour families and friends, who are affected, as the hon. member referred to workplace injuries are sometimes not visible and they affect more than an individual. They affect the community that supports and loves those individuals, as well.

Every worker has the right to work in a safe space and return home safe every night. By working together in our community, we can both prevent and recognize workers injuries so I will also be attending the event tomorrow evening and encourage those who can do so, to attend. And, if not, to just to take a moment to think about their role in safety for the workers and workplace.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Presenting and Receiving Petitions.

Tabling of Documents

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

**Ms. Biggar:** Mr. Speaker, by Command of Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor, I beg leave to table a document stating how many women have been appointed since 2015 and the makeup of those ABC boards. Also, I'm going to table a record updated yesterday at Thursday at 10:25 – 1:00 a.m. of the amount of, well, actually the fact that there was no fossil fuels being used on PEI to produce energy and I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Family and Human Services, 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

Orders of the Day (Government)

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

**Mr. Mitchell:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. Minister of Finance, that the 1<sup>st</sup> order of the day be now read.

**Speaker:** Shall it carry? Carried.

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

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

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

**Speaker:** Shall it carry? Carried.

I will ask the hon. Member from Charlottetown-Lewis Point and Deputy Speaker to come and Chair the Committee of the Whole House.

**Chair (Casey):** The House is now in a Committee of the Whole House to further consider the grant of supplementary supply to Her Majesty.

Hon. members, and those who are watching, we are on the Health PEI estimates. We are on page 94.

Permission to bring a stranger to the floor?

**Some Hon. Members:** Granted.

**Chair:** Thank you.

We'll allow her to set-up.

Welcome, could you introduce yourself and your title for the record?

**Denise Lewis Fleming COO:** Denise Lewis Fleming, Chief Operating Officer for Health PEI.

**Chair:** Welcome to the table.

Hon. members, we are on page 94. The Pharmacare section has been read. We did an extensive discussion on that last night.

Shall that section carry? Carried.

Shall the total carry? Carried.

**Mr. MacKay:** Chair?

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque.

**Mr. MacKay:** Thank you, Chair.

Just a generic question. I looked through the budget and I can't seem to find out where it might be at, minister, I'm being told that there's a grant through health and wellness that might be able to help out with the community garden. Basically, the town of Kensington, as well as with a young gentleman in the community is planting a vegetable garden for seniors, as well as the school program and so forth.

I'm just wondering if there's going to be any funding available through the department on that?

**Mr. Mitchell:** Can I –

**Chair:** Sure, but it's in another budget.

**Mr. Mitchell:** Thank you, hon. member.

That will be part of the department budget once we get through the Health PEI, so we'll bring that forward.

That program that you speak of, that's a program that we partner with agriculture and education on, the community. It lines up well with our healthy eating strategy on the department level. I'd be pretty confident in saying that that's probably there, but I don't have that specifically –

**Mr. MacKay:** Okay.

**Mr. Mitchell:** – so we can either talk about that, or I can investigate that and get you that information quicker.

**Mr. MacKay:** That would be great if you could do that minister.

**Mr. Mitchell:** Certainly will.

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

**Leader of the Opposition:** Thank you, Chair.

I'm just curious, when the hour was called, last night –

**Chair:** Sorry?

**Leader of the Opposition:** When the hour was called last night, I was in the midst of asking questions and I would have assumed that I would still be on the list from last night?

**Chair:** No. The lists disintegrate with each sitting.

Do you have still have questions on the Pharmacare section?

**Leader of the Opposition:** Just a couple of –

**Chair:** (Indistinct)

**Denise Lewis Fleming COO:** (Indistinct) sure.

**Mr. Mitchell:** We'll revert back, that's fine.

**Chair:** No, we don't mind going back.

**Leader of the Opposition:** Thanks very much, Chair.

Last night, I was asking about the methadone program and the suboxone program and where we're at on that and I believe you were going to bring back some information for me with regards to how much doctors are paid, essentially, per prescription, or for administering this program.

**Denise Lewis Fleming COO:** So the request last night was in relation to the cost differential between a prescription for methadone versus a prescription for suboxone. Those reimbursements go to community pharmacies in order to administer those, not to the physicians. So the average cost for a filled prescription for methadone is approximately \$15.20 and the average cost for a filled prescription of suboxone is \$16.53.

**Leader of the Opposition:** \$16?

**Denise Lewis Fleming COO:** 53.

**Leader of the Opposition:** 53.

Okay. Thank you, Chair.

**Chair:** Thank you.

Medical Affairs

General Administration

Oh, sorry.

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** Oh, no. (Indistinct)

**Chair:** I didn't see you. Do you have a question with –

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** (Indistinct)

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

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** Thank you, Chair, for allowing me to do this.

Those figures you just gave us, Denise, does that include the dispensing fee and the cost of the medication?

**Denise Lewis Fleming COO:** Yes, it does.

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** It does.

Could you give us a breakdown as to how much is dispensing fee and how much is medication?

**Denise Lewis Fleming COO:** I just have to do a percentage here. So it's approximately – for methadone, the dispensing fee is approximately 90% of the cost and for suboxone, the dispensing fee is approximately 55% of the cost.

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** Okay. I'm just wondering why the discrepancy in the – is it?

**Denise Lewis Fleming COO:** The methadone is a much lower cost per drug for the cost of the core piece of the Methadose. Suboxone has a higher drug component cost.

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** Okay, got it.

Thank you.

Thank you, Chair.

**Chair:** Thank you.

Medical Affairs

General Administration

“Appropriations provided for administration of the *Health Services Payment Act* and for the development of partnerships between physicians and other collaborating professionals. This section is responsible for grants and physician supports per the Master Agreement, the Medical Residency Program and other physician medical training programs.” Administration: 35,700. Equipment: 61,100. Materials, Supplies and Services: 56,800. Professional Services: 7,391,400. Salaries: 4,396,200. Travel and Training: 77,000. Grants: 4,265,700.

Total General Administration: 16,283,900.

The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

**Mr. Trivers:** Thanks, Chair.

Is it true that a general practitioner – a family doctor essentially is required to be on call if they have patients in the hospital?

**Mr. Mitchell:** I'll start with that and then Denise can finish up with it. Not to my knowledge, hon. member. If a doctor does their rounds, that's to the best of my knowledge, that's it for them that day. They're not on a callback that would be handled by whoever else is in the hospital. Is that fair to say?

**Denise Lewis Fleming COO:** I'll give a slight clarification. If you refer to the master agreement that's with the physicians, family practitioners can have call groups of which they share the call for patients that they have in the hospital for which they're responsible. For example you can have call groups of family physicians as small as a group of three. You could have call groups as large as eight, so you would, in that case, one day in eight you would be on call to respond to any patient issues at the hospital.

**Mr. Trivers:** Are there family physicians that aren't part of any call group – that essentially would mean they are on call all the time?

**Denise Lewis Fleming COO:** Physicians that usually are not part of a call group have made arrangements in order to have their patients covered by themselves or one of their peers. They may not have a formal call group.

**Mr. Trivers:** The reason I bring this up is I talked to a physician and this was a complaint. They said: Man, it would be really nice if I wouldn't have to be on call all the time. Do you facilitate that with physicians? Does this department facilitate that for physicians?

**Denise Lewis Fleming COO:** The physicians themselves are a self-organizing group in this particular piece and creating their on-call list.

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

**Leader of the Opposition:** Thanks very much.

The hon. member from Rustico brings up a good point and furthers a few questions I

have. So, from my understanding and my experience as well, hospitalists play a large role now in doing rounds at the primary care facilities – PCH and the QEH – do you have any figures as far as how many GPs actually still conduct rounds?

**Denise Lewis Fleming COO:** We would have to bring it back.

**Mr. Mitchell:** I'm not sure what that number would be.

**Leader of the Opposition:** How many hospitalists would we currently have working out of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital?

**Denise Lewis Fleming COO:** The hospitalists are a self-organizing group. We fund a certain number of lines. They're responsible for recruiting within as to how many individuals that they may want to have on the list in order to cover the number of hospitalist lines that are approved for QEH.

**Leader of the Opposition:** Okay. Within the master agreement with hospitalists, I'm assuming they're still – they're permitted to hold clinic hours as well – outside of the hospital?

**Mr. Mitchell:** The master agreement lays out those provisions, whether you're a general practice doctor with no hospital visitations, or you're a hospitalist. The master agreement lays out which path you want to be – fee for service, salary, hospitalist, non-hospitalist, so that's where that gets established.

**Leader of the Opposition:** But my question is: If you're employed as a hospitalist, your primary responsibility is to do rounds and then to care for admitted patients at the hospital, but outside of those working hours, can hospitalists also hold clinic hours in say a pharmacy?

**Mr. Mitchell:** Okay. I misunderstood.

**Denise Lewis Fleming COO:** The provisions under the master agreement that was signed last year with the medical society is that for all physicians that were on the compliment, including hospitalists – last year – they would be allowed to continue to do work outside of their hours if they had

historically done that in the past. For all new physicians coming to the Island, their letters of offer and/or their employment contract – depending upon if they're salary, or for fee for service – will specify that they need to complete their core duties first that they were hired to do, whether it be a hospitalist or as a GP, and that if they wanted to expand beyond that, then they need approval from Health PEI in order to do that work.

**Leader of the Opposition:** That brings up an interesting question because a lot of Islanders currently rely on clinics for their medical advice and medical care. How much does a doctor receive in remuneration for a clinic visit – per patient?

**Denise Lewis Fleming COO:** I don't have the fee code listing here with me, but off the top of my head – a recollection – for a walk in clinic I believe it's \$25 a visit, however, if it's for a basic office visit in a family practice office, I believe it's approximately \$35 a visit.

**Leader of the Opposition:** I've heard from some Islanders that had concerns visiting a doctor that's making an appointment, or most often it's with their own GP, that when they go in to make an appointment and present to that appointment that they're only permitted to talk about one issue or one ailment, what have you, with the doctor and that if there's other issues or other ailments that they want to talk about, they have to book another appointment to talk about that issue. Is there anything in the master agreement that outlines those conditions?

**Denise Lewis Fleming COO:** There's nothing in the master agreement that specifies how a physician must practice. Those are professional standards and practices that are dealt with through the college and if there's also issues, that we really would encourage patients to bring them forward that way.

**Leader of the Opposition:** Would you find it concerning, though, if there was doctors practicing out there and that was the case? Say you had a respiratory issue and you also had, maybe, an arthritic or a diabetic issue and you booked in to see a doctor and you talked about your respiratory issue and then you wanted to talk about your diabetic issue

and you were told that you're going to have to book another appointment for that.

Would that be a concern to you?

**Mr. Mitchell:** I think, certainly, if that was the case, that would be a concern for any patient that goes into a doctor's office with a couple of troubling events. Obviously, to rebook, time elapses and things of that nature. Again, I haven't had that specific complaint brought to me.

As Denise has said, if there are people, who have complaints, certainly, a call to the college of physicians would be optimal in those cases, to bring that to their attention, as well.

**Leader of the Opposition:** I want to move on to another set of questions with regards to the medical schools, particularly, Dalhousie University and Memorial University. I'm assuming, I'm asking in this section with regards to –

**Mr. Mitchell:** Seats?

**Leader of the Opposition:** Seats, yes.

**Mr. Mitchell:** We'd be able to –

**Denise Lewis Fleming COO:** (Indistinct)

**Leader of the Opposition:** Can you tell me how many seats currently we pay for at Dalhousie University and how many seats we pay for at MUN?

**Mr. Mitchell:** Go ahead.

**Denise Lewis Fleming COO:** We pay for 16 students at Memorial University. Four in each year. Four in first year, four in second.

In Dalhousie, Health PEI does not pay by the seat. What we do is we contribute to supporting post-graduate residents. We provide funding support. That's what you would see in some of the salaries in this section. We provide, just quickly here, 22 post-graduate residents with their salary support during those training years.

**Leader of the Opposition:** Twenty-two post-graduate residents through Dalhousie. Has that number increased or decreased over the last number of years?

**Denise Lewis Fleming COO:** The largest increase was when the PEI family residency program was introduced, because within those 22, that's 10 of our post-graduate residents that come to our program. There are another 12, 10 of which are specialists that are training in various places throughout Atlantic Canada, and two in Moncton in enhanced family medicine training.

**Leader of the Opposition:** I'm wondering, can you advise what the annual cost is for the 22 post-graduate resident positions that would go to Dal?

**Denise Lewis Fleming COO:** The overall funding that we provide to the medical residency training program is \$2,448,900.

**Leader of the Opposition:** Okay.

How much does the province pay to MUN for the four seats per year?

**Mr. Mitchell:** That's \$800,000 there.

**Leader of the Opposition:** \$800,000?

I might have a couple of more questions, Chair, but if you want to move on –

**Chair:** Sure.

**Leader of the Opposition:** – list (Indistinct)

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

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** Thank you.

I'm just going to piggyback a little bit on what the Leader of the Opposition was just saying. The four students in each of the four years at MUN, that works out to about \$200,000 per student, is that correct?

**Denise Lewis Fleming COO:** The \$800,000 would cover all 16 of those students.

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** That's for all 16, okay, so \$50,000.

What incentives are we offering these students that we are supporting through school to come back here; specifically, in terms of filling the more difficult spaces that we have in rural Prince Edward Island?

Are there specific incentives for new graduates to move back here to make a commitment to serve rural areas?

**Mr. Mitchell:** Again, that would not reflect here, hon. member. That would be through the department, through recruiting. We'll have an – I don't have the specific – what we would do in that to entice people to go back. We could have a further conversation on that when I'm on with the department budget piece.

Recruitment deals with those issues. I'm sure there are several things, several incentives that are offered there, but none of these, to the best of my knowledge, are reciprocated back that you have to work on PEI.

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** For these 16 students, who are going through MUN at the moment, are they under any obligation to come back to the Island –

**Mr. Mitchell:** No.

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** – at all?

But they are all Island –

**Mr. Mitchell:** Islanders (Indistinct)

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** – students, who have gone there.

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

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** Is the hope in providing funding for their education, that they will be –

**Mr. Mitchell:** Absolutely –

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** – (Indistinct) to come back –

**Mr. Mitchell:** – and recruitment will continue to talk and reach out to them, see how they're doing. Offer help to come back home and be here. That's part of that process through recruitment.

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** I'm just moving on to this particular section and how it relates to the others. This is about administration or management of physicians, but in each of the other sections, it looks like there's

certainly an aspect of that. It's related to administration of physicians, as well.

I'm just wondering what this division does that's different from the others and is there any overlap with it comes to administration of the physicians?

**Mr. Mitchell:** Go ahead.

**Denise Lewis Fleming COO:** This particular section of the medical affairs division, what they support in the administration, as was mentioned, is for physician supports.

You would see in the professional and contract services handout that was given that we provide – we have a budget of providing nearly \$5 million in physician supports for our salaried and contract physicians. This group administers securing with different groups, for example, the Summerside Medical Centre or with Polyclinic, the RN (Indistinct) the LPN, the medical staff support. That's what this group organizes.

They also work with developing the contracts, once recruitment and retention has identified individuals that come, this group also works with identifying those pieces. Of course, they also deal with the medical residency program and those educational pieces. Finally, they also help administer the grants that are payable to the medical society under the master agreement.

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** Thank you, Chair, that's good.

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

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

I was wondering if the master agreement allows for physicians to work part-time? Apologies if this question has already been asked.

**Mr. Mitchell:** It does. Yeah.

**Mr. Trivers:** Just to be clear: they could choose to work 20 hours a week and split a workload with another physician.

**Mr. Mitchell:** I believe so.

**Denise Lewis Fleming COO:** I'll temper that response. It's a conversation with Health PEI because Health PEI has to be agreeable that part-time work is needed. They can't unilaterally split their position without agreement by Health PEI. If they're fulltime, they can't just say: I want to split it and go 50/50. It's a discussion with Health PEI as the employer.

**Chair:** Hon. members, I'm having a little trouble hearing the questions and the answers. If you have conversations going on I don't mind you taking them outside.

Thank you.

The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

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

I believe it was the Minister of Education, Early Learning and Culture that actually brought this up at standing committee. It was a really good point, is that there are definitely doctors out there looking for more work-life balance.

The idea was if a fulltime doctor is needed why not let a couple of doctors share the workload. Maybe, one week one doctor is working the full workload, the next week it's a different doctor. Or maybe it's 60/40 or 70/30, whatever the mix is.

I was just wondering, if that's allowed in the master agreement, and, if, indeed, Health PEI is thinking about doing that sort of thing because it does seem like a great suggestion to me.

**Mr. Mitchell:** Just to clarify when Denise said that you need that blessing from Health PEI, that's just a qualitative piece. That, what you're suggesting, does go on.

**Mr. Trivers:** Okay.

**Mr. Mitchell:** It's just Health PEI is a part of it to say, yeah, we agree with that, that we thing that's the best way to go. And off you go.

We have some in place right now.

**Denise Lewis Fleming COO:** For example, in Kensington, there are two physicians that work together to share a practice and cover

that off. I know of that as one particular example where it does happen.

**Mr. Mitchell:** It just means you have to do that check-in with Health PEI to say, hey, this is what we're thinking about and have that done.

**Mr. Trivers:** Okay, great. Thanks.

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

**Ms. Biggar:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I think it's a great discussion you're having to educate people on how recruitment goes and how that whole process and piece works together.

One of the pieces is the nurse practitioner. If I might ask a couple of questions about that.

I think, one of the challenges, as we know in certain parts of the province, my own included, is that there is a shortage of physicians. We do have nurse practitioners, who have a scope of practice.

One of the things that, I guess, confuses people is if there's a nurse practitioner at a medical clinic and they may not have a family physician, they cannot see – this is what the understanding is – they cannot see that nurse practitioner unless they're attached to the physician that's in that clinic.

My second part is – and I know this all has to be negotiated with the medical society – is there any discussion going on about increasing the scope of practice for nurse practitioners to let them have their own panel of patients within a practice?

**Mr. Mitchell:** I guess the best to approach an answer to your question is: Yes. In fact, a nurse practitioner needs to work in a collaborative practice with a – or a couple can work in a larger practice with several doctors, which is done in the area of – of various areas across PEI.

To your point of the nurse practitioners being able to work in a walk-in clinic, there are various levels of training and for that particular type of work for a nurse practitioner; they need to be specifically trained for that type.

To your other question of – what was your other question, your last one?

**Ms. Biggar:** Just the negotiations that would be –

**Mr. Mitchell:** Oh, yes.

**Ms. Biggar:** – required.

**Mr. Mitchell:** So, I guess what's fair to say based on situations that are now presenting in West Prince, presented in Kings County with ER (Indistinct) those discussions are being held at a high level right now to say: Okay, is this part of a possible solution?

We're talking about that. I'm not ready to say today that we have a solution, but they are part of the talks. The nurse practitioners' scope of practice is certainly part of that talk.

**Ms. Biggar:** To your knowledge, in other provinces is there that scope of practice that does do that with nurse practitioners? Is there a different model?

**Mr. Mitchell:** I believe there is. Denise probably has a better history of that.

**Denise Lewis Fleming COO:** I won't say I have a great depth of history on it, but my understanding is there are some other jurisdictions where there is an expanded scope of practice which allows nurse practitioners a bit more independence in the areas, but they also have, I believe, additional specialty training in those particular areas.

**Mr. Mitchell:** Right and one part in particular that I know some is in the north, right?

**Denise Lewis Fleming COO:** Yeah.

**Ms. Biggar:** Just one last question in regard to that: Does PEI have the capability, then, to provide that expertise –

**Mr. Mitchell:** Training?

**Ms. Biggar:** – in training if that was – if we have a present nurse practitioner and we went to that model, do we have the expertise to train them at that next step?

**Mr. Mitchell:** The short answer to my limited knowledge on that is when we get trained at UPEI; it's specific to new training for a new nurse practitioner out of the door. I think that training would be more specific, and I'm not saying it's not able to be done here, but we're not providing it at the moment because it wasn't something that we thought we needed as soon as we do.

Therefore, that's something that we're going to have to take a look at for certain. They're not getting it today. If that's a model we need to move to, then we'll have to look at (Indistinct)

**Ms. Biggar:** I would make that recommendation that we look into that type of a model – collaborative model. To take it one step further might assist a lot of communities that are challenged.

Thank you, minister.

**Mr. Mitchell:** Yeah, appreciate it.

**Chair:** Shall the section carry?

**Leader of the Opposition:** Chair?

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

**Leader of the Opposition:** I said I had more questions and if you wanted to move on and then come back to me.

**Chair:** Sure.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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

I want to just go back so the seats at Dal and MUN for a moment. Are those 100% occupied every year with regards to the demands from Island students?

**Denise Lewis Fleming COO:** To my awareness, we have four students in each of those years currently.

**Leader of the Opposition:** Perfect.

I just wanted to talk about health care futures for a moment. I'm assuming it would kind of tie into this section.

**Chair:** That's in health and wellness.

**Mr. Mitchell:** That's on the department side.

**Leader of the Opposition:** All right.

**Chair:** You good?

**Leader of the Opposition:** Thank you, Chair.

**Chair:** Shall the section carry? Carried.

#### In-Province Physician Services

“Appropriations provided for payment of the In-Province Physician Services including Family Practice, Emergency Physicians and Specialists.” Administration: 9,000. Equipment: 1,400. Materials, Supplies and Services: 1,000. Professional Services: 78,607,300. Salaries: 32,985,100. Travel and Training: 675,900. Grants: 68,000.

Total In-Province Physician Services: 112,347,700.

The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** Thank you, Chair.

There's a large increase in this section obviously from last year and I'm wondering how many new family doctors we're hiring.

**Denise Lewis Fleming COO:** Within this section, as the Leader of the Third Party as noted, there's a large increase over the budget from the previous year. You will see it also brings us more in line with our spending. Our forecast was \$109 million and so our budget for the upcoming year is \$112 million.

In this new budget for 2018-2019, what it does is it puts the funding in place for all the current complement that we have. It supports that, and it includes the investment of two new family physicians; one in the Queens – well, both in the Queens area, but one for, I'll say, general community practice and the other to support Hillsborough Hospital and community mental health.

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** Thank you.

The minister and I have chatted about this a couple of times, but I just – he will be aware that we're lacking a physician now in the South Shore area. The Crapaud doctor left end of last year, I believe it was, and I'm just wondering whether any of these new doctors – you mentioned there were two for the central part of the Island – if any either of those is possibly going to go to the Crapaud area or –

**Mr. Mitchell:** I guess, hon. member, I've had several conversations with people from that area about the loss of the doctor from the area and I feel for the situation there. These doctors that are referenced here are not hired to fill that position in Crapaud.

We are, though, trying to find a solution there in regards to possible nurse practitioner coverage. There are several neighbouring communities there as well; Kinkora, Borden, the Crapaud area that we're looking to fill – find a solution there to their needs. I get it from a perspective of a community in Prince Edward Island that had a doctor for well over 100 years. They have concern, and we're trying to determine ways to alleviate the situation for them, but we're not there yet.

We have some more work to do once we have the nurse practitioners, the new hires, identified and will be coming very soon. One of those will be figuring rotation for there. I don't really have the final answers on that, but that's kind of where we're going. It's not the doctor that you see in this here, unfortunately, today.

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** I appreciate that, minister.

How many doctors are we short across the whole – and GPs, I'm talking about here.

**Mr. Mitchell:** It's around 10.5 full-time equivalents but we'll (Indistinct)

**Denise Lewis Fleming COO:** Currently in our family practice?

**Mr. Mitchell:** Yes.

**Denise Lewis Fleming COO:** Vacant?

**Mr. Mitchell:** It's 11.

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** 11?

**Mr. Mitchell:** Point one.

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** Okay.

Thank you, and there's been a lot of talk, of course, about the shortage of psychiatrists. We're short in many specialist areas, but that's the most critical one when it comes to the wellbeing of Islanders, in my opinion.

How many full-time equivalents are we short today of psychiatrists in PEI?

**Mr. Mitchell:** Actually, as far as our full-time equivalents today, we're short two. We were very fortunate to recruit four recently in the past few months and we're hopeful that we can recruit two more.

One of the best ways in this field is with four new coming who have left other areas, and have friends in other areas, and have interest to come this way; that network is just tremendous to kind of enhance others to take a look at PEI.

I feel pretty confident that those other two positions will come to be filled. But, you know, again recruitment is out working hard for that. Dr. Keizer, she's always trying to recruit new psychiatrists to PEI. The four of them.

Yeah, so, the development of the psychiatry residency community elective to attract a fourth or fifth psychiatrist will be a big part of possibilities, too.

I think we're in okay shape. I won't say we're in pretty good shape, but we're in okay shape. I think some of the new recruitment measures and some of the experiences of the four new ones may help to draw others over, too.

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** You mentioned, Denise, that, yes, that there's a big increase, but that's largely because we under spent by about \$10 million last year. Presumably, because so many of those positions were unfilled at that time, whether it's general practitioners or psychiatrists or anybody else.

I'm wondering whether the budget that we have for this year, \$112 million, in this

section, whether, if all the positions were filled. If we had the two new psychiatrists. If all of those 11 GPs were to arrive magically on PEI, and the other ones, is that budget sufficient for that eventuality?

**Denise Lewis Fleming COO:** I believe that it is for the planned complement that we have approved at this point. When a position is vacant, we do bring in locums, and so there are costs that we would have incurred over the past year of covering those locums being in and them doing work. Now, that budget will be used to cover the cost of the permanent physician that is here.

We are in good shape. That's why it's really great to see the funding that was provided by government to bring us up to that full amount that we needed to cover – the pressure points, as you mentioned, wouldn't have been as much in psychiatry because we had the locums covering the other piece.

We also had fairly substantial pressures in our radiology area; like the number of tests that are being ordered that were driving those pressure points. We also had pressures in our internal medicine group because a new physician had started prior to the beginning of the fiscal year; which is great because it was a recruitment for a retiring physician, so we had some overlap and some additional costs.

We should be in good shape for the upcoming year.

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** You mentioned there, Denise, about the filling in those holes with locums. I have spoken to a couple of people here on PEI, who had experiences with psychiatrists, who were flown in from Toronto, in this example, to see patients over the weekend.

I understand why, with a backlog, that we have people waiting to see psychiatric specialists why you'd be tempted to do that. But, the people that I spoke to, and there were several of them and I don't know if they saw the same individual doctor. I should be clear about that. But, none of them felt that they had a useful experience with that locum.

Of course, when you're dealing with mental illness, so much of the success of that

treatment is the empathy and the relationship that you establish with the caregiver –

**Mr. Mitchell:** I couldn't agree more. Like, you hope and you expect that every time somebody walks through the door to see a doctor, they're getting the right attention that they require. That's unfortunate to hear that.

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** And, I don't know, but I imagine that the expense of bringing these psychiatrists from another jurisdiction for a weekend to see these patients, in order to clear up some of the backlog, so there's a numerical advantage to that, and I understand that.

But, in terms of the outcomes for these patients or these individuals – and it's very difficult, of course, with mental illness. It's not like ophthalmology; you go in and you get your eyes fixed and you're good. That's not how mental health works.

I'm wondering whether there are any metrics that you follow in terms of the effectiveness of this, other than reducing wait times?

**Mr. Mitchell:** You know what? I don't have a good answer to that. I don't know, Denise, if you would either?

**Denise Lewis Fleming COO:** Sure. Dr. Keizer and Verna Ryan have been doing a lot of work over the past year to identify metrics in order to measure the quality and the effectiveness of the services that are being provided.

They are currently working on the metrics. For example, one of them is the percentage of – or the number of days you wait until you have your urgent consult from the time that it has been a referral to the psychiatrist. The number of days that you would wait for a semi-urgent or a – I don't want to call it a routine referral, but, you know, that you need that additional psychiatry care.

They're also developing those same metrics for community health references. Because, of course, there are other practitioners that can work in a collaborative way to deal with mental health issues, for example; mental health RNs or psychologists.

They're doing the measures on both sides so that we ensure we also steer people towards the appropriate resource to get the care that they need.

**Mr. Mitchell:** I was going to mention the same thing about seeing the proper individual, whether it's a psychologist or a psychiatrist or other measures.

Even as of recent, when you're talking about flying locums in for to do weekend coverage; there is even fairly solid discussion now on the telemedicine piece, perhaps, for psychiatric visits, type of thing, which is used in other areas. I understand, used very well.

Those are other options that may come to be. We want the person to be seen by the right health professional, right? That's so important.

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** I totally understand how difficult it is, particularly when it comes to mental health issues to have clear measurements of outcomes.

Again, we see, if we look through the physician, the remuneration list that we have here. Once again, we have a million dollar psychiatrist. Somebody who billed the province over a million dollars last year.

You mentioned, Denise, the other care workers, who can provide frontline, immediate care and, over the long-term care to people with mental health problems, whether they be social workers, RNs, counsellors, psychologists. There is a whole suite of people who can provide, in many cases, the same care that psychiatrists and I don't want to diminish the importance of psychiatrists in the mental health care system.

I'm wondering how – I'll ask a very blunt question: How many, for example, social workers, would we be able to hire for \$1 million?

**Mr. Mitchell:** I suppose Denise could do the math here, but to your point, hon. member, it is important. There is more focus on that today, than probably in past years to determine, as you said, a whole suite, whether it be social workers, whether it be

an RN with experience, whether it be a psychologist. And yes, it's psychiatrists, too, right?

They all have an important role to play. I think we'll probably have more measurable on that as we move forward, now, with implementing in schools very early to intervene as early as we can. Information that we're drawing now from walk-in clinics to establish who was seen by who; what was the results, that type of thing.

And obviously, successes in our youth, right now, with our Strength Program, and the INSIGHT Program. We have more data to draw on to say, these are measurable and to determine who you saw and how the outcomes were.

I think, we're getting better there. But, to your point of how many social workers.

**Denise Lewis Fleming COO:** It would be approximately nine to 10. What further information I would like to share with the House is that, in particular, this case you're mentioning about a particularly high remuneration paid to a psychiatrist, is that it was also in an area where they were carrying a significant workload.

I wouldn't say it's a reflection of an average daily piece of work for that particular individual. They were carrying a lot of extra load through some of the shortages in the psychiatry. I would say it's an exceptionally high amount. We expect there's probably going to be some adjustments going forward into the future now that we're getting closer to complement.

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** I know it's a little crass to make that comparison but I think it's important that Islanders know because we want to have the best outcomes for as many Islanders as we can in all aspects of governance or health care.

**Mr. Mitchell:** I think, to your point, what kind of brought that more out was that CBC piece, *Peace of Mind*. They did that segment piece. They did talk to social workers. They did talk to psychologists. They did talk to psychiatrists. That put more awareness out into the community on that. I thank CBC for doing that. It brought a lot of new points for

a lot of people. That, in itself, has helped, as well.

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** I know. I'll let you pass on, Chair. I appreciate you staying with me.

I want to acknowledge all of the good things that are happening, minister. I realize this is not a problem that can be fixed with the flip of a switch. I understand that.

I'm particularly gratified with some of the longer term things that you're putting in place now – the new program at UPEI I think will be a huge benefit for the province.

Obviously that will accrue for many years, but I think we're putting in the foundation for a much more effective system here, so I don't want to – despite the sharpness of some of my questions, I do want to acknowledge that.

Thank you.

**Mr. Mitchell:** I appreciate that.

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

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

I guess my first question would have to do with locums that are brought in to backfill for the vacancy of permanent positions. Is there a cost comparison of when you bring in a locum as compared to when you have a permanent, full time healthcare provider here?

**Denise Lewis Fleming COO:** I do not have one with me, no.

**Leader of the Opposition:** Sorry?

**Denise Lewis Fleming COO:** I do not have one with me, no.

**Leader of the Opposition:** Okay, well I guess –

**Mr. Mitchell:** But you're asking do we pay locums –

**Leader of the Opposition:** My question is general, I guess.

**Mr. Mitchell:** Do we pay locums more than (Indistinct).

**Leader of the Opposition:** That, essentially, would be my question. Yes. Is it a higher cost to have locums come in, filter them in and filter them out, than having permanent people here on the ground?

**Denise Lewis Fleming COO:** It depends upon the contract arrangement with the locum. For longer term locums, if they're in for two months, three months – locums can even be six months, then there's very minimal cost differential between that type of locum that comes in and we'll say a permanent fill because they're acting, I'll call it, as a temporary, permanent fill so the costs are quite similar because we pay the same supports.

Shorter term for if somebody's coming in for a weekend or a couple of weeks to cover a vacation piece, it is, yes, more expensive than what the core piece would be for somebody that's permanently here.

**Mr. Mitchell:** I think with some of the locums that you see coming in, that's the way they run their career. They're locums forever in some cases. They'll come to PEI for a while. They'll go to New Brunswick for a while, so when you sign on for four months or six months, it's not necessarily a big increase in cost because they just choose – that's the way they'd like to work – to see a lot of the country and a lot of the world.

They'll make a couple of bucks extra to put towards whatever – their university or vacation type of thing.

**Leader of the Opposition:** I know we do have a specific section that we'll be going back to at some point with regards to recruitment and retention, but we are talking about locums and obviously we have to recruit those. So my question would be: Is there any work done when we do have locums here to try to –

**Mr. Mitchell:** Keep them?

**Leader of the Opposition:** Keep them?

**Mr. Mitchell:** Absolutely; every time.

**Leader of the Opposition:** Take away their bridge pass or their passport or something.

**Mr. Mitchell:** Well, we didn't take away their passports yet, but like I said: This is the way they run their careers in a lot of cases. They go from province to province, see the world, make their money, pay off their bills, but we absolutely try to keep everyone that we get and try to – we don't build cricket fields yet, but we might.

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

**Mr. Mitchell:** Could Denise share an example of that.

**Chair:** Oh, sorry. Yes. Denise.

**Denise Lewis Fleming COO:** So I will share an example of – do we do our best to encourage them to stay? The answer would be yes. That was one of the strategies that Dr. Keizer used in recruiting a psychiatrist and that we have had somebody that's come and signed on for a locum – they came last year, then they agreed to come back, and they're doing an extended locum right now while their family prepares to transition, and then they'll be coming on permanently later in the year.

**Leader of the Opposition:** I have several more questions, but just something that the minister just mentioned: Did you say 'cricket fields'?

**Mr. Mitchell:** I'm referring to that movie that came out of Newfoundland where they built a cricket course. (Indistinct)

**Leader of the Opposition:** Okay. Well, just to –

**An Hon. Member:** We have one, that's right, in Stratford, yes.

**Leader of the Opposition:** Chair, just to clarify that –

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

**Leader of the Opposition:** Thank you.

That Stratford actually does have a cricket pitch.

**Mr. Mitchell:** Pitch, sorry.

**Leader of the Opposition:** Thank you.

**Mr. Mitchell:** As minister of sport, I should be up on all my sport terms.

**Leader of the Opposition:** I remember back several years ago, the hon. Member from Souris-Elmira was asking the then minister of health – I believe it was minister Currie’s probably third venture as minister of health – and the questions were around the shortage of doctors in eastern PEI, in particular the Souris area – the minister at that time made a statement that Health PEI was going through an exercise of looking at the possibility of the redistribution of doctors here on PEI to different geographical areas. I believe he said it was based on population and so forth.

**Mr. Mitchell:** Yes.

**Leader of the Opposition:** So Chair, I guess my question would be: Was that report ever completed or statistical work ever finished?

**Mr. Mitchell:** To the point of – I’ll say Souris specific, but actually, Souris is not specific because Health PEI looks at that as a region – the Kings County region. Currently we are at our full compliment in the Kings County region. In Souris specific, though, in that case, they do have their two doctors with one travelling back and forth out of Montague. Dr. Fancy is going up to do a day or two a week in Souris as well. But to the best of my knowledge, it is based out of population. It is based out of population for the region as well and that compliment has been established and we’re very fortunate that it’s now full.

To your point of recruitment, it’s now full because of two new doctors who basically are from the area. I think, actually, one doctor is married to somebody from the area. That’s our best recruitment piece always is to get somebody from the area to fill that full compliment there in the Kings County region.

**Leader of the Opposition:** The Leader of the Third Party was asking a little while ago with regards to how many GPs we’re currently short or trying to recruit and I think the response was 11.

**Mr. Mitchell:** Just over 11; 11.1.

**Leader of the Opposition:** I just want clarifications because I’m going through the physician fee for service and contract payments handout that you provided and if I go through family practice emergency department physicians – that may have answered my question there because it also includes emergency department physicians.

They’re all listed as general practice, but if I go through 2017 total FFS and contract amounts (gross amounts), I count a total of 17 vacancies there.

**Denise Lewis Fleming COO:** This is not a reflection of vacancies of what I would share with the Leader of the Opposition. What that reflects is the individual that had a payment in the previous year did not receive payments in this year. So, I would use the example of the general practice number 18. That very well could have been a locum in the previous year, in the calendar 2016, where the \$34,000 and they didn’t come back for a locum, so it’s not a reflection of the vacancy.

**Leader of the Opposition:** Okay. Thanks for that clarification. If I was to go through to – there’s no page numbers, but under ophthalmology, there’s one, two, three, four, five, six, seven – there’s seven total positions here and by your reasoning or your explanation, I’m assuming number 226 was probably a locum that came in because they received just shy of \$26,000 in 2016, but nothing for 2017.

But what really jumps out at me is we have one ophthalmologist that billed for just shy of \$1.4 million and then we have some others that are considerably lower. Is there a reason why we would have one ophthalmologist that billed that high? Are they that overworked?

**Denise Lewis Fleming COO:** I think it would be determined by their style of practice, the amount of surgery time that particular physician would be taking on. There are some ophthalmologists that do not do surgery and, as I’m sure most of the House is aware, that there’s a particularly high value placed on cataract surgery and it can drive very large billing amounts.

**Leader of the Opposition:** That brings me to another question with regards to the cataract surgery and I'm being told that that list is getting longer and longer all the time because that procedure isn't being as readily available as it was in the past in previous years. It almost seems like there's a slowdown in the number of procedures that are being done.

**Mr. Mitchell:** I am aware that – and I do receive calls on cataract surgeries from people that say: I waited a while to get in and now that I'm in, there is a delay on that.

Can you address that? We're not short, I don't think, of ophthalmologists, it's just who's doing the surgeries. Is that fair to say?

**Denise Lewis Fleming COO:** That is correct, as the minister states. It's not that we're short on our ophthalmology complement. It's just that not all of our ophthalmologists are choosing to participate in doing cataract surgery, which does mean we actually do have some vacant eye-surgery time in that particular area in the eye surgery suite, which is then, work that's ongoing on the OR utilization and how we then, potentially, may redistribute that time in order to allow to deal with the wait times.

**Leader of the Opposition:** I wonder if you could confirm the days of the week that the eye clinic is actually open at the QEH?

**Mr. Mitchell:** The clinic or the –

**Denise Lewis Fleming COO:** Surgery.

**Mr. Mitchell:** – surgery room?

**Leader of the Opposition:** The surgery area.

**Denise Lewis Fleming COO:** I'll bring that information back whenever we get to the piece on the QEH because it is operated at the QEH. I'll bring it back, at that point.

**Leader of the Opposition:** Okay, thank you.

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

**Ms. Bell:** Thank you, Chair.

Minister, could you advise on whether we are any close to enacting the act to bring in midwife service, so bringing in the registrant as required so we can have midwives available on PEI?

**Mr. Mitchell:** I guess, there's some work to be done there. I did receive some notification from some midwives that are going to be part of the (Indistinct) I do believe that is part of that umbrella legislation. I have to do a little more work there. I believe there was something that was tabled that needs to be addressed, as well.

Work is ongoing, I guess, is fair to say.

**Ms. Bell:** It's underneath the *Regulated Health Professions Act*.

**Mr. Mitchell:** Yeah.

**Ms. Bell:** There is a requirement to have a registrar to then, sort of, enable that to happen.

**Mr. Mitchell:** That's my understanding, as well. That, of course, isn't under Denise's section here, it's through the department. By the time we get here, I'll probably be able to formulate a better answer for you on that.

You are right. There is that regulation piece under the *Regulated Health Professions Act*, they're part of that.

**Ms. Bell:** My reason for asking is that we know that one of the areas of pressure is in, specifically, having sufficient care and availability of care for gynecology, for pre and post-natal care and the balance of that between GPs and specialty care. That's not an aspect of that service.

**Mr. Mitchell:** We are aware of what could come from all that. We still have that first piece that we've got to find ways to work with.

By the time I come back with Kevin, I'll try to have a better answer for you.

**Ms. Bell:** Super. I'll look forward to that.

Thank you, Chair. Thank you, minister.

**Mr. Mitchell:** Ask it again –

**Ms. Biggar:** Carry the section.

**Chair:** Shall the section – the hon. Leader of the Third Party.

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** Thank you.

The Leader of the Opposition was talking about specific individuals on the fee-for-service list that we have here. I mean, of course, we all understand why they're numbered, but I haven't had time to do the math on this, yet. I did have a quick look through and I see, when it comes to general practice that, of the 200, almost exactly 200 physicians that are noted here, there were only 12 of those that had billings over half a million dollars. It's quite a small percentage. Then, we have one individual, who was over, again, over \$1 million, a general practitioner.

Of course, this is no reflection on the quality of the work that she or he may be doing. But, when you have outliers – I don't know what the average is here, I realize that not all of these would be fulltime practitioners, I get that.

The average, I mean, just looking through it, my guess is the average would be about \$250,000, is my guess. When you have outliers, like somebody who is billing over \$1 million or \$800,000, there's a couple in there at \$800,000, is there a trigger process within the department that goes, uh-oh, not necessarily as a problem, but we need to check into this and make sure that these billings are legitimate?

**Mr. Mitchell:** Yes. You may have heard, last year, where there were several doctors that were audited. There is that process, but let's be clear as well. In order for a doctor to make that kind of money, they're putting in a lot of hours.

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** Yeah.

**Mr. Mitchell:** Obviously, we talk about work-life balance and there are doctors that are very serious about work-life balance and they work so many hours a week. Every so often, somebody comes in that may not have a family situation or other things and they work a lot. If you work a lot that's the kind of compensation you may see.

There are mechanisms though, that you verify that what you're saying.

**Denise Lewis Fleming COO:** Usually, at least, twice a year, there's an internal group within Health PEI that does get together and they look at the billing patterns, and look for any unusual spikes or changes and then determine if it might be appropriate to do, what we'll call an educational audit, where we'll look to see, is it something people need to be educated on? Just do a random sample, or is there then, further depth, where we might need to go to a comprehensive audit. It is periodically reviewed throughout the year.

**Chair:** Hon. member, we are moving onto a motion now. You'll have more time –

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** Yeah.

**Chair:** – over the weekend, to look at your list –

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** Sure, I will –

**Chair:** – and we'll come back –

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** Thank you, Chair.

**Chair:** – next time we convene.

**Mr. Mitchell:** Madam 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.

As Chair of a Committee of the Whole House having under consideration the grant of supply to Her Majesty, I beg leave to report that the committee has made some progress and begs leave to sit again. I move the report of the committee be adopted.

**Speaker:** Shall it carry? Carried.

#### Government Motions

**Speaker:** I'll now call on the hon. Minister of Family and Human Services.

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

I call Motion No. 59.

**Speaker:** Shall it carry? Carried.

**Clerk Assistant (E. Doiron):** Motion No. 59, the hon. Minister of Family and Human Services moves seconded by the hon. Member from Tignish-Palmer Road, the following motion:

**WHEREAS** more than \$40 million in new provincial and federal investments annually has been made to help our province's most vulnerable Islanders over the past three years;

**AND WHEREAS** this government has placed significant emphasis and investment in helping to better the lives of Islanders, including:

- A generic drug program to help Islanders with lower medication costs, with more than 19,000 Islanders registered;
- Increases to seniors and low-income home repair programs that have helped 4,200 Islanders and that were cancelled by the former Conservative government;
- Breakfast program funding doubled to \$200,000;
- Increases to minimum wage that now stands at \$11.55 per hour – the highest in Atlantic Canada;
- From Budget 2015 through to Budget 2018 tax reductions that have brought the total number of islanders who no longer pay provincial income tax to 30,000. These tax reductions total \$21.75M and include adjustments to personal income taxes, HST refunds and rebate of the provincial portion of sales tax on residential electricity, wood, pellets and residential propane;
- Increases to the child care subsidy program that has directly helped more than 1,000 Island children;
- Introduction of a Grandparents and Care Providers Program that sees carers receive \$700 per month, per child;
- Introduction of the Seniors Independence Initiative that sees seniors receive up to \$125 per month to help with the costs of items like snow removal and light housekeeping;

- An additional funding of more than \$2 million to non-government organizations this year to help connect Islanders to jobs and provide benefits to those Islanders who need them the most;

- Five years of increased food rates and an increase of shelter rates; and

- The launch of the Be Aware, Get Your Share initiative

**AND WHEREAS** this government is committed to working with all Islanders, community organizations, the business sector, and all levels of government to continue this work;

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Legislative Assembly encourage government to continue to promote these initiatives so that all eligible Islanders receive the benefits that they are entitled to;

**AND THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Legislative Assembly call on government to continue to work with all partners to continue to meet the needs of Islanders and families.

**Speaker:** Thank you.

The hon. Minister of Family and Human Services.

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

As Minister of Family and Human Services, I am very pleased to speak to this motion today. I'm so very proud to call Prince Edward Island home. I truly believe it is a place like no other when it comes to supporting one another.

We recognize that everyone has a role to play in helping each and every person succeed to the best of their abilities. Every week we see a benefit or a fundraiser or communities are rallying together to help a neighbor or a friend.

Today I actually stood and spoke to one. I mentioned the JEMS Boutique red carpet event that will be going on tomorrow in Charlottetown, which will be supported by two other community partners: Island Mothers Helping Mothers and KINLEY in

raising funds to support sexual violence prevention on Prince Edward Island.

Each and every day, we have community organizations that are changing lives across our province. And across government, we are working with all Islanders to support this great work. These contributions take many forms, from dropping into a neighbor living alone for a chat, to financial assistance for Islanders who need more daily support. It is our sense of community and caring that I believe sets us apart as Islanders.

I know each and every one of us in this House has felt the generosity of Islanders and I know that each and every one of us takes our position as MLAs and our special role to help our constituents and all Islanders very seriously. We recognize that one of the fundamental responsibilities of government is to work together with residents to help ensure all are living the most dignified, successful life that they can. Our government is committed to supporting Islanders and families who need it most, when they need it most.

Over the past three years, the federal government and our provincial government combined have invested more than \$40 million in poverty-related initiatives each year. As the motion states, these are indeed historic investments and they are truly improving the lives of Islanders. While there's always more work to be done, it is important to inform Islanders of the progress that has been made and how they can benefit. There are a number of tremendous initiatives that have been launched or are in progress to support Islanders and make their lives better.

Much of this work is not possible without our committed partners. The amazing partnership between our provincial government and the many community partners across our province is improving the lives of Islanders each and every day. Over just the past two months, I'm very happy to say that the province has increased its supports for 21 different community organizations by more than \$2 million. Our government is very proud to support these community organizations in their important work to help people overcome barriers, gain self confidence, and become employment ready when they are ready.

As I mentioned, it is important that Islanders know the benefits available to them. That's why our government, partnering with the federal government, launched the Be Aware & Get Your Share initiative. This initiative informs Islanders of the various provincial and federal benefits that they are entitled to by simply filing a tax return. To help get the word out, we have done public awareness through web, radio, pamphlets, and one-on-one meetings with communities and I encourage all members of this House to help spread that word.

This campaign is indeed working. We have seen a 7% increase in the number of people filing their taxes. This means more benefits are not flowing to Islanders.

It is important that we don't look at any particular benefit or initiative in isolation. It is the combination of many that are making the difference. I was so proud just a few weeks ago when we introduced our third consecutive balanced budget. It builds on the tremendous work over the past three years and it is truly a budget for all Islanders.

Our provincial government's new Budget included \$500,000 to increase shelter rates – a budget commitment that we made. While an additional \$420,000 will increase food rates, the fifth consecutive year food rates have increased, outpacing the CPI rates. We are removing the provincial portion of the HST on residential electricity, wood pellets, and propane. We are increasing the basic personal exemption so Islanders can keep more money in their own pockets. We are making it more affordable than ever for students to attend post-secondary education with more than 1,000 Island students receiving free tuition.

400 new child care spaces will reduce waitlists and make it easier for families to access care. While an additional \$1.2 million in child care subsidies will reduce the financial burden for Island families which will also allow families that are living below the Market Basket Measure to have no parent share of any child care.

**Mr. Roach:** Good job.

**Ms. Mundy:** I am particularly proud of the budget investments of \$70 million over the

next two years as well as the creation of 1,000 new affordable housing units in the next four years. We all know that access to affordable, safe housing is necessary and we have identified it as a priority.

A housing action plan is being developed in collaboration with a housing supply task force, a team of housing experts and a co-development team made up of our community partners, government departments, municipal officials, and planners. A number of innovative approaches in partnership with federal government, municipalities, and our community partners will help address the housing challenges across Prince Edward Island, not only today, but into the future.

Again, with support and partnership with our federal partners, through our social infrastructure funding, government has issued three requests for proposals recently to build new seniors' units in both Summerside and Charlottetown.

**An Hon. Member:** Well needed.

**Ms. Mundy:** As well as new housing units that support Island families in transition.

I am very excited to announce that Ellis and Birt Ltd. has been awarded the contract to build 44 new affordable seniors' units in Charlottetown which will be available for seniors within the next year.

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

**Ms. Mundy:** The new seniors' complex will be located in East Royalty, Charlottetown, and will include a mix of one and two bedroom apartments, as well as a minimum of six accessible units.

**Mr. R. Brown:** Work for Jamie Larkin.

**Ms. Mundy:** The building will include parking, laundry, heat, and a common area for activities. It will be located on the current T3 bus line to ensure easy access to public transit transportation.

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

**Mr. Roach:** Good move.

**Ms. Mundy:** Ellis and Birt is an Island-owned, family-run business and has been providing quality service to Islanders since 1969. These units are welcomed and wonderful news and I look forward to sharing even more good news regarding units for Summerside and Island families in transition very shortly.

These most recent Budget initiatives build on the many other benefits introduced over the past three years. A Generic Drug Program to help Islanders with lower medication costs, with more than 19,000 Islanders registered.

Increases to seniors and low-income home repair programs that have helped 4,200 Islanders, which, I will add, were cancelled by the former Conservation government.

**Some Hon. Members:** Terrible.

**Mr. R. Brown:** Shame.

**Ms. Casey:** Shame.

**Ms. Mundy:** Breakfast programming funding doubled to \$200,000.

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

**Mr. LaVie:** (Indistinct) what did she say.

**Ms. Mundy:** Increases to minimum wage that now stands at \$11.55 per hour, the highest in Atlantic Canada.

From budget 2015 through Budget 2018, tax reductions that have brought the total number of Islanders who no longer pay provincial income tax to 30,000 –

**Mr. Roach:** Yes, sir.

**Ms. Mundy:** These tax reductions total \$21.75 million.

**Mr. Roach:** Stand with Islanders.

**Ms. Mundy:** As mentioned earlier increases to the Child Care Subsidy Program that has directly helped more than 1,000 Island children.

Introduction of a Grandparent and Care Providers Program that sees caregivers receive \$700 per month per child, in

addition to child care, dental, medical and social support in parenting courses.

The introduction of the new seniors independence initiative that sees seniors receive up to \$125 per month to help with the cost of items like snow removal, light housekeeping, errands, and meal preparation.

I'm also very pleased about the great work in my department. Over the last two years, we have seen the most significant transformation and reform of programs and services in the history of our department. That continues as my department continues to make improvements in many areas including, currently within the Social Assistance Program.

Several pieces of work are underway to reform and modernize this program to better meet the needs of those who use it. A review committee is carrying out the work to reform and modernize the program. As part of the reform, other key areas of focus will include eligibility, exemptions, rates and barriers to employment.

The social assistance reform initiative will also be an area of focus in the poverty reduction plan currently underway.

As part of the poverty reduction work, we have also launched an engagement process so Islanders can join the conversation about poverty reduction. The public can visit [www.princeedwardisland.ca/povertyreduction](http://www.princeedwardisland.ca/povertyreduction) for more information on ways to provide input, including an online survey.

Our approach to poverty reduction was recently highlighted in the Tamarack Institute's Vibrant Communities newsletter.

It stated the province of PEI, "... appointed twelve members to its new Poverty Reduction Advisory Council in February of 2018. The council is now getting to work to deliver a poverty reduction plan to the government for October.

"In developing their advisory council, the Province sought to create a membership with a broad range of perspectives. Specifically, the Province looked for individuals who could speak from at least one of the following perspectives: lived

experience of poverty or social exclusion, disability, business or employer, service providers, Indigenous, Acadian or francophone, academic or newcomer. The final committee has strong representation from each of these groups.

"The inclusion of individuals representing a diversity of perspectives reflects the government's understanding that significantly reducing poverty requires more than just government action. Partners using a multi-sectoral approach including service providers, business leaders and governments must work together for a poverty reduction strategy to succeed.

"Moving forward, the Poverty Reduction Advisory Council in PEI will be working to develop an action plan that addresses housing, food, education, employment, community capacity and health, which reflect several identified game-changers in poverty reduction. By focusing on these six priorities, they can strategically achieve impacts in poverty far beyond these policy areas, by initiating a series of positive cascading effects."

It goes on to say that," These positive steps from the Province of Prince Edward Island are a reflection of the growing movement in Canada to reduce poverty. As Vibrant Communities' CEO, Paul Born, mentioned in his reflection at the end of 2017, as more and more governments and communities take steps to address the root causes of poverty, it is really starting to look like Canada can end economic poverty in this lifetime."

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

**Ms. Mundy:** As I mentioned previously, it is important that we do not look at anyone of our investments in isolation. The combination of several initiatives add up to the help in improving the lives of Islanders.

Malcolm Gladwell, in his book *The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference*, coined the term tipping point. He described it as "The tipping point is that magic moment when an idea, trend, or social behavior crosses a threshold, tips, and spreads like wildfire."

He also stated, “That is the paradox of the epidemic: that in order to create one contagious movement, you often have to create...” several smaller ones. That is what we are doing.

We will continue to work with individuals, families, community organizations, the business sector, all levels of government so that every Islander is able to thrive in our Island communities.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** The seconder of the motion to speak to the motion, the hon. Member from Tignish-Palmer Road.

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

I’m pleased to second, and also to support this motion on supporting historic investments in Islanders and families.

It is very important to always work to improve the prosperity of Prince Edward Island and its Islanders. I’m also proud to represent the residents of Tignish-Palmer Road. If we want to talk about rural Prince Edward Island thriving, one should look at my district.

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

**Mr. Perry:** Now, I do understand there is always more work to be done, but I’m so proud of my community, and the way that we have worked together for generations to help all residents live meaningful and fulfilling lives.

A huge reason for this is the cooperative movement. We know, as a community, that we all have a responsibility to help others.

**Mr. Trivers:** Started in Rustico.

**Mr. Perry:** By working together, we can help achieve that. For example, the Seniors Home Care co-operative was established in 2001. It is supported by many local organizations and individuals. It’s a pride of our community. It’s centrally located in Tignish.

It was on the original farm of pioneers of our community, Annie and William MacLeod –

**Mr. LaVie:** (Indistinct)

**Mr. Perry:** – and it was donated in their memory by Lloyd and Stella MacLeod. It is within walking distance to the grocery store, to the church, to the medical centre, to the post office.

They provide 24-hour supervision, home cooked meals, activities and entertainment. It also provides in-house medical and pastoral services, hairdressing and foot care. All of this to 52 residents of our community.

My aunt lives there. She’s 96. I know, even before she left her home to go there, you know how individuals think going to the seniors home is kind of like the last step. But to her, she’s been there for 10 years. Her health is actually, I think, improving since she’s been there because of the care and the quality of service that’s provided by the staff at that cooperative.

I can speak on behalf of all the families who have a resident in that centre, that it is probably the envy and the model of any community care facility right across Prince Edward Island. I’m very proud of the individuals that got together to organize this much needed facility in our community. I give them a great deal of thanks for doing that. I also want to thank the staff; it’s all local staff. The manager from there, she’s local. She gets it. She understands that these individuals have family and that these individuals are the reason why we have what we have today.

We respect our elders and each resident is respected in that facility. When you walk in the facility, the first thing, you think: it’s clean, number one because the staff take great pride in it; they’re locals. They know that we, in the community, know who clean that place. So they take great pride, when you walk in there, their home-cooked meals are fantastic. So there are local individuals who go in there, they cook; there are volunteers that go in. You walk in that door, there’s music almost every day and every evening by locals who volunteer their time to go in there to entertain our elders because we are very proud of what they’ve done in the past. We’re very proud of this facility in our community.

That's just one of the cooperatives of the many cooperatives that we have in that community. Another one is the Tignish Fisheries Co-op. It's Tignish fisheries limited. They have now Royal Star Foods. It's probably the best example that can be found anywhere of people working together for the common good. They're strength in voices –

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

**Mr. LaVie:** (Indistinct)

**Mr. Perry:** This is a fine example of people coming together to share their voices and to create that strength to move their issues or their commodity, their community forward. These cooperatives are prime examples of that.

The Tignish Co-op. It has a main store in the community of Tignish.

I'm going to go back to the fisheries just for one moment. That was established in 1926. It's been a viable and sustainable operation for ninety-some, ninety-plus years and the future looks good. It looks good because, again, it's the community who actually own it. They take great pride in what they do. They take great pride in the work that they do within the plant. They take great pride in the product that comes out of the plant. They wouldn't do it alone. They do have support.

We do have to thank the province. We have to thank the government on both levels, the federal, also, for their investments in our businesses in our community. And, we are, again, as I mentioned earlier, a thriving community due to the fact that we have strength in numbers and we have the cooperative movement.

Going back to the co-op store in Tignish, which has been established, again, back in the early 1900s, has a grocery store. They have a meat section, produce, they have a bakery, they have a restaurant, by the great name: the Very Best Restaurant. They have a home décor area. They have furniture. They have appliances. People come from all of Prince County to go to the Tignish Co-op to buy furniture there because they give good prices, good value for their dollar. They come there to shop for clothing, and

other necessities because it's member-owned and member-driven.

They also have a gas bar. A sawmill. A feed mill; which I need to get to by 5:00 p.m. this evening. They have a poultry –

**Mr. LaVie:** (Indistinct)

**Mr. Perry:** – a poultry processing plant. All of this is within the community of Tignish, accessible to all members and actually individuals, who aren't even members, as I mentioned earlier, who use our facilities, because we have great staff and great products –

**Ms. Casey:** Call the hour.

**Speaker:** The hour has been called.

**Mr. LaVie:** Extend the hour.

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

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

**Mr. Mitchell:** I move, seconded by the hon. Member from Charlottetown-Lewis Point, that this House adjourn until Tuesday, May 1<sup>st</sup>, at 2:00 p.m.

**Speaker:** Shall it carry? Carried.

Have a good weekend.

The Legislature adjourned until Tuesday, May 1<sup>st</sup>, at 2:00 p.m.