

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

Tuesday, 1 May 2018

| | |
|--|------|
| SPEAKERS RULING | 2156 |
| MATTERS OF PRIVILEGE AND RECOGNITION OF GUESTS | 2156 |
| STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS | 2160 |
| SOURIS-ELMIRA (Georgia Fraser)..... | 2160 |
| BORDEN-KINKORA (Grade 3-4 Somerset School Award)..... | 2161 |
| LEADER OF THE THIRD PARTY (Island Musicians and Chris LeClair)..... | 2161 |
| ORAL QUESTIONS..... | 2162 |
| LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION (Closures at KCMH emergency room)..... | 2162 |
| LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION (Addressing risk to health professionals at KCMH (further) | 2162 |
| LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION (Health care crisis in rural PEI) | 2164 |
| BORDEN-KINKORA (Access of doctor to South Shore residents) | 2164 |
| BORDEN-KINKORA (Contingency plan for South Shore residents)..... | 2164 |
| BORDEN-KINKORA (Names added to patient registry)..... | 2165 |
| BORDEN-KINKORA (Nurse practitioner for walk in clinic) | 2165 |
| BORDEN-KINKORA (Improvement of access to health care) | 2166 |
| BORDEN-KINKORA (Vacant billing number available for use)..... | 2166 |
| GEORGETOWN-ST. PETERS (Approval of loan for new Hampton Inn)..... | 2166 |
| GEORGETOWN-ST. PETERS (Approval of loan/existing hotel in Summerside)..... | 2166 |
| GEORGETOWN-ST. PETERS (Hotel owner in Summerside)..... | 2167 |
| GEORGETOWN-ST. PETERS (Standard practice re: registration of company) | 2167 |
| GEORGETOWN-ST. PETERS (Taxpayers' dollars to purchase and redevelop hotel) | 2168 |
| GEORGETOWN-ST. PETERS (Approval of loan/existing hotel in Summerside (further) | 2168 |
| CHARLOTTETOWN-PARKDALE (Web presence program at Innovation PEI) | 2169 |
| CHARLOTTETOWN-PARKDALE (Approved web presence program applications) | 2169 |
| CHARLOTTETOWN-PARKDALE (Evaluation of web presence program) | 2169 |
| LEADER OF THE THIRD PARTY (Request for Special Committee on Democratic Renewal to reconvene) | 2170 |
| LEADER OF THE THIRD PARTY (Study of consensus government in DR committee)..... | 2170 |
| LEADER OF THE THIRD PARTY (Shut down of Special Committee on DR) | 2171 |
| CHARLOTTETOWN-LEWIS POINT (Proclamation of Regulated Health Professions Act)..... | 2171 |

| | |
|--|------|
| CHARLOTTETOWN-LEWIS POINT (Appointment of registrar)..... | 2172 |
| CHARLOTTETOWN-LEWIS POINT (Timeline for regulating midwives)..... | 2172 |
| WEST ROYALTY-SPRINGVALE (Information on charges under pesticide act)..... | 2172 |
| WEST ROYALTY-SPRINGVALE (Knowledge of charges under pesticide act)..... | 2173 |
| WEST ROYALTY-SPRINGVALE (Directing power of state)..... | 2173 |
| SOURIS-ELMIRA (Dredged harbours on north side of PEI)..... | 2174 |
| SOURIS-ELMIRA (Conversations with federal government re: dredging harbours)..... | 2174 |
| SOURIS-ELMIRA (Dredged harbours on north side of PEI (further)..... | 2174 |
| STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS | 2175 |
| EDUCATION, EARLY LEARNING AND CULTURE (Student Assessment Results (PCAP 2016)) | 2175 |
| TRANSPORTATION, INFRASTRUCTURE AND ENERGY (Women’s Institute Roadside Cleanup)..... | 2177 |
| TABLING OF DOCUMENTS..... | 2179 |
| ORDERS OF THE DAY (GOVERNMENT) | 2179 |
| ESTIMATES | 2179 |
| HEALTH PEI | 2179 |
| SECOND READING AND COMMITTEE | 2202 |
| BILL 114 – Plastic Bag Reduction Act | 2210 |
| MOTIONS OTHER THAN GOVERNMENT..... | 2210 |
| MOTION 62 – Carbon Tax cost analysis for families and individuals..... | 2210 |
| RUSTICO-EMERALD | 2210 |
| BORDEN-KINKORA | 2211 |
| FINANCE | 2212 |
| COMMUNITIES, LAND AND ENVIRONMENT | 2214 |
| TRANSPORTATION, INFRASTRUCTURE AND ENERGY | 2222 |
| LEADER OF THE THIRD PARTY | 2225 |
| PREMIER | 2225 |
| MOTION 40 – Encouraging government to adopt a “Health in all Policies” approach to governance..... | 2226 |
| LEADER OF THE THIRD PARTY | 2226 |
| CHARLOTTETOWN-PARKDALE | 2228 |
| ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM | 2229 |
| ADJOURNED..... | 2230 |

The Legislature sat at 2:00 p.m.

Speaker's Ruling

Speaker: Hon. members, I wish to address two points of order that were raised by the hon. Leader of the Third Party at the conclusion of Oral Question Period on Friday, April 27th.

On the first matter, the hon. Leader of the Third Party objected to an alleged misrepresentation of his position on highways by the hon. Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy.

Secondly, he asserted that the hon. Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy presented incorrect information to the House on women's participation on agencies, boards and commissions on Prince Edward Island.

Hon. members, although raised by the hon. Leader of the Third Party as points of order, I do not find either instance to be a point of order. There is no procedural irregularity in either of these matters that are consistent with the rules, customs or practices of the Legislative Assembly.

Hon. members, before concluding, I would like to address one point relating to the use of the routine Responses to Questions Taken As Notice, that give rise to the second matter raised by the hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Now, the hon. Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy rose on April 27th, during Responses to Questions Taken as Notice to provide additional information on a question that she was asked on Thursday, April 26th.

Rule 62 (3) of the *Rules of the Legislative Assembly of Prince Edward Island* states that, "The minister to whom an oral question is directed may: (a) immediately answer the question, or (b) state that he or she takes the question as notice and answer it orally on a subsequent day under the same order of business, or (c) state that in his or her opinion the question..."

Hon. members, at no time on April 26th, did the minister indicate that it was her intention

to take as notice any questions related to agencies, boards and commissions and to answer on a subsequent day.

Now, hon. members, this is not a terribly serious matter, but I just want to remind all honourable, especially, ministers that when Responses to Questions Taken As Notice is called this presents an opportunity to answer only questions they had previously taken under advisement during Oral Question Period, or to correct a response that a minister had previously given. It is not an opportunity to introduce new information on a subject to the House.

Thank you, hon. members.

Matters of Privilege and Recognition of Guests

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

An honour to welcome everyone here on the floor and in the gallery, and those watching from home or on other platforms as we begin the fifth week of our spring sitting.

I begin by recognizing, as hon. members on all sides have done by wearing our carnations or pins, that May is Multiple Sclerosis Awareness Month. Multiple Sclerosis is a chronic, often disabling neurological disease affecting an estimated 300 Prince Edward Islanders.

We recognize the good work of the MS Society here on Prince Edward Island in supporting research, providing services for individuals and families. We met earlier with representatives of the MS Society, who are here in the gallery today, being; Tom Killorn, Janet MacPherson and Don Bell. We acknowledge their presence and the good work, and, of course, the support that all of us can give to people and families, who are suffering with Multiple Sclerosis.

We have a delegation in the gallery today from the Women's Institute, who will be recognized later, but I had an opportunity earlier to meet with Carol Jenkins, who is president-elect of Women's Institute. Jacquie Laird, past president and a number of board members; I see that Farida Chishti

has joined us. Farida has made – are you the current president, Farida? No, but you've been in many roles. Anna Copper is here. Pat MacKinnon, I believe others have joined. It's a great organization.

A number of other great people who take an interest in public affairs, including here, in the gallery, Cheryl MacLean is here today, Eddie Lund and Lorne Yeo among our regulars. Russell Myers is here today, as is Cora Lee Dunbar. It's great to have so many Islanders, who contribute in multiple ways outside of this Chamber come and share with us in the work that we do here.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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

As I noted, last week, in my greetings, the weekend was certainly going to be a very active weekend here on PEI with many activities, whether it was the pride launch in Summerside or the many other activities that took place. I just want to congratulate Islanders for their involvement and for their community service that many of these activities surround.

We are starting a new week. We're starting a new week with announcing, of course, the MS awareness month taking place throughout the month of May. I'd also, like the Premier, like to acknowledge the representatives that have joined us here, today from the MS society. Thank you for all the work that you do in the community and for the advocacy, as well on behalf of those individuals that are diagnosed with MS.

I'd also like to, of course, welcome the members of the Women's Institute. Another tremendous organization here on PEI that does phenomenal work year-round in all of our communities. Not just the rural communities, but the urban communities, as well. In particular, a young lady sitting in the back corner there, Pat MacKinnon, I'd like to say hello to my cousin. Pat, it's great to see you here in the gallery. And, of course, a good friend of mine Russell Myers, who has also joined us.

I'd be remiss, as well, if I didn't say something about the opening of the lobster industry; the lobster spring season here. We did read, of course, in the local media about some very close calls with some fishermen. I would like to thank and congratulate their fellow fishers for being there for them in their time of need. I know there were a few other close calls across PEI that, perhaps, didn't get noticed in the media.

But, when we have an industry that is so important to the economy of PEI and we have individuals that are out on the waters that are looking out for their fellow fishers, I applaud them and for their service.

Last, but not least, I just want to send a special thank you out to those individuals that are on the other end of the phone when an Islander might pick up the phone to call 811, the medical help tele-line. I, myself, had the occasion to do that today at lunch time for an individual that's very dear to me, and I just want to say that the individual that I spoke to, the RN on the other end of the line, was extremely professional, very helpful and I thank those individuals for the service that they provide to the Island.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

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

I'd like to welcome everybody back for another week in the Legislature. Of course, everybody here in the gallery; Lorne Yeo, a constituent of District 17 and Marie Burge and Eddie Lund, of course.

A couple of people, I'd like to particularly recognize because they are ex-patients of mine from my previous life and that's from the Women's Institute contingent here; Jacquie Laird. Hi, Jacquie, it's lovely to see you, again, and from the MS society, Don Bell. It's always nice for me to reconnect with these people that I used to have regular contact with. Albeit, not always the most pleasant opportunity to chat, but it's nice to see you both, again.

It's also worthy of note that this is May 1st,

and that's International Workers' Day. We should remember all workers today.

I also want to make a special mention and congratulations to the Muslim Society of Prince Edward Island, who are expanding their mosque up on MacAleer Drive. I think they're already raising funds to buy adjacent land with plans to expand the facility there. I think that's a wonderful thing, and good for you. What a lovely sign of how our community here on Prince Edward Island is growing and diversifying.

I want to make note of the passing of one of the music community's great pillars here, Chris LeClair, died on the weekend and Chris was a wonderful musician, a generous man and I'm going to speak a little bit more about Chris in my member statement shortly. He will be a great loss to the music community here. A special scholarship in his name has been founded so I encourage everybody, if you can, to donate to that.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Dumville: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'd like to welcome all our colleagues back and also everybody here today and a special welcome to Eddie Lund and Lorne Yeo. Oh, I see we've got Gerry Moore here today and he does great work out there keeping our Island all tidied up there, Gerry, so we appreciate that.

I'd like to welcome all the people from the MS Society here today and, in particular, the Women's Institute. Women's Institute do great things all across Prince Edward Island and I want to particularly welcome Ms. Chishti here today from the Brackley Women's Institute because I had occasion to go out there and be the guest speaker there one day and they're really busy and doing a great job out there.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque.

Mr. MacKay: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's an honour to rise here today after a beautiful weekend. Welcome my colleagues all back for another week and everyone in the gallery today. I'd also like to welcome two great individuals in my district: Doreen Cole from the Women's Institute; she's a great community leader and does a tremendous amount of volunteer work as well as Janet Cotton. Janet's probably the number one ticket seller on Prince Edward Island. When you see Janet calling, she's fundraising or organizing for something. As well, don't let her fool you. She might drive a red car, Mr. Speaker, but she's a supporter of mine.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Biggar: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Yes, it's great to be back here on May 1st and looking forward to better weather ahead.

I, too, as minister of transportation, but also as a former Women's Institute member, am very pleased to be able to recognize Women's Institute today. I'll be doing a ministerial statement a little bit later so welcome all of those people who've been mentioned and who have come in today for this presentation. Gerry Moore with Island Waste Watch management is here with us as well and he works closely with the Women's Institute as well.

Also one of my constituents: Cora Lee Dunbar is here with us today and she's a great motivator in many areas and she's also one of our cohorts. So, congratulate her on that and I hope you enjoy the proceedings.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance

Mr. MacDonald: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I just want to rise today and welcome everybody in the gallery: Eddie and Lorne, obviously, and the Women's Institute. My mother was part of the Women's Institute for a number of years and I always remember her having the meetings on – I think it was on a Monday night – and I wasn't very impressed with it, to be quite

honest with you, but I always enjoyed the sandwiches that you left after you went home, so that was good.

The MS Society – Don Bell from my district – I can tell you, if you look up the word ‘volunteer’ in Wikipedia, I’m sure Don’s name is under it somewhere. He does a tremendous amount of work – volunteerism – in our riding and we certainly appreciate it.

I would be remiss if I didn’t mention Turk Gallant and Mike Kelly on the job they’re doing in Vegas and a big win last night. Also, the Islander’s game seven. I think a lot of people will be watching this with great interest.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

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

It certainly is a pleasure to rise and welcome all the public gallery today, especially those from the Women’s Institute that are visiting today. It’s good to have them in. It’s always good to see Eddie back. Eddie missed a few there, so he’s back in action again and of course, Lorne is giving him a fair run for his attendance in the gallery. I see Russell Myers is with us today. Russell and I played some hockey and baseball in our younger years and it looks like Russell’s in pretty good shape – ready to go at it again this summer. So, it’s great to have him here.

I also would like to recognize those from the MS Society that are with us in the gallery today; phenomenal work that the MS Society does. These are three great representatives that are with us today and I’m very pleased and proud to say that we just recently signed a proclamation with the MS groups so that they can carry on that great relationship and great work that goes on there.

As well, I’d like to say that with Tom Killorn, Don Bell, and Janet MacPherson as part of the team that’s running with the MS Society; they continue to do great advocacy work for the MS Society.

As I close today, too, I would like to make mention to Cheryl MacLean who is in the gallery today. Cheryl is a tremendous friend of mine, for many years, and Cheryl and I had a great opportunity to work together at the 2009 summer Canada Games and I’m hoping, Cheryl, that we’ll get a chance to work in the upcoming Canada Games that we’re working on bringing back to PEI. So, it’s great to have you in today as well.

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

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It’s a pleasure to rise today. I’d like to welcome everyone here in the gallery, the MS society and the Women’s Institute; both wonderful organizations that do yeoman’s work for the province. I’d like to welcome Gerry Moore, a family friend for a long time and the CEO for Island Waste Management.

I’d also like to send a big shout-out to all the fishers from District 4 and wish them a prosperous and safe fishing season. Also, to the workers of the Northumberland Ferry; I had the opportunity to make the first crossing again this morning. We had a great crowd on board, enjoyed the Islander breakfast and got to go up and speak with the captain and the first mate, and it was a wonderful trip across. Although, very foggy when we got back to Wood Islands, so all in all, great to have the ferry going again and we’ll continue that work.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

I, too, would like to welcome Cheryl MacLean to the gallery.

Thank you very much.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

Mr. LaVie: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to say hello to everyone in District 1 Souris-Elmira and to everyone here from the Women’s Institute, for sure.

To the MS society – and I see some familiar faces here – I know firsthand the work that the MS society does as my wife was diagnosed with MS about five years ago. We've attended a lot of the meetings and they're – I'm sure the walk is coming up shortly. I missed the walk last year. I busted my ankle and couldn't do the walk, but I did attend for the lunch afterwards. I never miss out on a lunch, but I always look forward to the walk and the walk gets bigger and bigger every year. It's just amazing how much support is here on PEI for the MS society and just a big shout-out for the work they do and keep up the good work, and they are making good strides in MS, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Roach: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's always such a great pleasure to rise in the House and welcome all our visitors here today. But, I'd like to recognize the Women's Institute. They're here today, I know they have a big cleanup day coming soon and we hope to be able to reduce that in years to come, that it's not going to be as much work for you.

I want to recognize the MS society that are here today. I want to personally thank them for the tremendous amount of community work they do, for the people behind them that do the research, for the fundraising that they do. My daughter in law and my daughter have now both been diagnosed and are living with MS, so I really appreciate the work that they do very much.

Today is my daughter's birthday and it was always a proud moment, especially coming from a traditional lobster-fishing family, we always used to say that we were blessed that she was born on opening day of lobster fishing.

On another note, in about 10 days from now I look forward to addressing my daughter as Dr. Alaina Roach-O'Keefe.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's a pleasure to rise today and welcome everyone watching from District 18 Rustico-Emerald, and of course everyone in the gallery.

I know the Women's Institute has been recognized already a lot, but I wanted to say thank you for all the work you do across the board. You touch so many areas. I see Jackie Laird and Carolyn Jenkins and Pat MacKinnon and of course, Janet Cotton, Doreen Cole; just good stalwarts for the community, real community leaders. At their gala this year, they raised money, I believe it was for the Prince County Hospital and that's just part of the great work they do, so thank you so much.

Speaking of hospitals and doctors, I just found out that today is actually National Physicians Day. It's something that's soon to be proclaimed officially by the Senate, so I wanted to celebrate the doctors across our province and the great work that they do. Of course, they have our lives in their hands and they do a phenomenal job.

Thank you.

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

Ms. Mundy: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It gives me great pleasure to rise again today and welcome all my colleagues back, all those visiting in the gallery, and those visiting at home.

I just wanted to make a special mention and a special welcome to a wonderful mom, entrepreneur, community volunteer, adventurer, life of the party and best friend to me, Cora Lee Dunbar.

Welcome Cora Lee.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Statement by Members

Speaker: The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

Georgia Fraser

Mr. LaVie: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm happy to rise today and recognize a ringette goalie, Georgia Fraser from Souris, for being the only Islander named to the national all-star team. Georgia received the news last month at the national championships in Winnipeg where she and seven other eastern PEI players were part of the team. PEI was ranked 11th in the field of 21 teams in the U-16 division.

PEI was seeded 21st going in, but made it to the playoff round with a record of three wins and two losses. As Georgia said, this was a big opportunity for her and was not like people I'm used to playing against and I had to adapt a lot to their different kind of plays and the shots were a lot harder and more precise.

The all-star players were picked by their peers. After each game teams voted on the best player on the opposing team that made a difference during the game. Georgia has been playing ringette for nine years and has been goalie for the last seven.

The season may be over but she has been working toward her goal of making the 2019 Canada Games team. I wish Georgia all the best next year and I hope she achieves her goal.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Borden-Kinkora.

Grade 3-4 Somerset School Award

Mr. Fox: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's my pleasure to rise today and recognize Sharon Anderson's grade 3 and 4 class for winning the Garry MacLean Award at Somerset School. This is the first year of the award. The award was created earlier this year in memory of Garry MacLean, a president of the PEI Chapter of the Hemophilia Society of Canada in the 1980s and 1990s.

Cathy Wright, Garry's sister, presented the award and said it was something they had to come up with to honour Garry and help spread awareness. There was only one student in the class who had heard about the

disorder and none of them knew anything about it. Mrs. Anderson has showed them some videos on the disorder and they were all on board to help with the project. They only had a few days to work on their project before the March break with the snow days. But those two days were still a success.

Students created posters to put up around the school with information about the disorder and created power points to present to other classes at the school. Students also held a pajama day which raised over \$208 for the hemophilia society. On top of that, they also created a YouTube video and posted it to help them inform people on hemophilia.

The Somerset students were chosen from four submissions and their prize was \$1,000, which they donated to the schools outdoor classroom.

I want to thank the students for being so thoughtful in their project and worked to inform their community and Islanders of hemophilia. They were very deserving of this award.

Thank you.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Island Musicians and Chris LeClair

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

Prince Edward Island can be rightly proud of our cultural heritage. For a small place, we have produced an extraordinary number of world-class artists. And that is perhaps nowhere more true than in the realm of music.

It is almost impossible to turn on a national CBC radio on any given day and not hear an Island musician prominently featured, whether it's Megan Blanchard or Lenny Gallant or Catherine MacLellan or Eddie Quinn or Amanda Jackson, on and on.

Up-and-coming young musicians are also making their mark as well. A SOPA grad Deana Joka has received \$19,000 in scholarships to study bass guitar at the prestigious Berklee College of Music in

Boston. We wish Deana all the best as she prepares for the classes in September.

One thing that Island musicians all have in common is their generosity. Nearly any week of the year you can go to a fundraiser for an Islander or their family who is in need and hear members of the music community contributing their time and talents selflessly.

This week, the music community lost one of its own, Chris LeClair. Chris exemplified the big heartedness of Island musicians, playing at countless fundraisers and charity events throughout his too short life. He is a huge loss to the musical family of Prince Edward Island and to the Island itself.

Chris would have been happy for his many friends, who will be attending and playing at this week's ECMAs in Halifax. PEI already has one winner, Jon Rehder, a masterful multi-instrumentalist and all around sweet man. He has won the Stompin Tom Award this year. Congratulations to Jon.

Other Island musicians are up for awards, as well. Rose Cousins leads all East Coast musicians with eight nominations, Jenn Grant has six and KINLEY has four. That's three of the top five nominees from PEI. That's amazing.

Joining these multi-nominees are The East Pointers, Whitney Rose, and many others. Our little Island has produced some big talent. As the ECMA weekend approaches, I invite this House to join me in thanking our Island musicians for all of their kindnesses and also wishing them the best of luck in this week's ECMAs.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Responses to Questions Taken As Notice

Questions by Members

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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

Last night marked the ninth temporary closure of the Kings County Memorial

Hospital emergency room, this is since just December.

Closures at KCMH emergency room

Question to the minister of health: What is your government doing to deal with this ongoing problem?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Mitchell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As the minister responsible for health on Prince Edward Island, I take my role very seriously to try to ensure that health care is available for Islanders in the communities where they live as we can best provide it.

Obviously, yesterday down in Kings County the doctor that was working the emergency room service was unable to fulfill their shift. We did have to close the ER there from 3:00 p.m. onwards.

When this occurs, and sometimes it's on very short notice, we do our absolute best to inform the mayor of the Montague area and the residents of the Montague area with a public service announcement. We do that immediately.

Unfortunately, yesterday's case was fairly late notice, but we did our absolute best, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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

When I raised this issue earlier this session I noted that there's no walk-in clinic in Montague. There are no evening walk-in clinics in all of Kings County. Left unchecked, this situation will increase the risk of burnout for the doctors and the nurses that we do have.

Addressing risk to health professionals at KCMH (further)

Question to the minister of health: What, if anything, has been done to address any of these things?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Mitchell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Certainly, when we speak of ER coverage in the Kings County area, we are very fortunate that we now have a full complement of doctors in that area, which means that the rotation is a one-in-eight week rotation for those doctors in that region. But, from time to time doctors find themselves needing the time off and coverage is, sometimes, not able to be found.

Therefore, we find ourselves in situations such as yesterday, but we are looking at all areas for improving and enhancing the system in that area, be it walk-in clinics, be it different rotations of doctors, or even incorporate nurse practitioners. We will be holding meetings continuously on that.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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

Quite often, the easiest solution is to actually sit down and talk to the frontline workers. In fact, the frontline health workers at Kings County Memorial Hospital have come up with innovative ideas to improve things for patients and reduce the risk of staff burnout.

Question to the minister of health: Is Health PEI moving forward with any of the ideas from the frontline workers, and if so how fast will you take action?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Mitchell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Certainly, there are suggestions being brought forward. We are collecting those. We are looking at all options. We currently have a meeting set for Montague region on May 18th, for meetings with the mayor, some councillors from the area, some doctors from the area, and I'm sure other frontline folks will be in the room, as well.

We'll have a good opportunity to sit down and talk about other areas that we can look in. As I said earlier, there are several that we

are collecting information on. Hopefully, we can find a good resolve for, not only the health care professionals, but for Islanders from the region that need access to doctors and nurses when they need it, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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

We hear time and time again how hard it is to retain health care professionals here on PEI. What we're not hearing is a plan to actually work alongside our health care workers to come up with a solution so that we're not burning them out.

We also know that it's hard to recruit doctors here on PEI, as it is in many other jurisdictions. The doctors working at the Kings County Memorial Hospital emergency room are regularly putting in shifts of 12 hours or more. That's on top of their family practices.

Question to the minister of health: Is working our health care professionals to the bone this government's plan for our health care workers?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Mitchell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As I said earlier we are looking at all options, including the hours that the doctors in the region work. Obviously, as I said, we have a full complement there, now, which means it's a one-in-eight week rotation. We're hoping that the doctors and ourselves and the community can work together to find a reasonable solution here.

It is very important that access is available in each of our communities across Prince Edward Island and we want to have a positive outcome for the Kings County area, and, in particular, all other areas of Prince Edward Island, as well.

Currently, I was informed today that we have – our search probably will allow for a couple of new doctors to be coming to Prince Edward Island in the very near future, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker.

That's interesting that he's going to announce a couple of new doctors. A couple means two. Right now, I'm aware of four doctors impending departure from PEI, so his two new, and the four departing it only puts us further behind.

Delays in dealing with this problem are not improving access to health care for the residents of Kings County. It's making it increasingly difficult to recruit and retain health care professionals.

Health care crisis in rural PEI

Question to the minister of health: Do you agree that the current approach with our health care workers is pushing us closer and close to a health care crisis on PEI, particularly rural PEI?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

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

As I said, I'm very pleased that the recruitment and retention folks are out working very diligently to try to attract new doctors to our region. When I say our region, I'll say Prince Edward Island. They have identified a few new doctors that are willing to come to Prince Edward Island and that's a very positive thing.

We will, very soon have seven new nurse practitioners spanning out across Prince Edward Island to handle other needs of our vulnerable Islanders that need medical access. I can guarantee you, we will continue to work daily upon trying to attract new doctors, especially to rural regions of our wonderful province, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Borden-Kinkora.

Mr. Fox: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

This week South Shore residents were dealt another blow in their ability to access a family doctor.

Access of doctor to South Shore residents

Question to the health minister: When did you first learn that Dr. Giordani is leaving his family practice at the end of July?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Mitchell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I've had the opportunity to meet with residents from the Crapaud area. Actually, I'm meeting with them on Friday, as well, again.

There has been a doctor in that community for over 100, 150 years, almost, I believe. I definitely see the concern that the folks in that region have.

We will continue to work with doctors and nurse practitioners to alleviate the medical needs in that area. We will continue our conversations, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Borden-Kinkora.

Mr. Fox: Mr. Speaker, Dr. Giordani took over his family practice about 2,300 patients in Crapaud when Dr. Visser retired in July, 2017. In January, Dr. Giordani relocated his practice to Cornwall; now, he'll be leaving on July 31st.

Contingency plan for South Shore residents

Question to the health minister: What contingencies are in place for the up to 2,300 South Shore residents, who will soon be without a family doctor, again?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Mitchell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I believe Dr. Giordani is doing some locum work in the west end of the province. We're very fortunate to have him cover those needs that we have there. I don't have indication that he is leaving at the end of July or the

end of June. I'll have to go back and check into that.

Certainly, the health, well-being for Islanders in every region of the province is of utmost concern to myself, to the department, and to this government and we'll continue to work on regions to ensure that their health needs are met in a timely fashion.

Thank you.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Borden-Kinkora.

Mr. Fox: Well maybe the minister should take a drive to Cornwall and see the guy's office where the poster says he's leaving on July 31st.

So now we've gone from a new doctor arriving last July, to relocating to another community in January, to leaving the province all together this July. Now up to 2,300 South Shore residents are going to be on the lurch without a family doctor. There's also another 500 in the area already on the patient registry.

Names added to patient registry

Question to the health minister: Will government be encouraging these Islanders to put their names on the patient registry, or will they be told to wait and see what happened up in West Prince.

Thank you.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Mitchell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Certainly Islanders –

Mr. LaVie: On the ropes.

Mr. Mitchell: – have every right and every ability to add their names to the patient registry and actually any that aren't on the patient registry; I do encourage Islanders to get their names listed on there. Obviously, when we are able to attract physicians, we do collect names from that patient registry. If there are full patient panels that exist today, that's a good transition, so we will

work off the registry and off panels that exist today and any new doctors that come forward to provide that service on Prince Edward Island.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Borden-Kinkora.

Mr. Fox: Mr. Speaker, rural PEI has no faith in the patient registry. The community has sprung into action in response, focusing on short and long-term solutions. A walk in clinic is offered a couple of days a week, depending on the availability of doctors. The walk in clinics are heavily used by area residents and could easily be expanded to meet the demand.

Nurse practitioner for walk in clinic

Question to the health minister: The community has asked for a nurse practitioner three days a week that could work through the walk in clinics. With the new developments, will government act on this request?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Mitchell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As I said earlier, I'll be meeting with representatives from that community on Friday and I expect that will be the main focus of our conversation. I've indicated to them that a nurse practitioner for the area is something that we are looking at from the department level to see if we can do that service.

Obviously we have other communities in the area that we're working with: the area of Borden, the area of Kinkora, the area of Crapaud and if we can make something a workable solution there, that's exactly what we're trying to do, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Borden-Kinkora.

Mr. Fox: Well it's very, very plain to see that the community's actually being very proactive. The community has a long-term vision – it's for a medical centre that serves the area with walk in and night clinics – related health services and a staff by combination of a doctor, nurse practitioners,

and other health professionals working together in a collaborative approach.

Improvement of access to health care

Question to the health minister: What is government prepared to do to make the community vision a reality to improve local access to health care in the South Shore area?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Mitchell: Again, that has been the conversation that we've had previously and I anticipate that'll be the conversation that we have on Friday.

I am working with the community; I am working with the department to find a reasonable solution for those residents from that area who for years had a doctor right in the community and if we could come back to that type of service, I would gladly do that. But in the meantime, we have other needs that we have to address as far as nurse practitioners, maybe, for the area, working collectively with other areas and that's the work that's going on and we will continue to work very closely with them on that.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Borden-Kinkora.

Mr. Fox: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The community has gone so far as to look at recruiting their own replacement as many communities around the region have done. Previously, government said that there were no available billing numbers for the area. That status will change in July when Dr. Giordani leaves.

Vacant billing number available for use

Question to the health minister: If the community were able to recruit a new doctor themselves, would that soon-be-vacant billing number be made available for their use?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Mitchell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Certainly, if the community was able to recruit a doctor for that area, we would absolutely sit down and have that conversation. We are actively recruiting doctors for all regions of Prince Edward Island and if the community is able to find one on their own, I'd be more than happy to sit down and have discussions with them on that.

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

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Approval of loan for new Hampton Inn

Question to the Premier: Has your Cabinet approved a loan to build the new Hampton Inn which will bring in a new 125 rooms and over 50 jobs to the North River area?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance

Mr. MacDonald: Mr. Speaker, I'm not aware of any loans through the province at this point in time.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Approval of loan/existing hotel in Summerside

Question to the Premier: Did your Cabinet recently approve a loan to take over an existing hotel in Summerside?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance

Mr. MacDonald: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Tourism has grown by 6.5% in the Province of Prince Edward Island and I'm glad the hon. member uses the word 'loans' because last week he was using the words 'giving money away'. We have hard-earning Islanders – in fact in his own district, we've got over \$30 million in loans out to companies in his own district, but he tends to float around the province and pick out individuals or companies that he doesn't think that desire loans from our province that are creating employment, creating

awareness for our province's marketing, using – if you're talking about a Hampton Inn, that's wonderful because every time someone puts a flag in a property, that's a marketing tool for PEI.
Thank you.

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

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's great to know that the minister's watching me so closely, and my patterns, and where I'm traveling, and who I'm talking about. It must mean that I'm doing something that's getting under his skin, or maybe getting under all your skin.

Hotel owner in Summerside

Question again to the Premier: Who owns the company that was loaned the money to buy the hotel in Summerside?

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

Mr. Palmer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We were lucky enough to be able to approve a loan to a company in Summerside that is buying a hotel there and they're going to revitalize that. We're very excited about that in Summerside because we know that will add to the great product line that we already have there and we look forward to the renovations being completed.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Question again to the Premier: Does the individual who you loaned the money to buy the hotel in Summerside have any particular connection to the individual who ran your leadership campaign?

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

Mr. Palmer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Again, we're really excited that we're able to have additional investments into Summerside and we know that tourism is a very important part of our community. There are 7,700 full-time equivalent jobs in PEI and we've had over one million overnight stays. So we're very glad that we can have investments into the community and we'll support entrepreneurs as much as we can.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Standard practice re: registration of company

Question to the Premier: Is it standard practice for somebody to register a company and only 72 days later receive a \$4 million loan from your government, or does it only apply to people who are related to someone who ran your leadership campaign?

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

Mr. Palmer: Again, I'm very excited that entrepreneurs in PEI are able to quickly respond to market needs, so they find an opportunity and they work really hard to seize on that and I think the investment coming into Summerside is very welcome and I know it's only going to strengthen our tourism product there and I'm very proud to continue to support entrepreneurs.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

All I'm trying to figure out is if this person who received the loan, if he has some direct connection to the Premier, which I know he does. His father ran the Premier's leadership campaign. In a recent media interview, the new owner of the hotel says he bought it for \$2.9 million and plans to renovate it to the tune of \$1.2 million. The liberal lending machine approved him at \$4 million for a loan.

Taxpayers' dollars to purchase and redevelop hotel

Question to the Premier: Do you think it's fair that taxpayers have to fund the entire purchase and redevelopment of this hotel?

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

Mr. Palmer: Mr. Speaker, I'm very proud that our government is able to provide loans to up to \$355 million in our loan portfolio to over 1,000 businesses in PEI – 60% of those in rural PEI. We make money on those loans, so we're very happy to do that. We're making \$5 million a year in net profit on our loan portfolio and we're happy to continue to do that, and continue to support entrepreneurs in PEI.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I expect you to support entrepreneurs, but all of them. Not just the ones – this is about the Premier and the Premier won't answer it because he's so directly tied to this. I know he tapped on your shoulder and said you have to do it, because it's his own friend's son who got approved for the loan, the whole shot.

Approval of loan/existing hotel in Summerside (further)

Question to the Premier: Do you see something wrong with this when you're giving 100% financing to an existing hotel while there's an entrepreneur out in North River putting every cent of their own money into building one?

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

Mr. Palmer: Mr. Speaker, all of our loan portfolio is monitored and measured by the professional staff at Finance PEI. They evaluate each loan on its merits, and I have seen the loan application. I don't do the evaluation of it myself, but nowhere on there does it ask party affiliation.

I know the member opposite really wants it to say that, he's really excited if we would do that, but you can go on the website; download the application yourself and see that it doesn't have it on there, which –

Mr. Fox: Table the application.

Mr. Palmer: – I know will be disappointing to the member, but it's not there.

They're based on merit and the ability to pay back.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm sure it's somewhere in the fine print, the part that the rest of us Islanders don't get to see. It probably has to do with dinner tickets or helping with the leadership campaign if you're leader. That might have had something to do with it. It's not like you didn't know he was a Liberal. It's not like you didn't know that his dad ran the Premier's leadership campaign. That stinks pretty bad; to anybody that should stink bad.

Between 2012 and 2016, profits to Island's hotels raised from \$800,000 to \$9.2 million, according to Stats Canada. So, we've heard the last couple of years about record-breaking seasons and I'm no genius, but I'm pretty sure that a bank would fund something like that given those numbers backing it up.

Question to the Premier: Did this loan recipient go to the bank and get turned down for his financing before he turned to the Liberal loan machine?

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

Mr. Palmer: Mr. Speaker, again, I know that there isn't a party affiliation part on the application and I know it's disappointing to the member opposite that somebody may not – that somebody may follow their political affiliation of their father and their grandfather before them. Maybe that's not the case anymore. Maybe it's not 1950 anymore.

We're very proud of entrepreneurs, and I don't think anybody should be punished or given a greater opportunity based on political affiliation of their grandfather.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Parkdale.

Ms. Bell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The web presence program from Innovation PEI provides funds for small businesses and industry organizations to design, develop, and host a website and register a unique URL domain name. The program will cover 40% of the eligible costs to a maximum of \$500 per small business. Applications must be submitted before any financial or legal commitment is made on the project.

Web presence program at Innovation PEI

A question to the Minister of Economic Development and Tourism: How is this program promoted to the business community?

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

Mr. Palmer: Mr. Speaker, I know the web presence program is promoted on our website as well as promoted through various chambers of commerce, and anywhere that we can get access to the business community because we know that this is an important project. It's very good for businesses that are first starting out, so they get the opportunity to recover some of their costs and they're actually able to spend a little bit more on marketing.

We're very happy to continue to support entrepreneurs across PEI from large projects to small projects, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Bell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

This program is in fact often one of the only business support programs from Innovation PEI that any small business can qualify for,

and I have been a supporter and a promoter of this program in previous work.

Mr. Trivers: Me too.

Ms. Bell: So is my colleague.

If a business owner has registered a URL or begun any work on their website in any way, however, they will not qualify for this program as per the eligibility criteria.

Approved web presence program applications

A question to the Minister of Economic Development and Tourism: How many applications does this program receive a year, and how many applications are actually approved?

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

Mr. Palmer: Mr. Speaker, I don't have that information with me, but I can certainly take it away and bring it back tomorrow or sometime in the next couple of days.

But, we do have a micro-loan program that supports trades. We support small-scale food processing, and those are loans to a maximum of \$15,000. So, we do have supports out there for small business, and we're very happy to continue to do that because we know that business is very important and they are the engine of the economy.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Bell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Well, \$500 doesn't buy a lot of gas, but it's better than nothing. But, one of the things to consider is that many business owners now make their own websites and not necessarily a third party provider, but only quotes from third party providers in PEI are considered for eligibility under the program.

Evaluation of web presence program

The question to the Minister of Economic Development and Tourism: When was the last time this program and its eligibility criteria were evaluated?

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

Mr. Palmer: Mr. Speaker, we continue to evaluate programs that are available to small business across PEI because we know it's really important.

As I said, they are the engine of the economy in PEI and we continue to expand some of our programs like our micro loans that we have available, and I know there's winter production financing that falls into that micro-loan program that can offer up to a \$15,000 loan for craft people as they build their inventory over the winter so it'll be available for sale coming into their busy season.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

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

Last week, the report of the Standing Committee on Rules, Regulations, Private Bills and Privileges was tabled and I'm very pleased that we're making progress in modernizing this Legislature. However, there are still a number of issues that have not been addressed by this committee such as election finance reform and lowering the voter age.

In January, I wrote to the Chair of the standing committee on democratic renewal for the second time to request that the committee be reconvened.

Request for Special Committee on Democratic Renewal to reconvene

A question to the Minister of Education, Early Learning and Culture: Why did you not reply to my letters?

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

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

I would note that I don't believe this to be something that's within my purview in either of my ministerial capacities, but let me just point out that there was a lot of work on this file that was done throughout the course of the winter, whether it be through the development of a map that would be utilized in the next referendum or in relation to the legislation that will be relevant to that, which as we have indicated on a number of different occasions, we are working on right now.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

I should say that we never met to discuss the maps at all and that was entirely the work of the Electoral Boundaries Commission.

Since my letter in January when the minister was indeed minister of education, the Leader of the Opposition has proposed that we consider the possibility of introducing consensus government on Prince Edward Island.

Study of consensus government in DR committee

A question to the same minister: Do you think that this is a subject that should be studied by the Special Committee on Democratic Renewal?

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

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

I want to first note that I do feel that I should be very careful in terms of how this question is answered because I don't think I have the capability to speak on behalf of all my committee members on that committee. I think there are certain actions that were undertaken by the committee that would indicate that those options were considered and in fact, I can remember two presentations in relation to consensus government that were made to the committee at the time.

I do think the hon. Leader of the Opposition's input is valued and I do have some questions as to the timing of that, but I don't think I have the mandate to speak on behalf of my committee members here, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you very much.

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

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you.

I appreciate the minister's answer and perhaps that's all the more reason to reconvene the committee.

For a year now, I have been asking for this special committee to meet so we can complete our mandate and discuss just these sorts of issues.

Shut down of Special Committee on DR

Question to the same minister: Will you confirm that the Premier has shut down this committee without actually informing the committee members to ensure that no further work is done on democratic renewal?

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

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

Again, this is a totally improper question.

The hon. Leader of the Third Party would know that this is something outside of the purview of this Chamber in terms of answers as to what would have gone on at that committee. It's something that's outside of my purview as minister, not proper to be asked during Question Period.

Again, what I will say, is that a lot of work has gone on in relation to democratic renewal in this province over the few months. I suspect there will be a lot more to come. This is in stark contrast to what we recognized, as a committee, when we were doing our work, and what the hon. member is here saying right now. And, I do take offence to that.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Casey: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question today is to the Minister of Health and Wellness: Minister, you are my third health and wellness minister, who I'm going to pose this question to on midwifery —

Mr. LaVie: Good luck.

Ms. Casey: — some say that I'm tenacious with this issue, but minister, those, who are tenacious are people like Joyce England, the members of BORN, and the PEI association of midwives, who have been advocating for midwifery services on Prince Edward Island for close to 20 years. This week there will be many events leading up to International Day of the Midwife on May 5th.

The advocates for midwifery on the Island, including Joyce England were present on the gallery on May 11th, 2017, when the registered health professions act was unanimously passed by this House.

Proclamation of Regulated Health Professions Act

Minister: When you will proclaim the registered health professions act.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

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

I guess the short answer to that, is yes, hon. member, you are tenacious when it comes to this very important subject. Obviously, you are a great advocate for the area of midwifery on Prince Edward Island, and I would say passionate, as well, about it, hon. member.

As you mentioned we were able to get introduced, and passed on the floor of the Legislature this registered health professions act last year. We are working now on regulations to accompany the act. We intend that, as soon as we get those done we'll be able to proclaim the act. Hon. member, I'm very pleased to say that, I think, that we are on target to have that completed by this summer.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Casey: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Appointment of registrar

Minister, that is great news. I think all of those listening will be thrilled with that.

I understand that a registrar will have to be appointed. Who will that be and what will their job be?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Mitchell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Currently, the Department of Health and Wellness, we, oversee almost 100 statutes and regulations so each compete for priority for the legislative agenda. That's kind of our causes for delay.

When we do get this act proclaimed this summer, we will, indeed, need appoint a registrar. I don't have the name of who that could be or is, or possibly could be.

We do that the role that they play will be vitally important. A few of their responsibilities, also, will be receiving and assessing applications, providing recommendations as to whether or not to designate a health profession to a registered body, to perform disciplinary duties as required by the act, and other roles as they will need to do their work, as well, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Casey: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Well minister, we are making some progress on midwifery.

Timeline for regulating midwives

Minister: Once the act is proclaimed, this summer, and I'll hold you to that, and a registrar is appointed, how long until we see

midwives regulated to work on Prince Edward Island?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Mitchell: Hon. member, as soon as we get the act proclaimed, we will be open to take applications. That work will be progressing very well.

The purpose of this act is to provide regulation to health professions practicing with small member numbers on Prince Edward Island. They will – not only be midwives – but there will also be acupuncturist, naturopaths, that will be looking to work on Prince Edward Island under this regulated umbrella.

The act will set out a very clear process for regulation in areas such as; determining appropriateness of profession, and it'll also talk about scope of practice and standard practice. Once we get this proclaimed, I anticipate that we will see applications rolling in. We'll try to get them out as quickly as we can, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Dumville: Mr. Speaker, on December 19th, 2016, an Emyvale farmer and his farm company were charged with eight offences under the pesticide act. One hour and 18 minutes after a conservation officer laid these charges, Erin Mitchell reported to the Premier's office that the farmer had been charged. We now know seven of these charges were laid without factual foundation and dropped.

A minister of justice would certainly receive a breakdown of departmental charges. What shocks me is the haste at which this Islander's charges were reported directly to the Premier.

Information on charges under pesticide act

My question for the minister of justice is: Does the Premier or his staff routinely get such timely information on charges in one particular case? If not, why did it happen here?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: I'm not sure if that question was directed to the minister of justice, or me. Let me respond –

Mr. Myers: All of mine were directed to you (Indistinct)

Premier MacLauchlan: I would have, at the time, been the minister of justice. The deputy of justice and the deputy to the Attorney General has been mentioned as having made that report. It wouldn't normally, or necessarily be the case that such matters would reported to the minister in such a short time span. But, if it was, the case that that did happen –

Mr. Fox: Totally unethical.

Premier MacLauchlan: – it would be because that was in the deputy minister's –

Mr. Fox: Totally.

Premier MacLauchlan: – judgment that that was appropriate to be reported.

Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Dumville: I'll try it again to the minister of justice, but if the Premier wishes to answer, that's fine.

All the more reason, why would he get it reported so immediately instead of waiting for the monthly report.

Knowledge of charges under pesticide act

What advanced knowledge or involvement did you have, the Premier's office, have in laying these charges? Why so immediate? Why couldn't you wait for the monthly report?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure what the hon. member has in mind, a monthly report.

Let me assure the House that whatever was

involved in that investigation that led to the laying of those charges would be done entirely within the discretion and independent judgment of the investigating officials and the decision to lay charges would not have had any part – where there would be no part played by either the deputy minister or the Attorney General, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

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

Mr. Dumville: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

To the minister of justice: These charges were laid six days before Christmas.

Directing power of state

Will you commit to my constituents, who are farmers, that your office will not direct the power of the state against them because they fell out of favour with this government?

Mr. Fox: Yes.

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

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

As a former officer of the law, I would think that the hon. member would be very careful in asking a question like that in a place like this. There is an insinuation that goes along with it.

Let me assure you that all of the officers of the law that work within, or under the supervision of our department take their jobs very seriously. That would include police officers, conservation officers, Crown Attorneys. Let me assure you that we do not interfere in the operation of their discretion, in terms of who they might charge and when they might charge them, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you very much.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

Mr. LaVie: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

You are well aware that the crab fleet and both the lobster fleet on PEI set their traps yesterday. So setting day has come and gone. There were big safety issues on the north side of the Island on setting day.

Dredged harbours on north side of PEI

Will the minister of fisheries explain why your government failed to properly dredge the harbours on the north side of PEI?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

Mr. Henderson: Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member's well aware, the fishing industry certainly is a very perilous profession. It's a difficult opportunity for people to try to make a living.

The province, we are really advocating to make sure that we have safe and accessible harbours for our fishers, but the reality is that it's small craft and harbours through the federal government that is responsible for dredging in the Province of Prince Edward Island, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

Mr. LaVie: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, this is not a new issue. I've been sitting in this seat for seven years and I've heard this issue for seven years now. It's not a new issue.

Conversations with federal government re: dredging harbours

To the question to the minister of fisheries: Did you talk to the federal government about this issue?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

Mr. Henderson: Mr. Speaker, when it comes to accessibility to harbours and to the fishing industry in general, I do have conversations very regularly with, whether it's my federal MP, or whether it's the federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans, and unfortunately there were a couple of incidents that occurred, actually one in my own riding where a vessel got grounded and

swamped and it was great work within the fishing community for them to come and rescue those particular individuals.

The reality is, though, in some of these cases especially, there's a significant amount of sand that's moving up and down the north shore as well as the south shore and from this particular perspective, all three dredges that are in the province are in action. Weather can be a challenge sometimes too and ice in and ice out is also a factor, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

Mr. LaVie: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The reality is their lives are in danger. These fishers, their lives are in danger. We saw it over the weekend. One boat capsized and there were fellow fishers handy; rescued the four or five men.

Dredged harbours on north side of PEI (further)

Question to the minister: Will you not only today, but into the future, take immediate action to dredge the harbours on the north side of PEI?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

Mr. Henderson: I do, as minister of fisheries and also as a MLA, have the opportunity to attend regular port authority meetings where they brief me and keep me up to date on some of the challenges within their harbours. I have the opportunity in my department as also in contact constantly with Baron Delaney of small crafts and harbours to try to get some priorities.

If I take some of the situations, soundings have to be done, ice has to be gone so the boats can get out, the navigational buoys have to be put in place and in this particular case, we actually have three dredges that are currently in operation and, in fact, one is actually at Covehead Harbour as we speak and we're hopeful that dredging can commence very shortly. There's also a dredge at North Lake as well as at Malpeque harbour currently, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira, this will be your final question.

Mr. LaVie: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

My final question to the minister of fisheries on PEI: Will you reach out to the federal government, your federal government, and not only start dredging ASAP on north side channels; not only this year, not only tomorrow, but into the future?

This is an issue we've heard – not today – we've heard this for the last seven years, 10 years, the minister of fisheries before you, he heard all about it and you're hearing it. It's an issue every year on the wharves.

Can you make sure that this is done into the future?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

Mr. Henderson: As I indicated earlier, it is a very perilous profession, the fishing industry and I also look at the issue of making sure our harbours are as free and as accessible as they possibly can be, so it's a safety factor in many cases.

I have had communications with my MP, the DFO – right at the moment, all of the current dredges in Prince Edward Island are in operation, and they usually are right from ice in to ice out – they are in operation. We'll do everything we can to encourage them that and if there's even more dredges available out there, I hope there's contractors out there that would consider getting into that particular business and providing that service so we can do these things quicker, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Statements by Ministers

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

Student Assessment Results (PCAP 2016)

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

It's with great pride that I rise today and congratulate our junior high students who are reaching very high levels of

achievement. Island students are now among Canada's best in reading, math, and science according to the results of the Pan-Canadian Assessment Program, or PCAP, which was released yesterday.

In reading, PEI students lead the country. PEI has more students achieving the expected level of performance in reading than in any other province; 91% of Island students are reaching reading expectations – 3% more than the Canadian average. Prince Edward Island is one of only three provinces at or above the Canadian average in math, along with Ontario and Quebec. Island students are also at the national average in science and Prince Edward Island is the only province to show significant improvement in science during this cycle of PCAP.

PCAP assesses Canadian students on common Canadian curriculum outcomes. It is a key indicator of student outcomes, as well as the performance of our education system. The latest results show that since 2010, Prince Edward Island students have shown: almost twice as much improvement in reading as any other province, more than double the improvement in math, and significant improvement in science.

We commend our dedicated teachers and staff for their strategic efforts which are helping our students make significant gains and moving Prince Edward Island to one of the highest performing provinces in the country.

Student achievement is a key determinant of health, social, and economic prosperity and the education of our young people is very important to this government.

We are pleased to see that the investments we have made in education from the time these grade 8 students entered our schools are now paying off, whether they were: major investments in teachers and support staff, professional learning that focuses on the needs of students, a system-wide kindergarten, major investments in curriculum and leadership in learning resources, or provincial assessments that provide teachers with valid information on how well students are meeting curriculum outcomes.

We remain firmly committed to making strategic investments in education that ensure our students continue to do well. The \$17 million increase in our new education budget will allow us to continue to raise the achievement bar and shape a public education system that advances excellence for Island children and youth.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque.

Mr. MacKay: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

First off, I want to congratulate the students, teachers, and parents for the results that were achieved in the 2016 Pan-Canadian Assessment Program – PCAP –

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. MacKay: – that were publically released on Monday, April 30th. While I do not support provincial common assessments, I do believe that our students should participate in the PCAP and PISA assessments. PCAP gives us a snapshot in time on where a particular group of students sit nationally and PISA does the same internationally.

The results support my questions asked in the House last week concerning the provincial assessment program. As I stated last week, the most effective way to improve student achievement is direct supports into the classroom. Teachers in the classroom know their students best and are in the best position to address the gaps in student learning as soon as they occur.

Unlike the minister of education, I don't believe that teachers need to wait six months for the result of a provincial common assessment to tell them what they already know from their classroom assessments. In fact, teachers inform me that the feedback that they receive for provincial common assessments provides no useful information.

As an example, a student in grade 6 writes the elementary literacy reassessment in May of any given year. The department of education does not provide the results or any feedback to the teacher, student, or parent until November. By this time, the student

has probably moved on to grade 7. In most cases, this will be a new school with new teachers; have moved from an elementary model of school day to a secondary model, and so on.

Were the common assessment results helpful in programming for the student entering grade 7? The answer is no. Were the common assessment results useful in providing the student on areas that need improvement? The answer is no. Were they useful in informing the teacher on how to address the gaps in students' learning? The answer's no. Were there – helpful information for parents to provide further supports at home? The answer's no.

Thankfully, teachers have provided the supports with the limited resources available to them long before they are allowed to see the common assessment results. It begs a question: Who do the provincial common assessments benefit and why are they administered?

My background is not that of an educator, but I trust and value the voice of educators in the classroom. Since assuming my responsibilities on the education file, I have heard from a lot of teachers on the common assessment file. These are the people who have students in front of them on a daily basis – who are making hundreds of decisions daily on instruction, on assessment, on necessary interventions for students, all the while dealing with a multiple of class composition challenges.

They see no value in common assessment. I am hopeful the minister of education will throw away the 10-year-old briefing note that his department has been giving ministers and listen to the classroom teachers.

Finally, if, as the minister boasts that the common assessments program, which has been running for a decade now, has been so wonderful in supporting our students, why is it that only 51% of grade 3 students met expectations in writing during the last assessment? This is what happens, Mr. Minister, when you rob your supports at the classroom level to fund your testing regime.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

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

I'd just like to take a few seconds to recognize Jon Rehder, whom I mentioned in my member's statement earlier today. Jon is recipient, the winner of the Stompin' Tom Award this year at the ECMAs.

[Applause]

Dr. Peter Bevan-Baker: I want to start off by saying this is fantastic news. This is something that we should all be celebrating here on Prince Edward Island and particularly the reading scores because, as we all know, first you learn to read and then you read to learn all of the other things that we need. It's the absolute foundation of all education. I congratulate the department; I congratulate Island teachers; and I celebrate with Island students on this huge leap forward in our test results in a very short period of time is quite spectacular. Congratulations, minister.

Successful learners – and we all, of course, are learners – all of us, at any age, are learners – and the successful ones are those who use these tools – these basic foundational tools of reading and math and science – and they use them to think creatively and to think independently because we need, in this world – we don't need parrots who can memorize things and regurgitate them, we need independent thinkers. We need creative thinkers. We need problem solvers. The foundation blocks for all of that are measured in this test.

The minister talked about making strategic investments and I think it's really important – and I want to say this on Jon's behalf – that we don't forget the arts when we come to education. None of these test scores take into account the value of the arts, which are there, in many respects, to foster that independent thinking, that creativity, that ability to master something by yourself but be aware of being part of a team, and of sensitivity to others. So, this is a wonderful announcement and I welcome it, but let's not forget, of course, the value of arts in education, too.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Women's Institute Roadside Cleanup

Ms. Biggar: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Women's Institute of Prince Edward Island is a valued community organization that makes Prince Edward Island a better place in which to live through its focus on family, personal growth, and community involvement.

The Province of Prince Edward Island is a proud supporter of the Women's Institute and appreciative of the great work they are doing right across the province.

I'd like to recognize again the members of the Women's Institute that are with us today and that's: Carol Jenkins, President Elect; Jacquie Laird, past president; Doreen Cole, chair of the roadside cleanup; Liz Spangler; Anna Copper; Farida Chishti; and Janet Cotton; and other members of the Women's Institute.

For 44 years, the Women's Institute has undertaken an annual Roadside Cleanup initiative that helps protect our natural environment and maintains the beauty of our province.

I'm pleased to announce that Islanders taking part in the 45th Annual Roadside Cleanup on Saturday, May 12th, 2018, have more locations to access designated cleanup bags this year. The specially-marked yellow bags will be available at all Access PEI locations across the province as well as Island Waste Management Corporation sites.

Taking part in the Roadside Cleanup is simple for Islanders. All Islanders have to do to take part is pick up one of the designated yellow bags at the access sites, choose an area to pick up litter, and leave the bags on the roadside for pickup.

My Department of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy will collect the bags on May 14th. The annual Roadside Cleanup is a perfect example of Islanders making Prince Edward Island mighty by

working together to make great things happen.

I'm also very pleased that we are going to introduce a pilot project in conjunction with Island Waste Management Corporation, and I thank Gerry Moore for his initiative on that also.

Effective on May 12th to coincide with the Roadside Cleanup day, we will be extending hours at all waste watch sites until 2:00 p.m. across Prince Edward Island to encourage Islanders, if they have other products they want to drop off there, they can do that free of charge. We'll be doing that pilot from May 12th to June 30th. We want to evaluate how much more traffic we get there so that we can encourage that in the spring. We will look at it again for the fall.

But, I'm very pleased, again, to support the Women's Institute; a hard-working organization that has a positive and lasting impact on our mighty Island.

Thank you.

[Applause]

Speaker: The hon. Member from Borden-Kinkora.

Mr. Fox: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I don't think we can say enough about the Women's Institute and the work they've done in the past. It is noticed. I also want to recognize Gerry Moore and the work that waste watch does. Good job, well done.

I think we also have to expand this and talk about all the people that don't belong to the Women's Institute that walk our highways and collect garbage, and the farmers that clean the ditches and stuff like that. That's a tremendous thing for Islanders to do and we notice things like Adopt a Highway.

I also want to give a shout-out to the watershed groups on this too, because sometimes we forget them, because they're out there cleaning our rivers and making sure that the garbage is not in these rural areas that people are visiting.

The annual Roadside Cleanup actually began in 1973 and it was initiated by the

Women's Institute, and it was from a strength of a partnership that actually started with the Pat Binns government back in 2003 when they partnered with that government and the community groups across the province to launch Adopt a Highway project, another initiative to keep our roadside clean.

I want to thank all the Women's Institute chapters for their longstanding environmental leadership and continuing service to make our roadsides more beautiful. I think we can take a lesson from them; what they've started, and what they've continued, and we must, as a society and as a government, continue to support them.

Thank you.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Parkdale.

Ms. Bell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I think this is the third time in as many weeks I've gotten to speak about the Women's Institute, not just from the gala spring dinner and then for the 28 day campaign, but now back again with such another amazing community initiative.

I love the tagline most for the Women's Institute: Women Inspired. I think it's something that we can really relate to; that amazing women come out with amazing ideas and inspire others to be even better. I also think it's fantastic that we have this opportunity to really encourage families, schools, groups, and businesses to compete with each other and who can be the most inspired in the work that they do to clean up our communities.

I'm looking forward to going out with my family, with my daughter and her friends from the community and cleaning up at the experimental farm in a couple of weekends and taking pictures and sharing them with you, along with many other Islanders.

Thank you so much for inspiring us to love and value the place we live.

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

Ms. Biggar: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I inadvertently forgot to mention that Gerry Moore has brought plastic bags for our Roadside Cleanup, so everyone here today on their way out can collect them and get to work.

Thank you.

Presenting and Receiving Petitions.

Tabling of Documents

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. MacDonald: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

By Command of Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor, I beg leave to table information pursuant to sections 47, 30, 28 and 32 of the *Financial Administration Act* since the last report to the Legislature dated September 30th, 2017, 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.

The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Parkdale.

Ms. Bell: Mr. Speaker, by leave of the House, I beg leave to table the Halifax Regional Council memo in supporting jurisdictional scan on research options to reduce or eliminate the use of plastic shopping bags in that municipality and I move, seconded by the Honourable Leader of the Third Party, that the said document be now received and do lie on the Table.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Reports by Committees

Introduction of Government Bills

Government Motions

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 first 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 to chair the Committee of the Whole House.

Chair (Casey): The House is now in a Committee of the Whole House to take into consideration the grant of supply to Her Majesty.

For those of you who are watching online, and for members, we are discussing the Health PEI budget estimates. We're on page 95. The section In-Province Physician Services has been read but hasn't been carried yet.

Shall the section carry? Carried.

Hon. members, can we bring a stranger to the floor?

Some Hon. Members: Granted.

Mr. R. Brown: Bring the brains of the operation (Indistinct)

Mr. LaVie: Now, we'll get some answers.

Mr. MacEwen: We just spent two hours not getting any answers.

Chair: We'll allow her to set-up.

Thank you.

Mr. Mitchell: We have the answers, hon. member.

Chair: Good afternoon, could you introduce yourself and your title for the record?

Denise Lewis Fleming CEO: Denise Lewis Fleming, interim Chief Executive Officer of Health PEI.

Chair: Welcome.

Denise Lewis Fleming CEO: Thank you.

Chair: Okay. Hon. members, the minister has some handouts in response to some questions that were asked. Are you tabling those?

Denise Lewis Fleming CEO: Yes.

Chair: Tabling them?

Mr. Mitchell: Yeah.

Denise Lewis Fleming CEO: The four documents are the Health PEI organizational charts and staffing complement summary. The response to the question on the inter-operative electronic health record; the family physicians participating in hospital call groups and the provincial eye surgical suite operating schedule.

Chair: Perfect, thank you.

We'll continue on at the bottom of page 95.

Out-of-Province Health Services

“Appropriations provided for administration and payment of out-of-province health services under the *Hospitals Act* and the *Health Services Payment Act*.”
Administration: 11,800. Equipment: 3,100. Materials, Supplies and Services: 1,600. Professional Services: 51,435,600. Salaries: 566,800. Travel and Training: 9,000. Grant: 245,700.

Total Out-of-Province Health Services: 52,273,600.

Total Medial Affairs: 180,905,200.

The hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid.

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you, Chair.

Minister, were are we at with out-of-province fertility services, getting them covered?

Mr. Mitchell: Out-of-province fertility services?

Mr. MacEwen: Yes.

Mr. Mitchell: Hon. member, I don't mean to not answer your question, but I think we probably may have some – a more prudent answer to that when we have the department in; when Kevin comes in. It'll be under recruitment and probably have some of that information (Indistinct)

Mr. MacEwen: Can't hear you.

Mr. Mitchell: When we do the department estimates –

Mr. MacEwen: Yes.

Mr. Mitchell: Kevin may have more information regarding that under the recruitment section of the department estimates. I can try to dig up some numbers (Indistinct) here earlier though, so you're prepared for that.

Mr. MacEwen: I had asked you questions earlier in this session about some of the major concerns of the Rotary Club of Montague. One of the big things they keep hearing over and over, and as I mentioned that day, it was a fantastic presentation.

They always feel the frustration of how they can just get it done: when there's a need, they fill it. They are very careful, you say, they do have great (Indistinct) when it comes to that. They don't just hand out bridge cards; they don't just hand out gas cards.

They're very frustrated with the fact that – and I gave you some examples of, someone's got to go right away and they actually don't have the financial resources to get there. Are you confident that the department is doing a good job of those emergency ones?

I know, you're saying, between social services, you'll make it work, eventually, but do you feel confident that when someone calls and they need to get over

there, and a bus is obviously, is no good, that they're getting the financial resources they need to get over to an appointment?

Mr. Mitchell: I think I feel quite comfortable in saying, when the call is made and the connections are made, we do our utmost best to ensure that those needs are met. Obviously, I know, when you are talking about Rotary and my experience with another service charity group on the Island, people reach out, probably, in those cases to everybody for that immediate assistance. Sometimes, it's right there.

But, I know, Hope Air and some of (Indistinct) called do a good job of trying to determine the needs and trying to determine abilities to get it out the door as fast as they can.

I've had some people indicate to me, how great it is; I wouldn't have been able to get there, otherwise. And to allow, as I referred to, again, they do allow for accompanying people to go to those immediate appointments with them. It's a pretty good program now; compared to just how limited it was, too, in the past. Always looking at making things better.

I feel pretty comfortable in saying, we do our utmost best to get people going.

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you, minister.

Do we have an idea on how much Islanders spend out-of-pocket for off-Island travel for health services?

Denise Lewis Fleming CEO: That wouldn't be something that we track.

Mr. Mitchell: We wouldn't track that; what kind of expenses would be incurred.

Mr. MacEwen: Should we be?

As minister, would you not like to know what that cost is in comparison to what –

Mr. Mitchell: We know our out-of-cost medical, you know. When you go for a service done, we know the cost of that service fee.

Mr. MacEwen: Yeah.

Mr. Mitchell: But when you say, if a family goes, we don't track what they would spend.

Mr. MacEwen: Have you ever heard an example where someone didn't get over for the service they needed because of a cost?

Mr. Mitchell: I haven't personally, but maybe Denise did. (Indistinct)

Denise Lewis Fleming CEO: I have to admit, I'm not aware of any at the moment.

Mr. MacEwen: Good.

Thanks, Chair.

Chair: The hon. Member from Tignish-Palmer Road.

Mr. Perry: Thank you, Chair.

Regarding, I'm not sure if it's in this section or not, but transportation for seniors to a health facility, like ambulance-wise, is that in this section?

Denise Lewis Fleming CEO: That will be under the ambulance section later on.

Mr. Perry: Later on? Perfect, okay, I'll save it for then.

Thanks.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you.

I want to ask a question about the increase in the – this budget line increases every year. It's not as significant this year as it has been in past years. I remember it went up hugely, but it's still going up. I'm wondering what plans we have to rein that in because it's a lot of money leaving this province.

Denise Lewis Fleming CEO: The increase that you would see, primarily factored into this budget line for the fiscal year 2018-2019, actually has to do with the rate increases that are set inter-provincially by a national committee. Primarily in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, their fee increases are quite substantial this year.

For example, the intensive care rate at the

QEII in Nova Scotia will be going up \$7,046 a day, effective April 1st –

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Seven thousand –

Denise Lewis Fleming CEO: – it was \$6,180 a day. What we do to work to manage these pieces is that as soon a person is medically stable and eligible for transfer back to PEI, we have out-of-province liaison nurses that are actually situated in the hospital over in Nova Scotia and they work to coordinate their return home to PEI as soon as they can.

We also have a similar liaison service in Moncton, New Brunswick.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: To follow-up on that Denise. It's \$7,000 a day to occupy a bed in that unit, I mean, clearly –

Mr. Mitchell: Intensive care.

Denise Lewis Fleming CEO: In intensive care.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Yeah, sure. And clearly you can't just take people out of there and ship them home, but what's the cost of ambulance, I presume that's how they are transported back to the Island, for a trip from Halifax to Charlottetown or Summerside?

Denise Lewis Fleming CEO: One moment, until I flip to the other section –

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Yeah, sure.

Denise Lewis Fleming CEO: – I'll get that for you.

Our out-of-province transport cost to Halifax, St. John or Fredericton, it's \$800 a trip.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Okay.

I'd expected a much higher figure, I must say. I want to ask some questions about – and clearly because of the size of the population base here, we can't provide all of the surgeries; cardiac and vascular, some of the other ones; neurological surgeries.

One of the areas that it appears we do not have the skill or expertise here is when it

comes to transgendered individuals here on Prince Edward Island. I met with a group, just the other day, a couple of whom have gender dysphoria.

The gender reassignment surgery is something which, I don't think they feel we have the skill set here on Prince Edward Island to do. Could you update us on where we are with that, minister?

Mr. Mitchell: So recently I met with the same group – probably the same individuals that you had met with as well, hon. member, and certainly understand their concern and their need as well.

Obviously, I committed to them that we would be moving forward soon and I'm still committed to that and I'm hoping that's just a few days away. But to your point of having expertise here, I don't know that for certain in all cases, but I expect that there will be some of it out-of-province.

Even the day of my conversation, they anticipated that would be the case and wherever the best jurisdiction to go to receive the proper service when we get things moving forward, I would anticipate that would be how things will roll out. But there will be probably some that we can do here and we'll look to do as much as we can here as in all cases.

Obviously you're right, we don't have the size and scope of population that we could have every service done here, but the ones that we can do and do well, we will continue to do that, but any that can't, we'll certainly work with those individuals to get them where they need to be seen by the proper professional.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Moving on to the hospital, which is going to be taken down – the mental health hospital here – and rebuilt as a campus, I believe is the terminology that you're using. I'm not sure how many mental health patients now seek services off-Island. I think it's a lot less than it used to be, but I'm wondering whether, when this new campus is established here in Charlottetown, whether you are imagining that – if this is as innovative and progressive as I envision it may be, whether we can actually attract some patients from off-Island to – I mean, we can look at this as a

sort of trade deficit, if you like, the amount of medical funds that we spend off-Island, but could we reclaim some of them or get them back in a campus, or are we just building it to be sized for Island patients.

Mr. Mitchell: Well, that's a loaded question that you're asking for certain and those that are involved now in treatment for mental health have a vision of being able to provide the very best health – meet the health care needs of Islanders right here on Prince Edward Island. That is their vision.

Obviously, with success from our two youth programs – the Strength Program and the INSIGHT Program we're able to now measure that we can do things really well here on PEI. When you incorporate that with our new campus, certainly there's a lot of opportunity and we have a lot of expertise here. Dr. Heather, she's a – if I was to ask her: Do you think we should be treating all patients here on PEI, I think she would probably indicate: absolutely. That's the vision and as we move forward, I think the campus will address some of those concerns.

From time to time, though, people do need to seek help in other areas and we'll support that – if that is the case for the best outcome, obviously we want everybody to have what their needs are met and if we can't provide that on the Island, we'll have to address it wherever it's available. I do anticipate – I think if you look at our numbers in mental health care, yes, the numbers have drastically dropped over the last number of years and that's strictly because of the professionalism here of our frontline people who are dedicated to the care that is needed in this area and have, I'll say, improved in any way, form so that it's incorporated (Indistinct) social workers, psychologists, psychiatrists, all working pretty collaboratively now to catch things as early as we can, I guess, and then to deal with it right here on the Island.

I hope that answers your question.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: It does.

Just one final question on the Hillsborough Hospital: any update on the timeline on that, minister?

Mr. Mitchell: I don't have a timeline update. I do notice quite a bit of work going on there and once we get the Legislature closed, I'll be able to actually sit down and look at drawings, look at where we are, what needs to happen. I'll probably have a better sense of that a little bit later on towards the summer on how things are going, so we can reconvene with a quick conversation sometime.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Great.

Thank you, Chair.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thanks very much.

One of the recent reports by the Auditor General – just back a couple of years ago – she brought a lot of attention towards out-of-province health care services and one particular item that she highlighted was the coding for out-of-province health care. She raised some very serious concerns with regards to how the coding was taking place and various issues around that. Can you enlighten us at all on what measures have been taken to tighten that up?

Denise Lewis Fleming CEO: Sure. We have actually undertaken approximately a yearlong project to upgrade our out-of-province billing and payment system through which that coding occurs and part of that upgrade will also include receiving files electronically from Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and our main jurisdictions to reduce the likelihood of human error in doing the coding and the input. We anticipate that that project's going to be completed and in place by the end of this calendar year.

Leader of the Opposition: Have you been in touch with the Auditor General's office to provide an update on that?

Denise Lewis Fleming CEO: The Auditor General's office did not ask us for an update on that particular recommendation this year whenever she did the update on her report. I understand she will now be doing that cyclically, so it may come up next year for us to provide her with that update.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you.

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Chair.

I was wondering: Given the cooperation between the different adjacent provinces – Prince Edward Islanders heading over to St. John or over to Moncton – or Halifax, I should say – I was wondering if you’ve looked into the idea of having a centre of excellence on Prince Edward Island, similar to the way they have sort of centres of excellence in medicine in some of those other places like Halifax or St. John – something that we could actually attract patients from outside of PEI to come here and try and call it a health trade deficit, if you want to call it, to see if we can make up some of this shortfall we have in spending so much money going out of our economy.

Mr. Mitchell: I think, hon. member, to the question from the Leader of the Third Party, our centre of excellence could be our new mental health campus and so I guess that – if there’s something in the near future, the short term, that would be it. We’ll be modeling off others and looking for opportunities to work with other provinces there when we can because if we can provide service absolutely reciprocal, that would be a big benefit for Prince Edward Island.

But in other areas, there’s many, many associated costs with trying to be able to do every part of health care and providing those services. That will be the initial one; if we can get there, as we’re building it and processing it, that would be the best opportunity.

Mr. Trivers: Thanks, Minister.

That’s great to hear. I think that would be good for the economy as well as Islanders in general. One doctor that I talked to, he actually practices in Hamilton, but spends his summer on the Island, thought that a cath lab might be another idea. He’s a heart surgeon and he thought that would be a possibility here as well. I just thought I’d bring that to the table here today.

Mr. Mitchell: Appreciate that. We’ll investigate that as well.

Chair: Thank you.

Shall the section carry? Carried.

Shall the Total Medical Affairs carry? Carried.

Thank you.

Emergency Health Services, Long-Term Care and Hospital Services East

Queen Elizabeth Hospital

“Appropriations provided for delivery of a wide range of programs and services through the Province’s primary referral hospital, including: Emergency Department and Outpatients, Surgical Services, Ambulatory Care, the PEI Cancer Treatment Centre and Inpatient Services.”
Administration: 1,937,700. Equipment: 129,100. Materials, Supplies and Services: 30,341,800. Professional Services: 1,956,000. Salaries: 90,707,100. Travel and Training: 356,200.

Total Queen Elizabeth Hospital: 125,427,900.

The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: I’d like to talk about the diagnostic capability that exists at the QEH and whether the wait times there for scans, x-rays, blood tests, all of those things – whether we’re sort of on par with the rest of the country.

Mr. Mitchell: As far as wait times, I think we’re getting to par. We had some staff issues, I believe, last year that caused us problems. Is that correct?

Denise Lewis Fleming CEO: I don’t have the wait times here with me. We aren’t quite at the national benchmarks that were set for wait times for MRIs or CT scans. The information on that can be found on Health PEI’s website if you’d like to look at where the stats are and where we sit.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Particularly with the bigger tests, like the CT scans and the MRIs. I understand, I mean, that’s expensive

equipment, but am I right in thinking that there's a major barrier to that, it's not the capital expense; it's the staffing required to – if we were to get a second MRI, for example, to cut wait times down considerably, is it the staffing costs that are the big barrier to making that sort of decision?

Mr. Mitchell: I don't know if it's cost. It's finding staff, in some cases – recruiting staff is always an issue. I believe, and I'm going from recall here, but I think there was – we had some vacancies for various reasons last year, which caused us a little bit of a backlog, but I think they're back on track now. It was, maybe, a mat leave or two mat leaves.

Then, that becomes the issue to try to find people to backfill, right? Because it's short-term, you know, that type of thing. That was one of our issues last year. I think we're in pretty good shape right now.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Okay.

Mr. Mitchell: As Denise said, we might not be right up to the benchmark, but we're doing good right now, at this point, anyway, as long as things stay the way they are.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thankfully, touch wood, I haven't had to, personally, have many experiences in any of the hospitals on the Island. Reports that I get from people who go to the QEH are almost always positive –

Mr. Mitchell: Yes, absolutely.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: – just the level of care they receive there and the way in which the care is delivered. All kinds of good reports coming back.

I'm wondering whether the – and you would know, minister, that it's the most inefficient, ineffective way to spend money when it comes to dealing with people with emergency problems; the ER as this sort of funnel through which many of those problems come.

The wait times in the ERs are notoriously high, whether it's – it's a bit better at the PCH, as I understand it, on average, than QEH, but what are you doing, both, to reduce that wait time? I mean, it ceases to be

emergency care if you have to sit there for six hours. But, more, perhaps, more or equally importantly, the cost involved of using that facility to deal with what often are not situations that should end up in the hospital.

What are you doing to triage that and to, sort of, move people out of the ER?

Mr. Mitchell: I think, to your point, the triage identified a lot of that concern. Apps, actually patient flow within the hospital has an effect, too.

Obviously, announcement of 100 new long-term care beds will take some people out of the hospital beds that are in there now. The seniors that are waiting for long-term care beds. That's going to aid patient flow.

If you're in the ER, you appear with whatever the issue is, we now have a place for you to transition to very quickly, so then more people can come through. If you're in the ER and you're waiting, then, you got – kind of backlogs up. Obviously, to recruit more doctors and nurse practitioners into some of the ER settings, as I mentioned earlier today; Kings County – they can aid that process of wait times.

Obviously, in areas where walk-in clinics, they take some of that, you know, in the city and in probably Summerside where if there's a clinic there to go to then you stay out of the ER, right? You're over there, you're treated and you're gone home.

These are all things we're working with and working on. I think that piece of long-term care beds, patient flow, so that you're not waiting in the hospital for weeks or even a month for a bed to come up in the long-term care facility, will really help that process, too.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: When it comes to mental health admissions, have you been keeping statistics on the increase, and I'm assuming it is an increase, in the acute mental health admissions that you get at QEH, whether that be psychotic incidents or people who are suicidal. Do you keep statistics on that?

Mr. Mitchell: I would say those are probably available. I don't know if Denise has them with her, here.

Denise Lewis Fleming CEO: Perhaps, we can look to those when we get to the section on acute mental health because that would be covered –

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Okay.

Denise Lewis Fleming CEO: – I believe I have some stats over in that section.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Okay.

Chair: Are you okay with that?

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Yes, I am, but I have another question.

When one arrives at the QEH with an acute mental health problem, there are a couple of rooms there, which are, sort of, designed to be very transitory places. But, I understand that occasionally patients end up being kept in those rooms for extended periods of time. What are we doing to make sure that somebody in a crisis, a mental health crisis, that that is not exacerbated by being put in a – essentially what's a prison cell?

Mr. Mitchell: I've had opportunity to talk about that with both ERs. Obviously, that is a concern to identify. Again, it's a patient flow. We don't know if we have an availability to go to the units. That's wonderful, but we don't always have that. The beds will be filled in Unit 9, or in Summerside at the other unit, where you would go.

I am aware that from time to time the stay there is longer than anybody wants it to be. We're trying to come up with some reasonable solution there.

I don't know if you had anything to add to that, Denise.

Denise Lewis Fleming CEO: I know there has been work that's been going on over the past year. In order to coordinate more with the nurse manager down on the floor in Unit 9, and the crisis mental health response team within the hospital in order to connect those groups and enable that flow better. That's another piece of work they were trying to advance in order to minimize the length of time people would be up in that hold room while they're awaiting care.

The other piece is also working to make sure, sometimes they have to be held and seen by the psychiatrist before they can be admitted to the floor.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Yeah.

Thank you, Chair.

I'm aware there are many factors that go into that.

Chair: The hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid.

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you, Chair.

I'm also aware that there are a lot of factors go into that, but I know on March 28th, there was a report that it takes 22 days for emergency psychiatric patients to be seen. The very next day, there was a release from Health PEI saying that experienced crisis intervention professions respond promptly to mental health emergencies at both QEH and PCH emergency departments.

How is a 22-day-wait a prompt response?

Mr. Mitchell: I guess, when you look at the time period that you speak of, I assume, I'm just going to go back in my memory here, but at about that time, we were just recruiting the four new psychiatrists to come into PEI to do their work here. There's no secret, we were struggling for six to eight months there.

It would have been during that time period that those statistics would have derived from. I think if we had the ability and maybe Denise does, to say, compare that snapshot, in that time, to today, I think it would be significantly improved. But, I don't know if that is able to be provided to you today.

At that point in time was, you know, they were challenging times, there's no question about it. That number is concerning, but not surprising, based on where we were.

Mr. MacEwen: You tell me you can get me that information today, about what the wait time is now?

Denise Lewis Fleming CEO: I don't have it right here with me –

Mr. MacEwen: But you can get bring –

Denise Lewis Fleming CEO: – send it back to the House.

Mr. Mitchell: Yeah, we'll get it.

Denise Lewis Fleming CEO: Yeah.

Mr. MacEwen: How many of the four new ones are doing ER coverage?

Denise Lewis Fleming CEO: To my understanding, at least three of them.

Mr. Mitchell: I'm pretty sure three are. I'm not sure about the fourth, though. I don't know. I think, I know three are. I'm not sure about the fourth.

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you.

Chair: The hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque.

Mr. MacKay: Thank you, Chair.

I'm curious, minister, what is the average cost today for a patient in hospital, a long-term patient?

Mr. Mitchell: A long-term care patient that's waiting in the hospital to go –

Mr. MacKay: That's – yeah.

Mr. Mitchell: Yeah.

Chair: (Indistinct) another section?

Denise Lewis Fleming CEO: To clarify, do you mean the average cost of a hospital stay?

Mr. MacKay: Yeah, of the patient stay. Is there an actual number they go by that – a patient in long-term care? Like a daily cost?

Denise Lewis Fleming CEO: There's a difference between – the average cost of a hospital stay for Health PEI at the QEH is approximately \$1,100 a day. That's set by our inter-provincial rate.

Mr. MacKay: Okay.

Denise Lewis Fleming CEO: The amount that a senior awaiting long-term care is

responsible for is actually tied to their long-term care subsidization rate that they would be receiving.

Mr. MacKay: Going back to, I guess, the follow-up of what you just mentioned there. If somebody is in, which I've had a couple of constituents, I guess, looking back that have been into long-term care beds in hospital for as long as three months, but that cost is not \$1,100 a day, is that what – it's lower?

Mr. Mitchell: Not to the family, if that's what you're asking.

Mr. MacKay: No, I guess (Indistinct)

Mr. Mitchell: But, I guess, in all fairness, if you're in a hospital bed, whether you're long-term care or whether you've broken your leg, it's probably the same value –

Mr. MacKay: That's what I'm looking –

Mr. Mitchell: – yeah, I think that's what you're trying –

Denise Lewis Fleming CEO: That's what I'm saying; the cost to deliver services at the hospital are, on average, \$1,100 per patient day; but the cost to a family of long term care –

Mr. Mitchell: Right, right.

Denise Lewis Fleming CEO: – a person awaiting long term care, the maximum it would be, I believe, is around \$76 a day.

Mr. Mitchell: Yeah, 76 or (Indistinct)

Chair: The hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque.

Mr. MacKay: Just one more follow-up question, Chair, thank you.

So that \$1,100 a day, has that increased year to year?

Denise Lewis Fleming CEO: Yes, it does change slightly every year based on what our actual costs are. We submit our hospital expenses to CIHI, the Canadian Institute for Health Information, and they utilize our data in order to calculate what our per diem rate or our daily rate is that we would bill for

hospital charges to individuals that are out of province.

Mr. MacKay: Okay. Thank you, Chair. I'm good for now.

Chair: The hon. Member from Borden-Kinkora.

Mr. Fox: Thank you.

Just to pick up on where the hon. member was talking about, how many people would be filling bed space in long term care –

Mr. Mitchell: In hospitals?

Mr. Fox: Yeah.

Mr. Mitchell: Sixty-six.

Mr. Fox: That's all?

Mr. Mitchell: Today.

Mr. Fox: Is that (Indistinct) –

Mr. Mitchell: There's about 150 Islanders waiting to get in long-term care facilities. So there's 66 in hospital, there's 73 or 74 at home, and there's probably a dozen that are in community care facilities that are waiting to transition to long-term care. That should add up to about 150, I think.

Mr. Fox: So Denise, can you explain that pricing again? You say it's \$1,100 per day for the average hospital bed, so can you explain how that works with long-term care in a hospital?

Denise Lewis Fleming CEO: The difference between the two, the cost to deliver the care, is approximately \$1,100 per day. That's based on all the staffing costs, the support services, our plant operations, heat, light, property taxes. It's an average for the cost of that whole service. Whereas, the long term care, as you're aware, that under the policy that Health PEI has is once you're medically discharged you're no longer requiring acute level of care –

Mr. Fox: Right.

Denise Lewis Fleming CEO: – and you're awaiting placement in a long term-care bed, then there is a policy about billing what you

would be equivalent to as if you were in the bed in long term-care.

Mr. Fox: Okay.

Denise Lewis Fleming CEO: The maximum daily rate is approximately \$76.

Mr. Fox: So then 50-some people or 60-some people that cannot get into long-term care but they're in a hospital bed, what would the cost per day for that person – would that be \$1,100?

Mr. Mitchell: As I said earlier, it's really immaterial whether you're there, you know, long-term care waiting for bed, broken leg, surgery on your knee, any other issue (Indistinct) –

Mr. Fox: It's still \$1,100.

Mr. Mitchell: It's the same. Every bed in the hospitals in PEI costs \$1,100; but it is important when you talk of the seniors that they're in the right facility getting the right care that they need for a geriatric (Indistinct) cares that they need.

Obviously that's why we've announced we need to open up more long-term care beds so that they're transitioned out of there and into the right environment or setting for their best health care.

Mr. Fox: So –

Mr. Mitchell: So that (Indistinct), the cost will still be \$1,100 even after that person moves out and somebody else moves in, obviously, right? But it will open up the opportunities for – you know, if there's people – and we often hear this – that they're waiting in ERs for a bed on the floor to open, that's going to help that transition piece and people aren't there for two weeks or three weeks, they're there the appropriate amount of stay for whatever service they're getting done.

Mr. Fox: So if my math is correct, that's \$60,000 a day!

An Hon. Member: No, 72,600 a day.

Mr. Fox: \$72,000 a day, times that by a year –

Mr. Mitchell: (Indistinct)

Denise Lewis Fleming CEO: I'm going to offer a correction to the statement that the hon. member just made, is that as mentioned it's a maximum of \$76 a day; however, as many in the House may be aware, a number of our Island seniors are eligible for subsidization, so some of those individuals, they would be charged nothing because of their income level. Then they receive complete subsidization from the province in relation to their long-term care bed, so their bill would be zero. Whereas, others, if they have the income capacity, might be 78; so it can range from zero dollars to the \$76.

Mr. Fox: But if we're spending that much money a day, a month, in a year on seniors in the hospital filling beds that they don't need to be in, why wouldn't we divert that money immediately from health and build more seniors housing?

Mr. Mitchell: Hon. member, currently today we have 1,147 long-term care residents on Prince Edward Island. That's the number we're working with, and that's why we are increasing that by 100. Well, up to 100, I guess is – you know, we'll reassess next year.

Obviously, currently there are private facilities that are ready to take on some of these patients. Some are dealing with areas of dementia or Alzheimer's so those are specialized, so we have to determine who's available to deal with those type of issues. I'm really pleased to say that we're going to provide 100 new beds here in the next two years.

Mr. Fox: One final question since we've talked about long term care: Has there been any analysis done on what a proposed carbon tax would do to these people living in long-term care?

Mr. Mitchell: From the department of health?

Mr. Fox: Well –

Mr. Mitchell: There may be some associated numbers that are – actually, there isn't.

Mr. Fox: There hasn't.

Mr. Mitchell: Be more specific, though, so that I can –

Mr. Fox: If the federal government imposes their carbon tax and that's passed down to PEI, has there been any analysis done to see what that impact is going to be on somebody in a long term care facility or that type of facility?

Mr. Mitchell: You're talking government-owned and private-owned.

Mr. Fox: Yeah.

Mr. Mitchell: Obviously, I'm not going to speak for the minister who's handling the file, but there's some indications made that we are leaders right now in our energy supply and usage on PEI, so I think there's arguments being made there that we're already doing well within our share. I haven't got the finals tabulated on that, so I guess we just work as we move forward.

Mr. Fox: Okay, thank you.

Chair: Thank you.

Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Chair.

I just wanted to ask you a question on, picked up something that the minister said a few moments ago, that there's going to be I believe he said upwards of 100 new beds open in the next year or so? Is that correct?

Mr. Mitchell: Two years.

Leader of the Opposition: Oh, next two years. Can you confirm whether or not that includes the beds that have been sitting vacant now for several years at Andrews of Stratford?

Mr. Mitchell: Well, I anticipate – you know, as soon as we get the budget passed, we get out with RFPs, so I don't really know where the beds will be identified at. I do know from discussions that there are private enterprises on Prince Edward Island that are ready to respond to an RFP. So until that goes out and see who's got what and where they are, I don't have a good indication of exactly narrowing that down.

Leader of the Opposition: So there was a figure tossed around here a little while ago that it's roughly, I believe, \$1,100, which is the typical cost for a hospital bed on a daily basis?

Mr. Mitchell: Yes.

Leader of the Opposition: Is that just for the primary referral hospitals or is that for all hospital beds across PEI?

Denise Lewis Fleming CEO: That would be for the QEH.

Leader of the Opposition: For the QEH.

Denise Lewis Fleming CEO: Yeah.

Leader of the Opposition: I know in the past I've been approached by constituents when they have a – in most cases it was a parent that maybe had broken a hip or something like that and had surgery, and was ready to either move on to rehabilitation or convalescent care, something like that, and they were moved to the hospital in Souris and the immediate reaction from the family members was it was terrible because they were just so far away.

But within very short order, visiting their loved one at the hospital in Souris, they were ecstatic over the care that they were receiving, and that's a testament to the people that work in the facility, not only Souris hospital, but all of our rural hospitals.

Can you confirm whether or not the rural hospitals currently are operating at more or less 95% or 100% capacity and where we're at on that level?

Mr. Mitchell: Yeah, and to your point, I often hear the same concern if someone (Indistinct) restorative care could be provided at the Prince Edward home or Souris typically. Obviously, there is some angst right off the get-go, but you're right, once you get to that facility, it's wonderfully run, the care is second to none, and oftentimes the recoveries are fairly reasonable.

I think they're pretty much at capacity, but I'd say that's a pretty fluid number, so I'll check with Denise.

Denise Lewis Fleming CEO: So for the Kings County Memorial Hospital for the last fiscal year that just ended, they were operating at about nearly 100% capacity.

Souris Hospital was at approximately 88% capacity on average over the whole year.

If you'll bear with me for one moment – the western hospitals are in a section further along, but I'll just see if we can (Indistinct)

Leader of the Opposition: Yeah, makes sense. They're further away.

Denise Lewis Fleming CEO: Western Hospital, their average occupancy was 95% last year, and Community Hospital O'Leary, their occupancy was 80%.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you.

Denise Lewis Fleming CEO: Well used.

Mr. Mitchell: (Indistinct)

Chair: You good?

Leader of the Opposition: Yeah, I'm good, Chair.

Chair: Thank you.

Shall the section carry? Carried.

Community Hospitals – East

“Appropriations provided for service delivery and program needs for Souris and KCMH community hospitals to deliver a variety of medical hospital services, including short-term acute care, outpatient and emergency services, convalescent/rehabilitative, palliative, and respite care.” Administration: 228,900. Equipment: 32,200. Materials, Supplies and Services: 1,770,900. Professional Services: 22,900. Salaries: 10,755,000. Travel and Training: 53,700.

Total Community Hospitals – East: 12,863,600.

The hon. Member from Georgetown-St. Peters.

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Chair.

Just a follow-up to the questions that the Leader of the Opposition had today; I noticed lately the ER has been closed down a lot and it's something that I hear a lot of concern about, particularly in the outer ring of the Montague area.

What can we do to help alleviate that situation?

Mr. Mitchell: Yeah, so I think the number was nine in the last number of months and that is a concern, but since that time – since the initial ones, we were able to recruit a couple of doctors. But, when doctors need some time off it is a challenge so we are going to, as I said earlier, we are going down on the 18th of May to meet with the mayor, some councillors and some doctors. I think there are other frontline staff, and I'm taking the deputy with me – the staff that will be dealing with Denise to come up with some kind of a solution.

Lots of times, there are doctors that step up when a doctor needs to have time off or whatever the reason there, but we're trying to find out what can we do to do better? Is it the hours that's the biggest issue? Is it a walk-in clinic that would be the best solution? I know there are two sides to that from when I went down earlier, but if it's a solution we're willing to look at that. The nurse practitioners can fill a role and we're sending a – there will be a new nurse practitioner going to that area.

I think we have things in place for that initial discussion to say: Do any of these make sense? And have that open, frank discussion about – it's the Islanders' health that we're dealing with, and we want to provide the proper individuals, the proper health professionals, and services there to do that work. So, what can we do?

We're going to sit down and try to come to some agreement that will be beneficial to everyone.

Mr. Myers: One of the other things that came up, and it kind of coincides partially with it, is the fact that there is no walk-in clinic in that area.

I know, from witnessing in the Charlottetown area, how efficient that becomes when it takes away from people

who might be waiting. So, in Montague you go to the ER. That's just the way it is because there is no other option. If you called your doctor and said: I'm sick – you're going to get an appointment six weeks from now, and if you're really sick or if you need some sort of treatment or prescription, you have to find a way to make that happen so it becomes the ER, which I would still go to the ER in Montague before Charlottetown for speed. But, when it's closed I can't do that.

Has there ever been any extra thought given to how we could have a walk-in clinic to kind of run parallel and may take some of the strain off of the ER?

Mr. Mitchell: Yeah, absolutely.

There currently exists, that collaborative approach with nurse practitioners now. There are two of them in that area, and so that ability is there. These are the doctors that we would have to say: If there was a walk-in clinic that was developed there, would you be able to provide any services toward that?

We reach out further though, even when the ER is closing because a doctor cannot fulfill the shifts, we reach out across Prince Edward Island. If the walk-in clinic is established, we reach out our tentacles as far as we can to say who is available to come, and kind of determine that prior to.

But initially, on Friday the 18th I'll be asking any of the doctors in that area: Is a walk-in clinic the solution? And if it is: Are you willing to spend any of your hours there? Right now, it's kind of a one-in-eight rotation for them and there are times where they need to be not working. So, I want to work best with them. I want to have discussions that bear some good outcome.

So until I sit down – I did have – when I had my initial tour down there, I did have a couple of brief conversations, but I was hopeful, I guess, at that time when we recruited two new ones that, hey, we got the problems fixed. But, there are from time to time that, for whatever reason, there are holes so we just got to come to terms and say: How can we fix it?

Mr. Myers: I am aware of the issue now. I know there's a doctor that's away and I don't fault anybody for – it's hard-working doctors down there and I don't fault anybody for wanting to take time off.

I know from the attraction of doctors to rural communities has been an issue, not just this government faces but governments everywhere face, and I know there's a few who have come out here recently that would be from the area or between Montague and Souris, and I'm wondering if you have approached any of those doctors to see if they'd be willing to come to the area. It might be a good time to get them; they're young.

Mr. Mitchell: Yeah, and that's the discussions that are being held right now and like you said though, everybody is out talking to all of them so you've got to state your case and plead it well, and make the good points of why it's good to be here.

We're having some – as I said earlier today, there will be a couple of new signings in the very near future, internationally, as well. One of the best networks we have is when somebody comes from somewhere else and really likes it here and tells their friends and colleagues, then we get a few calls saying: I would like to come over and have a look too.

So, we get them here as quickly as we can and hopefully we can snag them to stay. We have lots of good reasons why PEI would be a wonderful place to work and live and we've just got to continue to work on that, as everybody in here (Indistinct) hard competition.

Mr. Myers: Absolutely.

Chair: The hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid.

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you, Chair.

Do you have statistics that show the number of cases at the Kings County Memorial Hospital that are not emergency but are presenting at emergency?

Mr. Mitchell: I don't have them at my fingertips. Denise may, but probably –

Denise Lewis Fleming CEO: Yeah.

Mr. Mitchell: You do? Okay.

Yeah, so those cases are rated, I guess, when they come into triage and determined urgent-urgent, less urgent type of thing.

Have you got some stats there?

Denise Lewis Fleming CEO: I do.

For last year at the Kings County Memorial Hospital, there was a total of 15,347 visits to the Kings County Memorial Hospital. That included all visits –

Mr. MacEwen: Sorry, did you say 347?

Mr. Mitchell: 15,000.

Denise Lewis Fleming CEO: 15,347.

Mr. MacEwen: I was going to say.

Denise Lewis Fleming CEO: Now, as you may be aware, there are triage levels, as the minister mentioned. Triage levels one and two are considered resuscitation or emergent. That was less than 4% of the visits. Triage levels four and five are the ones that are considered less urgent and non urgent, and in that particular area – so the less urgent, sometimes those are ones that could be appropriately seen in a physician's office or at a walk-in clinic, and the level fives, that equates to approximately 58% of the visits to the Kings County emergency department.

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you.

That's a staggering number and why the department has, kind of, taken things into their own hands to try and get that message out there.

The Member from Georgetown-St. Peters was asking about it, the Leader of the Opposition was asking about it. We've all been asking about whether it's the walk-in clinics with physicians or nurse practitioners.

What's the real hold up with that because it's obvious that that would certainly help things at that ER if we could even cut that by 25% or in half?

Mr. Mitchell: Part of the discussion is to – it's to look as broad as you can, but to have everybody at the table at the same broad level. Obviously, in the west, I'll use the Alberton, they have a bit of a different system, which I said a couple of weeks ago during Question Period that maybe that's even something that we should look at there.

They do triage or assess and say; look, you could be dealt with tomorrow. Can you come back in tomorrow or – and basically, you know, individuals do that. That's currently not the practice in Kings County.

That was another one that I said: well, maybe we should look at that. I think we used (Indistinct) paramedics a little bit too in Alberton. That's not done in Kings County either. It's a matter of everybody sitting at the table, agreeing that a solution needs to be found and then agreeing on working that solution collectively and collaboratively, whether it involves nurse practitioners, doctors from other regions or locums or whatever it is. Just put it all on the table and see where we get.

Mr. MacEwen: I still feel like we're dancing around. Is there an elephant in the room here? Is it as simple as, you know, is it going back to turf, is there –

Mr. Mitchell: Well, there's –

Mr. MacEwen: – maybe we, you know –

Mr. Mitchell: – further discussion –

Mr. MacEwen: – should be getting – that should be a physician spot rather than trying to get another nurse practitioner in there. Is – because I still feel like we're talking all around. I get what you're saying when you say we need to get everybody in the room. We need everybody in agreement. But, to me that screams months and months. You how hard it is to get all the players.

Is that what you're getting at? Is there, kind of, a push and pull there?

Mr. Mitchell: There's work that needs to be done there. I'm not going to dance around that. We're going to do that work.

Obviously, there are 15,000 people go through that ER per year, right? It's

providing a very valuable service. I'm not trying to indicate that anybody that's there is not doing their job to its full capacity –

Mr. MacEwen: No.

Mr. Mitchell: – they certainly are, but these few holes are fixable. We're going to find that best way to do that, but we still need to talk about that, right?

Mr. MacEwen: Minister: Do we track the, I'll say the location or where these people are coming from at the Kings County memorial ER?

Mr. Mitchell: Yes, we do.

Mr. MacEwen: Are we able to say that of that 58% that are not urgent, half of them are coming Souris and Morell or from a place that where – and we always keep saying, walk-in clinics. We all get that that's not the best way to do things. There's no continuity of care there. But, it certainly alleviates pressures elsewhere.

Are we looking at that saying: oh, wow, half of those people are coming from Souris? Maybe we should put extra resources, or really try and make things better for walk-in clinics in Souris or something.

Mr. Mitchell: Denise doesn't have the information either and I don't have it, but I do know it's tracked. I know there will be people from Charlottetown show up at Prince County Hospital, people from Summerside show up at the QEH, people from Souris show up at the QEH, people from Charlottetown show up at Kings County.

There is, those numbers are available.

Mr. MacEwen: Are we using them?

Mr. Mitchell: I would – oh, yes, well. Yes, but, you know, we need to provide health service whenever you show up at the door, right? Whether you live in Tignish and you're showing up in Kings County, it doesn't mean we chase you out the door and say, go back –

Mr. MacEwen: No, but it might make you say, wow, we should put some resources there.

Mr. Mitchell: Well –

Mr. MacEwen: That would help our ER.

Mr. Mitchell: That is part of the conversation. Resources, as I – we're 11 doctors short. We're trying to find them, right? We've got seven new nurse practitioners coming out in the next month. That brings us from 22, add seven more. We're trying to –

Mr. MacEwen: Certainly sounds like –

Mr. Mitchell: – fill –

Mr. MacEwen: – the hours in Morell are going to expand, that's for sure. That's what you're –

Mr. Mitchell: What's going to expand?

Mr. MacEwen: The hours in Morell.

Chair: Do you have another question?

Mr. MacEwen: It was just a comment.

Chair: Okay.

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you, Chair.

Chair: Are you done?

Mr. MacEwen: I'm good.

Chair: Thank you.

The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Chair.

I was wondering; one thing I've heard is that people that have Alzheimer's are taking up beds in hospitals. I was wondering if there are plans in place to move them out of hospitals into proper facilities, whether that would long-term care facilities or other places to free up those hospital beds.

Chair: Hon. member, could you please repeat your question?

Mr. Trivers: Oh yes.

Chair: Thanks.

Mr. Trivers: My understanding is that there are hospital beds taken up by patients that have Alzheimer's. I was wondering what the plans are to help move them out of hospital beds and free up those beds into more appropriate facilities, like long-term care facilities or mental health facilities as needs may be?

Mr. Mitchell: We did speak about this a little bit earlier.

Mr. Trivers: Okay.

Mr. Mitchell: But, with the new long-term care beds that we have – part of our budget that we're moving forward with, 50 this year, 50 next year. We'll reassess that next year and determine our numbers a little better. But there are 66 seniors right now in hospital beds across Prince Edward Island waiting for admission to long-term care. This is going to be a big deal on that, over the next two years, to have 100 beds so that they're not waiting in – that extended waiting in hospitals won't exist.

We're working on that now to identify. We'll be putting out an RFP after the budget goes. We'll be identifying where beds are available. Where, across Prince Edward Island, they are available; who has capacity and then working towards moving that along as quickly as we can.

Mr. Trivers: Of those 66 that are waiting for long-term care, what percentage or approximately or how many would have dementia or Alzheimer's related (Indistinct)

Mr. Mitchell: (Indistinct) would be – there would be numbers. There are also 73 waiting in community care facilities. Some of those would have the same needs, right?

I mean, I don't have that differentiated number broken down like that. The most important thing is if you need long-term care service, if you need that environment for that senior that's where you should be and that's what we're going to try to transition to as quickly as we can.

Mr. Trivers: Of those combined 139 people that are waiting for long-term care –

Mr. Mitchell: (Indistinct)

Mr. Trivers: – the community care and hospitals, can you bring back how many of them would require like an Alzheimer type facility or something that, you know, long-term care beds that would be more than just the standard long-term care bed?

Mr. Mitchell: I can see if we can get a break down. Currently, we have about 150. There's also, sorry. I gave you the wrong – that 73, is people waiting at home.

Mr. Trivers: Okay.

Mr. Mitchell: The number waiting in community care is about a dozen to 13, or so.

Mr. Trivers: Okay.

Mr. Mitchell: Then, there are 66. Those change a little bit day to day, so the overall numbers are higher than 50, basically. Some are waiting at home with various levels of needs, as well, right?

I can find how is in the hospital, if I can get it right down of that. It would be harder for me to identify people that are home.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, minister.

If you can include the full complement of people who are waiting to get in –

Mr. Mitchell: I'll see –

Mr. Trivers: – that would be –

Mr. Mitchell: – what's available –

Mr. Trivers: – great.

Mr. Mitchell: – and bring back whatever is available.

Mr. Trivers: Because I mean –

Mr. Mitchell: – (Indistinct)

Mr. Trivers: – it makes a difference right, when you're trying to plan for the facilities, what type of facility they need as – okay, thank you.

Chair: The hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid.

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you, Chair.

Since, the hon. member is on that topic: Why are there Alzheimer patients in Unit 9? Why would they ever be there?

Mr. Mitchell: I don't – I'm not clinical so I really don't know if that's – do they have more than one issue, I guess? Is there mental health involved and dementia or something like that could be the case as the hon. member mentioned there. There could be more than one issue.

I wouldn't have that kind of information available.

Mr. MacEwen: Does it concern you or is it just because we don't have any beds anywhere that they're in Unit 9 or like, are we just trying to find any bed possible for Alzheimer's? Is it a security thing? I would think that you'd be briefed if we had Alzheimer's patients in our mental health unit.

Denise Lewis Fleming CEO: That is not a first placement selection. Only if it's medically necessary due to – you might have other psycho-geriatric issues that need psychiatry attention and for that reason they may end up in Unit 9. There is also a psychogeriatric unit at the Hillsborough Hospital, so people with dementia, there's many other components to their health status and so they may require treatment in those areas and that's also why the work on the mental health redevelopment campus is going to be so important, along with the long-term care beds – in order to help with patient flow that once those senior individuals receive their care that they need for any mental health treatment, that they can then move forward into other appropriate placements that support their dementia needs.

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you to that answer.

Just to confirm that if there was someone with dementia – an Alzheimer's patient – in our mental health unit then they would be there for mental health purposes. They're not there because there's not a bed –

Mr. Mitchell: I would assume so, yes.

Mr. MacEwen: Well I don't want to assume so. I want to know if that's the case. Or are we putting people there because we don't have beds elsewhere? That's different. There's a huge difference with that.

Mr. Mitchell: To the specific case that you reference, I have no information on it. If you wanted to have an off-base discussion on it, I could determine that for you. I'd do some investigating.

Mr. MacEwen: I just – no. I guess, officially, there should never be –

Mr. Mitchell: You're right. And Denise will reiterate that.

Denise Lewis Fleming CEO: It is not our plan or preference to put people with dementia in Unit 9, however – and it's not unique to the psychiatry service – you can occasionally have individuals that are placed, what we refer to, as off-service. If all the beds are full in the hospital in the unit that would primarily be their care centre, but there is still a bed available and it can be appropriately used to care for that individual, we will place them there until such a time as we can move them to the appropriate service area.

Mr. MacEwen: It's my understanding that there is somebody there now, but I'm curious if that bed is being taken from somebody else. What happens if someone needs that bed for mental health purposes, but there's an Alzheimer's patient in there, where does that happen? Do they go to another unit, or does the Alzheimer's patient get bumped? How would that work? What's the policy for that?

Denise Lewis Fleming CEO: There's daily bed management, so they look at how they may need to adjust the bed utilization in order to accommodate the patients that need to be admitted and get them to the service unit that they need to be on.

Mr. MacEwen: So if that Alzheimer's patient had been there for a few weeks now, what would that tell us – that no one needs the bed in Unit 9 currently?

Denise Lewis Fleming CEO: I cannot draw that conclusion from that statement, no.

Mr. Mitchell: I would assume they're there for mental health concerns and they may have Alzheimer's, or dementia, or some other ailments too, but I would assume that there's obviously some mental health issue that's being addressed there as well.

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you, Chair.

Chair: Shall the section carry? Carried.

Provincial Clinical Services

“Appropriations provided for delivery of diagnostic imaging, laboratory and Pharmacy services in PEI Hospitals.”
Administration: 314,200. Equipment: 12,141,500. Materials, Supplies and Services: 1,071,100. Salaries: 25,886,700. Travel and Training: 184,300.

Total Provincial Clinical Services:
39,647,900.

The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Chair.

Please direct me if I'm asking this question in the wrong section, but it involves the emergency department, but it's the emergency department of the PEI Rape and Sexual Assault Centre. Is that included in the emergency health services section of the Budget?

Denise Lewis Fleming CEO: I'm sorry. Can you repeat what –

Mr. Trivers: The PEI Rape and Sexual Assault Centre is an emergency health service and I was wondering if this was the appropriate spot to ask questions about the budget for that?

Denise Lewis Fleming CEO: That centre, I believe, is not-for-profit. It's not operated by Health PEI.

Mr. Trivers: Okay. Well, maybe I should add, because it's an emergency health service, and it's a non-profit and perhaps there should be some budget in here. I was wondering if there's any more funding available for the PEI RSAC, the Rape and Sexual Assault Centre, because in 2017 they did say that they do need more funding,

especially for their emergency health services. Did you consider that when you were putting this budget together?

Mr. Mitchell: I think if somebody is needing a service because of anything like that, they do present at hospitals; they do present at ERs; they are dealt with within the health system, so I'm not sure that we're not meeting the need of someone who's just experienced a rape situation. They come, they get the treatment that's required, all aspects to the best of my knowledge and I don't know what all would be involved in that as far as (Indistinct) – we do deal with those types of incidents currently.

Mr. Trivers: So maybe my better question is: How much funding does the province provide to the PEI Rape and Sexual Assault Centre that has to deal with these emergency health services?

Denise Lewis Fleming CEO: All I can speak to is Health PEI and we do not provide funding to the PEI Rape and Sexual Assault Centre.

Mr. Trivers: Does the province at all?

Denise Lewis Fleming CEO: I cannot speak to that.

Mr. Trivers: Minister? I don't know if (Indistinct)

Mr. Mitchell: (Indistinct) like physiotherapy, we don't supply all – there's other, probably, private things that we don't supply to. I don't know whose budget that falls under.

Chair: We have an intervention from the hon. Minister of Family and Human Services.

Ms. Mundy: Yes, we do fund the PEI Rape and Sexual Assault Centre and we actually, just a couple of weeks ago, we announced one-time funding for an additional \$75,000 to help them address their wait list.

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: How come that's not included as an emergency health service?

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

Ms. Mundy: (Indistinct), sorry.

Mr. Mitchell: I think the emergency part of that health service, they do present and we do address when someone's been abused or raped, they do show up at ERs and they do show up at doctor's offices and we do address those needs.

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: So, on a slightly different topic, thank you for your response to that. I'm still sorting it out exactly.

I think more funding is probably needed for the PEI Rape and Sexual Assault Centre and as an emergency service, something tells me that maybe should be coming from health and wellness budget, but if you can find it in the family and human services budget, that'd be good and we'll get to that, I'm sure.

My question, Chair, thank you for your patience – is the deal with the number of beds in the ER – emergency department or emergency room – that are taken up by patients waiting for psychiatric help. There's a number of patients – we've heard lots of reports of patients weeks waiting in the ER, taking up a bed there, waiting to get into, say, Unit 9 or elsewhere. I was wondering if any of the budget allocated here in emergency health services is going to help address that issue.

Mr. Mitchell: I'm unaware of people waiting for mental health needs for weeks at a time in the ER. Obviously we've talked about particular times where they are in those – there's a couple of rooms available for people with mental health issues that stay a little longer than we would like, but weeks at a time, I'm unaware of.

But having said that, we did have a shortage of psychiatrists there for a while so do you have any update data on that?

Denise Lewis Fleming CEO: So, slight clarification: The section that we're currently in is provincial clinical services, which covers the – if I'm correct here

(Indistinct) – diagnostic imaging, laboratory services, and pharmacy services in the hospitals. The emergency services in the emergency department were covered in the QEH when we did that previous section. We do, as you mentioned, have usually every day at least a few patients awaiting placement to go into a bed to your referral of people holding a bed. However, as much as the conversation has been on mental health patients, stats that I've heard, it's usually less than – I believe it's 3% of the patients awaiting are psychiatry patients. They just happen to be the focus a bit more of the conversation with all the mental health issues going on.

Mr. Trivers: Definitely, I mean last summer I did talk to a young lady who spent many, many days waiting to be admitted to Unit 9 and so, I don't know, I'd question those stats. I'd be interested to see them.

One thing that she did mention, when she was waiting in the emergency department, it was the, like the staff, the non-medical staff in the emergency department, really didn't know how to deal with people that were having mental health concerns.

For example, she was, sort of, tackled and pinned to the floor with her arm behind her back kind of thing, which was not really an appropriate response. One thing she had brought forward was simple training on how to deal with people that have mental health issues would have really – it would have been a good way to dissolve the situation.

I was wondering if there's any money in the budget to help train, just that simple, I think there's anywhere between one and three-day courses that you can take to help deal with people in emergency that have those sort of needs.

Mr. Mitchell: I don't have that number. I do know that the Leader of the Third Party spoke about those with gender reconstruction and I do know that PEERS Alliance has gone over for some, I'll call it, sensitivity training, for just to kind of bring more awareness of individuals' needs.

I'd be quite safe in saying that I'm assuming that probably goes on anyway, but we'll see what number Denise comes up with there

that provides that type of training over the course of a year.

Denise Lewis Fleming CEO: Under the QEH section you would have noted that there's a line for travel and training. Within that travel and training component there is funding for in-service training that they can target – for staff in the hospital. It can be any of the staff, but they also prioritize what can be done.

It includes approximately \$26,400. Then, it also includes another \$145,000 in support for our staff in educational courses.

That funding is there in order to help advance that training. I know there is a conversation and work that's going on between the mental health group and the emergency department doctors to help improve.

Mr. Mitchell: I think if cases as you suggested occur, obviously, we take that quite seriously. Whoever is involved, it would be investigated. If it's determined that some kind of more specialized training be done, it would be readily available.

Mr. Trivers: Okay, thanks, Chair.

Chair: You good?

Mr. Trivers: Yeah.

Chair: Denise, I have a question, with regard to diagnostic imaging. In the fall session, I asked a question with regard – when you go to x-ray or go to have a diagnostic test there's always a sign up in the waiting room that says, so many people missed their –

Mr. Mitchell: Missed their appointments.

Chair: – appointment. My question to the minister in the fall session was my dentist and my hair dresser send me out a week before my appointment, they send me a text that says, please confirm your appointment. It says press C to confirm. Within one second, I get a confirmation that they've received that I'm going to show up. Then, the day before, I also get the same text that says, you have an appointment tomorrow.

I was just curious, as a result of the question that I asked in the House in the fall session, is this something that the department, the diagnostic department would take up, there are programs out there that are written, would they be doing something like this to inform their patients?

Denise Lewis Fleming CEO: The diagnostic imaging division is looking at ways to be more proactive in their reach out to remind Islanders about their appointments. We do have a policy though, that we keep in mind about also protecting personal information and using texting in those particular pieces. You need to be very sure that you're texting the correct –

Mr. Mitchell: The right person.

Denise Lewis Fleming CEO: – phone number when we're dealing with this particular health care information. They're currently looking at options for collecting people's email information, if they're willing to share it.

Right now, I believe they're focusing on making sure that they also have staff do call outs to remind people at least 24 hours in advance of the appointments that they have upcoming.

Chair: Great, thanks.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Chair.

Some of those questions that you just asked were actually ones that were on my list. I do want to stick with diagnostic imaging for a few moments.

There was an announcement made, I can't remember, it was just in the last couple of years and what the announcement was, was around the expanded hours for diagnostic imaging. I'm just wondering if the minister can remind me, exactly, what the details were around that.

Mr. Mitchell: There were expanded hours, they went from eight hour days to 12 hour days, I believe; six days a week, as well.

Leader of the Opposition: How has that impacted the wait times because what I'm hearing continually from Islanders, particularly around CT scans and MRIs, in particular MRIs, that it's still a very exhaustive, lengthy wait to get that testing done.

Denise Lewis Fleming CEO: It's interesting, in one of the challenges that we face is we can expand the hours, it's also then determining the demand that's coming in.

For example, on CT scans, in the fiscal year 2013-2014, we did 6,518 CT scans –

Leader of the Opposition: Sorry, that was 2013?

Denise Lewis Fleming CEO: Yes, 2013-2014.

Leader of the Opposition: 2013, how many?

Denise Lewis Fleming CEO: 6,518.

Leader of the Opposition: Okay.

Denise Lewis Fleming CEO: Last fiscal year, up to the end of February, so that would be 11 months worth of data, there were 8,665 CT scans performed. It's a fairly significant increase in volume, which leads back to the conversation and the important work that will be done through the Choosing Wisely campaign on appropriateness. There's one thing to add hours, but we also want to make sure that we're performing CTs appropriately in order to make sure that we can address the wait times while everybody's receiving the services that they need.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you.

The Chair asked, a few moments ago, just regards to – which sounds to be, or appears to be an excessive amount of missed appointments for diagnostic imaging. They have a white board, out at the hospital that I've seen.

Has any research been done to determine the most relevant reason for people missing those appointments?

Denise Lewis Fleming CEO: I'm not aware of any survey the group in conducting, right now, but I would have to go back and ask them if they're doing some research, as they do their call backs.

Mr. Mitchell: On part of tours, that was a question that I asked, when I was out into some of the facilities, was there any reason given? A lot of response was similar that; oh, they just felt somebody else would walk in and take it – just that would be there waiting. I guess people feel that there are always people waiting there, so it's not really a big deal to miss it. They're doing that education piece when you're making that appointment about how important it is that you're here on that particular day at that particular time to have your appointment.

The work with the staff phoning out the 24-hours advance, I think, the numbers are improving. It's that education piece that that is your appointment time. It's very important that you're here. The front end work just to indicate how important it is, is improving.

Leader of the Opposition: I agree that it's paramount that we do remind people that they do have an appointment because, quite often these appointments are made for two, three, four months down the road –

Mr. Mitchell: Absolutely.

Leader of the Opposition: – that type of thing.

Now, as an example, quite often, I will get a phone call a few days in advance as a reminder that I have a dental appointment with my dentist, or even my family doctor, who is a phenomenal individual. He's got a great practice, Dr. David Reid.

I will get reminders from them, as well. I think it's very important that we come up with a system. I understand what Denise is saying with regards to we can't be sending texts out because there is personal information there, medical information in case we're going out to a wrong cell phone number, especially with how frequently people change their phones and maybe change their numbers and things like that.

But, I think the human touch is the best

touch, and whether it's through some dedicated volunteers that the hospitals have, a wonderful core of volunteers that work for them, if that could be part of the process.

The other issue that I'm hearing quite frequently from Islanders is that, okay, yes, they wait to get their diagnostic imagining done and sometimes it's an extensive wait and sometimes it's like that, right? Again, people are triaged and if they need it done quicker they'll have it done quicker.

The other issue I'm hearing on the backside is the length of time that it takes to read the results, and have the results shared with either their specialist or with their family doctor and then to receive that information back.

Is there anything that's being done to expedite that process?

Mr. Mitchell: No.

With today's technology – I'll share you a story that happened to me this week.

Leader of the Opposition: Should I get comfortable?

Mr. Mitchell: No, it's very brief.

Leader of the Opposition: Okay.

Mr. Mitchell: But, it was suggested that I get an x-ray and I said: So what do I do then? Do I take this thing back to you? He said: No, I just go in and look at it online.

That's technology today. To your point, I don't know why it wouldn't be available fairly quickly, but Denise maybe –

Denise Lewis Fleming CEO: What you're referring to might be the wait for the radiologist to complete their report and send it back to the physician. So, some of the things that Health PEI is looking at is what do we have for voice recognition dictation in order for the reports to be prepared faster? Because the reads, from my understanding, are done, actually, fairly quickly and it's getting the reports transcribed and then signed off by the radiologist and forwarded out to the requesting physician.

We are looking at some technology for what we can do to support that.

Leader of the Opposition: I'm just wondering: Can you confirm whether or not the diagnostic imaging equipment at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital is still being shared with the Atlantic Vet College, whereas animals are brought in at night for diagnostic imaging at the QEH?

Denise Lewis Fleming CEO: We haven't done that in a number of years now, no.

Leader of the Opposition: So it's no occurring anymore?

Denise Lewis Fleming CEO: No.

Leader of the Opposition: Okay, thank you.

Chair: Shall the section carry?

The hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid.

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you.

The recent AG report talked a lot about how our medications are dispensed, and narcotics.

How are things going on that front with our provincial pharmacies?

Mr. Mitchell: That was brought forward by the AG and we take that very seriously. There is work going on as we speak to take some better controls there.

Denise can probably talk to some of the latest work.

Denise Lewis Fleming CEO: Sure.

In particular, an investment within this budget is to support the operating cost for implementing what's referred to as 'automated dispensing cabinets.' So, they are cabinets that are secure and enable better tracking of controlled drugs such as narcotics and the intent is for those to be placed in certain key areas in the hospital, as well as in the public long-term care facilities in order to support improving those controls.

Other work, as mentioned in our response, in the Auditor General's report, is that we've

already implemented changes in order to improve the control and handling of drugs and the destruction of them.

Mr. MacEwen: The new methadone spot has that, right, the automated dispensing?

Denise Lewis Fleming CEO: That's privately operated, so I honestly couldn't say –

Mr. Mitchell: (Indistinct) yeah I'm not sure (Indistinct)

Denise Lewis Fleming CEO: – if they (Indistinct)

Mr. MacEwen: Okay.

Could you explain, again, exactly where these automated dispensers are going?

Denise Lewis Fleming CEO: In the capital budget that was approved here in the Legislature last fall, there was a capital project for 52 automated dispensing cabinets over the course of the next two years. I have to admit, I don't have the numbers right here in front of me. I can forward it to the member.

Some of them will be in hospital and some of them will be in our public long-term care facilities.

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you.

The AG – I don't have it in front of me, but specifically talked about long-term care as well.

Are they going into our provincial long-term care facilities?

Mr. Mitchell: Yes.

Denise Lewis Fleming CEO: Yes.

Mr. MacEwen: Excuse my ignorance; was there the talk of private – do you guys oversee that? Can you guys say that you have to put those in, or is that an unfair expense at this time? How will that work?

Mr. Mitchell: We do inspections on the private ran care facilities regularly. I'm not sure that –

Denise Lewis Fleming CEO: (Indistinct)

Mr. Mitchell: Yeah, we don't have the ability to tell them to put in this or this.

They're pretty good at having them on the work they do, so I don't have a good report back to say there are deficiencies here. I think these facilities do a good job of administering their pharmaceutical needs within their facilities and we keep a close eye on them.

Mr. MacEwen: Chair?

Mr. Roach: Call the hour.

Chair: Shall the section carry? Carried.

Mr. MacEwen: I still have questions, Chair.

Chair: Oh, you still have questions? Sorry.

Mr. MacEwen: Yes.

Chair: I thought you showed –

Mr. MacEwen: No, I was putting my hand up.

Ms. Biggar: Call the hour.

Chair: Oh, sorry. I didn't see your hand, sorry.

The hour has been called, hon. member.

Mr. MacEwen: Okay, thank you.

Chair: Thanks.

Ms. Biggar: Extend the hour (Indistinct)

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct)

Ms. Biggar: Let him have his question.

Chair: The hour has been called, thank you.

Mr. Trivers: Extend the hour.

Ms. Biggar: (Indistinct)

Mr. Trivers: It's unanimous.

Mr. Mitchell: Madam Chair, I move the Speaker take the chair and that the Chair report progress and beg leave to sit again.

Chair: Shall it carry? Carried.

Mr. Speaker, as Chair of the Committee of the Whole House having had 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 that the report of the committee be adopted.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Ms. Biggar: Don't forget your garbage bags!

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

The Legislature recessed until 7:00 p.m.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Roach: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. Minister of Communities, Land and Environment, that the 24th order of the day be now read.

Speaker: Shall it carry?

Clerk Assistant (E. Doiron): Order No. 24, *Plastic Bag Reduction Act*, Bill No. 114, ordered for second reading.

Ms. Biggar: Carry the bill.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Roach: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Communities, Land and Environment, that the said bill be now read a second time.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk Assistant: *Plastic Bag Reduction Act*, Bill No. 114, read a second time.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

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

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

I will call on the hon. Member from Charlottetown-Lewis Point, if she wouldn't mind coming and chairing the Committee of the Whole House for this bill?

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

Some Hon. Members: Yes.

Some Hon. Members: No.

Mr. Trivers: Maybe an overview, too, Chair.

Chair: Thank you.

Hon. member, would you care to give the House an overview of the bill before we get into reading it clause by clause?

Mr. Roach: Thank you, Chair.

Really, the purpose of this bill or act is simply to reduce the use, by businesses, of single-use checkout bags to reduce waste and environmental damage, and to promote responsible and sustainable business practices in the Province of Prince Edward Island.

That's really the very basis of it. I certainly have done a lot of research on this. I've reached out to a lot of Islanders. As a result of that, it really was what brought me forward. It was always an issue for me. The one thing that I did read during my research that seemed to summarize a lot of it about why we should take a look at this bill, it was a quote from David Suzuki. He said: The weakness of all plastic bags is their abandonment in the environment.

I think when we read about the amount of plastic and the waste that's in our environment, in our oceans I think that, that certainly rings true. I'll leave it there, Chair.

Thank you.

Chair: Hon. members, I'll start to read section 1, and then when I finish reading the

section, I'll open the floor for questions on that section.

Mr. Fox: General question, please?

Chair: The hon. Member from Borden-Kinkora.

Mr. Fox: Allen, can you explain –

Chair: (Indistinct)

Mr. MacKay: No –

Chair: Hon. member –

Mr. MacKay: No names.

Chair: – could you refer to the member by his –

Mr. Fox: Montague-Kilmuir can you –

Chair: – district name.

Mr. Fox: – explain that, what you're classifying as a single-use checkout bag?

Mr. Roach: I think it's – what we're looking at is basically the – when you go into the grocery stores, it's the bag that's given to you by whichever grocery store you may be in that's made out of a very thin plastic and it's designed for one use; fill the bag, take your groceries home and away you go.

Mr. Fox: What about all the people that use that single bag, so-called single bag as a garbage bag in their waste cans in their house and that kind of stuff?

Mr. Roach: I certainly think that there are other plastic bags that are designed for the household use. I know, also, for example, that a lot of people use the single checkout bag, they use it for dog waste. I see it all the time. Once it's used for that purpose, it now goes into the dirty waste can and now it's in the landfill site.

I think that's what we're really trying to avoid, is to get that out of the land-use site.

Mr. Fox: What I'm wondering here is, I know low-income families, they use these bags in their garbage bags, in their garbage cans in their house for waste, sanitary waste

in their bathrooms. Then, from there they take the bags outside, they dump it into the compost, if it goes into the compost and they put the single-use bag into the waste can.

Do we know what this could actually cost a family in additional cost for buying garbage bags for that purpose?

Mr. Roach: I think there are always options there for exactly what you described. It could be, simply, having a garbage can that you take outside and dump into the waste can and take that garbage can back into the house, and reuse that instead.

I think what we have to do is really starting thinking about how we reduce that amount of waste in our environment. I think for all of us, even going to the grocery store and trying to remember to take a reusable bag, and remember to take it. It's a change. There's no question.

Mr. Fox: The final question I have for now is: I remember back maybe about two years ago, that, I think Sobeys, Atlantic Superstore, they came out with, I think it was a five-cent cost per bag as you went through the checkout.

Was there any analysis to see if that actually cutback on the amount of plastic bags going out through the store? Did it cutback that use or anything?

Mr. Roach: I think, and I believe it may have been – in my research, I think I was reading about, I think it was Ireland. They did this, believe it or not, back in 1993. They cut back their usage, I think, it was a high number, like maybe 70% or 75%. Then, as people got used to paying it, the misuse, if I could call it that, of the bags started to go up and it was about 10 or 15 years later, they put another high price on it, again, and then the usage went down.

I think the fact that, when you go into the store today and you receive one of those bags to put your groceries in, the reality is, is the cost of that bag is hidden in your groceries. It's hidden in the bill when you walk out the store.

Mr. Fox: Yeah (Indistinct)

Mr. Roach: Of course, the other piece of it is when it comes out the other end, it ends up going to a waste disposal site, and it has to be picked up. So, you're paying for it, really, the second time.

Mr. Fox: Okay, thank you for now.

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Thanks, Chair.

Thank you, minister for bringing this bill to the floor. I guess my first question – I just wanted to make a general statement. To me, the goal and then the thing that people want in the world and what I want in the world is a reduction in plastic waste period.

Now your bill here seems to be targeting single-use plastic bags because that's an area to start off with. Would you agree that this is a start and really it's reducing plastic waste as a whole that you'd like to see?

Mr. Roach: Yes and that's a good observation and that's what the research has shown me. But with the single-use bag, for example, the plastic waste that we have in PEI that's sitting there waiting to go someplace, the bulk of that is single-use plastic bags that are all compressed together. We have, I think, about 55 or 60 tons of it here now on PEI.

Mr. Trivers: You had mentioned as well in your opening remarks that one of the key problems with plastic waste – especially plastic bags – it ends up in the ocean and can harm marine wildlife and that's what we see on social media and those are – there's the turtle with the straw in its nose.

Mr. Roach: Yes.

Mr. Trivers: That's been really a poster for reducing plastic waste. Does any of the plastic waste from Prince Edward Island, given our excellent Island Waste Watch Management system, make it to the ocean? What are the odds that plastic waste from our Island makes it to the ocean?

Mr. Roach: I think the problem in Prince Edward Island and – it's funny, when I had discussions with the Women's Institute of Prince Edward Island, who I've spoke to

them a number of times about this and they tell me that when they do their cleanup, the plastic bag that you get from the grocery store, that this is getting worse, and worse, and worse – year, over year, over year.

Mr. Trivers: Do they indeed get in the ocean from Prince Edward Island? Is that a belief of yours?

Mr. Roach: Absolutely. They get in our oceans right here around PEI. It's like – this is not just PEI, but this is worldwide. Because those bags are so light, they literally – they blow away quite easy. They're just like a little balloon. They lift up in the air and go.

One of the things that I found during the research was that it's over a million birds that are killed – that die every year because of plastic that's blown out and a lot of those are seabirds. Over 100,000 mammals die because of plastic in our oceans every year. That's everything from whales, to seals, to porpoise, to any kind of marine life.

Mr. Trivers: The other thing about plastic waste, of course, and I think you mentioned it, is it just basically doesn't ever break down; it's there for hundreds and hundreds of years.

One of the things that Island Waste Watch is doing, of course, with plastic that is put in recyclables, is baled up and sold to China, or the Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy said it's incinerated. I was wondering: The minister had said that with incineration, in fact, it's a relatively clean process because of the incineration methods – and I don't necessarily believe that's 100% the case. I think incineration may, maybe not be a good option, but how do you feel about incineration and using that as a method to reduce our plastic waste.

Mr. Roach: I kind of go back to – and again, it's going back to research, but we have a lot of people out there who produce plastic. We have people in Canada who kind of go out and support the plastic industry and the people that are involved in it, but they never seem to come to the table with a fix for any of this and I'm happy if there's a way to recycle it and it's not going to harm our environment, but the problem is that

we're not really good stewards, as human beings, for making sure that it all gets there. We have so much waste in our oceans.

Just to give you an example: There was research that was done. It involved, I think, about 30 ships and one, I think it was a C-30 Hercules aircraft that they went out and we've all heard about this great mass of plastics that swirls around out in the ocean and they're telling us now with the samples that they've taken, that by 2050, the weight of plastics in the ocean will weigh more than all of our seafood and fish and everything that's in the ocean. That's a pretty stark thing to learn.

Mr. Trivers: Yes, absolutely. I understand your point and thank you for bringing that up. It's not so much the plastic that we're recycling or we're sending to be repurposed or even incinerating, it's the stuff that we don't track that gets in – that's killing animals.

Mr. Roach: That gets away from us.

Mr. Trivers: I think it's the Pacific Ocean that has the floating (Indistinct)

Mr. Roach: Actually, the Pacific Ocean is the only one that they've actually gone and analyzed, but there are actually four of these masses that are swirling in our oceans – in various oceans now.

Mr. Trivers: I was wondering why – and maybe you've already answered this, but why you didn't expand it to include, say, straws? That seems – with the turtle with the straw in its nose. It seems like including straws in the scope might have been a good thing because there are alternatives to straws. Just wondering why you didn't expand it to include straws.

Mr. R. Brown: It's called the plastic bag act.

Chair: The hon. Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy, do you have an intervention on that?

Mr. Trivers: My next questions is why you would bring it to the floor and I think you're helping answer that.

Ms. Biggar: Thank you, Madame Chair.

Mr. R. Brown: He's the smartest man in the caucus (Indistinct)

Ms. Biggar: Just on that particular topic, I was listening today to a conversation on CBC about the straws and one of the considerations that was mentioned was by people with disabilities who have mobility, whether they have cerebral palsy, or MS, or those kind of – or you're in hospital – whatever mobility issues, that having a flexible straw, compared to a paper straw, is something that when we say: let's throw away every plastic straw, there are some other factors that we need to think about too. One of those is that factor. I just want to mention that.

If I may, Madam Chair, just one more intervention about burning plastic bags at energy from waste, they need to have a combination of heat sources that they burn there. They do burn biomass, woodchips as well to do the heat system. There's not enough heat off of the plastic to keep the temperature up, so it's a combination that they use at that particular waste plant.

Thank you.

Chair: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Roach: Yes, great point. Thank you, Minister.

The other thing – when I originally started doing the research, there was a restaurant – I believe it was in Victoria BC – that started off this: We're going to try and not serve straws in the restaurants because most people that come in there can have whatever they drink normally out of a glass and certainly, some of the issues that were just raised by the minister would apply. I think that this really is a start and then I think we can move, certainly, towards other plastics as we progress. But it has to start someplace.

I'll give an example: Just when you were talking about what happens to plastic, it gets burned. The City of Halifax just shipped 300 tonnes –

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct)

Mr. Roach: –yes of plastics to an unknown destination in Western Canada to get buried.

To me, that's not an answer. It may be a short-term, but we still have to go back to the source of it and keep it out of our environment. If we can find ways to recycle what we do capture, great, but we have to try and reduce that and keep it out of our oceans – and out of our environment just on land.

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Chair.

These really are questions on the overall act. I was wondering if you used an existing act anywhere in the country or somewhere else in the world to base this act off of.

Mr. Roach: I actually – I researched a number of countries that had acts and of course we're not a country, we're a province. Some of them are pretty heavy-handed, but I did find bylaws in Victoria, BC; in Fort McMurray, Alberta; and a place, I think it's called something leaf Manitoba; in Montréal; and I researched what a number of other provinces – I also researched how Newfoundland is viewing this, how Nova Scotia's viewing this.

I wanted to find one that really was a really simple act so that we can just get this started – just get this ball rolling. I'm sure they're – down the road as any laws that come in. We've been amending the criminal code now for 150 years and I see this as an act that'll be amended right across the country as provinces get on board. But I think in a lot of the literature that I researched, it clearly said that a lot of the cities and towns were waiting for the provinces to take a step forward. We're a province that's small and I think that we have an opportunity to take that step forward and I think we might be able to encourage others to do the same.

Mr. Trivers: It's funny that you mention cities that are bringing in similar sort of legislation or bylaws, I guess it would be; in fact, so the Retail Council of Canada reached out and said they thought this act was sort of very familiar to what's going on in Victoria, British Columbia. In fact, a friend of mine, a girl I went to high school with, a lady, Kate McCallum Pagett, contacted me. She lives in Victoria, British Columbia now, and she said: a teacher at our

school, this Margaret McCullough, she's actually got some students that have a Ban the Bag campaign, some of her students, in Victoria.

She said maybe this is a great opportunity for Vancouver Island and Prince Edward Island to lead the country, and I thought: What a fantastic idea. I wanted to bring that up to you, and I apologize for not bringing it up to you a little sooner.

Mr. Roach: Just to follow up on that point, we have a school principal out in Mount Stewart who had sent me a lengthy letter and stated that at her school now, the kids have gotten involved, our youth have gotten involved, and they are banning all plastics that they possibly can at the school, including knives and forks and Styrofoam cups. They said: We're going to go back to washing dishes. The kids are really into it.

What I like about that already is that our youth are engaged and we didn't even ask them to. They're just on board with it. The principal has now laid out a challenge to principals in schools all across PEI to join them and so the same thing. So if nothing else, we got our kids involved.

Mr. Trivers: One more question, thank you.

This is a good act. It's an important step to take. I think it's what constituents of Prince Edward Island want. Maybe not all of the details in the act – we'll talk about that as we go through it – but definitely the spirit of the act, what you're trying to do.

I was wondering. You were recently a minister in government, and of course you guys meet as government caucus. I was wondering why the Department of Communities, Land and Environment, led by the Minister of Communities, Land and Environment, didn't bring this act forward as opposed to bringing it forward as a private members bill.

Mr. Roach: Well, I can tell you –

Mr. R. Brown: Collaboration.

Mr. Roach: I can tell you that –

Mr. R. Brown: Consensus government.

Mr. Roach: – even as a young kid, I grew up and I lived on the harbour in the Colville Bay in Souris, and I saw all kinds of stuff washing up on the shore as a young boy. I've owned a couple of waterfront properties, and every spring I have to go down and clean up the plastic bags off my shore.

I've been involved in shore cleanups on PEI on many occasions since I've come here, and I've also been on the ocean and I've seen plastic in the water. I had a friend of mine who had a plastic bag wrapped around his outboard engine, burned his engine out, so \$19,000 later, over a two-cent bag.

Mr. Trivers: Right.

Mr. Roach: So it's always been a concern, so once I was no longer a minister, I wanted to continue to be heavily engaged in this Legislature and it was something that I always wanted to do. I read up on private members bills and thought: you know what? This is something I'm passionate about so I think I'm going to go ahead and do it.

Mr. Trivers: So it's a priority for you, but not necessarily a priority for this government.

Mr. Roach: Well, it –

Mr. Trivers: Thank you.

Mr. Roach: I wouldn't –

Ms. Biggar: Let's vote on it and you'll see.

Mr. Roach: Yeah.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Mr. R. Brown: That's not nice.

Ms. Biggar: Let's vote on it.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you.

Ms. Biggar: You'll soon find out.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Firstly, I want to thank the Member for bringing forward this bill.

I'm delighted that we're going to be talking about this tonight, and like the member from Rustico, I think the intent of this bill is fantastic. There's a number of little things in there, and as Rustico-Emerald said we'll get to that in a minute; but I think the general purpose of this bill is excellent and I thank you. Also, I'm touched that you would have started by quoting David Suzuki right off the top.

I just want to clarify something that Rustico-Emerald asked. I didn't quite get an answer on it when he asked if this is based on any particular jurisdiction. You mentioned a couple of municipalities where they have regulation on this, not legislation. It seemed to me like Victoria perhaps was the one that this is most –

Mr. Roach: Well, when I read through them all, I found that Victoria wasn't complicated; and I did not want to bring – for the first time around on a piece of legislation – I didn't want to bring a really complicated bill. All I wanted to do was let's get it on the floor of the Legislature, let's try and get the bill enacted, and we can kick-start this.

It's not the perfect bill, but it's a start. We have to start someplace, and I just felt after everything I had researched that, you know what, it's time, because I see so many cities and so many provinces that quite frankly are dragging the heels. They're sending it out for another review, let's review this and let's review that, and as you watch things going along, the situation's just getting worse. So I think it's time that we started.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: You mentioned about the simplicity of the bill, and indeed it's the hybrid model that you're coming forward with –

Mr. Roach: Yes.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: – the fees plus the ban –

Mr. Roach: Yes.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: – is actually one of the more complicated ways of doing this. There's the three basic ways. You put a fee in – you mentioned Ireland earlier – and that works if you've got a really high fee. In Ireland now it's the equivalent of over 30

cents Canadian for a bag, and that's enough of a distinctive to stop people from doing it. So fees is a simple way and can be effective, but you're going to be charging every Islander, every time they get a bag, a significant amount of money.

Or you just put a ban in, but those have varying – from my research, anyway – varying levels of success. So we have a hybrid model which you are suggesting, and I think, it seems to me that that is the model of the future. If you look at the more contemporary jurisdictions that have brought in plastic bag legislation, it's this hybrid model that they've got. I appreciate that.

You mentioned in your remarks at the beginning that you've reached out to a lot of Islanders, and I'm wondering whether you spoke to the Chamber of Commerce, the CFIB, small retailers, because it's going to have a profound impact on all of those people.

Mr. Roach: I've certainly heard from chamber members, and I have spoken to – I have heard from CFIB and I also spoke with the Canadian council representing retailers –

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Right.

Mr. Roach: – and I've never received any real negative remarks; but I felt that in a private members bill, I felt that if I were to start that process, then I would be redoing the work (Indistinct) that was done in all those other communities across Canada that have done this, and they all seemed to reach the same conclusion: Put it off, kick it down the road, let's wait another year, let's wait till the provinces do something, and nobody seems to want to do it.

I have spoke to some of the major national retailers, and they have said to me clearly, that a couple of years ago one of the national retailers tried to do away with the ban and did it themselves in Nova Scotia, but the other retailer took advantage of the situation and it wouldn't work. They've said to me the only way it will work is if there's something there to take it away and all retailers are on the same level playing field.

I also think that PEI, we have a great reputation of being a clean province and that we're – environmentally, I think we're

moving in the right direction; but I also have a lot of faith in Islanders, and the response I've gotten back from Islanders. I've got – you know, these are the bills that I've researched. There's more research and these are the stacks of emails that I've gotten, and I'll be glad to share them with everybody in the House, in support of it.

So I think we're going – obviously, it seems to be going in the right direction.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: I agree, minister, but I think it's really important that we have –

Mr. Roach: Thank you, but I'm not a minister anymore.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Oh, excuse me.

Mr. Roach: I appreciate that.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: I think it's really important to have buy-in from the stakeholders, and particularly from Islanders. There was an Angus Reid poll done in 2012 or 2013, I can't remember which, where there was well over 50% of – this was a Maritime poll – of Maritimers supported the idea of a plastic bag ban.

My belief is, I agree with you, and certainly the discussions I've had with my friends and neighbours and constituents, is that they want to see this. They want to see a plastic bag ban on Prince Edward Island. So I'm absolutely not arguing about that at all.

You mentioned about – a couple of times you've used the phrase 'dragging your heels' to get something to done. I totally agree with you that this has to be a province-wide thing. If you do it in a small place like PEI with one municipality, it's going to be chaos. It's going to pit one community against another. So I absolutely agree with you that a province-wide ban or fee-plus-ban is the way to go.

I'm wondering whether you've done any research on – there were a couple of places where municipalities or jurisdictions have actually been sued by the plastics industry for implementing a ban. I wonder if –

Mr. Roach: Yeah, and it was Joe Hruska who actually, and I've read the case, and I don't think that's going anywhere.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: I don't think so either.

Mr. Roach: I've done a lot of research on him, personally, to see his background and he's a big supporter. He'll tell you that plastics are one of the best things that we have to keep for our environment and I couldn't disagree with him more because he's representing a base of people there who want to have plastic to make a living off it.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Just one final comment and, again, I really appreciate you bringing this forward.

The plastics can be incredible. I still have some Tupperware that my mom and dad used literally 50 years ago, and it's been scratched up but it works. If you use plastics well and you build good things out of them, it's a fantastic material.

The problem is what we do with it. You said it right at the very beginning; it's the habits that we've got into and the disposable society that we've become that's the problem.

Mr. Roach: I also believe plastics do have a place.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Absolutely.

Mr. Roach: Yes.

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

Chair: Shall it carry? Carried.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Mr. Speaker, as Chair of the Committee of the Whole House –

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Speaker: Order, please. Order!

Ms. Bell: (Indistinct)

Mr. Myers: So you just took the time instead?

Ms. Bell: No, you guys did (Indistinct)

Mr. Myers: No, we didn't. You guys did. Peter was asking the questions.

Speaker: Order!

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

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Mr. Fox: (Indistinct) play by the rules.

Mr. Myers: The rules don't apply to them.

Mr. Fox: The rules don't apply to them.

Ms. Bell: Mr. Speaker?

Speaker: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Parkdale.

Ms. Bell: Mr. Speaker, I'd just like to clarify the discussion that was happening regarding the allegation of House time. I would like to clarify for the members from the caucus that we did, as per our requirement, reach out to negotiate the time for the private members' bills in the evening as we have discussed, and that negotiation was accomplished without our offer of allocating some of our time to ensure that private members have the opportunity to present their bill.

So, the determination of time was achieved without our final input. We are always happy to negotiate, as we should as House leaders, but I would really appreciate that if we need to have those conversations that they happen through the House leaders.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. R. Brown: Good point.

Speaker: Thank you.

That's probably the way it should – it's the government House leaders that have to decide this stuff on their own.

Ms. Biggar: Stay out of it.

Speaker: The hon. Opposition House Leader.

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Opposition moves Motion No. 62.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk: Motion No. 62.

The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald moves, seconded by the hon. Member from Borden-Kinkora, the following motion:

THAT an Order of the House do issue for a copy of all documentation including but not limited to:

Memos, letters, correspondence, electronic mail, minutes of meetings, studies, reports, analyses, from January 1, 2015 to April 20, 2018 pertaining to the implementation of carbon pricing on Prince Edward Island.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

This sort of motion is what I've been told is known as a 'procedural motion.'

Really, what we're doing is we're looking for more information about the carbon tax. And, as I know, all members are probably hearing from their constituents, it's something they're concerned about. Even this evening between sittings today I had people approach me and say: What's going on with the carbon tax? What's happening? When's something coming in? They talked about the increase in fuel prices that IRAC has just brought in, and imagine when the carbon tax; how much will that go up?

Really, it's just a motion to try and get more information to make sure we understand what's going on. During budget estimates, I believe it was, the Member from Morell-Mermaid and the Minister of Finance and the Premier and some other ministers had a really good chat and conversation going on. The member was able to get some information about what's going on with negotiations with the federal government with regards to a carbon tax.

It's getting this information and working together and collaborating to come up with the best solution for Prince Edward Islanders that's the most important thing, but to do that we need to be included in the process.

The Minister of Finance referenced that he even read my blog post about the carbon tax –

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct)

Mr. Trivers: – and making them revenue neutral as opposed to fiscally neutral; using the basic personal tax amount –

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct)
bradtrivers.com.

Mr. Trivers: – to give any monies collected through a carbon tax directly back to constituents in Prince Edward Island, which is really modeled off what they do in British Columbia with the carbon tax.

But once again, this motion is about really getting a full picture of what sort of deliberations the government is undergoing with respect to the carbon tax, in the spirit of openness and transparency, and collaboration, and working together and making sure that we have the best solution for Islanders.

If the Trudeau government is going to force carbon pricing or carbon tax on Islanders, then we all need to work together to make sure that we bring it in the best way possible. We're just asking that various pieces of correspondence, electronic mail, minutes of meetings, studies, reports, analysis that have been done by the government, are released for everyone to look at so that we can make this decision together.

It's a procedural motion, so I would ask that the House support this motion so that we can move on and we can comply with any forced tax from the federal government in the best possible interest of Islanders.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Borden-Kinkora.

Mr. Fox: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As the hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald says, this is a procedural motion to make sure that Islanders have as much information as possible on any proposed new tax that is coming into PEI.

Presently, we have the HST, which has moved from the GST. We saw a raise in the HST. Those were two moves that did not have, basically, any consultation with the public on how they would affect the different sectors across the Island.

If you take gas alone, we have a provincial road tax which applies to gasoline and diesel. We also have the federal excise tax on every litre of gas and fuel that's sold, and we also have the HST, which derived from of course from the PST and a secondary provincial sales tax which encompassed into one. Now we're talking about introducing a carbon tax on top of all them.

If we look at electricity, we had the House announce, or the minister announced that they were talking about taking off HST off electricity for homeowners in home heating. So, does that mean that we're going to take the HST off and we're going to put a carbon tax – replace one tax for another?

I think the general public needs to know exactly what all a carbon tax would affect in PEI on all products. I'll use a line from the Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy there back about a couple of weeks ago when she stated to me: Did you consult with the women's groups? Well, did we consult with every group in PEI – did we talk to the cyclist organization in PEI? Did we talk to low-income seniors' groups? Did we talk to school kids' groups? Did we talk to the curling clubs? Did we talk to the hockey schools? Did we talk to all of these different groups in what they think, or how they think a carbon tax would affect them?

We do know, from analysis that has come out of different provinces, I believe there was an article in the *Journal-Pioneer* last week that: A Liberal carbon tax will increase gasoline somewhere in the area of 14 cents, which will have a ripple effect on home heating fuel.

I want to take you back. It's very simple to say that a carbon tax will not affect Islanders, we'll say, on electricity or

gasoline or whatever, but I do know that a carbon tax will, at the cost – will come into effect at the cost of production. I think that's one thing we got to remember. That the Liberal carbon tax will affect Islanders at the cost of production or how the goods move or manufactured across other sectors.

I think I alluded to the other day that a carbon tax would, essentially be buried within the price of a product that is coming into PEI.

I think government needs to be very upfront on any consultation or any letters, any memos, any analysis, any reports in the timeline outlined in the motion to find out what the effect is. Have we actually looked at the cost to a low-income family making \$21,000 and less? Or senior citizens trying to live in their own home and stay when they have to – they're exposed to a carbon tax.

I think it's very important to give Islanders all of the facts; make all the details of a carbon tax, how it will affect every Islander so that they know what they're facing. Theoretically, under the Trudeau government, we could wake up tomorrow and the federal government in Ottawa, could say, here's carbon tax at 15 cents.

It's very nice to hear that the minister and the government is trying to negotiate our good activity that we've done in the past, but we must ensure that all Islanders know what the effect of a carbon tax is.

The third party, I think, it's very important to know, they want an even higher carbon tax and they are campaigning on a \$15 a tonne with no evidence to support or backup what they're saying.

I think, the other day, if you would have watched the hon. member, Michelle Rempel: what is the effect on single mothers living at home, or living to try to support a family, what is the analysis done on what the effect is going to be on them or a senior citizen? The hon. Minister of Finance would not answer the question. He would just read from a script.

We much saw that today by the hon. Minister of Economic Development and Tourism. He stuck to a very sharp, pointed

reply on several questions that were asked to him by opposition -

Mr. Trivers: He was excited.

Mr. Fox: He was excited –

Mr. Palmer: I still am.

Mr. Fox: The final –

Mr. LaVie: (Indistinct)

Mr. Fox: – point I want to make is that this is simply a tax grab. I think we need to look at what we've done as a province, but what we can do in other areas; reforestation, getting major industry off of bunker C fuel. I don't care what Maritime Electric says, but they should be made – and I don't care if they only use their generating system 200 hours a year, or 300 hours – they should be made to comply and reduce carbon emissions going into the atmosphere when they fire up the generators. Hands down.

We should be looking at Slemon Park, who is also on bunker C. The government has an opportunity. They bought Slemon Park. It's still being fired by bunker C. The government could lead, by further example, and reduce that emission of that.

With that, I think it's very important that this motion – we know completely what the impact is going to be on Islanders from tip-to-tip, from every industry, from every walk of life, from every age group, completely.

Has the government consulted with every group that could be affected? Until that question can be answered, we need, as a House, to have access to; correspondence, letters, memos, electronic mail, minutes of meetings, studies, reports, analysis, in that period from January 1st, 2015 until the 20th of April, 2018.

With that, Mr. Speaker, thank you.

Speaker: Next speaking to the motion the hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. MacDonald: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It was very interesting, last week, when he had the discussion around carbon pricing with all the parties in the House. It was

relevant, at that time, I think, that we're all, kind of, trudging or trajectory in the same direction.

As I've said before, we're unique. We should have a carbon pricing plan that reflects that. We do not have mass transit. We have no natural gas. We ship our goods by truck, mainly, off the Island. I know, in my riding, I have 150 trucks at one end of it, and 150 trucks at the other. We rely on those vehicles to transport our goods to market.

When you consider PEI's current level of tax on gas and diesel, we are already at a level of tax equivalent to three to four years of the federal plan. That says something. We're already sending a price signal to Ottawa based on those numbers. That's important. That's why we're still in negotiations with Ottawa.

We have one of the lowest levels of greenhouse gases among all the provinces. We have made great strides in wind energy; 25% of our energy coming from wind. It's clean sourced and the other clean-sourced electricity. We've seen what we've done in the budget. If they want to price signal, gas, diesel, now we're into giving exempting tax on the first block of electricity. We're giving rebates on wood and wood pellets. I think PEI has a great story to tell and that's why we're still in negotiations with Ottawa.

Negotiations with the federal government can be very strategic; in coming from a small province and seeing what we've done over the past two-and-a-half years. When we talk about the infrastructure in the 19 communities and the \$90 million that we negotiations with Ottawa; collective roads. We've got the 1,000 cars down to 650, so the cost-share on those.

The grandparent caregiver program is another one that, you know, for a small province of 152,000 people, to have the federal government change their tax laws for that? That shows you that we are in the best interest of Islanders and we'll continue to do that.

The cable. Another one that – \$140 million cost-share project with the federal government –

An Hon. Member: Thank you, Gail Shea.

Mr. MacDonald: If those four or five items right there don't prove to Islanders that we don't have their best interest, then there's something wrong.

We continue to discuss with the federal government a carbon plan that will be the right fit. We're an Island and we are different. We continue to say that to Ottawa. Last month I talked a little bit about the provincial HST and residential electricity. That's a cost to the province of \$8 million a year. This rebate will not only put more money in Islanders' pockets, but it will encourage switching to cleaner fuels. That's what this is all about is reducing carbon. We're setting an example. The switch will, in turn, save Islanders even more money in the future.

We also announced \$12 million in a low-carbon economy programs offset by \$6 million in federal funding that will help Islanders make their homes more efficient and providing future savings on energy costs to thousands of homes across the Island.

I can't say enough about what we're doing as a small province already, and how far we have come in the past number of years and where we're going. I think Ottawa has to recognize that.

There's a total of \$20 million in supports to Islanders— yields savings for many years to come. You watch *Power & Politics* and talking about Saskatchewan and Manitoba and BC and Quebec and what they're doing. You talk about the OECD. They even said that some of the other provinces have a cap and trade and they're going to have a problem to find out how to measure that cap and trade system against the backdrop of what Ottawa wants.

There are variations that are going to create friction right across Canada. There's no need for a small province like ourselves because we know where we stand. We know what we're doing. There's no need of us to rush out and to create something that may be a detriment to us in 10 years or 15 years.

The path forward should be to build on the considerable achievements already made, and I think that's our strategy going forward and we'll continue to work. As you could see the other night, the Premier and other

ministers are very capable in talking about this as well.

A well-designed carbon pricing provides a predictable, long-term signal for our province for residential, business, drives efficiency and innovation and that's exactly what we're trying to do. Our approach will be fiscally neutral with tax returns to Islanders; investments in efficiency support and improved clean infrastructure.

It's great that this motion is on the floor, but I think I've said, and we've talked about debating this in the public when negotiations are ongoing and changing daily, I don't think it's going to benefit any Islander, to be quite honest. I think we need to have a strategy and move forward with that strategy, and take the best interest of Islanders into consideration on every decision that we make.

I was actually pretty relieved last week when all three sides, three parties, were all basically on the same page. We know where we have to get to. It's how we get there and we'll continue to push the envelope with Ottawa. I think there's a challenge for us at some point, and I think a small province, we have to be ready for that challenge.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

Prince Edward Island is not immune to the impact of climate change. There is overwhelming evidence that climate change is occurring and its consequences will be serious to Prince Edward Island.

Last week, I mentioned there was a video online now, an excellent video I think. It wasn't a government video. It was Islanders talking about the change that they have seen over the number of years. Most of it was hosted in Rustico and the fishermen in Rustico of many years indicated that sea levels are rising. Banks are being eroded. These are people that have been around Prince Edward Island many years.

So, for us to question in this House that climate change is not occurring, is

absolutely false and anybody that thinks it isn't happening has their head buried in the sand. These individuals talked about: We're running out of time. If you just do any research, and you'll see that the ice caps are melting and that water is rising sea levels.

An interesting analysis has been done and everybody thinks that the main effect of climate change is what carbon we're putting in the atmosphere and capturing heat within the atmosphere. 80% or 90% of the heat that's coming through hitting the Earth and not being emitted back into space is being absorbed by our oceans. That's where the real effects of climate change is going to take place, in our oceans and not in our climate above us.

Rising sea temperatures have a dramatic effect on our climate. Everybody thinks that the polar ice caps are melting from the top. Research has shown that the sun is coming down heating the Earth, heating the water. More heat is being absorbed by the ocean than by the atmosphere, so get that: More heat is being absorbed by the ocean. The ocean is getting hotter, and if you do your analysis, cold water is at the bottom. Cold water now is coming up to the top. Thousands of years old, that cold water has sat there. It's being pushed to the top, being heated and sent back down. At the polar ice caps, the water is undermining the glaciers; undermining it. It's melting from the bottom. That's why you see them falling off and just not melting.

All that heat, what they're saying is that at some point in time, the ocean is going to get so hot it can't absorb anymore. Now, if it's absorbing 90% of the heat now, just picture if it can't absorb anymore heat. That 90% heat is going to come into the atmosphere and into our lives dramatically.

For us to stand here and say that climate change is not happening and not going to affect us, is absolutely incorrect and I hope that no one is inferring that climate change doesn't exist because it does.

Mr. Myers: Sounds like a second ago you were (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: You know?

Leader of the Opposition: (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: No, I'm just trying to get the message out to the ones that don't believe.

Mr. LaVie: (Indistinct)

Mr. Fox: (Indistinct) know it's happening.

Mr. R. Brown: Like, the Trump-ers.

Mr. LaVie: (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: The Trump-ers that don't believe this –

Mr. LaVie: Donald Trump is the only fellow (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: You have to make sure that they do.

We're an Island, that's what's most important. We're an Island. We're going to see it first. There are Islands in the Pacific right now that are drowning, that's the easy way to put it. They're in the UN trying to beg for to save their Islands because the rising tides are absorbing their Islands.

I remember on the waterfront, you would never see water over the top of the yacht club. Maybe once every a couple of years, but it's getting more and more each and every year.

Our government is committed to taking proactive action around climate change, including, moving away from fossil fuels to clean sources of energy.

We are developing a climate change strategy to reduce carbon emission and this requires a commitment of individuals, communities, and industries all across the province. We are working together to build a better and more secure future for Prince Edward Island.

Prince Edward Island is a low emitter of greenhouse gases now. Islanders have been taking steps to reduce our emissions for years and have made significant investments.

When our government took over in 2007, we were ahead of the curve and I'm proud of our accomplishments. I'm proud of our

foresight when it comes in predicting the future on what could happen.

Mr. MacEwen: Still ahead of the curve (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: We were one of the very first provinces, if not the first, to introduce a Prince Edward Island climate change and a strategy for reducing the impact of global warming. This report was done in 2008 and if anyone reads it, would have to admit that it's an excellent, comprehensive report outlining, first of all, we put the background of the effects of climate change and how it occurs in this report, and then we laid out a substantial amount of goals in it to do, and how we can do them over a period of time.

This would be the foundation of our next climate change report. But, one of the most important things of this report was the energy accord which was negotiated as a result of the climate change report. It was tough negotiations, but it was negotiations that were done between ourselves, the Province of New Brunswick and other admitters on Prince Edward Island.

I believe that if those negotiations would have been open to full negotiations of everybody, I don't think we would have got the deal we got out of this. One of the first things that was recognized in the energy accord of 2010, was the switch that Islanders would have to make from burning oil to burning renewable energy.

An Hon. Member: Plastic bags.

Mr. R. Brown: So, we had to make sure that what we're doing is increasing our wind capacity, which is a renewable resource. But also, we had negotiated a deal with our sister province New Brunswick that provides our electricity.

Through that negotiation, we were able to reduce power rates by 14%. What this did was incentivize people to shift from oil to electricity. As part of the energy accord, we renegotiated our deal with Point Lapreau, which is non-emitter. We assisted in the closing of Dalhousie, which was an oil burning carbon producing plant. We participated in shutting down that which cost Islanders a lot of money. The Point Lapreau refurbishment also cost Islanders.

That's why we're saying that Islanders, Prince Edward Islanders have been involved in carbon reduction for many years. Islanders have been ahead of the curve for many years when it comes to reducing carbon.

You have to understand; a litre of oil emits 2.8 kilograms of carbon into the air, 2.8 – so we saved about 30 million liters of fuel, which is approximately 80 to 90,000 tons of carbon going into the air. So when you look at it –

Mr. Trivers: How many Confederation Bridges?

Mr. R. Brown: That's two pairs.

That was a phenomenal achievement here on Prince Edward Island, to reduce that much carbon that was entering our atmosphere, but Islanders contributed to the reduction of that by switching to heat pumps and more.

I want to take this opportunity also to thank the City of Summerside for their innovative work that that they're doing in terms of their energy. I'd have to say that the City of Summerside would have been, would – I'd even predict that they're one of the most advanced municipalities in Canada when it comes to carbon reduction and energy efficiency, what they have done.

I really have to admit that when it comes. They're ahead of the curve. They're way ahead of the curve with a lot of their energy initiatives. They're the people that – their council up there looks at it as: We're not afraid to be first. They study their analysis, they work on it, and I think they've made tremendous decisions over the years, and I have to thank the council and the mayors, both Basil and the current mayor, for their efforts here.

They created a wind farm that feeds into their electricity system. They're now producing I'd say a ton of their electricity from this wind farm, which is carbon neutral; but they've taken an innovative approach here where they took, they said the wind was blowing at night and they were dumping their electricity, which means that they had nowhere to sell their electricity at 3:00 a.m. in the morning, 2:00 a.m. in the morning.

Because North America has a phenomenal supply of electrical power which is needed during the day, but at nighttime a lot of it is not being used because factories are shut down, buildings are shut down, heaters are lower. So at that time of day, it's pretty hard to sell your power.

But they came up with a phenomenal idea. They purchased ceramic brick furnaces for their communities. I understand they have close to 380 of them in place; these ceramic bricks take the heat from the windmill from nighttime and stores it in the ceramic bricks and then during the day these bricks are used to heat their houses.

Totally non-emitting: you're taking energy from the wind that is blowing through your town, storing it in ceramic bricks during the night, using that energy during the day to heat your house. I have to give them a lot of credit for this. This is something that some critics said is a waste of time, and they took the approach.

Also, they've gone on to smart metering for their houses there, to allow their customers to get a lower rate at nighttime when electricity costs are cheaper. So they have incentivized their people to buy these ceramic bricks, furnaces, put them in their houses and to do that. They also install smart meters for their residents in order to control their energy costs.

Did they stop there? Did Summerside stop there? No way, they didn't. They continue to go ahead in their innovation in their city. What do they do next? They looked at their sports centre, their wellness centre, and they said: Okay, what can we do to reduce energy consumption there? But mostly currently, it's not a matter of just turning down the heat, they said: What can we do?

So they put solar power panels all outside of their centre and I was talking to the mayor yesterday at the federation of municipalities meeting and the mayor said: Well, during the winter there's lots of energy coming from the wind farm, but during the summer there's less wind during the summer so therefore they're supplementing their energy requirements with solar panels. So they said: We don't have the capacity to use it all at once.

So they purchased, they worked out a deal – and this is what’s good about Summerside, they’re always out working out ideas and working deals and working concepts out with other people, with companies – and they got a battery, a big battery that’s beside the wellness centre. The mayor tells me yesterday that they’re cycling through pretty good with taking the energy from the solar panels, storing it in the batteries when they don’t need it. When they need it, they can take it out of the batteries and use it for their centre, thus saving again carbon, with thus saving money for the facility.

The Premier and I and the Deputy Speaker was out last week to the City of Charlottetown’s opening of its new well fields; and lo and behold, behind the well fields was a bank of solar panels there to be used to drive the motors that pump the water to serve the residents of Charlottetown.

Mr. LaVie: Where’s that?

Mr. R. Brown: Again, out in Milton, it’s a really good project and again, I thank the City of Charlottetown; but where a lot of innovations are coming from nowadays is cities and towns across – the minister of transportation and I were in Tignish, phenomenal project.

They have taken a wood chip burning plant. They have made a district heating system through their municipality. It’s innovations like that that are keeping up to the technology. What Tignish Initiatives did is there’s new technology came out that made this viable.

If you look at the City of Charlottetown’s energy from waste plant, which is a phenomenal plant which saves millions of liters of fuel a year, which saves millions, hundreds of thousands of tons of carbon, and we’ve been in this game since – I think the energy from waste plant was 1988 it was developed. I have it somewhere here; but just picture how much carbon that plant has saved over the years.

When other people were heating their houses with electricity which came from coal fired plants, emitting tons of carbon into the air, we were heating downtown Charlottetown with energy waste, recycling

energy waste into the city. Many, many years ago, this was a far advanced system.

We had it connected to – there was a wood chip plant at the old Prince Edward home and there was one at UPEI, but the plant got so efficient that they could do the burning and energy distribution from there; but all our companies are always thinking.

But back to Tignish, I just want to get back – that’s a big system; but what Tignish done is taken a big project like that and said: How can we make it smaller for ourselves? Something like Bill Gates did when he saw these big computers and said: How can I make them smaller for people? So I’d say that Tignish is on the same level as Bill Gates when it comes to thinking, Mr. Speaker.

They’ve taken a little plant. They’ve got the conduit tubing going from building to building in their town. It’s all automated. It’s not like *The Titanic* where somebody’s shoveling in chips every hour. It’s totally automated. They’ve got the best of technology there. They have the best of engineers there; but the most important part of it, with all the technology and all the ability there, they had the spirit and the initiative of the people of Tignish that said: Look, we can do this, we can reduce our carbon, and we can heat our buildings. They’ve added some more buildings to their facility.

Again, Islanders stepping up to the plate and doing the right thing for climate change. Did they have to be fined for it? Did they have to be pushed into it? No. That’s the best part about being here on Prince Edward Island. We don’t have to be pushed into reducing our carbon footprint. We are doing it, we have been doing it, and we will continue to do it because I think Islanders know the importance of climate change.

The more we can work on changing our methods, changing our way of doing things; we then help our environment and help our economy. Because what better way to help the economy, and we have the federal government saying environment and the economy. Well, Mr. Trudeau can take a tour of Prince Edward Island and he’ll see how the economy and the environment are

working together here in Prince Edward Island in terms of wood chips.

Take a look at it. Instead of importing oil, dirty oil, carbon (Indistinct) oil from Venezuela or from Saudi Arabia or places like that, we are getting our energy; we are getting our source of heat, from our backyard. We've got local farmers – I was at the woodlot association meeting a few weeks ago. I think the woodlot association is gearing up. They know they have a phenomenal resource here. We have a phenomenal resource on Prince Edward Island in our wood.

Mr. Trivers: Wood chips release carbon.

Mr. R. Brown: There are always discussions about, you know, we're going to run out of wood. I think with the woodlot owners association and the woodlot people on Prince Edward Island, I think we'll have many, many, many years of –

Mr. Trivers: It doesn't reduce carbon emissions, though.

Mr. R. Brown: Yes, it does –

Ms. Biggar: Yes.

Mr. Trivers: How is that –

Mr. R. Brown: – and I will work with those and the government will work with them.

I want to thank people out – and again, you talk about Islanders, the department of forestry has been replanting trees, up to a million trees a year on Prince Edward Island. Just picture how much carbon that's taking out of the air.

Mr. Trivers: (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: We didn't have to be forced into it. We weren't told. We weren't ordered. We weren't ordered; we just went and did it. That's the spirit of Prince Edward Island; we just go and do things. That's why these talks with Ottawa are centred around the great work that we've been doing here on Prince Edward Island already, and the knowledge that a lot of people can take from Islanders and Prince Edward Island as a whole.

As the Premier has always said: Our smallness is our advantage. We don't get wrapped up in these big bureaucracies and take five, 10, 20 years to discuss a thing. We have a good idea. We get this good idea onto the drawing board –

Mr. Trivers: (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: – and onto the building right away. Like the Tignish initiatives has done. Like we've done with the energy deal.

A lot of other provinces can learn a lot from Prince Edward Island. One thing you see up in the Tignish area, they must have a lot of brains up that way, they have the wind test site. I think that's been 1978. You know phenomenal knowledge has been – come out of the wind test site. I think we were one of the first one's –

Mr. Trivers: 1981.

Ms. Biggar: Highest regime in Canada.

Mr. R. Brown: I think one of the – Vestas was – came to Prince Edward Island –

Mr. Trivers: (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: – and set-up one its –

Ms. Biggar: (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: – first test sites. All we have to do is go to the other end of the Island, Souris. You see where the new freezer plant was put up. Again, smart people sitting around saying: How do I reduce my carbon? But we're also –

Mr. LaVie: Smart people in rural communities.

Mr. R. Brown: – I don't know what my lineage is, English or something. There must be a lot of Scots on the Islanders because they also wanted to reduce their price of running their plant. One of the things they did was build a windmill.

You know, you think of it, okay, a freezer plant, you've got to keep it cold. Wind is not blowing all the time, but if you can get that plant cold enough that it doesn't thaw enough until the next blow of wind you don't need to bring in any external energy. I

think they have it down quite pat. I think they've cycled – cycling through their energy needs right there.

You think of it, a freezer. They're freezing a product. They're freezing our product for exports. They're getting it from the wind, which is free. In essence, the freezer is a big battery, when you look at it. They're storing energy in the ice. The ice is cooling and keeping its product cold.

Again, another innovation that's done. This innovation is being done on big scales across Prince Edward Island, but a lot of small scales across Prince Edward Island when you look at Island businesses.

I think where we get our ideas is, we come from a farming background. We come from an innovative background, Islanders. They come from where we had to think and build our own way. Build our own innovation in order to make our farms more efficient, our fishing fleets more efficient.

You look at fishermen all the time are thinking about better ways to catch lobsters; better ways to handle them. We're always thinking about better and innovative ways. We have a lot of brain power here on Prince Edward Island. That brain power has been put to use many times over. That's what we're telling Ottawa. We're telling Ottawa. That's why, one of the reasons we are one of the lowest per capita in the country. Prince Edward Islanders deserve credit for that.

I believe Islanders deserve a lot of credit for the work they have done over the years in terms of reducing their energy requirements.

Mr. R. Brown: That's what we're saying. And, you know, any time Ottawa looks towards trying out new innovations they've come to Prince Edward Island. Have we always succeeded? No.

Mr. Trivers: (Indistinct) release the documents.

Mr. R. Brown: We tried the hydrogen buses. Ford came down and gave us the hydrogen buses. We tried the hydrogen buses, very expensive at the end, but we did a test for them. Innovation is not always about winning at everything. It's taking

chances. And when you do not win just keep going.

That's another thing about Islanders. When they do – when there is a setback we don't sit back and cry and we don't sit back and moan and cry and try to blame somebody else.

Mr. Trivers: Stop filibustering –

Mr. R. Brown: We just move on to the next innovation and how can we do it?

Mr. MacEwen: Just say yes or no?

Mr. R. Brown: The energy accord not only helped us in terms of reducing our energy on Prince Edward Island, we have an environmental problem that was brought upon, one time, when some government thought they'd change all the oil tanks here on Prince Edward Island.

At that time, a lot of 12 gauge oil tanks came into the province. I just got the Insurance Bureau of Canada's insurance report for Prince Edward Island. I – we have a problem, but this new energy policy that's coming out. The minister of energy is going to be announcing some programs, I think, is going to go a tremendous long way to solving our energy problem and a potential environmental problem with it comes oil tanks. Because when the oil tanks are up for renewal now, if we can replace oil with a less carbon item, we also do away with the tank. What better way to solve two problems? Again, it's thinking innovatively; thinking small and making sure that we get it.

There's a lot of talk about the carbon pricing and how it's going to affect the economy. The Office of Parliamentary Budget Officer put out a report and said, you know, if the money goes back to the residents there's really no effect on the economy. I'll table that for my colleagues, who are trying to fear-monger people into believing that this is going to hurt them.

We need to – this information and I hope, if they were looking up on the Internet or on some of the government sites, they'd see that there is a lot of opportunity here, okay.

Leader of the Opposition: Release the information so we can see. Don't do everything in secret behind closed doors –

Mr. LaVie: (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: Mr. Speaker –

Leader of the Opposition: Open and transparent, #fail.

Mr. R. Brown: I hear the chirping. I hear the chirping, there will be –

Leader of the Opposition: Lots of (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: – opportunity; all kinds of opportunity to debate this.

We will be reducing our carbon plan in a week or two. There will be ample opportunity. There will be ample information in that report. So, what I'm saying is you will be getting the information you require when the carbon plan comes out.

Leader of the Opposition: (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: Because that's what you do.

Leader of the Opposition: (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: You bring the information together. You put it into a plan and into a strategy, which will be being tabled in the future.

Leader of the Opposition: You've got no plan.

Mr. R. Brown: See, that's one thing that we don't do, Liberals. One thing about –

Mr. Trivers: There's a lot you don't do.

Mr. R. Brown: – Liberals, we don't rush in.

Mr. LaVie: (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: We don't rush into things.

Some Hon. Members: [Laughter]

Mr. R. Brown: We don't rush.

Mr. LaVie: Yes, you do.

Mr. MacEwen: That's for sure.

Mr. R. Brown: Yeah, we don't rush into things like Leo Rossiter did down in Georgetown; lost millions of dollars. We don't rush into things. When Pat Binns rushed into Polar Foods –

Mr. LaVie: (Indistinct) by-election (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: – and lost millions and millions of dollars –

Mr. LaVie: (Indistinct) rushed into a by-election (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: You take your time. You make your plans. You execute your plans. That's the Island way of doing things.

An Hon. Member: This leader doesn't (Indistinct)

Mr. Myers: (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: I've always looked at –

Mr. MacEwen: (Indistinct) applications (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: People that rush in –

Mr. Myers: (Indistinct) PNP (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: – people that's cars are broken the side of the road and once they get the old vice grips out trying to fix her, that car usually ends up on the road for a long, long time.

Where we Liberals think, okay, we look at the engine. We make sure we know we're going to do, and we fix it.

Mr. Gallant: We study it.

Mr. R. Brown: We're not like other governments; rush in and all of a sudden you get all the engine parts over the highway –

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: – and you can't move the car, at all.

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct) Tory.

Mr. R. Brown: So, back to –

Mr. LaVie: (Indistinct) speaking for two hours (Indistinct) I know how you feel.

Mr. R. Brown: – the energy thing.

You know, and I have to admit, sometimes, previous governments have made good decisions, but it has always been based on good advice from the Liberals.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Mr. LaVie: (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: You take energy from the waste plant we had down there when it was developed. The piping that's gone all through Charlottetown. One hundred and twenty-five buildings are being heated by this –

An Hon. Member: Amazing.

Mr. R. Brown: – no carbon; 125 smokestacks are not spewing out carbon.

These are buildings like the DVA, the post office, city hall – these are not small buildings. These are buildings that burn millions of litres of fuel every year in order to heat. What are they doing? They're getting their energy; they're getting their heat from energy from waste plant. They have reduced carbon emissions per year – 43,000 tonnes. Again, you look at it, you think –

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct) telling you the truth?

Mr. R. Brown: Nobody would think of that. You go all around North America; I don't think you'd see a plant, an idea, as efficient as our energy from waste plant on the highway there. We're solving one problem –

Mr. Trivers: Creating another.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: – and we're taking an advantage of that –

Mr. Trivers: It doesn't reduce carbon emissions.

Mr. R. Brown: – solution to help.

I just said to you – 43,000 tonnes. You're on the Internet all the time.

An Hon. Member: Yes.

Mr. R. Brown: Google PEI and energy savings. You'll get like 1,000 hits on every page for 10,000 pages. Try it. You're up there until 3:00 in the morning on the Internet, go ahead, try it. I think he'd be – he'd come back tomorrow and say: Look, you're doing excellent. Now, what I said last night, forget about it.

Another thing I want to thank Islanders for is the watershed groups. Now you'd think: What would the watershed groups have to do with climate change? They're cleaning out the areas, they're replanting, they're using trees and things that absorb – plants that absorb carbon. They're building up land areas. So we owe a lot to the watershed groups and we also have to talk about the ALUS program that was put into place in 2008 – a great project that also is helping.

In conclusion – and I might start up again because my conclusions usually lead to another conclusion – Islanders have been, are, and in the future will be working to reducing carbon here on Prince Edward Island. I think that – we've got a lot of calls from a lot of people around the world are coming to us and asking us: How have you done it? Wind farms. I remember when the first set of wind farms were coming out. There was a lot of criticism from it and at that time, even our –

Mr. MacEwen: From you. You were in opposition (Indistinct) –

Mr. R. Brown: No, no, we were for it.

Mr. MacEwen: (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: Even, Maritime Electric was against it at first because the economics of it, but the previous administration went ahead with the support of the Liberal opposition and that was one of the best things. If you had a good idea, we supported it.

Mr. J. Brown: It didn't happen very often.

Mr. R. Brown: No, it didn't. No.

Ms. Biggar: There weren't very many good ideas to support.

Mr. R. Brown: When we gave them a good idea that they announced, we'd support it. In all seriousness – yes, you'd think about it – we're doing a lot of good things now and the energy efficiency programs that were put in place as a result of the 2008 strategy, have gone a long way in saving Islanders a lot of money.

Mr. Trivers: You cut the taxes on (Indistinct) vehicles.

Mr. R. Brown: We have a lot of ideas. We have a lot of great things. Electric vehicles, as I mentioned earlier –

Mr. Trivers: (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: – we tried hydrogen and again, we have to thank Summerside – they're going with electric. They have electric stations. We let them experiment with that. If it works, good – work out the bugs in the town of Summerside and then that way, we can apply it across Prince Edward Island.

An Hon. Member: The city.

Mr. R. Brown: Oh, the city. Sorry. Okay.

In conclusion, I'm just going to say that Islanders deserve a lot of credit. This is why we're one of the lowest emitters in Canada.

Just one more – Irving. I've got to say something about them but they get slammed quite a bit by the opposition.

Mr. MacEwen: No we don't.

Mr. R. Brown: They have been working really hard in reducing emissions. They were the first ones to come in with the bio-digester, which saved a phenomenal amount of oil in their plant –

Mr. MacEwen: (Indistinct) being enacted by Maritime Electric.

Mr. R. Brown: – a phenomenal amount. Then Mr. Irving came along with compressed natural gas that he's shipping in

from off-Island, just off the other side of the fixed link. The day that plant was opened, we met our targets – a few years earlier – and it's because of our big emitter like Cavendish Farms that was innovative again, which not only was helping the environment, cutting its cost, allowing it to pay its company to grow here on Prince Edward Island. So, there's a story here. We're innovative, we want to save money, we want to help the environment and that can all happen here on Prince Edward Island now, it happened in the past, and it most definitely will be happening in the future, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you very much.

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

Ms. Biggar: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy for PEI, I think we all know certainly that we can't control what the global energy crises are, but we do know that we have control over how we consume energy right here on PEI. Energy efficiency keeps money in the pockets of Islanders.

Mr. Trivers: Speaking to the motion. At least start off speaking to the motion.

Ms. Biggar: Excuse me, Mr. Speaker, do I have the floor?

Mr. Myers: It's just whether or not you (Indistinct)

Speaker: Yes, you do.

Ms. Biggar: Energy efficiency and conservation as it ties together with carbon pricing, which is what we're talking about here and this all ties in with what Islanders are doing and we will continue to do around energy efficiency and conservation because they are the most cost-effective means of reducing our energy costs and, of course, the cheapest source of energy is the one that we don't use.

It also reduces our environmental impact and creates jobs for our local industry professionals. Since 2008, the Province of Prince Edward Island, through Efficiency PEI, has helped Islanders save over \$9

million on their energy bills. This includes providing \$7 million in grants to over 9,800 residential clients, a free weatherization service to 4,200 low-income homes, and helping over 500 businesses with programs and services to reduce their energy consumption.

We've generated \$56 million in building renovation expenditures; and we have reduced CO₂ emissions by 25,000 tonnes; and we've saved, through our efficiency programs to date, 1.5 million litres of home heating fuel annually. These incentives have all helped to support our province's commitment to reduce energy consumption in the electric and non-electric sectors by 2% annually by 2020.

As we move forward, our province is taking a coordinated approach on energy and environment to build a future for our province that is based on the smart investment and choices we have made in these areas to date. The made-in-PEI approach to energy efficiency will help us meet our climate change commitments and grow the economy, while simultaneously ensuring Islanders are saving money and living comfortably.

In 2017, the Government of Canada announced the Low Carbon Economy Fund and PEI has been successful in leveraging this opportunity. This funding will increase Efficiency PEI's operating budget ten-fold. It's an exciting opportunity to expand our services to Islanders and to substantially reduce our provincial carbon footprint to provide carbon reduction incentives that will invoke change in our communities, our industries, and our individuals.

With this funding Efficiency PEI has developed and will be offering a comprehensive suite of new and expanded existing programs covering all economic sectors throughout the province. This program funding will be approximately \$50 million over the next four years. The expanded program will create job opportunities for Islanders in the field of clean energy and efficiency, a sector which will continue to provide economic stimulus for years to come.

I'd like to talk a little bit about our energy strategy as well. The goal of the strategy is

to develop a stronger, more sustainable, and resilient province. The energy strategy will result in energy savings for Islanders and reduce our reliance on imported fossil fuels. It will create new opportunities in employment, economic opportunities through retrofitting projects, and the generation of more locally produced energy.

Our province has established a provincial transportation committee whose goal is to develop a sustainable transportation strategy. The National Building Code has been enacted for the province and will come into effect in 2018 for commercial buildings and 2020 for residential buildings.

We are expanding, again, our energy efficiency programs and offering new programs which were recently announced: the new home construction program will offer opportunities of up to \$5,000 for new home builds; but also –

Mr. Trivers: Speaking to the motion?

Ms. Biggar: – programs will be incentivized –

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Ms. Biggar: – to low to medium income Islanders to encourage their adoption of energy efficiency programs.

Mr. Trivers: That's not what we meant by the motion. (Indistinct)

Ms. Biggar: Mr. Speaker, the opposition doesn't want to hear the good things we're doing here obviously.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Mr. Myers: Table the document you're reading. That's what we (Indistinct)

Ms. Biggar: But Mr. Speaker, we are sharing with Islanders what our plan is.

An Hon. Member: No.

Ms. Biggar: Mr. Speaker, we have engaged a consultant for a grid modernization study. We're building a new 30-megawatt wind farm. In March of 2017, when we released this, this strategy was developed with three guiding principles.

An Hon. Member: Three? (Indistinct)

Ms. Biggar: Reducing greenhouse gas emissions, implementing cost-effective actions and decisions, and creating local economic opportunities.

Mr. Trivers: (Indistinct)

Ms. Biggar: We went across the Island and engaged with people and we got over 70 recommendations for actions out of those.

The strategy pursues six fundamental goals: reliability, energy systems that meet our needs, now and in the future; influence over our future; greater control over prices and reducing reliance on external market forces; leadership, demonstrating energy leadership within Canada and globally; capitalizing on our ability to be innovative and flexible – we can be a testing ground and are a testing ground for new technologies and processes; leveraging resources through partnerships; researching new projects and new developments; and to consider our context, the options that we can take into account, our unique size, our infrastructure, our rural nature.

We talked about what's happening in rural PEI with energy initiatives in Tignish and in Montague and Souris area. People are taking on innovative projects to look at how they can reduce their reliance on fossil fuels. We are aligning with the federal policies and regional opportunities. The policies in our areas are being developed, and our energy strategy is going to be, and is aligned, with the provincial climate change strategy.

I want to talk about our wind farms. We talked about it earlier. We're the second-strongest wind regime in the world after Denmark. We have plans to grow our capacity over the next several years. We are a pioneer around the world in clean energy. Together, the provinces four wind farms generate more than 220 kilowatt hours, which supplies 25% of our province's electricity requirements. The wind farms generate an annual revenue of approximately \$20 million for the province.

Part of our energy strategy recommended, and we are going forward with that, to expand our wind generation capacity by

adding 30 megawatts by 2019, 2020, and an additional 40 megawatts in 2025.

Mr. Trivers: Table the document.

Ms. Biggar: We are pursuing that. We're gathering wind data. We're identifying land that – we actually have identified three Island locations and will be moving forward on that. We will continue to develop that.

I want to remind, also, that in our recent budget, our third balanced budget in the history of the province –

Mr. MacKay: Third? It was two (Indistinct)

Ms. Biggar: – since we've come in.

Mr. Fox: It was two the other day.

Ms. Biggar: I want to remind everyone that we are taking the provincial tax, 10% tax, off a rebate on the first block of electricity for every Islander. That's going to cost approximately \$8 million.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Biggar: But not only that, not only that, we're taking it off of propane; we're taking it off of wood; we're taking it off of wood pellets because we want to encourage people to move away from fossil fuels, move to electrifying the province, and encourage people to move that forward. We will continue to work with them.

We also are working with the federal government right now on our second phase of our infrastructure program that is going to be a \$367 million program. We're near the signing of that agreement. That will also include green infrastructure projects that we can move forward on for the province. These programs – these initiatives that we're taking are going to create jobs for Islanders in the field of clean energy and efficiency and will continue to provide economic stimulus for our province.

These are the things we're already doing – Islanders are doing – to initiate and enhance our carbon pricing, our carbon reductions. So, we have a lot of great work being done, that's been done. We'll continue to do that through Efficiency PEI, with Islanders, and continue to work diligently to ensure that

Islanders reap the benefits of a strong economy.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. R. Brown: We're going to meet our targets.

Mr. MacEwen: Standing vote, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. R. Brown: No.

Speaker: Next speaking to this motion – what is the wish of the members?

Mr. MacEwen: Standing vote.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Ms. Biggar: Keep going.

Speaker: Just keep going? Okay.

The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

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

It's a pleasure to rise to talk about this procedural motion, which is essentially a big FOIPP request. That's what we're talking about here.

An Hon. Member: Yes.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: I would encourage government – I'm going to vote in favour of this motion, I should tell you. I would encourage government to come forward with this information. The carbon pricing is a major decision of government and we have to make this decision before the end of the year. I think it's really important that this Legislature and all Islanders have an opportunity to be part of that discussion and over the last couple of years as government is being consistently secretive about what their plans is and what the details are and I don't think that's right because this is such a major decision that's going to impact every single Islander.

This government likes to talk about transparency; here's an opportunity for you to practice it. Let's table these documents.

Some Hon. Members: Yes, right.

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

Speaker: Are there any other members who would like to speak to the motion?

The hon. Premier.

An Hon. Member: Close debate. Mr. Speaker, he's going to close debate now.

Mr. R. Brown: He's the Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Ms. Biggar: He's the Speaker.

Speaker: Go ahead, Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, we had a good discussion on the floor here while we were in committee of the whole on estimates last week on this very question and I thought there was a really good exchange from all sides and that some hon. members recognized that this is not simply a matter of coming down with a price as if this is all about 'the price' or 'the tax' as it's being called regularly from the other side. But indeed, a matter of proceeding to meet our commitments – our commitments to the environment; our commitments to reduce our carbon footprint; and our commitments to live up to the Pan-Canadian framework on climate change; and a clean economy.

I'm reminded of a series of events from the mid 1970s – in the first part, so that we will know that this is not something that just started in this province or that just started with the Paris Accord in December of 2015.

In the fall of 1973, there was what became known as the Arab oil embargo and that really threw a shock into the world market and prices tripled, maybe even quadrupled, over the space of the next 24 months. It caused quite a ripple within Canada around this very question of the price of petroleum. The further question of the authority of the federal government to tax, and the authority of the provincial government to – at that time the issue was whether they could control the resources, and there was some pretty heavy activity and some shifting of ground, including some provincial elections that took place during that period.

The thing that I want to get through to is that they finally resolved it toward the end of 1975 where, more or less, the federal

government declared that the price was going to be just under \$10, \$9 and something. *The Globe and Mail* had a front page story and they interviewed Peter Lougheed and they interviewed Bill David who was the premier of Ontario at the time. They finally got around to interviewing Alex Campbell to say: What do you think of this? His words at that time, and we can leave this to pick it up on another day, his words at that time – they closed off *The Globe and Mail* article, were: Renewable energy anyone – 43 years ago, renewable energy anyone.

So, maybe the next time we talk about this, we'll come to renewable energy anyone, and with that, I move that we adjourn this debate.

Mr. MacEwen: (Indistinct)

Speaker: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Parkdale.

Ms. Bell: Mr. Speaker, I request that Motion No. 40 be now read.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk: Motion No. 40.

The hon. Leader of the Third Party moves, seconded by the hon. Member from Charlottetown-Parkdale, the following motion:

WHEREAS the World Health Organisation defines health as “a state of complete mental, physical and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity”;

AND WHEREAS health care involves both interventions when people are sick or injured, and a Health Promotion System, which aims to improve the overall health of a population;

AND WHEREAS there are economic, social, physical, and mental benefits to both individuals and society as a whole in fostering a healthy population;

AND WHEREAS the factors that most influence population health are the social determinants of health (which include income and social status, social support

networks, education and literacy, employment, and working conditions), and the ecological determinants of health (which recognise impacts on human health of a strained environment);

AND WHEREAS the health of a population - including its mental health - is largely a function of the social, economic, and environmental factors that shape the conditions in which people are born, learn, work, play, and age;

AND WHEREAS determinants and factors affecting health care are unequally distributed among Islanders, leading to differences in health outcomes that are systemic, unfair, and avoidable;

AND WHEREAS optimizing the health of our population strengthens the capacity of all Islanders to fully engage and participate in economic, social, cultural, and political life as contributing citizens;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly encourage government to shift policy objectives in all aspects of governance toward economic growth and development that promote human health and development, and are socially just and ecologically sustainable.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

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

Before I start, I want to thank a couple of people who did research and background work on this motion: Susan Hartley, who happens to be the health and wellness critic for the Green Party, and Karla Bernard who is the education and early learning critic, and also Gary Roberts who is an Islander and did a lot of fine work and background research for this motion and for some of the words I'm about to say.

Improving the physical and mental health of Islanders is often viewed as the work of the health care system. But in reality, what we currently call health care could better be described as illness management, as it is primarily tasked with caring for individuals when they are sick or injured. That, of course, is a critically important service. We

all need to know that we will have access to timely care when we are ill.

Indeed in Canada, we rightly take pride in providing all citizens with access to critical interventions that often mean the difference between life and death. Yet these systems are mostly designed to respond to the absence of health, and they rarely focus on building health and resiliency, nor do they bring significant improvement to the health of the population overall.

In her 2016 Chief Public Health Officer's Report for Prince Edward Island, Dr. Heather Morrison delved deeply into the issue of what makes Islanders healthy, focusing on the social determinants of health. The report defines the social determinants of health as, and I quote: The societal conditions that influence people's health.

More specifically, this includes a long list of factors: income and social status, social support networks, education and literacy, employment and working conditions, social environments, physical environments, personal health practices and coping skills, healthy child development, biology and genetics endowment, health services, gender, and culture; a long list.

According to Dr. Heather Morrison, estimates indicate that socioeconomic factors account for about 50% of all health outcomes, while health care accounts for 25%, genetics for 15%, and physical environments for 10%. I don't know about everyone else here in this room, but I often look to my parents and my grandparents for a prediction of what my own longevity will be, but in actual fact, genetics only play a very small role compared to the social determinants of health, for example.

But the good news, at least for me and pretty well everyone sitting in this room, is that even if we did not win the genetic lottery for good health, most of us enjoy even greater benefits from our relatively privileged socioeconomic positions.

As caring communities, we long to see a society where all members enjoy sufficient income, support networks, good working conditions, safe social and physical environments and all of the other factors I

just read out, that contribute to the wellness of both individuals and the population as a whole.

Unfortunately, the social-determinants of health are not equally distributed around the Island and as Dr. Morrison points out, and I quote: Differences often lead to health inequality; differences in health outcomes that are systemic, unfair and avoidable. For example, we have varied income and education levels, of course. It's difficult, sometimes impossible, to afford a nutritious and well-balanced diet on a low income. The chronic stress associated with insecure or unsafe housing leaves families vulnerable to mental health issues. Islanders should all have the same opportunity to enjoy a healthy life, but sadly that is not the reality in our province.

This presents both a challenge and an opportunity for us here in this Legislature. Often when we talk about health care we focus on access to doctors and other health professionals, building and maintaining health care facilities, ensuring that Islanders can afford medications, and all of those are critically important, of course, but we remain blind to the equally important social and economic factors that influence health. Indeed, relative to other factors, the health care system actually plays a comparatively small, though critical role, in improving the overall health of our population.

In addition to the social determinants of health, we must recognize the ecological determinants of health, something which is becoming an increasingly important concept in promoting a healthy society. There is growing evidence that the impacts of human activity on our environment impact our health. Climate change, water quality and quantity, energy resources, waste management, the health and fertility of our soils, the stability of natural ecosystems, and other environmental factors need to be taken into account when designing policies to promote a healthy population.

We often talk about the environment as if it's something out there separate from us, whether that's a marine protected area or a growth of hemlocks, or a national park. The environment is not something disconnected from us; the environment is a continuum along with every person and everything in

this room. There's that old saying: You are what you eat. That is quite literally true. You are actually what you eat, drink and breathe, but you are made up of the environment. Every cell in our bodies gets recycled, some in very short time and within seven or eight years, almost our entire body is replaced. That body comes from what we eat, drink, and breathe – the environment.

There is no separation between us and the environment. If we don't look after our environment we are poisoning our own bodies. It's a really important concept that we're just beginning to understand.

Of course, almost none of the socio-ecological factors affecting health lie within the traditional scope of the health care system, but they lie with a multitude of government departments and programs.

That is why Dr. Morrison's report, a report that I would encourage everybody to read, calls for, amongst other things, a health-in-all-policies approach, the title of this motion.

This would be a far more holistic approach applied across government and would require that all departments consider the impacts that their policies and decisions have on the social-ecological determinants of health. By breaking down the artificial barriers that exist between and among departments, we can enlist all of government in the common objective of promoting the health and wellness of every Islander.

This might seem like a monumental shift, but it really isn't. We've already – we can already see kernels of this sort of cross-departmental holistic thinking in some parts of the public service. The bridge model, for example, brings together professionals from public safety, education, family and human services, Indigenous organizations to help individuals or families who are at risk of harm.

This recognizes, this bridge model recognizes that complex situations require multi-faceted, broad-range, long-vision solutions. Using the socio-ecological determinants of health across departments is a similar multi-pronged approach to the complex policy challenge of improving the health of Islanders. It recognizes that a wide range of factors affect health and wellness

and that an equally broad solution is required.

It is our responsibility as the leaders in this province to work on and to find solutions that will allow all Islanders to live healthy, rewarding, prosperous lives. For that reason, Mr. Speaker, I call on all hon. members of this Legislature to support this motion.

Thank you very much.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Parkdale.

Ms. Bell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to speak to this motion today.

It is such a privilege to be here and participate in meaningful debate on the future of all Islanders.

As a newly elected MLA, it is easy to become overwhelmed by the complexity of issues that face Islanders and it can be tempting to focus on one or two things like the economy or population growth as a panacea for all of our ills. I would never deny that those metrics aren't important, but I don't feel they really tell a complete or human story.

I did not seek public office so I could do my bit to improve the GDP. I did it so I could tell the stories of my constituents and make a difference, whether those stories are about the chronic stress of insecure employment; the barriers to social mobility within our current social assistance programs, the profound indignity of being unable to afford your own ostomy supplies, or the extraordinary risks homeless women must navigate daily.

Some would argue that, with the exception of ostomy supplies, these aren't health care stories, but, for me, everyone is a story about how we're collectively failing to provide our fellow Islanders with the basic minimum socio-economic supports necessary to enjoy good health.

Of course, poverty is only one of the social determinants of health. We must also hear the stories coming out of our education system, our justice system and the challenges that face families with limited employment opportunities and housing

options. The tales that our depleted soil and water may be telling us.

We need to be measuring, not just the employment participation rates, but also whether Islanders have secure jobs with benefits; livable wages, food security, childcare and safe working conditions. These are the larger challenges we must address when we talk about health and wellness. For that reason, I am proud to stand today and support this motion.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Next speaking to the motion, the hon. Minister of Economic Development and Tourism.

Mr. Palmer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm happy to be able to respond to this, as well. Economic development has underpinnings of everything that has been talked about today within the promotion of human health. The society just and ecological sustainability.

Along with a lot of other things that makes the economy move forward, it helps with economic development. We know that those pieces cannot happen in isolation. It's a very important part to continue to grow your economy and we know things that are successful do have various pieces of that in it, as well. That's where successful commerce comes in. To grow our economy, we know that successful organizations respond to the environmental pieces that are going in, on and around our community, through our province. We know that it's very important.

I don't see where this is a huge departure from where we are, today. I do know that the province continues to work with lots of organizations that are successful. That bring new money into our province that those businesses and the economics surrounding that are all – it's all very important to continue the growth in our province.

Our society, over generations, has grown to be far more aware of elements of economic development and what pieces are very important for the sustainability of that. If we look at examples back around sustainability piece as an example, environmental piece is.

I know when I was a kid, and it speaks to something that we talked about earlier; people would take their car and park it over a stream to change their oil. So, those kinds of behaviours are not accepted today. That seems ridiculous that that would happen today. If there was any economic development that had that kind of harm to the environment, it wouldn't be acceptable and it wouldn't be sustainable and it wouldn't be something that would continue on.

I think a lot of that, through, kind of, evolution of PEI and acceptance of what various businesses are doing and what they can do, I think, is really, it's really important. It's surprising to me, actually, that the motions that I'm hearing. Like, last week I heard there was a motion from the Green Party about the fishing model that, they really didn't like the model that we had here on PEI anymore and they have a motion on the floor to take a look at fishing and what's happening on the north side and how we do that. That's something that we're going to debate here further in the House.

They don't like our electoral system. They want to change that, as well.

Ms. Biggar: Don't like our votes.

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct)

Mr. Palmer: I've heard before, and we've talked about it in here, supports for companies that export. I've heard that a number of times: Why would we help successful companies in PEI that are exporting? I think that's really important. I know there was a topic here, a week or two ago, about a company that's in Summerside that the government has supported both federally and provincially. I believe it was an \$18 million project and a \$4 million contribution –

An Hon. Member: ADL.

Mr. Palmer: – support to ADL, which creates jobs for 275 people in Summerside and 165 farmers across the Island.

I know that the leader of the Green Party, kind of, at a, I think, it was a governance retreat or something that, I believe, that he talked about that they questioned why we'd

do that, and why we would support or want companies to export.

Those exporting companies bring new money into the province.

Ms. Biggar: Health care.

Mr. Palmer: It pays for roads and schools and –

Ms. Biggar: Call the hour.

Speaker: The hour has been called.

The hon. Member from Vernon River-Stratford.

Mr. McIsaac: I move, seconded by the hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir, that this House adjourn until tomorrow, May 2nd, at 2:00 p.m.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

The Legislature adjourned until tomorrow, Wednesday, May 2nd, at 2:00 p.m.