

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY



Speaker: Hon. Francis (Buck) Watts

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The Legislature sat at 2:00 p.m.

Matters of Privilege and Recognition of
Guests

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Good afternoon, everyone. Welcome to the guests in the gallery, colleagues here; those watching by television or Internet.

We've got Donnie Sanderson with us this afternoon from St. Peters Bay. A great observer of affairs in the province. It's great to have you in here up close, Don.

Some regulars; Eddie Lund, Lorne Yeo, Alan Malone, is not quite as regular, but he's here; Russell Myers and Isaac (Indistinct) got a good bunch aboard and I'm sure we'll have a great afternoon.

I want to mention the evolving events in New Brunswick with the flooding in the Saint John River, and now the lower part of the river. We are observing those – evolving situation very closely. Our ministers have been in touch directly. Officials are regularly in touch; transportation and EMO, in particular. I have been in touch with Premier Gallant to let it be known that we are ready to lend whatever assistance that we can lend.

Earlier today I had an opportunity to tour and spend some time at the Provincial Heritage Fair. A lot of bright students there; done some terrific work, and brought things out from their family treasure chests, and from our museums and the Internet; telling a lot of great stories and a lot of people who support that, including our own JoAnne Holden, who was one of the judges.

If I may add, a number of colleagues in the public service, who are looking at taking on a different workload in the near future. There are events on a pretty regular basis to acknowledge their work and their collaboration and contributions, over, in some cases, well into a fourth decade. There is an event this evening for Sheila MacLean, who has done great work for us; and tomorrow for Margaret Simpson. So

acknowledge Sheila and Margaret. Certainly, hope that lots of people will turn out and I'm sure they will to celebrate and be with them.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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

I'd like to thank the Premier, first and foremost, for his comments with regards to our neighbours in New Brunswick and ensuring that our various ministers and EMO have been in touch with their partners in New Brunswick.

When I spoke about this unfortunate situation, yesterday, I actually had stated that I had hoped that we had seen the worst already, but from news reports that I observed today, it seems like we're certainly well away from seeing the worst of what is yet to come.

Again, I thank the Premier for his direction and leadership with the provincial government to make sure that every available resource that we can muster here on PEI is available to our neighbouring province in New Brunswick.

I would also like to recognize the students that are participating in the annual heritage fair at the Confederation Centre of the Arts today. Over the 12 years that I worked there, it was one of the highlights of my year to welcome the students in and to walk around and see the wonderful projects that they did.

I actually recall, one particular year, when my son, actually, did his heritage project on my father, and his 42 years of service with Marine Atlantic. My dad, actually, started in 1947, two weeks before the old Abegweit, the original Abegweit, came into service brand new. It was just heartwarming to see two generations come together over history that's very significant here on PEI.

Speaking of history, I want to congratulate an Island company, a local company here in Charlottetown for their 50th anniversary that's coming up this weekend. I'm speaking, of course, of the PEI Home & RV

Centre, which is owned and operated by the Hambly family, just off of Kensington Road. I wanted to let everybody know that the Hamblys are going to be hosting an open house, May 4th to May 6th at the PEI Home & RV Centre. I'm told by Matthew, that there's actually going to be a free BBQ. I hope it's free because I'm announcing it that way, but there will be a free BBQ –

Ms. Biggar: Sponsored by –

Leader of the Opposition: – on Saturday. Matthew if that information is not correct, then please let me know, but it might be too late.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you.

I would instruct Wayne or Matthew to send the bill to the hon. Leader of the Opposition if that's the case.

I would like to welcome our regulars back to the gallery, Lorne and Eddie of course, and others and particularly Isaac Williams who is joining us today.

Like everybody else in this House, our thoughts are with our neighbours in New Brunswick and the pretty desperate situation there in the southern part of the province, and we only hope that things turn around soon and it starts to dry up, but I join the other leaders in sending our thoughts their way.

Today is World Press Freedom Day, and every year on May the 3rd it's a date which celebrates the fundamental principles of press freedom around the world to defend the media from attacks of their independence, and also to pay tribute to the journalists who have lost their lives in the exercise of their profession.

Here on Prince Edward Island, of course we're very fortunate to have the media that we do have and I salute and I give thanks for their exemplary and the critically important job that they do. But, there are other countries where things are not so great.

On Monday of this week, a suicide bomber specifically attacked journalists; blew himself up and in doing so, killed nine journalists in that country. In other countries, record numbers of journalists are imprisoned simply for doing their job, and ironically the better they do their job the more likely they are to be imprisoned.

At the top of those lists are countries like Turkey and China and Egypt where between those three countries, they account for more than half of the journalists who are imprisoned around the world. I think it's important that we recognize how lucky we are here in this country, and yet how much work we still have to do in order to ensure a free press around this world.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Dumville: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I, too, would like to welcome everybody here today and our regulars, Eddie and Lorne, and also a constituent of mine, Alan Malone.

In regards to the flooding in New Brunswick, I have great empathy for what they are going through. I owned a home in Fredericton back in 1973 and that was the last year of the big flood. That was the biggest flood they ever had until now, so I sympathize with what's going on over there.

I'd also like to recognize all of the fantastic displays over here at the Confederation Centre. Those young people are just absolutely fantastic. I spent an hour over there, but I could have spent probably a couple of weeks. Like us all, we all could probably spend that much time over there and it was really interesting, the fact that not every day you have your granddaughter having a display of your wife's wedding dress in the fair. So, I thought that was kind of unique.

I'd also like to mention that it is our security officer Trevor Darrach's 69th birthday today, so Happy Birthday wishes to Trevor.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

Mr. LaVie: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I welcome everyone back today, especially the media. Where would we be without the media? And to those in the gallery – I would like to say a big shout-out to Donnie Sanderson myself. I first met Donnie when he was fire chief in St. Peters. Of course, my father was the fire chief at the same time and of course Donnie saw a lot of changes since he took over fire chief in St. Peters, and there were a lot of changes since Donnie retired at fire chief. It's great to see Donnie here today. I haven't seen him for a while and I was surprised when I saw him walking in and it's great to see him. I'd like to thank him for his service he did give to the fire services to the community of St. Peters, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

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

Ms. Biggar: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'd like to welcome everyone back and those watching at home from my constituency of Tyne Valley-Linkletter, and my new constituency of Tyne Valley-Sherbrook, but also the visitors in the gallery, Mr. Lorne Yeo and Eddie Lund and Alan Malone. I think maybe Alan might be getting busy to do some camping this summer so I want to welcome them to the gallery and hope you enjoy the proceedings.

Statements by Members

Speaker: The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

Christian Norton

Mr. LaVie: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Today I rise to recognize an outstanding achievement by Christian Norton. Norton was recently named one of 140 winners of the Clarendon Scholarship and will be heading to Oxford University in England in the fall.

Norton, a native of Annandale and the son of Louise and Gregory Norton, first received the Governor General's award when he graduated from Montague Regional High in 2012 and he continues to excel in his academic life. His full scholarship will cover all expenses: his tuition, college fees, living costs, and research costs for four years. This scholarship is worth \$280,000. What an amazing accomplishment.

[Applause]

He graduated with an honours biology degree in 2016 from UPEI and studied under Dr. Christian Lacroix, professor in biology, who recently co-authored a paper with Norton on his honours research project. As a UPEI student, he was awarded three consecutive NSERC undergraduate student research awards – an impressive accomplishment in securing these highly competitive awards.

Christian Norton is currently completing his masters at the University of Montreal where he is studying how certain plants are used for food and medicine.

I want to take this opportunity to wish Christian all the best next year when he starts at his new University. I am sure he will succeed at whatever he sets his mind to.

Thank You, Mr. Speaker

Speaker: The hon. Member from Borden-Kinkora.

Roundabout Consultation Meeting

Mr. Fox: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I am pleased to rise today to update the House on a public consultation meeting that was held yesterday evening on the new roundabout for the Newtown and Scales Pond roads.

I was pleased to host this meeting to ensure local residents had an opportunity to have their voices heard. Or at the least, they should have been briefed on the project. There were numerous issues raised and legitimate points were made. One of the issues raised was an irrigation pipe that lies directly under the road at the intersection. They installed this with their own money

and through consultation with the department years ago. If the department had of consulted they could have been reminded of the irrigation pipe that was installed years ago.

Other issues included concerns with the design and if larger farm equipment would be able to pass through the roundabout. Another concern was if the center concrete divides were going to be installed as you approach the roundabout.

The situation we find ourselves in is now government has already put this out to tender which closes today. If they would have took the time and asked the farmers and spoke with local residents this could have all been avoided. I was told in a meeting with the department that they don't need to consult on projects. This is the same minister who spoke at length about consulting with all groups on a bill, but didn't do the same with her own department's projects.

Well, I have to wonder if it's the minister that runs the department or the bureaucracy. These local residents deserve to have their thoughts and suggestions listened to. This morning some were even approached to sell their land. I hope the department takes their concerns into consideration before work is started on this project.

Mr. Trivers: (Indistinct)

Mr. Fox: I want to thank all those who came out yesterday evening and I will continue to work on your behalf to be a voice of your concerns. Later, I will be tabling the minutes from last evening's meeting.

Thank You, Mr. Speaker

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

Rural Municipality of Miltonvale Park

Mr. Dumville: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Home to about 1,150 people, the rural municipality of Miltonvale Park is well positioned to meet the requirements of the *Municipal Government Act* and also provides a great place to live. The

municipality provides activities for its residents to improve their health and wellness: fitness and yoga classes, line dancing, a walking club, six recent sessions on health and wellness in a project called Fit as a Fiddle, which was partly funded by the Department of Health and Wellness.

Over the past year, the community has built a new tennis/pickleball court at its community park. Four Lunch & Learns have been held this year to educate seniors about frauds and scams and physical/financial abuse. The municipality annually marks Family Violence Prevention Week with a big purple ribbon surrounding the Milton Community Hall and a blanket-making morning with comfy fleece blankets made and donated to Anderson House.

The recently renovated Milton Community Hall is a hub of activity and provides space for council office and church and community events, such as; recent watercolour classes, Monday and Friday coffee, this week's lobster takeout, and upcoming Ryan Cook concert and rhubarb social. Weekly Thursday night cards are held June through September. Activities go all year round; community plays, North Milton Women's Institute's strawberry, blueberry and apple socials, a community Halloween party and a Christmas craft fair.

Since the fall of 2012, about \$600,000 was spent on renovations, which will be completely paid off this summer. Annual Canada Day celebrations are held at the community park, which has a softball field, a recreational soccer field, basketball court, walking trails, dog park, and the new tennis court, and a park shelter, gazebo and small community garden.

Miltonvale Park also provides recreation, and cultural bursaries for its children. The PEI COD presented Miltonvale Park with the access award last fall for their efforts in making their community park more accessible.

Communication with residents is accomplished with social media, a website, newsletter and four welcome sign boards, which are equipped to display posters and booklets. Residents are delighted as Miltonvale Park is about to begin a long-

awaited interim project that will bring wired real high-speed to over 200 homes.

Just last month the municipality published a 344-page *Memories of Miltonvale Park* book, which outlined the beginnings of the community and notable events.

The environment is also a high priority. For the past decade the municipality has provided rebates to its citizens for low-flow toilets, high-efficiency washers and low-flow showerheads and also funds a summer student to the Cornwall and Area Watershed Group.

The municipality recently took a lead role in discussions with nearby municipalities regarding a municipal growth study. However, the other municipalities have decided to step back from the process for the time being.

Dedicated staff, incredible volunteers, the park, the hall, along with hard working Mayor Hal Parker and Shari MacDonald. They have five women councillors and one man all play a part in the success of Miltonvale Park.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for your indulgence. I know this was a little long.

Thank you.

Responses to Questions Taken As Notice

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. MacDonald: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I had questions yesterday from the hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald. As does every other province, PEI sells its debt through the big Canadian banks. A complete list of owners of the PEI debt as those of other provinces is maintained by the Canadian Depository for Securities, but that list is not available to the public or the provinces –

Mr. Trivers: Who are the syndicates?

Mr. MacDonald: We do know, based on who buys our debt, when it is initially sold; though most of it is purchased by pension funds, insurance companies and mutual

funds. Islanders, as clients of these entities would indirectly hold PEI bonds.

Canadian pension funds, banks, and mutual funds buy our debt because they see us as a good investment.

Virtually, all Canadian provinces have discontinued their programs of selling debt directly to residents as administration of these programs drives up costs, which would be passed onto all our residents.

The chartered banks have well-developed efficient systems for placement of debt. We know who holds most of our debt, as we know who the largest initial purchasers are and we see it in the publicly disclosed financial statements these major institutions; banks, mutual, insurance companies. Corporate investors see us as a good place to invest.

Our bond issues have fixed interest rates and fixed maturities. These do not change regardless of who holds the paper.

The province is prudently managing its debt by keeping capital spending to what it is needed to meet the needs of Islanders and by maintaining surplus budgets.

We have the fastest growing economy in Atlantic Canada and the third-fastest growing economy in Canada. PEI is conservative with our debt management laddering our long-term debt over various maturities to guard against interest rate spikes.

Short-term debt makes up only 8.5% of PEI's debt. One of the lowest short-term to long-term debt ratios in the country.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct) just the facts (Indistinct)

Mr. Trivers: (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: They're banging at the doors of the banks wanting (Indistinct)

Speaker: Maybe sometime.

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct)

Questions by Members

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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

As we noted last week, and in several occasions here in the Legislative Assembly, the Premier continues to be quite cagey with regards to this government's plan to tax Islanders for their carbon use.

When we asked about details, last week, around this carbon tax, unfortunately, as normal, we didn't receive any answers.

Sign-off on tax exemptions for farmers and fishers

Question to the Premier today: Has the federal government signed-off on carbon tax exemptions for PEI's farming and fishing industries yet? Yes or no?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, the federal government's position, going back, it must be 18 months on this question is that the – going back to October, 2016, is that the pricing model that they are putting forward as a model – doesn't mean that we, necessarily, have to follow it, that, as a model is one that would use, as its precedent the British Columbia tax on carbon. And it, indeed, does have an exemption for agriculture.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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

It's interesting the Premier would use British Columbia as an example, where as they're paying over \$1.60 a litre for gasoline this week.

Every day, Islanders, use gas, in fact, to drive to work. This week we were hit with another price hike at the pumps and we're seeing record prices all across Canada.

Additional cost to fuel with carbon tax

Question to the Premier: How much more will your carbon tax add to the price of gasoline, per litre for Islanders?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, the price of gasoline and, indeed, those prices were adjusted as of last weekend reflect supply and demand through the process of IRAC.

We have said, and continue to say, that we are a signatory to the Pan-Canadian framework on climate change and a clean economy. That does refer to a price on carbon, or a pricing mechanism for carbon. There are many ways to do that.

This has always got to be seen in the larger context of our commitment to reduce our carbon emissions and footprint and it's that goal that we are committed to, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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

Transportation accounts for nearly half of PEI's carbon emissions at 46%, so the cost of fuel does make a difference and it does matter. Especially when some estimates suggest that a carbon tax would add, minimum of 10 cents per litre at the pump.

Additional cost to diesel with carbon tax

Question to the Premier: How much more will your carbon tax add to the price of diesel fuel for Islanders?

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

Ms. Biggar: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Transportation makes up 42%, actually, to correct the statistics that were quoted. We are, presently, as part of our Energy Strategy, have put together a transportation committee. We will be working across different processes within government,

working with industry to encourage them and how we can address the challenge of transportation across PEI.

That industry is key also, to our export. We have 500 trucks that leave this province daily with exports that are over \$1 billion in exports from our industries across PEI that help drive our economy, which brings money back in here, which we can invest in programs to help incentives around carbon pricing.

Thank you.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Premier for that answer.

More and more Islanders are heating their homes with electricity. In fact, the price increase from a carbon tax will far outstrip the savings from removing the provincial portion of the HST on only the first block of electricity.

Additional cost to electricity rates with carbon tax

Question to the Premier: How much will your carbon tax add to the price of electricity for Islanders, Mr. Premier?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, there are a number of assumptions built into these questions. One is to be referring to it as a carbon tax. We haven't unveiled a carbon tax. There's this whole game here to cause fear among Prince Edward Islanders about our undertaking to reduce our carbon emissions, and we intend to live up to those commitments, and we believe that it's possible to work with Prince Edward Islanders through electrification, thank to the Leader of the Opposition for recognizing that – electrification, conservation, system management and incentives.

That's exactly what we will fully reveal and we said we'd do it before Mother's Day, and that's exactly the program that we're on.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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

Well, the Premier talks about speculation, but where I'm getting my information from is actually the Conference Board of Canada, which is a very highly-respected organization here in Canada.

According to the Conference Board of Canada, the cost of electricity is estimated to increase by nearly 15%. That's a huge tax hit on Islanders who are already struggling to pay their bills on a daily basis.

Question to the Premier: Why do you think Islanders can swallow yet another 15% increase in the price of electricity, Mr. Premier?

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

Ms. Biggar: Mr. Speaker, I find it quite incredulous that the Leader of the Opposition would instill fear into the hearts of Islanders and low-income Islanders.

The Maritime Electric just signed a deal with New Brunswick Power, which as a result ensures that PEI's electricity rates are not going to be affected by any increases, which New Brunswick may incur as part of their carbon pricing mechanism. Plus, again, we're investing over \$8 million in rebates to Islanders on electricity first block, on rebates for propane, rebates for wood, rebates for pellets and I find it quite troublesome that this opposition would try to scare low-income Islanders into thinking that there –

Mr. Myers: Oh, calm down.

Ms. Biggar: – is going to be detrimental to them –

Mr. Myers: That's feigned anger if I ever saw it.

Ms. Biggar: – and we are continuing to invest in Islanders –

Mr. Myers: I bet you can't fake that twice.

Ms. Biggar: – and I find that quite troublesome.

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct)

Mr. Roach: Great job.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: You know, Mr. Speaker, what's really troublesome is the minister of transportation, from her own website, doesn't realize that transportation makes up 46% of greenhouse gas emissions on PEI.

If the Premier's going to get someone to answer his questions for him, you might as well choose someone who knows their facts.

An Hon. Member: That's right.

Mr. Trivers: Mr. Speaker, this is what respected economist Jack Mintz had to say about the carbon tax recently, quote: Governments will keep deploying costly regulations to hit emissions targets letting future politicians, as always, worry about the bills while carbon taxes, if they survive the upcoming elections, become just another government tax-and-spend slush fund.

Concerns from economist Jack Mintz

Question to the finance minister: How do you respond to this concern?

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct)

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. MacDonald: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I try to read as much as I can as well, but I can tell you that I read it within the context of the evaluation of the writer and our approach will be fiscally neutral with many returns to Islanders.

We're working on many programs and it's unfortunate that the opposition doesn't believe in reducing the emissions here in Prince Edward Island like every other province in Canada is going to do.

But, we want to be a leader and we are a leader, and we'll continue to advance –

Mr. Myers: You hear the court challenge?

Mr. MacDonald: – our agenda in the interest of Islanders.

Thank you.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Well, Mr. Speaker, it's good to hear that the Minister of Finance does respect Jack Mintz.

In fact, when this government flip flopped and put the HST on Islanders, the finance department hired Jack Mintz to do a study on potential economic impacts to help sell it.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Mr. Trivers: You of course do respect this gentleman.

Mr. Myers: Yes, yes you did.

Economic impact of carbon tax

Mr. Trivers: Question to the finance minister: Will your department be retaining Mr. Jack Mintz or other economists to look at the economic impact that your carbon tax will have on Islanders?

Mr. Myers: Wes Sheridan is an economist.

Leader of the Opposition: Spin doctors.

Mr. Myers: You going to hire Wes Sheridan?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. MacDonald: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Eighteen of 20 of our sectors performed really well last year and we're leading the country in economic growth – or, Atlantic Canada, I should say and we're also third in the country in economic growth.

I think Prince Edward Island is doing very well, and I think with the addition of the 2018 Budget just proves to Islanders that this government has the helm and we're steady and straight ahead.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Well, Mr. Speaker, I just want to take this opportunity to say thank you to private industry for making this government appear that they're doing anything for the Island economy.

As the Leader of the Opposition has noted, the Conference Board of Canada says that a carbon tax will lead to cost increases in electricity, clothing and footwear, food and beverages, furnishings and household appliances. This is the Conference Board of Canada.

Cost increases to items of necessity

Question to the finance minister: Why does your government feel that Islanders are not paying enough for these items already?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. MacDonald: Again, Mr. Speaker, I'll have to go back to the minister of transportation's indication, and the Premier's, that I don't know who is talking about a carbon tax except the opposition, Mr. Speaker.

Leader of the Opposition: Islanders.

Mr. Myers: Lots and lots of Islanders, they don't trust you.

Mr. MacDonald: We're looking at – British Columbia brought in a cap and trade. Quebec and Ontario operate a cap and trade system. British Columbia introduced a carbon tax. Alberta has implemented a hybrid system.

Prince Edward Island is unique, and we've got a good story to tell. We're further advanced than most other provinces in Canada as far as carbon pricing.

Mr. Myers: Thanks to the Tories.

Mr. MacDonald: We're going to build something that's going to satisfy all Islanders and ensure that we look out for the most vulnerable Islanders on Prince Edward Island. We have no major natural resources and yes, transportation is something that

we're concerned with and we're going to deal with that.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Independent Parliamentary Budget Office, another source, estimates that a carbon tax will cost Canada's economy \$10 billion in GDP over the next five years. This government likes to talk about GDP, but \$10 billion less means less growth, less jobs and less productivity.

Lost GDP growth with carbon tax

Question to the finance minister: How much will your government's carbon tax cost the Island economy in lost GDP growth?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. MacDonald: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Again, if you want to talk about GDP – and I know it's not the most sexy topic to discuss in the general public – but as of this week, 3.2% – that's real growth on Prince Edward Island and again, the economy – I can't say it enough – is leading Atlantic Canada in third right across the country behind two big provinces.

I think we're going in the right direction and we have all the optimism in the world and so should our constituents of Prince Edward Island, because Prince Edward Island is doing more now than they've ever done before.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The minister really is chirping about the Island's GDP growth, but we have an independent analysis from the federal government that says a carbon tax will slow economic growth. As much as this government wishes, they can't have it both ways.

A carbon tax will have impact on our jobs and on our economy. You can't escape it. That's why we have a motion before the house to compel the province to release all research, data and analysis that they have on how a carbon tax will impact Islanders.

Release on information re: impact of carbon tax

Question to the finance minister: Will you level with Islanders and release that information for all to see?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. MacDonald: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'll take a page out of the third party's platform, basically, on economic development that this whole process on carbon pricing is going to produce – it's going to be phenomenal, and we're preparing for that and the hon. minister of transportation is putting programs together as we speak.

We want to complement carbon pricing in PEI with those advancements –

Mr. Trivers: (Indistinct) more taxes, more money.

Mr. MacDonald: – and we'll continue to do that.

I'm not sure where the hon. member is talking, but if you look back over the past number of years, gas and diesel has gone up every year. So, this fear mongering on the opposition side is nothing more.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

So, yesterday afternoon we had a good debate concerning a motion from the minister on the Status of Women on one of the recommendations put forward in the 2009 report from the PEI Coalition for Women in Government, recommendation number four.

Addressing of recommendations for women in government

Question to the minister: Why did you fail to address and advocate for all 17 recommendations?

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

Ms. Biggar: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I will advocate for all issues related to how we can engage more women in our boards and agencies, how we can encourage more women to step forward into a political process and Mr. Speaker, I commend the work that the Coalition for Women in Government has done to promote changes –

Mr. Trivers: Waiting for eight years.

Ms. Biggar: – for barriers that have been identified, one of which is how we can restructure our sitting hours in the Legislature to have more of a life balance between family, between work, between constituencies, and I will continue to commend them and to work with them and other agencies to raise those issues and bring them forward.

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

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

So in eight years they've advocated for one of the 17 recommendations that were made in 2009. Recommendation number two from the coalition dealt with the creation of an ombudsperson office, accessible beyond regular hours in government.

Advocating for ombudsperson

Question to the minister of status of women: Why have you failed to advocate for an ombudsperson?

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

Ms. Biggar: Mr. Speaker, in my consultations with the women's advocacy groups across PEI, this was one of their top priorities that they wanted to bring forward and how we could invoke change by all of us engaging together. Our MLAs are in our

districts, as I said, by having restructuring of the sitting hours that would be able to allow us, as the minister from Borden-Carleton noted, to be out there in our – excuse me – Borden-Kinkora.

Mr. Fox: I got promoted.

Ms. Biggar: But to be out there engaging and promoting and all of us everyday lobby and consult and bring issues forward and we, in fact, are doing the work to raise issues and we will continue to do that.

Mr. LaVie: (Indistinct)

Ms. Biggar: But the work that we did together yesterday was one of the key issues that wanted to be moved forward.

Mr. LaVie: You don't want to work.

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

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I don't know why the minister won't answer my question. I asked about an ombudsperson. She's cherry-picking out of the 17 recommendations for one that she thinks she can actually accomplish because she doesn't want to actually fight for women like she let on like she did yesterday.

In 2016, the coalition of women highlighted nine of those and sent it to the democratic renewal committee, so there are nine of them that are the top of their list. Recommendation number three from the original report dealt with five staff constituency offices spread across Prince Edward Island and shared among MLAs to make their jobs easier, make them more accessible and have a staff to help manage their constituency work.

Addressing of recommendations for women in government (further)

Minister: Why have you failed to advocate for recommendation number three?

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

Ms. Biggar: Well, Mr. Speaker, I think as the hon. member knows, a delegation of funds to run opposition offices, third party offices –

Mr. LaVie: (Indistinct) your priorities.

Ms. Biggar: – anything related to MLAs is a –

Mr. Myers: You're the minister of status of women, advocate.

Ms. Biggar: – function, certainly of the Legislative Assembly –

Mr. Myers: Do your job.

Ms. Biggar: Mr. Speaker, I do work every day on behalf of women –

Mr. Myers: Minister of excuses.

Ms. Biggar: – and I remember looking at that information back when Pat Binns was in government.

Mr. Myers: In 2009?

Ms. Biggar: This came to the floor then.

Mr. Myers: In 2009?

Ms. Biggar: Pat Binns' government voted against his own member for this particular issue. My caucus and the green party have come together to support this on behalf of women, on behalf of young families, on behalf of young dads, and those who want to come forward to sit in these very chairs and I'm shocked that the opposition over there won't even consider one piece of it.

Leader of the Opposition: (Indistinct)

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

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Minister Responsible for the Status of Women is being quite silly here today. She doesn't want to advocate for women at all. The reason I'm bringing these issues forward is that I'm trying to help her do her job –

Mr. Roach: Disrespectful.

Mr. Myers: Yes, I do disrespect the job that she's doing. Thank you to the member from Montague for pointing that out. She isn't doing a very good job. You're 100% right.

Recommendation number eight from the coalition of government –

Mr. Roach: You I was talking about, not her.

Mr. Myers: – was to provide a caregiver benefit to MLAs with child, or elder care giving responsibilities. Wow, wouldn't that help attract young people into politics?

Question to the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women: Why is it that you don't want to advocate for recommendation number eight?

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

Ms. Biggar: Mr. Speaker, in my role as minister of status for women, when I go to the federal-provincial delegation level, this is an issue that we brought to the federal table to have more support for child care spaces right across Canada. For more support, our government has increased child subsidy support for women, we have increased the child care spaces – that is something I advocated at the national status of women women's table and I will continue to advocate for those types of issues right across our government – we're supporting those particular programs.

Leader of the Opposition: But not here in the Legislature (Indistinct)

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

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Minister Responsible for the Status of Women isn't doing a great job advocating for women when it comes to try and help get more in government because there were 17 recommendations, one of which she cherry-picked here yesterday to try to make herself look good.

Recommendation number seven of the coalition was for government to explore and

implement a PR model – something that the minister not only voted against, even though it got the most votes in the plebiscite – the flawed plebiscite that her Premier held – she still voted against it.

Question to the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women: How is it that you failed so miserably in implementing recommendation number 17 of the PEI Coalition for Women in Government?

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

Ms. Biggar: Mr. Speaker, there are many ways that we create change to have more people involved in this Legislative Assembly, one of which is the one that I put together yesterday. I find it quite surprising that that opposition over there, who are also promoting that they want more women in their caucus, aren't even willing to support this one little thing. As you say, it's one part.

Mr. Myers: (Indistinct)

Ms. Biggar: It's one. It's only one and you can't even support it.

An Hon. Members: (Indistinct) Prince Edward Island for you.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Mr. Trivers: (Indistinct)

An Hon. Member: We'll see.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

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

The University of Prince Edward Island is primarily a publically-funded institution with the province supplying the largest share – roughly half – of the institution's operational budget. Accordingly, government works very closely with the University of Prince Edward Island on financial matters.

Government supports for major developments at UPEI

Question to the Minister of Workforce and Advanced Learning: What role does the province play in major developments at UPEI such as the school of sustainable design engineering?

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

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

Thank you, hon. member, for the question.

Our department and government work very closely with our post secondary institutions and UPEI is one of them. When they come forward with programs, we do what we can in our power to help support their programs.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

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

UPEI's latest project is to open an international campus this September in Egypt.

New UPEI campus in Egypt

To the minister: What role is the province playing in the creation of this new campus and how much public money is involved?

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

Mr. Gallant: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Thanks again for the question.

As I indicated, our department and our government supports our post secondary institutions and I could have had the opportunity to go over there to see this new facility, but the House was opening and it was more important to be here to look after the issues of the province.

With that being said, we support their initiatives and we'll support what they're doing and if we can support them in any way in their endeavor over there, we'll continue to do that.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

It was interesting that you decided to stay home, minister. It's also interesting that we have heard not a thing from government about this new development – for a government that loves good news announcements, even when they have little to do with them. I'm curious as to why there's never been any announcement whatsoever about this new endeavor from the university.

Again to the minister: Is government not proud of this new Egyptian campus of UPEI?

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

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

We are very proud of what happens at UPEI and the engineering department. I was out there a couple of weeks ago to see some of the things. There are some wonderful, wonderful accomplishments that students are doing out there. This is UPEI's project and for us to be out there talking about it when it isn't solidified yet, or all the details aren't out there yet, would be very inappropriate for us but we will continue to support the university in however we can.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you.

Actually, this project is very far along. It's solidified. We know that it's going to open this September. The Egyptian state minister has a long list of human rights violations including; suppression of free speech, violence and torture against dissidents, oppression of women's rights, outlawing and persecuting homosexuality, and being the third worst country in the world for imprisoning journalists, as I explained in my opening remarks.

Public money and undemocratic regime

Minister: Is government concerned that our province's public money and our province's identity and brand will contribute to legitimizing such an undemocratic regime?

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

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

As I had indicated before, our university does a wonderful job and the faculty out there and the president do a wonderful job of trying to garnish international students here and promote the university at large. We will continue to support the university in their endeavours to enhance the university and increase their enrollment.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Indeed, the university has done a fantastic job of attracting foreign students here, making up, now, I believe 23% of the population there.

Those students, who come here on Prince Edward Island, their human rights, their workplace safety, and their freedom from sexual harassment are protected with our laws.

Protection in Egyptian campuses

Minister: Will Island employees, faculty and students from Prince Edward Island, who go to this Egyptian campuses have the same protections?

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

Mr. Gallant: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

That's quite a question. That's a different country you're talking about. We don't know if faculty from here are going to go there for sure; they very well may be. We have our laws here and when we bring international students here, a lot of them want to stay here because of what a wonderful place this province is and how they're treated here.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Dr. Bevan-Baker: I'd say many do wish to stay here, particularly any women who might come here from Egypt.

I'd love to know more about how the UPEI administration decided that this Egyptian campus was a good idea. But, as has been brought up repeatedly in this House, post-secondary institutions are not covered by the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

Release of FOIPP review

When will government be releasing the results of its latest review of the FOIPP act, and will post-secondary institutions finally be covered?

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

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

It is, indeed, our department that carried this consultation. It was a consultation that took place beginning over the course of this winter. A number of submissions were received, and a number on this particular point.

I would expect that we will soon see draft legislation in respect of FOIPP amendments. That is something that we would look forward to having a further discussion and debate about on the floor of this Legislature.

Thank you very much.

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

Mr. Perry: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

My question is to the minister of justice: In 2016, the PEI *Coroners Act* was amended to provide faster and better service to Islanders who were in need in a tragic time.

The amendment was to have more field investigators hired and trained, in order to lessen the wait time for everyone.

Update on field investigators and response times

Can the minister give us an update on how many field investigators have been trained and hired and has this created the less wait time for Islanders?

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

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

Firstly, I'd like to thank the hon. member for his advocacy on behalf of his community members in respect of this issue.

It's always tough when there's a tragic death in the community, particularly when it's an unexpected death and there is the requirement for certain investigations to take place, which would often happen through the RCMP, and then, quite often through the *Coroners Act* with coroners.

This is something that we have been looking at and we've been working with Health PEI and Island EMS to determine what we can do to train and put field investigators in place to help to speed up response times in these cases, Mr. Speaker.
Thank you.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Tignish-Palmer Road, this will be your first supplementary.

Mr. Perry: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Minister, yes, it's very important to have minimal wait times for the coroner's office, especially in rural PEI.

Currently, there is a new response vehicle that is stationed in St. Eleanors.

Minister: Could you tell us has this vehicle decreased wait time for West Prince residents?

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

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

Yes, the Prince Edward Island Firefighters Association has been assisting with

coroner's transportation since 2009. The service was expanded into Prince County last December.

Before this service was available in Prince County there was no established service and so we would only be relying on anecdotal reports, in terms of response times.

What I can indicate is that there have been 15 calls since this service was initiated in Prince County. With the exception of one of those – one in the 15, the response time expectation was met. In that one case it was due to a vehicle breakdown. The response time was only exceeded by a very marginal amount.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Tignish-Palmer Road, your second supplementary.

Mr. Perry: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Minister, I know of more than one case where the wait time was a lot more than what was expected, or what any family should endure.

I've been in touch with you several times through email and phone trying to have concerned citizens and first responders, who came to me who wanted to have a meeting in West Prince to discuss this issue, and also their suggestion at, maybe, having a vehicle located up west may be a good idea.

Meeting with concerned citizens in West Prince

Minister: Will you commit today to meeting with these concerned citizens in the very near future?

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

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

Yes, I will make that commitment. Again, I would reiterate that the hon. member has been great to advocate for his constituents. I have also been speaking with the balance of the, what I'm going to call, the western MLAs. They have all been in touch on numerous occasions in respect of this.

It's something that we will do our utmost to

ensure that we move forward with. There are a number of pieces of it. Some of them, quite frankly and simply, involve ensuring that there's a proper chain of communication when these unfortunate incidents occur. We're already taking the steps to ensure that we are doing our very best on that.

We will, certainly, endeavour to meet with the hon. member's constituents, and those of the other hon. members from the western part of the province.

Thank you.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Borden-Kinkora.

Mr. Fox: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Yesterday, parents and students of Colonel Gray High School received a notice that they had found live, unused ammunition in the school.

Safety and well-being of Island students

Question to the minister of education: What precautions are being taken to ensure the safety and well-being of Island students in our schools?

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

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

I had been alerted to this incident prior to the story having become public. It is, obviously, a concerning report.

What I can advise the House here today is that, I guess, the first thing I can advise the House is there is an embedded police officer at Colonel Gray every day; Officer Tim Keizer, he does a great job there.

This ammunition, and I think it was one piece of ammunition, appeared there on the evening previous. There has been an investigation done in respect of that by the Charlottetown city police. In fact, they had a K-9 service in the school to do as thorough a sweep as they possibly could to attempt to determine what evidence they might unearth.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Borden-Kinkora.

Mr. Fox: Mr. Speaker, I don't care if it's one bullet or 100 bullets; it's ammunition in the school.

Everyone just wants to make sure that our students get on the bus in the morning and they are safe while they are at school. With the world evolving at a rapid pace, we need to ensure that our emergency response plans are also evolving. For example, how we evaluate technology can work for us or it can work against us in an emergency in our schools.

Have we looked at what information is publicly available about our schools online? These are all questions that should be asked.

Emergency response plan for schools

Question to the minister: Who is engaged in the development of the current emergency response plan for Island schools?

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

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

That's something that I don't have right at the tip of my fingertips in terms of who would have been involved in such a process, but I will endeavour to see what I can find out about that and bring that back, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Borden-Kinkora.

Mr. Fox: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I believe it's important to have stakeholders from all sectors involved in these emergency response plans, development and review from transportation, infrastructure, and energy to ITSS, to health and wellness – all of the departments.

Analysis of emergency response plan

Question to the minister: How long has it been since we had a group analysis and

critical appraisal of the current emergency response plan for our schools?

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

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

Again, I'll say I don't have the exact answer to that question right in front of me, but going by recollection this is something that we all would have heard of in the public media. My recollection is that's within the last couple of years and there's certainly been a new lockdown procedure that's been implemented, and it's actually been activated on a couple of different occasions at Prince Edward Island schools since that review has taken place. It's relatively recent, and we'll endeavour to get more accurate information on that back.

Thank you.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Borden-Kinkora.

Mr. Fox: Well, Mr. Speaker, the minister just talked about other jurisdictions a second ago, vaguely.

Geographical scan of other provinces

Have we ever done a geographical scan of what other schools in other provinces are doing to protect their students in their schools?

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

Mr. J. Brown: So, Mr. Speaker, this type of a policy, I should be clear to say, would be initiated, I suspect the hon. – well, I'll put it a different way.

Colonel Gray would fall under the Public Schools Branch. This would be a policy of the Public Schools Branch in terms of how it would be implemented, so I can't speak to it with a level of certainty to say where the precedence would have been obtained from or what jurisdictional scans would have been done.

Though, I do have kind of a higher-level idea that there has been such a scan done

and that policy, as I indicated, has been reviewed fairly recently, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Borden-Kinkora.

Mr. Fox: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

A year and a half ago we all had Island schools evacuated due to a bomb scare. There were lessons learned about that exercise. Teachers, staff, parents, and even students publicly provided criticism and feedback on how improvements could be made.

Inefficiencies in emergency response plans

Question to the minister of education: What has been done since September 2016 to fix some of the inefficiencies found in the emergency response plans?

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

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

Again, this is a plan that's administered by the Public Schools Branch in the case that the hon. member is speaking about. I think we would acknowledge that the first run through this, and fortunately the potential for a serious event did not come to fruition. It did provide some very valuable lessons that were learned, and I can indicate, again just from my knowledge in the public sphere, that there has been a great deal of work done to refine the process.

There's actually, in some instances, been subsequent incidences where this procedure has been triggered, and things have run much more smoothly in subsequent times.

Thank you.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Borden-Kinkora.

Mr. Fox: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We need our emergency response plan reviewed today, and we need individuals

from all sectors and departments involved in this review. I'll tell you why.

I was shocked this morning when I did a Google search and within minutes I found detailed floor plans, maps of each of the Island schools that are publically available online, including entrances and exits to schools, classrooms, cafeterias, and even mechanical and restricted areas.

Detailed floor plans of schools publicly available online

Question to the minister: Do you feel it's appropriate to have detailed floor plans of our Island schools publically available online?

Mr. Myers: Good question. That's a good question.

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

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

There is some chatter going on around me in relation to this, but this does get to be the kind of conversation that we need to start to tie together when we start looking at things like amendments to the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

I will say, again, that this is a policy that's administered, in this case, by the Public Schools Branch. This is something that I can seek further information from them in respect of. I can say that there would be obvious contravening policy reasons why there might be an online presence in respect of school mapping and why there might not be.

For me to speak as to why one has prevailed over the other wouldn't be appropriate here on the floor today without knowing more about it, but I will see what I can find out.

Thank you.

Speaker: Final question today will come from the hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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

Just on continuation of the line of questioning the hon. Member from Borden-Kinkora had: In my district of Stratford-Kinlock, we have a very serious situation around the schools in my district and this issue is something that I've brought up with past transportation ministers, the current transportation minister, and in fact, previous education ministers.

It's unfortunate that we live in a world in this day and age where our young people are at risk, unfortunately, due to circumstances beyond our control, but the issue that I speak of today has to do with two schools in the Stratford area that have one entrance and exit only. Essentially these two schools are land-locked. There are over 1,000 children in these schools.

What I've been advocating for, for many years now, is to have Glen Stewart Drive connected through to MacKinnon Drive so that, at the very least, if an incident ever did occur at those schools and there were 1,000 kids at risk, the first responders would have more than one access to those schools.

Safe and quicker access to schools in Stratford

Question to the minister of education or the minister of transportation – whoever would like to answer this question: What has been done to secure these schools and to ensure that first responders have a quicker access and a safe access?

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

Ms. Biggar: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Certainly any area that we review, and in this particular instance, we have had those discussions with the town of Stratford in regard to that particular issue. We're working with them and with the school board on that particular area and we'll continue to lay plans out on how that can be accomplished, but I want to assure everyone it's certainly something that we've had discussions on.

Statements by Ministers

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

School Construction Update

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

Today, I'd like to update this House on our plans to expand and enhance space at Island schools. In addition to the \$22 million project at Three Oaks, planning is underway for expansions at École-Sur-Mer, L.M. Montgomery and Stratford elementary.

Planning for the \$5 million addition to the École-Sur-Mer in Summerside is moving forward and a space program has now been approved. An RFP for architectural services went out last week and will close on May 18th.

We look forward to working with the school community to finalize the design and make the new space available to students as quickly as possible.

The tender for construction and site work at Stratford elementary is going out this week and we hope to begin work in early July.

The existing Stratford Elementary School is 53,000 square feet and the new addition will add another 25,000 square feet. It will include 13 classrooms, a music classroom, an activity room, as well as EA workrooms, guidance and teacher planning rooms and washrooms.

Based on parent requests to maintain as much playground space as possible, we are proceeding with a two-storey design. This new \$6.6 million addition will provide needed space for Glen Stewart and Stratford students, as well as room for future growth. We hope to have it ready for students in 2019.

Tenders for construction of the \$5.3 million addition at L.M. Montgomery will go out within the next two weeks. The 14,000 square feet addition at the rear of the school will include 10 classrooms and an activity room, as well as EA workrooms, guidance and teacher planning rooms and washrooms.

In response to parent requests we will adding new gym flooring and lightning, improve storage and ventilation in the boot room and upgraded PA and sound systems.

In addition, we are responding positively to

parent requests to separate bus parking from other parking areas and move the playground equipment closer to the school.

The L.M. Montgomery addition is expected to be ready for students in 2019. I would like to thank the folks at TIE and the many parents and school staff, who are working with us to ensure that these new spaces best meet the needs of students and growing enrollments.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid.

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's great to hear about these announcements. It's almost too cute by half to hear the minister of education stand up and talk about all these renovations and everything that is going to happen because when myself or any other member of this House, government members, included, ask a question about a renovation to a school out of a capital budget it's: oh, no. That's the Public Schools Branch. No, no, I don't deal with that. But, yet, when we're announcing simple tenders, we get up and hear a three-minute speech.

It's good news, but it's pretty funny, too.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Parkdale.

Ms. Bell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would also remind the minister that there was a commitment for a new school, or an expansion to the school in Sherwood, which was announced at the same time as these other four schools, last fall during the D-11 election campaign.

I would also raise, again, the continued issue of, as we increase capacity in these schools, we also need to ensure we reflect on the requirement to review and update school zoning, particularly around bus routes and zone applications for those who live in and around the area for the schools that are being expanded.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

Community Food Security Program

Mr. Henderson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

During the last fiscal year my department, in collaboration with the Departments of Education, Early Learning and Culture, and Health and Wellness offered for the first time a program to connect people with local food.

The Community Food Security Program provided funding to community groups, schools, early child care centres, and other organizations to promote good nutrition, healthy food choices, building community self reliance and a link to farmers and consumers.

The program invested approximately \$120,000 in 17 projects across the province, which involved more than 2,600 people. The feedback was very positive. The participants were enthusiastic about the activities in which they were engaged.

Food security is all about the various steps in the food production system and the ability of individuals and communities to influence those steps to bring about healthier, safer and more nutritious food.

Today, I'm pleased to announce that this program will be, once again, offered again this fiscal year. With our third consecutive balanced budget we look forward to working with our industry partners to support local food, local producers and local food industries.

Here on Canada's Food Island, we produce an abundance of fresh, high-quality, nutritious food products. Through this program, these products will be more accessible to Islanders and will learn more about where their food comes from and how it is produced.

The program offers non-profit organizations funding of up to \$10,000 for projects that promote increased awareness and support for local food products. The deadline for applications is May 25th.

This program provides opportunities to provide information about the benefits of local food for people and for the economy. Being the mighty Island means our small size helps us work closely with our industry partners to support local food and those who produce it.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

Mr. LaVie: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

When we have three ministers come together to make things happen to get the people to eat healthy food across Prince Edward Island is a good thing.

The education part of it is making sure we educate everyone, especially our children, where the food comes from and who produces it. Who produces it is our farmers and farmers are great stewards of the land.

When we talk about farmers we can talk about potato farmers, we can talk about any farmer on Prince Edward Island, anything from a carrot to any vegetable, to hamburger to pork. Teach our children where that food comes from and who produces it.

I like what you're doing, minister, but what you're saying, we are trying to brand ourselves as Canada's Food Island, but here we are with food banks from tip-to-tip; from East Point to West Point.

These food banks can't keep food on their shelves. So here we are trying to promote ourselves as the food Island and here we are; we have children going to school hungry. We're promoting food Island. We have children going to school hungry. We have food banks that can't keep food on the shelves. Let's make sure that our children and our seniors are both eating healthy into the future.

I support this, what you're doing. But, when you have food banks and when you have children going to school hungry, you have a problem, minister. Make sure you address some problems before too many more announcements.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

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

I welcome this announcement minister. Thank you, \$120,000 this year supporting 17 projects to be continued and that's great. This is a really super project that creates those linkages between our farming community and everybody else who lives here on Prince Edward Island.

Of course, perhaps, more than anywhere else in this country, Prince Edward Islanders are traditionally connected to the land. It was only a couple of generations ago that the vast majority of Islanders themselves were farmers. Almost all Islanders were food producers. It's the rapid change to a centralized, industrialized farm production system that's changed, not only the way we produce food, but it's changed the nature of human society. Perhaps, no more so than here on Prince Edward Island.

Those farmers, farmers work incredibly hard. They work in difficult conditions. They work with no guarantee of success. In many instances these days they work with very little financial return. The risks are enormous. The returns can be very changeable.

Any way that we can support our local farmers to do well, to thrive. To protect the soil and the water. To rebuild our rural communities. To produce a wide range of delicious, nutritious and safe, sustainable-produced food, we should be promoting that. Thank you for this, minister.

I'd like to echo the comments of my honourable friend, that we have school food programs, but my goodness, we could do so much more here. We have all of the elements to create, on Prince Edward Island, a universal, free lunch program. What a difference that would make, not just to the farming community and to Island students, but to the whole economy of this Island.

I really hope that this government understands and sees the possibilities of such a program and grasps it and runs with it.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Presenting and Receiving Petitions

Tabling of Documents

Speaker: The hon. Member from Borden-Kinkora.

Mr. Fox: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

By leave of the House, I beg leave to table minutes from the public meeting regarding the Newton roundabout that was held on the evening of the 2nd of May, 2018, and I move, seconded by the Honourable Member from Morell-Mermaid, that the said document be now received and do lie on the Table.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Mr. Speaker, by leave of the House, I beg leave to table a graphic from the communities, land and environment webpage on greenhouse gas emissions which clearly states in several parts that transportation makes up 46% of the greenhouse gas emissions here in our province and I move, seconded by the Honourable Member from Morell-Mermaid, that the said document be now received and do lie on the Table.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Mr. Speaker, by leave of the House, I beg leave to table documents related to the matters I raised in Question Period earlier today including; minutes from meetings of the UPEI senate for October 27th, 2017, January 19th, 2018, and March the 2nd, 2018, and April 27th, 2018 article from the *University World News* entitled Will Foreign Branch Campuses Exacerbate in Equality? And April 16th, 2018, article from *Egypt Today* entitled Prince Edward Island University, First to be Inaugurated in Egypt's New Capital, and *Human Rights Watch* country summary for Egypt dated January 2017 and I move, seconded by the Honourable Member from Charlottetown-Parkdale, that the said document be now received and do lie on the Table.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Reports by Committees

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

Mr. Perry: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As Chair of the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Fisheries, I beg leave to introduce the report of the said committee and I move, seconded by the hon. Member from Vernon River-Stratford, that the same be now received and do lie on the table.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Mr. Perry: Your committee has met in January, February, March and April of this year and have put together the following recommendations:

1. Your committee recommends that the Department of Communities, Land and Environment review the *Agricultural Crop Rotation Act*, with input from the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, in order to strengthen the act in ways that will encourage improvements in soil organic matter, nutrient retention and reduced soil loss.
2. As the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries and Agriculture and Agri-Foods Canada continue studying PEI's soil organic matter, your committee recommends that additional data be gathered to attempt to establish casual factors in areas where soil organic matter levels are improving.
3. Regarding the Northern Pulp wastewater treatment project, your committee recommends that evidence-based studies on the project's direct impacts on lobster and herring be carried out as part of the environmental assessment process.
4. Your committee recommends that the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries consider carrying out a study on the effects of neonicotinoid pest control products on PEI's bee population.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Are there any other members who would like to speak to the committee report?

The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

Mr. LaVie: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm just going to take a couple of minutes and just say the work of the committee and how well the chair; he chairs his meetings. When we do meet, we do disagree on issues and we work out our issues. We're not all on side all of the time, but it's a great committee to work with. Its great members on this committee and no matter the issue, it's always put onto the table and the issues are talked and it's talked off the table or we put it into a recommendation.

I just want to put a shout-out to the chair and all committee members how well they are to work with because this is my seventh year on this committee and what a great committee it is to work with. Even to get a meeting organized, it seems to work out very well. So, to the chair and the committee, big kudos out to you guys.

Thank you.

Speaker: Thank you, hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

Hon. members, I've just been informed by the Clerk, which I wasn't really aware of, that under new rules the report of the committee will not be debated on the same day. It will be debated at a later time. That's why I'm –

Ms. Biggar: (Indistinct)

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Mr. Myers: (Indistinct)

Ms. Casey: No, following the (Indistinct)

Mr. LaVie: (Indistinct)

Speaker: Sorry for that mix up.

Mr. Myers: Ignoring them like the minister over there; ignoring the people.

Introduction of Government Bills.

Motions Other than Government

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Opposition calls Motion No. 62 to the floor.

I forgot I was temporary House Leader.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

That motion has already been on the floor and the hon. Premier adjourned debate on that motion, so we'll ask the hon. Premier to continue speaking to the motion.

Premier MacLauchlan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

When we left off debate on this I was making reference to the events between 1973 and January 1st of 1977 when we saw, in response to the oil embargo, a very significant increase in the price of a barrel of oil in Canada. Between April 1st of 1974 and January 1st of 1977, the price of a barrel of oil rose from \$6.50 to \$10.75 – or \$9.75. In effect, a 50% increase in the price and the point that I made just as we were finishing the other evening was that when the premier of the day was asked about this in the national context, his response was: Alternative energy, anyone?

When you think that Prince Edward Island, at the time, was in fact generating all of its electricity here in the province effectively from bunker C; that we didn't have at the time the wind regime – we had the wind regime, but we didn't have the windmills and the technology and the networks and transmission networks to take advantage of that; that we didn't at the time have a transmission cable to the mainland. That didn't come until 1977 and then we have, within the past two years, installed, in effect tripling our transmission capacity to the mainland.

Much has changed during that time and frankly, it meant a lot to have a government at the time that didn't see a price change as simply an opportunity to behave like Chicken Little or to claim that the sky was falling, or that Islanders should all see ourselves as being in great peril, but indeed set in motion policies and investments and a broader view of what our options were to the point where today, we are generating on the order of 27% or 28% of our electricity through the year from wind. Second highest in the world after Denmark, where we have the energy that is being generated through quite extensive facilities dedicated to bio-fuels or biomass; where we lead the country

in waste management. That was certainly not the case in the mid-19070s, where in the early 1980s we installed the energy from waste system in the capital city here fueling now for more than 30 years.

Many of our public buildings where we have in our communities; Tignish was mentioned in comments that were made speaking to this motion the other evening, where Tignish has, through its cooperative approach to things, whether it's investment as a community, made some very significant investments that will see reduced dependency on using carbon as a source of energy.

That is exactly how we, as a province, under different and successive governments have continued to move forward, in the now, getting on for into a fourth decade since the mid-1970s to see the question of energy. To see the question of carbon as a piece, but not the only piece, and, indeed, a piece that as Prince Edward Islanders we should welcome the opportunity to be less dependent on carbon.

We don't have carbon to take out of the ground and that puts us in a much different situation than some of the other players in Confederation. From Prince Edward Island's point of view, we should support the Pan-Canada framework on clean energy and reducing our carbon footprint.

Prince Edward Islanders, collectively, spend, on the order of \$465 million a year on energy that is imported into our province. We should be approaching, and as a government we do approach this broader question of our energy needs; our energy diversification; our energy future as an opportunity to keep some of that money in our pockets.

It is not in that context entirely productive to get ourselves into a situation of paralysis or a huge argument over what the opposition continues to refer to as a carbon tax, but rather to look at all of the measures that we can take leading with electrification; leading with conservation; leading with being open to new technologies that could combine with some of those that are already to the benefit, to the great benefit of our province. The one that comes, of course, first to mind is

storage. Leading with the way we manage and use and deploy our grid.

Let me say grids, plural, because there are some significant opportunities in the whole area of micro-grids where we can do a much better job, and, indeed, leave money in our pockets when it comes to our energy needs. And our continued growth and prosperity as a province. And, as communities within our province, and it's for that reason that I say grids, plural.

Indeed, to be looking, as a province, at opportunities. Opportunities that arise from our relations with the larger world here in our region; that we were able to put those transmissions cables, again, plural, in place with the favourable terms that we were able to secure with the Trudeau government so that Prince Edward Islanders today – that juice started flowing in August of 2017 – have access to, in two directions, almost triple the capacity from 200 megawatts to 560 megawatts, transmission capacity.

It is in that context that we, on the one hand and on the first hand, see the ways in which Prince Edward Islanders can make our own choices. Can exercise our sovereignty, it's a very good day to be thankful that we have this Legislature. That we have and will have the opportunity, in this Legislature and through a provincial government, together with municipal governments and with the private sector, an opportunity to act together to do what's in our best interest.

I put a period at the end of that and start a new paragraph, which is about the need for Prince Edward Island to make those choices, to have those debates and to exercise that sovereignty with some I'll say humility, when it comes to the larger world.

We are sitting beside two provinces that are, in terms of, population roughly ten times the population of Prince Edward Island, a little bit more than 10 to one. We have relations with New Brunswick and Nova Scotia that, for example, involve 60% of our tourists coming from New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. Our major transportation, as the minister of transportation mentioned earlier, with 500 trucks crossing the Confederation Bridge in each direction, daily, being very much tied to what's taking place on the mainland.

With our footprint being, by far and away, being far and away the smallest of any province in Canada, including on a per capita basis, where we are the second smallest. We have the second smallest footprint after the province of Quebec.

Yes, we can do better. We have to do better with some astuteness and some alertness to what is taking place in the larger world.

I'm sure we all are following the developments. They continue to evolve even by the week and by the day, in terms of, what other provinces may be doing. What other jurisdictions may be doing. Things have certainly changed from the time of December, 2015, when president Obama played a very important role in bringing together the global consensus in the Paris accord.

It wasn't all the big countries that produced that Paris accord. The small Island states played a very and significant role and the Marshall Islands, in particular, were given a lot of credit for how that came together and what the consensus was.

China, was a very big contributor to that global consensus. Indeed, President Xi and president Obama, their particular agreement, or their particular collaboration, did a lot to ensure the result that came about, as did the part that India played, at the time.

I'm not referring to these larger developments, in the slightest to excuse us from making the best choices we can make and making the right choices at the right time here on Prince Edward Island. I do think it's important that we take our time; that we not lead ourselves to believe that by having the answer here for Prince Edward Island, we're going to have all the answers, and that's exactly what our government has been doing.

We have that transmission cable, those transmission cables, biggest single thing investment, infrastructure, for Prince Edward Island since the Confederation Bridge. Let me not speak about that in solely dollar terms, but in terms of the transformational benefit that they bring in terms of our options as a province and as a people.

The benefits that they bring, in terms of the markets, the opportunities that will be open to us, the technologies that may, together with those cables, transform our energy future.

I want to say another thing about this in this particular context and it's something we're not used to thinking about in Prince Edward Island because we tend to think: Well, we're at the end of the line. Somehow, whatever the rest of the world is doing, we'll (Indistinct) time will come and it'll be our turn.

You look in energy – and you can look across this province, you can look in this region – there are a lot of white elephants. There are stranded assets. There are investments that were made at the wrong time or in the wrong technologies; and we can be very thankful in this province that people have done the right thing at the right time so that we today do have choices and will have choices.

We've invested in wind generation, and we've done it on terms – unlike some other provinces – that in fact are affordable to the consumer. We have invested in transmission. We have invested in the biomass. We have invested in the energy from waste. We have invested in efficiency and conservation; and last year, we introduced an energy strategy, an energy strategy that came out of a very significant consultation with and deliberation together with Prince Edward Islanders drawing on expertise as appropriate with 74 measures laid out in that energy strategy.

On the point that is really the underlying theme of this motion; the entire process by which that energy strategy was developed was open and transparent. It was clear when the energy strategy was presented, and in the context of the Pan-Canadian framework, that there would be a further piece, a climate change action plan; a climate change action plan that included Prince Edward Island being the co-lead with the federal government on the whole question of mitigation – or adaptation, rather.

Adaptation, in particular, that is alert to issues that were very much on the minds of Prince Edward Islanders related to rising sea levels and more volatile weather conditions;

and catastrophic events, the kind of weather that we may well see anytime.

It was clear again in looking at that whole question that there are – this is not something that is going to be solved by a single measure, by going to the pumps and changing whatever that number is on the pumps by a certain amount – that it is going to take investments in Islanders' homes, investments when the time is right on transportation.

I repeat what I said about you can very easily do the right thing at the wrong time in this business, and you don't have to go far to see how that can be a permanent, where you can permanently impair your ability to make further choices.

So we have said there will be a climate change action plan; and in fact, we said when we were in committee of the whole last week, that we'll see that before Mother's Day, which is coming up.

Some Hon. Members: Absolutely.

Premier MacLauchlan: And we are here in session, and there will be the opportunity to see that in its fullness, together with the energy strategy, and together with our budget, our great budget, that has already sent some very important signals about incentives for Islanders when they come to making their energy choices to drop that provincial portion or to rebate that provincial portion of the HST on electricity, pellets, firewood and propane, clean energy choices.

I think when Islanders, and when all of us in this House, see this in its fullness, we will recognize that Prince Edward Island has an opportunity to advantage the price of renewable energy in a way that will be very effective in encouraging Prince Edward Islanders to make choices that will reduce our carbon footprint, that will mitigate our emissions, which is precisely why we've come to the point of having this discussion.

I say again that Islanders have made good choices in their own homes and businesses and in our collective investments in infrastructure and policies, and we intend for that to continue as we build on the choices

that have been made in the past. We'll be at a further stage in that next week.

So let me come, then, to this motion –

An Hon. Member: Finally!

Premier MacLauchlan: – (Indistinct) referred to when the Leader of the Third Party spoke about it as a FOIPP request.

I would say that in its scope and in its force, it goes beyond a FOIPP request in terms of the command to produce all documents, no exceptions or qualification.

A long list of things that could be included – but not exclusive, it's not the whole list – including but not limited to memos, letters, correspondence, electronic mail, minutes of meetings, studies, reports, analyses of a certain period of time. A good bit of that information is indeed available to the Prince Edward Island public, for example, in the work that led up to and culminated in or continues to move forward through our energy strategy that leads up to the climate change action plan.

This motion in effect is an order from the House to produce a budget measure. If the opposition is right – and they seem to be very committed to this, that there will be a carbon tax – if the opposition is right, and if the documents that they're asking for – not asking for, are going to have ordered – will produce this week as opposed to next week a budget measure, then I would suggest that it goes against all of the traditions and precedents of this House as concerned budget measures.

Indeed, we heard the opposition complaining when we had our capital budget in the fall of 2017 that there wasn't sufficient secrecy around the capital budget. In fact, you, Mr. Speaker, encouraged us to do a better job and we took that advice; but here we are in the spring of 2018 asking to have a week early everything that might in any way pertain – and if there's anything that's not on the list, then that's included by some other et cetera, et cetera – to what they believe is a budget measure that's coming next week.

I would say that this motion is entirely inappropriate for exactly the reasons that the

opposition was arguing last fall. It's premature; and we will have, and we had a good talk here last week in committee of the whole, and I would say there were certainly some members of the opposition I think are very sensitive about the whole picture that we're dealing with here, and I hope that that will be the overall approach that we will take in a way that Islanders will accept and act on the incentives and the programs and the supports and the investments that are being offered through a combination of the energy strategy and the climate change action plan; and that we will continue, as a province and as people, to do our part, to do more than our part, even as some of the rest of the world might wobble on this, to reduce our carbon footprint, to do a better job of our energy, to make the right choices, and to leave some money in our pockets or in circulation for other purposes. That's exactly our approach.

In conclusion, our view is that this motion is a) inappropriate, and that the day will come very soon as we've said when we can have a continuation and a real good discussion on the very matter that this motion is speaking to.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Are there any other Members who would like to speak to this motion? If not, we'll go back to the mover to close debate on the motion.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I do want to thank everyone that rose in the House to speak on this motion. It was a rather lengthy process at times, and we probably heard a lot of things that would have been better tabled as opposed to read into Hansard, but you made a lot of good points about the great things that the Province of Prince Edward Island has done, really, to reduce carbon emissions. We are a leader. Not only in Canada, we're a leader in the world.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Trivers: Yes, absolutely. In 2008, there was a great – it's called *Prince Edward Island and Climate Change A Strategy for Reducing the Impacts of Global Warming*. It was a great report that was tabled; just

excellent, really. In it, in fact, there's a history of taking first action on climate change, which is exactly what we've been saying in the opposition since one of the first times we even got to talk about carbon pricing in the House of November of 2016 when this government –

Mr. Roach: (Indistinct)

Mr. Trivers: – started talking about a climate change action plan. Back then, Mr. Speaker –

Mr. MacEwen: Tell us what you said.

Mr. Trivers: – I rose to speak to the minister's announcement in the House. It was a good announcement and I think I said so. It was – now the minister of health, was the Minister of Communities, Land and Environment. Yeah, the current Minister of Communities, Land and Environment probably remembers the report well; and what I wanted to, I wanted to just –

Mr. MacEwen: What did you say?

Mr. Trivers: – talk a little bit about what I said. After talking – and again, this is a response to the climate change strategy announcement – I said the other controversial part, of course, is the carbon pricing part. We know that the federal government is forcing carbon pricing on all the provinces, and you need to decide – this government, this province needs to decide which type of carbon pricing you're going to implement, whether that's going to be carbon tax or cap and trade.

Now shortly after that, you basically said –

Ms. Biggar: (Indistinct)

Mr. Trivers: – we're going to do a carbon tax. That's why we've been talking about a carbon tax ever since. Then I said:

“I think that Prince Edward Island, if you look at it in the context of Canada, whether that's on a per capita basis or whether it's on a provincial basis, is doing more than its fair share to reduce greenhouse gases. I know we're comparing Prince Edward Island to itself based on past levels...” – that's what the federal government's doing, when we're talking about reducing greenhouse gas

emissions – “...but I'm not sure that's fair.” Right? “We produce a huge amount of energy here through renewable energy sources and we need to get credit for that on PEI.”

Mr. R. Brown: Good point.

Mr. Trivers: “I don't think it's fair that Islanders pay higher taxes to try and reduce more than other provinces that have been at a higher level historically.” I said: “Please fight for Prince Edward Island to get credit for the work that Islanders have already done so we don't end up paying taxes because of the poor policies and work that's been done in other provinces.”

Mr. MacEwen: Good for you.

Mr. Trivers: So Mr. Speaker –

Mr. MacEwen: Good for you.

Mr. Trivers: – all I can say is – I mean, this was two years ago – is I'm glad this government is listening to the opposition.

Mr. Roach: Great.

Mr. Trivers: Yes, they really have.

Ms. Biggar: (Indistinct)

Mr. Trivers: At one point they were talking about –

Mr. MacEwen: (Indistinct) changed their minds.

Mr. Trivers: – and I mentioned this before, Mr. Speaker, a combustion turbine they were going to purchase –

Mr. MacEwen: (Indistinct)

Mr. Trivers: – running on diesel and they got away from that. They've totally changed their tune and that is so fantastic to hear that they've done that.

Ms. Biggar: (Indistinct)

Mr. Trivers: They've listened to us over here.

An Hon. Member: Fear-mongering.

Mr. Trivers: And Mr. Speaker –

Ms. Biggar: (Indistinct)

Mr. Trivers: – I just wanted to –

Ms. Biggar: (Indistinct) facts.

Mr. MacEwen: You made a statement on it.

Mr. Trivers: Since this –

Mr. MacEwen: You made a statement on it.

Mr. Trivers: Since this government really wants to talk about what was really –

Mr. MacEwen: (Indistinct) about it.

Mr. Trivers: – a simple procedural motion, I just want to talk about this 2008 climate change strategy report. In the history of taking first action on climate change –

Ms. Biggar: (Indistinct)

Mr. Trivers: – in 1981 – or 1980, the hon. Member from Tignish-Palmer Road has another article that says, but in the report it says 1981 – that's when the Atlantic wind test site –

Mr. R. Brown: Yes.

Mr. Trivers: – was put in. Right? That was a great job by the Angus MacLean government. What a great government that was that put that in.

Mr. R. Brown: (Indistinct) How old were you?

Mr. Trivers: In 1983 – you were probably around in the Legislature – 1983 –

Mr. MacEwen: Voted against it.

Mr. Trivers: – we had the development of a large biomass municipal solid-waste-fired district heating system in downtown Charlottetown, and at the University of Prince Edward Island. That was Premier Jim Lee that brought that in; another great initiative.

In 1994, we introduced waste watch on the Island. And you know what? That was Catherine Callbeck; I'll give her credit for

that. In 1997 – Jim Lee probably set the stage for that to happen – in 1997, we had the energy from waste plant in Charlottetown undergo a multi-million dollar upgrade and expansion, including the addition of a new heat recovery boiler, a wood waste combustion system and air pollution control equipment. This is the same equipment that the minister of transportation is still taking credit for. Of course, that was the Pat Binns government.

In 1997 when the Pat Binns government came in that's when things really started to move forward on the climate change reduction front, the carbon emissions. In 2000, Prince Edward Island together with other provincial governments and the governments of Canada finalized a climate change national implementation strategy and the first national business plan.

Then in 2001, again under Pat Binns, conference of New England Governors and the eastern Canadian premiers accepted the Climate Change Action Plan outlining greenhouse gas emission reduction goals for the region. And, the Prince Edward Island North Cape Wind Farm officially opened. What a mile stone in 2001 under the Pat Binns government. That was excellent.

Then in 2002, the Pat Binns government, again, they introduced a new hybrid gas electric car. The government purchased one and put it in there. I know we've got an electric car but the hybrid was in 2002. Also put additional investment into the North Cape Wind Farm, an interpretive centre to teach the public about wind energy et cetera.

In 2003, again, under the Pat Binns government, the Progressive Conservatives have a long history of being the environmental party here on Prince Edward Island.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Trivers: Prince Edward Island announced a Renewable Energy Strategy in 2003. Now you guys have a new energy strategy that you put together but this was –

Ms. Biggar: (Indistinct)

Mr. Trivers: And Vestas Energy System put in a V-90 prototype wind turbine constructed in Norway. That's way back in 2003. Then in 2004, again, under the great Pat Binns, an energy framework and renewable energy strategy was unveiled and Prince Edward Island became the first jurisdiction in Canada leading the way to introduce a tax incentive on the purchase of a hybrid electric vehicle. This is in 2004, an incentive that gives the provincial sales tax exemption up to \$3,000.

Mr. MacEwen: Do we still have that?

Mr. Trivers: Unfortunately, the Robert Ghiz government took that incentive out –

Mr. Myers: (Indistinct) you voted for that one.

Mr. Trivers: – removed it. So, we see a pattern here, we see the Progressive Conservative government bringing in measures to move towards renewable energy, to reduce carbon emissions, we see the Liberal government –

An Hon. Member: CT4.

Mr. Trivers: – putting in CT4 and pulling back. So I'm just saying I'm glad you're finally starting to listen.

Mr. R. Brown: You guys put the CT4 in.

Mr. Trivers: Finally started to listen.

So, in 2005, the Charlottetown transit system launched; fantastic, another great Pat Binns government initiative.

Mr. R. Brown: No, you were in opposition (Indistinct)

Mr. Trivers: The fuel efficiency standard was also introduced on all government-owned and leased vehicles.

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct)

Mr. Trivers: Yes.

And that's when, in 2005 –

Ms. Biggar: (Indistinct). We know all about it.

Mr. Trivers: Do you?

Ms. Biggar: Yes.

Mr. Trivers: I'm not sure you do. I need to remind you. Yes. After all, I had to table the information from your own website about the 46% that transportation contributes to greenhouse gasses today.

An Hon. Member: Who does she consult with?

Mr. Trivers: So, there was a special legislative committee on climate change and they tabled the report and the PEI wind energy institute was formed in 2005 at the Atlantic Wind Test Site, another amazing milestone. In 2006, under the Binns government, a great Progressive Conservative environmental government, the green in government initiative was announced and Canada's first safer-living home was built near West Cape. In 2007, that was a big year, we had to get our environmental projects completed just in case a Liberal government came in in the election. Thank God we worked hard (Indistinct)

Ms. Biggar: You're still tired.

Mr. Roach: What do you mean 'we'?

Mr. Trivers: I was working hard.

Ms. Biggar: You're still tired.

Mr. Roach: Hardly working.

Mr. Trivers: I was supporting the Progressive Conservative government. I've been a Progressive Conservative since I was knee high to a grasshopper, as they say, and I chose it because of the values and the beliefs of the Progressive Conservatives.

In 2007, a new 30 megawatt began operating at North Lake and this wind farm displaces 75,000 tonnes of greenhouse gasses per year, the equivalent of taking 16,000 motor vehicles off the road. I'm thinking about one and a half Confederation Bridges.

An Hon. Member: Yes.

Mr. Trivers: Yes, something like that. I don't know.

Anyhow, at that point 15% of all electricity used in the province was produced by renewable energy sources, so just fantastic, just phenomenal. Then, of course, the Robert Ghiz government did come in and 2008 they introduced the office of energy efficiency, which was good. Of course they would later take out the incentive on the hybrid cars, but that's alright.

I just wanted to make sure that you guys know that when you spoke to this motion, I agreed with a lot of what you were saying and you're moving in the right direction and you need to keep fighting for Prince Edward Island to get credit for all the great work that has happened here, mostly under Progressive Conservative governments, but I'll give you a little bit of credit. It's important because we do see reports from respected economists, like we talk about in Question Period, that a carbon tax will most likely have a negative impact on GDP and economy and that's something that we've seen.

This is a simple procedural motion and the idea here is: because here in the official opposition – and I'll give the Green Party credit as well, they spoke out against that combustion turbine a lot. I'll give them credit. Over here in the opposition, we have a lot to offer. The people of Prince Edward Island have a lot to offer. I can't write it all on my blog. We need to have access to the information that you're using. We need to know what kind of discussions you're having. Our preference over here is (a) no carbon tax. Let's continue with our great programs. Let's continue with this legacy of leading the country.

Number two: If there is some sort of carbon tax, or we'll call it carbon pricing, any money you take in is given back to make it revenue-neutral. None of it goes in the government coffers; it's given directly back through something like an increase in the basic personal tax amount – which is great to hear that the Minister of Finance has committed to doing that. What you're doing right now or what you budgeted to do – again, I want to see it in action before – but what you budgeted to do for the next two years is great; it's great. That's nowhere near what we're going to have to do. You can read on my blog the actual levels that we're going to have increase the personal

tax amount, but those are the two ways we'd like to see carbon pricing.

We want to see the information; we want to know what you're doing because we want to make sure you are continuing in that direction. We want to be able to hold you to account properly. That's what this procedural motion is all about.

To the Premier's point, I'll bite on that a little bit and I'll say: that perhaps we are asking for a lot of information. I get the feeling that perhaps the government members aren't all going to vote for this motion, but perhaps the government would consider, even if you vote the motion down, giving us at least as much of that information as is reasonably possible to share with us –

Ms. Biggar: Buckle up.

Mr. Trivers: – and the people of Prince Edward Island. That would be fantastic. I'm glad the minister of transportation is asking me to buckle up –

Ms. Biggar: Yes.

Mr. Roach: Safety first.

Mr. Trivers: I'm going to jump into my hybrid vehicle there –

Ms. Biggar: Safety first.

Mr. Trivers: – I'm going to buckle up. I'm going to save a lot of carbon emissions.

Ms. Biggar: Good.

Mr. Trivers: I don't know. I'm not sure what the minister of transportation drives, but –

At any rate, I do ask if you can't support the motion as it's written, at least support the intent of the motion and provide us with the information we need –

Ms. Biggar: I tried that last night.

Mr. Trivers: – to make sure.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Ms. Biggar: Question.

Speaker: Are you ready for the question?

Ms. Casey: Question.

Speaker: Standing vote?

Sergeant-At-Arms, you can ring the bell. A recorded division has been requested.

[The bells were rung]

Mr. Trivers: Mr. Speaker, the official opposition is ready for the vote.

Speaker: Thank you, Opposition Whip.

Ms. Bell: Mr. Speaker, the third party's ready to vote.

Speaker: Thank you, Third party house leader.

Mr. Perry: Mr. Speaker, government members are present and ready for the vote.

Speaker: Thank you, government whip.

What about all members of the independent party?

Mr. Dumville: The fourth dimension is ready.

Speaker: All those voting against or not supporting the motion, please stand.

Clerk Assistant (R. Reddin): The hon. Minister of Communities, Land and Environment, the hon. Minister of Economic Development and Tourism, the hon. Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy, the hon. Premier, the hon. Minister of Finance, the hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries, the hon. Minister of Health and Wellness, the hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir, the hon. Government House Leader, the hon. Minister of Family and Human Services, the hon. Minister of Education, Early Learning and Culture, the hon. Minister of Workforce and Advanced Learning, the hon. Member from Charlottetown-Lewis Point, the hon. Member from Tignish-Palmer Road.

Speaker: Thank you.

All those members who are supporting the motion, please stand.

Clerk Assistant: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Parkdale, the hon. Leader of the Third Party, the hon. Leader of the Opposition, the hon. Member from Borden-Kinkora, the hon. Member from West Royalty-Springvale, the hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald, the hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid, the hon. Member from Georgetown-St. Peters, the hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

Speaker: Hon. members, the motion is defeated.

The hon. Member from Georgetown-St. Peters.

Mr. Myers: Opposition would like to call Motion No. 44 to the floor.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Mr. Myers: Thank you.

Speaker: Motion No. 44 was adjourned by hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald, so I will ask the hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald to continue speaking to the motion.

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

I believe when I left off debating this motion, I was talking about how the amendments proposed in Bill No. 111 – *An Act to Amend the Municipal Government Act* really would have helped in the case of the Three Rivers amalgamation. We had talked about using democratic methods to engage unincorporated areas and the first way was making sure that there was a petition that was taken to unincorporated areas to get 30% of the people on board at the outset of the proposal – which is important because then you have to make sure that you can put in in very positive terms what the proposal's all about and you have to really think about it, you have to understand how to sell it, you have to make sure that there is a benefit to all the people involved with any proposal for amalgamation or restructuring, as it's called, in the new *Municipal Government Act*.

The next thing we were talking about was when there's a public hearing, if there's an objection, the public hearing should be mandatory. Even if one person objects, then let's have the open discussion; let's have the public hearing. Right now it's optional and I

rely on the Minister of Communities, Land and Environment – I know he’s a man of the people and that he’s going to make sure that a public hearing does occur for the Three Rivers amalgamation, so that is good. I know there’s going to be a number of objections to that. I’m very positive on that one.

The next thing we put in the amendment to the *Municipal Government Act* in Bill No. 111 was really the option for a plebiscite. You’ll notice, I’m saying option, we’re leaving it up to the minister – if they think there’s enough interest from the unincorporated areas, then they should hold a plebiscite to make sure they get a true picture of who’s for and who’s against; how many are for, how many are against. That way, when IRAC makes our recommendation, they can truly take into account the voices of all that are involved within amalgamation.

I had mentioned all this before when we were debating this motion. Probably the most important part is the last piece. IRAC has gone away, they’ve considered the proposal; they’ve considered the public meeting; they’ve considered the plebiscite; they looked at the petition of people; they’ve heard arguments for and against; and they’ve come back with a recommendation. Right now, with the Three Rivers proposed amalgamation, there is no consultation required. Let’s assume the public hearing does occur, there’s no need for government to hold a plebiscite, or IRAC. Now, thankfully the members of the unincorporated area got together, let by the Member from Georgetown-St. Peters and they did hold a plebiscite, so I hope that IRAC is taking that into account when they do make their recommendation. Of course, there’s no way for you to tell it since IRAC is an independent, third party party that you would never attempt to understand or influence their decisions.

The most important thing is when that recommendation comes back, right now the recommendation goes to the minister, the minister takes the recommendation to Executive Council, which is the Premier and Cabinet; they make a decision, and that’s it. We have to rely that the minister and the Premier and Cabinet – and really, it’s the Premier and Cabinet that makes the final

decision, even if the minister brings in a recommendation that they don’t like, Premier and Cabinet are going to make that final decision.

But that’s why, in Bill No. 111, the final amendment is probably one of the most important ones – I think it is the most important – is that that recommendation be brought to the floor of this Legislative Assembly by the Minister of Communities, Land and Environment for debate as a motion with a clear message.

The will of the Legislative Assembly, with regards to that restructuring or amalgamation, once the motion is debated on the Legislative Assembly, will be very clear. Why that’s so important, is when it comes to unincorporated areas, the only elected representatives that have the authority here in the province are our members of the Legislative Assembly. If it’s brought to the floor, in terms of a motion, to debate that recommendation from IRAC that’s been given to the minister, it means that the voice of the unincorporated areas – the elected voice, the MLAs – all get to have their say.

In the case of a majority government, the majority government can do what they want with that motion – they can vote it down, but at least the voices will be heard. The people that were elected to speak for the unincorporated areas will have their chance to stand up, as I’m doing now, and speak to that motion and get out all their concerns and give the opportunity to convince the members of this House and the general public of their perspective. That’s why it’s the most important piece.

Then, of course, what the next step is – it’s not taking away the right of Executive Council to make the final decision, but the minister now has to take the recommendation of the results of that debate on the motion – the will of the Legislative Assembly – they have to take that will of the Legislative Assembly and bring it to the Executive Council – the Premier and Cabinet – to make that final decision.

So, there’s no decisions made without public input; there’s no decisions made without elected official input; there’s no decisions made without the Premier and Cabinet being

fully aware of all the details around the situation that the unincorporated areas and their representatives want to bring forward. That is extremely important because I'm not trying to take away the power of government, the power of a majority government, the power of the Executive Council; I'm not trying to mix together the different branches of government: the judicial, the legislative, and the executive, all I want to do is give unincorporated areas a voice.

That's why I think it's so important that Bill No. 111 be debated and passed in this House as soon as possible, because we have projects currently on the go, proposals under way – some of them quite a ways into the process like the Three Rivers amalgamation proposal. I think it's really important that unincorporated areas have their voice. We see what happens when they don't. People know when they're not being included in a process; people know when they're not being listened to.

I tend to think that this government's going to find out at the polls just how good their *Municipal Government Act* is and whether this amendment is truly needed. So I would urge this government to pass the amendments simply for self-preservation

I do rise, of course, to support this motion. In the absence of amendments to the *Municipal Government Act*, the plebiscite really is the best indicator, I think, of the voice of unincorporated areas in the Three Rivers amalgamation. I think it's critically important for democracy, for this Island, for the people of this Island that this government recognize that plebiscite, and in a formal way recognize it when considering the recommendation of IRAC, whether that's just at the ministerial level or at Executive Council level.

If that doesn't happen, I think there's going to be a big, big outcry. Three Rivers is just the first of what could be many proposals for municipal restructuring. We're already hearing – there's already been attempts down in Borden-Carleton area; there's already been attempts in other areas. They're talking about it now in the west, in West Prince. People there really have a big question mark. They're not sure what a proposal means and why it would happen,

what are the benefits.

Let's embrace this chance that we have the attention of Islanders. Let government, Minister of Communities, Land and Environment, embrace this opportunity to engage those Islanders. If you truly do believe that restructuring is a good idea – and I know the former minister, now minister of health, really does – then communicate with Islanders. Communicate with people impacted by that proposal whether they're in an incorporated area, an unincorporated area, and let them know why. They want to know why restructuring is so important and how they're going to benefit; how the Island will benefit. That's very key.

I do support this motion and I do want to take this opportunity to give one last plug here for Bill No. 111, amendments to the *Municipal Government Act*. Please, read it. If you lost your flowchart, of the current process, so you can see how the two compare, I'll get you another copy. Please do consider it very carefully. Consider it in what it is, which is a measured set of changes to the legislation that is not meant to be overtly political. It's not meant to be a slam against the government. It's meant to improve the *Municipal Government Act* so we can make new progress on this Island.

Support this motion. Support Bill No. 111 and let's make the Island a better place.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Are there any other members speaking to the motion?

Next, the hon. Minister of Communities, Land and Environment.

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

I want to thank the opposition for putting the motion on. As we've seen the *Municipal Government Act* was established over a number of months; lots of consultations among Islanders, among municipal leaders and among communities.

The department put together an excellent piece of legislation that outlined procedures that are in place for amalgamation, annexation or restructuring to occur. There

is a proposal in there that says it goes to an independent, not-partisan body, which is IRAC. That decision is made. IRAC will take all the opinions in place and will make a recommendation back to the government – back to myself, which I would then pass on to Executive Council.

In other provinces, we went one step further in our *Municipal Government Act* than in other provinces. Most other provinces, Nova Scotia, in particular, they put it through their IRAC-type board and that's the final decision when the board determines whether there's amalgamation, restructuring or that, the board is the final decision here. We've added the additional step in back to the Executive Council.

I hold in my hand here, the report and the plans of the Three Rivers area that have worked for a number of years and a number of months among community leaders. They went on the good faith of government for its *Municipal Government Act*. They organized around the structure of the *Municipal Government Act*. They went out and did their reports, they did their studies. I think we owe it to these groups in the area to continue to follow the process that has been outlined in the *Municipal Government Act* that has been established through public consultations over the years, over a number of years and by a number of communities.

I will not be supporting the motion because there is a mechanism in place. In order – if we're going to jump right in to the middle of this one, what are we going to say to any others that come along?

I also have another one right now, from the town of Kensington; that a person wants to amalgamate one lot into the town of Kensington. Under the rules that are proposed by the hon. member, this person wants to amalgamate his property into the town. Under their rules, if one person objects to it, they would have to have a plebiscite of the whole –

Mr. Trivers: No, a public hearing.

Mr. R. Brown: – Kensington area –

Mr. Trivers: (Indistinct) plebiscite (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: – and if the plebiscite didn't allow that person to put their lot into the new municipality –

Mr. Trivers: Plebiscite is optional.

Mr. R. Brown: It's optional when they want it to be optional. It's mandatory when they want it to be mandatory, so when they get their act straight, then we'll make sure.

An Hon. Member: Give them the (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: We also have a proposal here that says, from the town of Kensington and a section outside the city that wants to amalgamate.

I think we owe it to these people that have gone out, worked extremely hard and the people that are in the process of working extremely hard, right now, to allow them the opportunity to have their case heard in front of IRAC.

IRAC has issued a public notice; everyone has it and the notice says, they have until May 22nd to make comment, either if you want to object to it, or you want to approve it. IRAC will hold public meetings on that. Out of those public meetings people will be allowed to make presentations and say yes or no to it, and then IRAC will look at the best interest of the area and make a recommendation.

I think we owe it to the groups that have been out there working on these proposals, and the groups that are working on them, right now, to allow them the opportunity to see if – to see and allow them the opportunity to have a discussion how they want to make their community better and Prince Edward Island better.

We will be not supporting it because we have a process in place that's been outlined across Prince Edward Island. We should allow that proceed.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Are there any other members who would like to speak to this motion?

The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

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

I'm delighted to have this opportunity to speak to this motion and around this issue. I want to take an opportunity to first thank the Member from Rustico-Emerald for his really very thoughtful and considered work on Bill No. 111, and also on this motion.

This, of course, is an issue, which has affected all of us in this House. In my own district, I had a meeting back in, I believe, it was August of 2016, long before the bill came to the floor of this House, to get a pulse of the people in District 17 as to what they felt about that. It was clear, even back then, that this was going to be a divisive issue.

I listened to – there were 50 or so people, who came to that public meeting. What was clear, at the end of that was that there is no consensus on how rural governance should be done; a lot of skepticism, a lot of mistrust, and a lot of questions.

We had people from, most of the folks, who were there were from District 17, but Robert Godfrey from the PEI Federation of Agriculture was there and expressed some very heartfelt concerns about what the new MGA might – how that might impact the agricultural community and farmers on the Island.

We had folks there, who had driven all the way from Alberton and Summerside. I don't think we had anybody from the Three Rivers area, but, at that point, that hadn't, sort of, flared up into the issue it currently is.

Again, it was a huge alert to me. When you call a public meeting and over 50 people show up before an act is even out there in the public that was a sign to me that this is going to be an important issue for a great number of Islanders. Clearly, it remains as such.

Democracy is really about listening to peoples' voices. That's what democracy is, and I think that the fatal flaw of the process – and by the way, I have to say that the intent, the purpose of the *Municipal Government Act*, I absolutely support. I think it's been clear for a very long time that we needed changes in rural governance on Prince Edward Island.

Numerous reports have all, sort of with one voice, come to the conclusion that the status quo is not acceptable. We're going to have to change something, and this *Municipal Government Act* was the first really brave attempt. I will say that. It takes courage to come forward with something that you know is going to be divisive, something that's going to be contentious, and yet do it. I commend the former minister for getting that through the department, and the current minister for carrying on and shepherding that because we're still very much at the beginning of this process.

The act may well have been passed in this House, but as we all know, that's just the first step in what could be, certainly, years perhaps decades-long process, to get a consistent form of local governance from tip-to-tip across Prince Edward Island.

The purpose of this act, I think, is laudable and the problem I think, the fatal flaw with what is happening in Three Rivers, is the process by which it has come forward. I think it's generated a lot of anger, a lot of mistrust and I think it's a real shame because if you're going to have a constructive conversation, you have to have a level of trust between those people who are participating in that conversation. That just is not present at the moment.

I think we need to stop and take a deep breath, admit the mistakes that have been made and there are many, and I'm not pointing a finger at government here, the minister or anybody in particular. I'm just saying we need to accept that mistakes have been made and we need to press a reset button and start this process again.

I appreciate the work that the Member from Georgetown-St. Peters has done in his community. I don't always agree with some of the things that have been said, particularly about my position on this issue, but I do appreciate the fact that the member is there listening to his constituents. As Rustico-Emerald mentioned in his remarks just a few minutes ago, we are, for the unincorporated areas, we are the only elected representatives of those people and when one's voice is not at the table, then it is incumbent on us as, particularly, rural MLAs to come forward and bring that voice

to the table and so I appreciate the work that he has done there.

There are many more things that I could say about this motion. I will support the motion. I think the work that has been done by the official opposition, and Rustico-Emerald specifically, has really been helpful in digging down and parsing out the real problems with this bill and how it can be fixed. I know I'm talking about Bill No. 111 here rather than a motion, but of course they're very much wedded together. I appreciate the work he's done.

I'm still a little bit disappointed and flabbergasted that some of the things that are very clear, both in the MGA and in Bill No. 111, have not filtered through to some members of this House about 'mays' and 'shalls' and the process and the flow charts of how we get from where we are now to municipal government which is consistent across this Island. But, I have faith in the people of this Island and Islanders, and in the people in this House, to make the right decisions and it appears this motion may not get unanimous support. There's at least one person, I think, who is not going to vote for this.

But, I hope that when Bill No. 111 comes back to the floor that there is more constructive debate and that this House recognizes that we have a bill which is a good piece of work, a really good piece of what that's taken decades to bring to this House and pass through this House, and we don't need to throw that out. But, when somebody from another party comes forward with very constructive suggestions on how to improve that bill, I think we need to put our partisanship aside. We need to look at the ideas that are coming forward and without a lens of, again, of partisanship; look at whether these ideas are going to improve the bill and I look forward to that bill coming back to the floor of this House.

I will support this motion.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Are there any other members who would like to speak to this motion?

If not, I will go back to the mover to close debate on the motion.

The hon. Member from Georgetown-St. Peters.

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's great to get a couple of motions voted on here this afternoon and hopefully government approaches this one here a little more openly than they did the one previous, where it was a whipped vote. Though, I heard the Minister of Communities, Land and Environment saying: We are going to vote against this. Which is –

Mr. MacEwen: How would he know that?

Mr. Myers: I don't know how he would know that. I –

Mr. R. Brown: (Indistinct)

Mr. Myers: As I understood from the Premier, every vote over there was a free vote by everyone. For me, I hope we see some of that freeness.

Just to kind of reiterate that, for me, I'm quite happy to be the representative for people and as all of you know, the rural areas are populated at a much different density than the urban areas and have, I would say, often a different need set when it comes to local politicians. Members who I know that represent rural areas know that, and the members who I know that represent rural areas don't ever seem to mind being the voice for them. I'm not saying that the urban MLAs do, but they already have a different structure so they already have levels of government that deal with various things that an MLA has to deal with in the far-reaching rural areas. I think that when you take this job on, there's already an understanding.

This motion was never really about whether or not I support amalgamation, though I've said openly that I don't, particularly when it's forced. If people want to get together and decide for themselves that that's what they want, then I'm okay with it. I personally don't see any advantage to where I personally live. I'm not sure how amalgamation helps. We contribute to all of the causes. I don't live in Georgetown, but I play hockey there. I pay to play hockey there. That money goes to the ice rental and the upkeep of the rink, or however the rink

operates, that's their business. I coach there. I volunteer my time there.

I'm not sure how creating a mega municipality is going to fix that. I'm certainly not looking to have a sidewalk by my house. I live on a collector road, so it's a major artery and government is already responsible for it, along with –

Ms. Biggar: Well paved.

Mr. Myers: It's well paved. It's well paved.

When fishing started the other morning you could really tell that the road was smooth. They were zipping by fairly well on their way down to the various wharfs, as I guess it wasn't just them, there were probably others of us who may have been rushing to the wharf that morning and I won't mention any names.

But, one of the things that I had always heard, and I had talked to the minister about it when he was on the floor for his estimates, is that more representation doesn't mean a better voice. I think I've represented my constituents to the best of my ability. Their voice has been heard here on numerous issues over seven years. I don't think I've let them down on any occasion. I certainly haven't – there's been no indication from the people that they feel that way, and I think that more government doesn't necessarily mean that this government over here is going to listen.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I would like to vote.

Thank you.

Speaker: Are we ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Question.

Speaker: All those supporting the motion, signify by saying 'aye'.

Some Hon. Members: Aye!

Speaker: All those voting against the motion, signify by saying 'nay'.

Some Hon. Members: Nay.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Mr. LaVie: That was pretty close.

Ms. Biggar: (Indistinct) call for a standing vote.

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct)

Speaker: Hon. members, the motion is defeated.

Mr. LaVie: Oh, come on.

An Hon. Member: It was close.

Leader of the Opposition: It was almost like an Islanders game it was that close.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Parkdale.

Ms. Bell: Mr. Speaker, I call for Order No. 19 be now called.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk Assistant (E. Doiron): Order No. 19, *An Act to Amend the Conflict of Interest Act*, Bill No. 112, ordered for second reading.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Parkdale.

Ms. Bell: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Leader of the Third Party, that the Order No. 19 be now read.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk Assistant: *An Act to Amend the Conflict of Interest Act*, Bill No. 112, read a second time.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Parkdale.

Ms. Bell: Mr. Speaker, I now requested that we resolve in the Committee of the Whole House to take into consideration Bill No. 112.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

I will ask the hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald to come and chair of the Committee of the Whole House, this bill.

Chair (Trivers): The House is now in a Committee of the Whole House to take into consideration a bill to be intituled Bill No. 112, *An Act to Amend the Conflict of Interest Act*. Is it the pleasure – actually, would you like to bring a stranger onto the floor?

Ms. Bell: I would like permission to bring a stranger on to the floor.

Chair: Is permission granted?

Some Hon. Members: Granted.

Chair: Thank you.

If you wouldn't mind, once you get settled there, just stating your name and position for the record?

Joanne MacKinnon Assistant: Joanne MacKinnon, legislative assistant for the Office of the Third Party.

Ms. Bell: Great.

Chair: Thank you.

Would you like to give an overview of the bill?

Ms. Bell: I would, Thank you, Chair.

This act is a document that provides the amendments that implement all of the recommendations made by the conflict of interest commissioner in his 2015 annual report.

In that report, the commissioner stated, and I quote: “This *Act* has been in place since 1999. It is modeled on the legislation in Ontario. While the legislation in Ontario, as well as that in other Provinces and in the House of Commons has evolved since 1999, the *Act* has never been amended.

“With this in mind I undertook a review of the legislation in other Canadian jurisdictions. In my opinion...” that is the opinion of the commissioner. “...the operation and administration of the *Act* could be improved with the inclusion of some specific provisions that have adopted in other jurisdictions.”

We based our legislation on the commissioner's recommendations, which include more clearly defined private interests; lowering the threshold of allowable gifts from \$500 to \$200; allowing private citizens to make a complaint to the commissioner; extending the cooling off period for ministers from six months to 12 months and implementing a mandatory review of the act after each general election.

In addition, it provides minor clarifications on issues such as the reimbursement for costs of establishing a blind trust, disclosure of corporate interests and members' pension plans.

Our bill has been guided entirely by the conflict of interest commissioner's recommendations. We were tempted to make some of the provisions more restrictive, for example, extending the cooling off period even further, but in the end we felt we needed to respect the authority of the commissioner on these matters and merely act on his recommendations in their entirety.

Thank you, Chair.

Chair: Thank you, member.

Is it the pleasure of the committee that the bill be now read clause by clause?

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Chair: All right, we'll commence with that.

Actually, the hon. Minister of Justice and Public Safety.

Mr. J. Brown: Thank you, Chair.

When this bill was tabled, I seem to recall that you had made a comment, so I'm speaking now, to the hon. Member from Charlottetown-Parkdale – you had made a comment that you had prepared this legislation and that you were anxious to compare it to legislation that we had tabled around the same time.

Do you recall that?

Ms. Bell: Yes.

Mr. J. Brown: Yeah, okay.

I guess, I have some curiosity in respect of how all this came to be and why it would have been that you would have made the comment in the way that you had made it.

When I asked that, specifically, and I want to give the context, which is to say that in April of 2017, the Premier, who was then the minister of justice, received a letter from the Speaker, who is chair of the Standing Committee on Legislative Management, enclosing both a copy of the report of the commissioner that you just referred to there a moment ago, and a draft bill, which is ultimately the bill that we tabled, and asked that we move that legislation forward on behalf of the committee.

Later on the 17th of January, 2018, I received a letter from the hon. Peter Bevan-Baker, and I'm going to read from this letter because it's – just in light of the comment that was made, I find it quite interesting.

In any sense: Congratulations on your recent appointment to Minister of Justice and Public Safety and Attorney General. I look forward to working with you in this new capacity. I'm writing today about amendments to the *Conflict of Interest Act*, which, I believe, would fall under your new department.

As you know in his 2015 annual report, the conflict of interest commissioner made a number of recommendations to modernize the act. I had been hoping that government would act on those recommendations and I have brought up the issue in Question Period, but have been given no assurance that government intends to implement the recommendations.

I believe these amendments need to move forward, and I've begun work on a private member's bill. However, in the spirit of collaboration, I want to contact you first to ask if its government's intention to proceed on the recommendations, and if so, would you be willing to work with the Office of the Third Party on the amendments?

I appreciate that we all like to keep our legislative plans to ourselves, but it would be inefficient to have Legislative Counsel to be working on the same project for both of our offices. As you can imagine, I am quite keen to begin work. If I don't hear back

from you by the end of next week, I will assume that government is not planning to move forward on the recommendations and I will begin providing instruction to Legislative Counsel.

I wrote back and I indicated that we did intend to proceed with legislation in this sitting. Ultimately, we tabled this bill.

What's really troubling to me is that the comment and the way that it was made cast an aspersion to say that this was something that you had differences with the way – you had differences in the substance of your bill versus what was put forward and attributed that to myself, as the minister of justice.

Really, what we had put forward came from the committee chaired by the Speaker and came forward at his request.

I guess what I'm kind of wondering is, is there an issue with the committee and its procedure? Or how did we get to the point where we're making a comment like that to introduce legislation in the face of a clear chain of correspondence that sets out a desire to work together between two parties for the betterment of everybody involved.

Chair: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Parkdale.

Ms. Bell: Thank you, Chair.

There are two different questions in there. I think the first one is in terms of content of the recommendations and (Indistinct) on legislative management, I can't speak to that because that is a committee which meets in camera and I'm not privy to the content of that committee. However, when there is a recommendation, what we have is the recommendation of the report for the conflict of interest commissioner and our legislation meets and includes every recommendation that is made in that report.

So if there's legislation which is not the same, then it'd be very interesting to see how are they not the same when they're meant to be coming from a recommendation from that commissioner. But I'm not able to comment on what happens in legislative management and any decisions that may have happened inside that space.

In terms of the chain of correspondence, we have the letters here and absolutely, we did offer to collaborate and we did put an inquiry out, but we didn't feel that we got clear direction back from your department on terms of what was happening with that legislation and we had made it clear that we were proceeding with ours. In fact, we did so with the full support, obviously, of Legislative Counsel and all of the facilities that are available to us and that has resulted in – and I said unfortunately – that it's coming forward with two pieces. How they compare is something that we can obviously discuss today, but effectively what we've done is brought forward legislation which incorporates every recommendation of the report.

Mr. Trivers: The hon. Leader of the Third Party has an intervention.

Ms. Bell: Sorry. Intervention?

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Charlottetown-Parkdale, has just covered what I said, which is that the letter that we received back from the minister was, in our mind, ambiguous. It was not clear as to whether government was indeed going to come forward with their legislation in this sitting, which is why we went forward with ours.

Chair: The hon. Minister of Justice and Public Safety, and the Attorney General.

Mr. J. Brown: So I do have the letter here and the letter says: Thank you for your letter dated January 17th, 2018 and your kind words of congratulations. I, too, look forward to working with you in my added capacity as Minister of Justice and Public Safety, and the Attorney General. Regarding your inquiry into the status of the proposed amendments to the *Conflict of Interest Act*, I can confirm that such a bill is on the list of legislation under consideration for introduction in the upcoming legislative session.

I guess what I would say in addition to that is for a member that sat on the committee to somehow now be thinking that he has some additional insight beyond what the committee has already done and sent to recommendation over on just months before, would seem to me to be totally – not just out of place, but in the way that your bill was

introduced here, frankly not respectful to the role of that committee and to the Speaker. I'm not sure who you were addressing when you tabled your bill, whether it was me or whether it was the Speaker who had moved that bill forward, but in one way or another, the comment I took as a slight, in terms of the quality of the legislation that was moved forward and the contents of it. Maybe I'm wrong. I don't know.

Chair: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Parkdale.

Ms. Bell: It's unfortunate that the minister feels that way. Legislation, when it's tabled, is for the benefit of the province and the introduction of legislation is meant to achieve our function of this House, which is to actually bring into law recommendations that have been made by independent – in this case, an independent commissioner of this province – who has made independent recommendations in his authority, in his role. Our role as legislators here is to bring forward legislation to enact that and, in fact, as we know with the numberings on the bill that our legislation was tabled first.

What I would also point out is that I find it – I said: unfortunately you feel that this is personally targeted or feel some kind of target there because this is really about doing what is in the best interests of the public. In that case, I do refer to one of the comments that our commissioner actually made in his report and what he says in this quote is: a mandatory review of the *Conflict of Interest Act* in quoting from his report, “A periodic mandatory review of the *Act* will provide Members with an opportunity to consider changes to the *Act* in a tempered and reflective environment as opposed to a hasty consideration of amendments initiated in the tempest of a controversy that exposes the legislation as being deficient.”

The last thing that we need to be seen as is not implementing legislation or recommendations from an independent officer who is thinking that he is providing his opinions that are in the best interest of the province and that is what his report is quite clearly doing and we are very happy to be able to bring forward legislation that we feel does just that.

Chair: The hon. Minister of Justice and Public Safety, and the Attorney General.

Mr. J. Brown: I guess what I'm saying here and you're not addressing is that it would have been quite clear to the leader of your party, the hon. Leader of the Third Party, who sits on legislative management committee that a bill had been prepared, had been sent to our office, that he had reached out to see what the status of that was, that we had indicated that it was in our plan to move it forward this session, and that in respect for the committee, we did just that.

So you mentioned the opportunity to consider all of these things – there's a committee that's there that's set up to do just that and that legislation was quite clearly moving forward, yet in your own words, you're rushing to get your bill on before we get ours on and then the comment is a comment to say: Oh, it'll be interesting to see what's in that bill and we look forward to the opportunity to compare one with the other as if there's some great reveal or whatever there. Well –

Ms. Bell: May I (Indistinct)

Mr. J. Brown: – I'm not on the legislative management committee, but it would be quite clear to me that that committee is set out as a representative group of this Legislature to do the work of the Legislature and to come back and make recommendations in respect of how we all conduct ourselves. What you're really saying in saying that is: We know better than whatever the legislative management committee does.

Ms. Bell: I'd like to respond. I think that's a really irresponsible remark to make, minister, to sort of suggest that anybody would know better, particularly from a committee in which I am also not a member and therefore have no idea what happens there when that committee meets in camera.

I am, however, having had the opportunity to look at the two pieces of legislation quite clear, that the committee appears to have made decisions in private – to exclude things from the legislation; to exclude things that were recommended by that independent officer, which are now not in the legislation brought forward on the recommendation of

that committee, which are included in the legislation that we have brought forward.

So I would suggest that perhaps the person that knows better in this is the commissioner – from his report which was tabled three years ago, in 2015. However there is an intervention from –

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you.

Of course, I'm fully aware of the confidences that exist when one participates in an in camera meeting, which all of legislative management committee meetings are; however, I am at liberty to say that I disagreed with the decision of the committee. I did. And I made my reasons for doing that very clear. I will reiterate them here in this House. I just do not feel that behind closed doors, the recommendations of an independent officer of this Legislature should be decided upon. The very people on whom the restrictions of the conflict of interest recommendations from the commissioner are going to have the most impact, namely, the 27 of us who live and work in this Legislature. I think the irony of us being able to pick and choose which of those we bring forward – the fact that that's such an obvious conflict of interest is a real problem.

That's why I decided that we would create our own piece of legislation in our office which clearly reflected all of the recommendations of the commissioner and we did that in collaboration with the commissioner. We met with him on a number of occasions to make sure that the legislation that is before you right now, this bill, is an accurate reflection of the intent of the recommendations that he made in his report of 2015.

Chair: The hon. Minister of Justice and Public Safety, and the Attorney General.

Mr. J. Brown: There's a lot to unpack there, Chair, in what was just said and I do wish to kind of take the hon. member up on that.

The first statement that I heard was that there's a clear conflict of interest there. The second piece of it was: I decided – and that

fits with the hon. Member from Charlottetown-Parkdale who said that: we have put together this legislation and are tabling it now – when she introduced the bill a couple of weeks ago. And further what the hon. member said, I decided that we're going to create our own.

So all this clearly indicates to me – there was full knowledge of what was going on at the committee, there was a race to get in there in front of the legislation that was prepared and put forward by the committee. This is a committee that's chaired by the Speaker. The letter came to our office from the Speaker. To me, I wonder – and again, particularly with the context in which the comment was made and folks are free to go back and look at the video in the archives and look at that for themselves, but what is the true purpose behind this bill coming forward. Why not wait until the bill that was prepared by the committee comes onto the floor to debate the substance of that bill, rather than try and rush to get in there in front and get our bill on and say: Oh look, we did better than the committee –

Ms. Bell: (Indistinct)

Mr. J. Brown: – who is representative of this House and is chaired by the Speaker

Ms. Casey: Call the hour.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Ms. Casey: Call the hour.

An Hon. Member: The hour has been called.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Extend the hour?

Ms. Bell: Extend the hour?

Some Hon. Members: No.

Ms. Bell: Nice try.

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

Chair: Shall it carry? Carried.

Mr. Speaker, as Chair of a Committee of the Whole House, having under consideration a

bill to be intituled *An Act to Amend the Conflict of Interest 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.

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

The Legislature recessed until 7:00 p.m.

Recognition of Guests (II)

Speaker: You may be seated.

I'll call on the hon. Government House Leader for recognition.

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

I'd like to welcome Kevin Doyle from out in Earncliffe area, a good friend to many of us here, who came in to watch a very, very productive evening in the House.

Thank you very much.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Borden-Kinkora.

Mr. Fox: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'd like to recognize Jamie Larkin here tonight and Darren Creamer.

Speaker: Thank you.

Government Motions

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

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

I move, seconded by the hon. Member from Vernon River-Stratford, that pursuant to section 4.10 of the *Provincial Court Act*, the report of the Judicial Remuneration Review Commission, dated January the 12th 2018, and as tabled intersessionally to the House on March the 27th 2018, be adopted.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Mitchell: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance, that the 1st order of the day be now read.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk Assistant (E. Doiron): 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 call on the hon. Member from Charlottetown-Lewis Point to come and 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.

Hon. members, tonight we're going to be starting with the budget estimates for Executive Council, and that can be found on page 66.

Permission to bring a stranger onto the floor?

Some Hon. Members: Granted.

Chair: We'll allow her to get settled in and introduce herself.

Good evening. Could you introduce yourself and your title for the record?

Karen Stanley Manager: Karen Stanley, Finance Manager, Executive Council.

Chair: Welcome.

Premier, do you have an opening statement before we carry on here?

Premier MacLauchlan: Thank you, Chair. I can be brief.

The net increase in the expenditure for Executive Council in 2018-2019 is \$103,000. It's 1.4% of our total budget compared with 4.8 across government. We run a pretty old-fashioned operation, and that's been the case if you go back to the years prior to my being in this roll.

It encompasses a pretty straightforward set of responsibilities the same as last year: the Premier's office, Executive Council, intergovernmental affairs, Aboriginal/Francophone affairs and strategic communications and public engagement.

Chair: Thank you.

Hon. members, as we've been doing with other budgets, I'll read the section and then I'll entertain questions on that particular section.

Premier's Office

"Appropriations provided for the operation of an office to support the Premier in carrying out responsibilities as Leader of Government and as President of the Executive Council. Employees provide program and policy advice, administrative support and organization, and liaise with the public and the media." Administration: 22,000. Equipment: 3,500. Materials, Supplies and Services: 5,500. Salaries: 644,900. Travel and Training: 44,200.

Total Premier's Office: 720,100.

Total Premier's Office: 720,100.

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

Mr. Fox: Thank you, Chair.

Premier, back a while back you promised to look into or do something about the severance packages in regards to MLAs to bring them in line with the rest of the world. Can you update us on that?

Premier MacLauchlan: I don't know if I used that language. There's been language about looking at the compensation or the terms and benefits. I haven't done anything directly recently about that, but I believe this is something that may be in the hands of a committee of the Legislature.

Mr. Fox: This committee, would they be looking at the differences, packages given to defeated MLAs or ones that are beat at an election?

Premier MacLauchlan: This is in the hands of a committee for which I don't speak, and we all have to be alert to that; but it would be my understanding that the whole question of, I'll call it post-Assembly service, would likely be considered by that.

Mr. Fox: Okay, thank you.

Chair: Thank you.

Shall the section carry? Carried.

Executive Council Office

“Appropriations provided for the operation of the Office of the Clerk of the Executive Council (responsible for the administration of Cabinet processes and management of Cabinet records), the Cabinet Committee on Priorities (responsible to direct and oversee the legislative work required to fulfill Government's plan, and align it with fiscal and governmental agendas) and the Policy Review Committee (responsible to review policy options and translate those into direction consistent with Government's agenda).” Administration: 33,000. Equipment: 5,000. Materials, Supplies and Services: 23,000. Professional Services: 40,000. Salaries: 1,264,500. Travel and Training: 11,000.

Total Executive Council Office: 1,376,500.

Total Executive Council Office: 1,376,500.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Chair.

I'm wondering if there are any handouts for this department that we could be provided with.

Chair: There's a request just to have a moment until the package is circulated, hon. members.

Shall the section carry? Carried.

Shall the total Executive Council Office carry? Carried.

Intergovernmental and Public Affairs

Intergovernmental Affairs Secretariat

“Appropriations provided for research, coordination of information, liaison and communication; provision of support, advice and consultation; and preparation of briefing documents on strategic intergovernmental issues and opportunities to ensure that the interests and priorities of the Province are presented in dealings with other governments.” Administration: 6,400. Equipment: 2,000. Materials, Supplies and Services: 2,500. Salaries: 592,200. Travel and Training: 66,000. Grants: 87,800.

Total Intergovernmental Affairs Secretariat: 756,900.

Shall the section carry? Carried.

Aboriginal Affairs Secretariat

“Appropriations provided to cover Aboriginal-specific programs and initiatives under the Canada-PEI-Mi'kmaq Partnership Agreement together with grants to the Native Council of Prince Edward Island and the Aboriginal Women's Association.” Administration: 6,500. Equipment: 3,000. Materials, Supplies and Services: 6,900. Professional Services: 72,000. Salaries: 317,800. Travel and Training: 16,100. Grants: 273,000.

Total Aboriginal Affairs Secretariat: 695,300.

The hon. Member from Borden-Kinkora.

Mr. Fox: Just a very quick one, Chair.

The grants of \$273,000, is that all split just between the Native Council of PEI and the Aboriginal Women's Association?

Premier MacLauchlan: There's a list I can provide.

Mr. Fox: Oh, is there?

Premier MacLauchlan: I can give you – it's a short list.

Leader of the Opposition: It's on the very last page (Indistinct)

Premier MacLauchlan: Oh, you've got it.

Mr. Fox: Okay, thank you.

That's good.

Chair: Shall the section carry?

Leader of the Opposition: (Indistinct)

Chair: Oh, sorry.

Leader of the Opposition: Thanks very much, Chair.

The grants with regards to Aboriginal Affairs, I'm assuming that's all provincial money because the lines share money that would come to the Mi'kmaq Confederacy and the Native Council of PEI, and the two reserves; that would be federal money. Correct?

Premier MacLauchlan: That's right.

The numbers here are provincial dollars.

Leader of the Opposition: Strictly provincial?

The federal dollars that flow through, they don't flow through the province's books at all? They go directly –

Premier MacLauchlan: That's right.

We would not – and in fact, there would likely be some people that (Indistinct) pretty serious concerns if someone suggested that's the way it should happen. But no, they would have direct relationships with the federal government.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you.

I'm just wondering, Premier, when – and this is clearly an area of increased activity and promises to be so into the future. Do you feel that the personnel that you have in here at the moment will be able to deal with

whatever legal situations arise over the next little while?

Premier MacLauchlan: We have been using outside legal services, principally a firm Cassels Brock based in –

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Tom Isaac, is that right?

Premier MacLauchlan: Tom Isaac, indeed, and he has a team around him as well and he would be one of the leading people in this field in Canada. Our province has had a relationship with him for about five years; a little bit more than that.

We've been able to handle things with that arrangement and let me say there are two aspects to this. One is the work that Tom Isaac does for us in advising and policy work and where something might come to litigation – which is certainly not our chosen path – that would be covered by the risk management file in government under Treasury Board.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: I'm just looking now at the Aboriginal Affairs grants and I see that \$200,000 has been set aside for infrastructure; \$100,000 in Lennox Island and \$100,000 in Abegweit. I'm wondering with perhaps the most vulnerable part of our province in terms of sea level rise is Lennox Island and particularly the sewage facility that's there.

I'm wondering whether that – is that specifically for that or is that for other infrastructure.

Premier MacLauchlan: The background of these amounts would be that it was instituted to deal with roads at Lennox Island and Abegweit.

We have regular discussions with the chiefs and their roads are getting to be in pretty good shape, or at least there's a limit to how much of that work might be done and they have their preferences for there to be some more flexibility around – and we're in agreement with that.

It would be on the initiative of the chief in either situation to make the first identification of priorities, and of course it's very much on the mind of Chief Ramjattan and the council and the community at

Lennox. I have to say that if there was something, you might say, extreme, there would likely need to be some other resources pretty well beyond what's identified here.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Is there a plan within Lennox Island to move that facility currently? Are they just sort of sitting on it and waiting? Is it the expense that, maybe, preventing –

Premier MacLauchlan: (Indistinct) general policy not to speak for them, of course, but I think they've done some shoreline protection and are very closely monitoring the situation and I would say their current plan is to make the best of the facility that they have onsite, on the Island, which is quite an advance to get (Indistinct) in terms of the investments that have been made there.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: I just want to go back to the outside legal services for a second, Premier. Do you have a figure there for how much we have spent on that in the last couple of years?

Premier MacLauchlan: The budget is \$75,000 and the expenditure in 2017-2018, the past year, is \$147,000. So, it's probably the one area across the board here where we've overspent. Money is well spent, but it exceeded the budget and in particular, that is to advise government on a very timely initiative which is to move toward a framework agreement between the province and the two First Nations, and the Confederacy, and the federal government would also be a party.

This is a significant piece of work and it has required quite a bit of the time and expertise of Tom Isaac's and his team, so that 147 would reflect all of their advisory work in the course of the year as well as any out-of-pocket expenses. It would be a combination of the work on the framework agreement and general advising.

You'll see that we've got a figure of 72,000 for 2018-2019, so it's our expectation that the framework agreement would come to its culmination fairly soon and that we'd go back to the normal state of affairs.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Great. Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Premier.

Chair: The hon. Member from Borden-Kinkora.

Mr. Fox: Quick question, Chair.

Premier, on the back page there for the grants, I notice that the Native Council of PEI get \$34,000, Lennox Island get 100 and Abegweit get 100. It's my understanding that there's a large population that live off reserve. I'm wondering why they only get \$34,000 compared to the other two getting 100,000?

Premier MacLauchlan: The two First Nations have a more extensive governance responsibility, assets, land and resources. Roughly, that's it. That's where the historic and the rights-based relationship is with the chiefs and the confederacy. This is not to take anything away at all from the merits of our relationship with the native council. They have extensive programming and some of that gets supported through other combinations of federal-provincial money as well –

Mr. Fox: Yeah.

Premier MacLauchlan: – and the 34 is funding that's been in place for the – you might say core funding for the native council.

Mr. Fox: Pass the budget. I'm done.

Chair: Oh, you're done. Thank you.

Shall the section carry? Carried.

Acadian and Francophone Affairs
Secretariat

“Appropriations provided for the coordination of measures relating primarily to the implementation of the *French Language Services Act* within the Provincial Government, including support to departmental French Services coordinators; coordination of several bilateral agreements; provision of translation services; administrative support to the Acadian and Francophone Community Advisory Committee, and several other initiatives concerning the promotion of the French

Language.” Administration: 8,500.
Equipment: 4,200. Materials, Supplies and
Services: 9,000. Professional Services:
144,900. Salaries: 753,000. Travel and
Training: 18,100. Grants: 10,000.

Total Acadian and Francophone Affairs
Secretariat: 947,700.

Total Intergovernmental and Public Affairs:
2,399,900.

The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you, Chair.

I’d like to talk about the French language services complaints officer. Jean-Paul Arsenault retired, I think, in December 2016 or somewhere around there because of a lack of action in that area, and I know a new complaints officer has been installed since then and I’m just wondering whether the French language services have been expanded at all since the new officer came in.

Premier MacLauchlan: Yes and there’s not a direct relationship between the role that the complaints officer plays and the extension of the services, but there was a linkage made. In any event, there was in late 2017, an extension of three, I will say, services and these are designated: 811 was one of them, the Acadian museum was one of them, and – I’d be happy to come back because there is a more fulsome note that I can give you.

It’s probably in one of my other books but there is a further plan, and this is done under an advisory committee that’s functioning very well – Jacinthe Lemire is the Chair – to have further designations in the course of 2018. So we will have moved – I can, I think it would be best, Chair, if I provide a follow-up note. It’s very straightforward of the areas that have been done to date and that have been called for by the committee and that will be implemented.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Great. Just a note on that: I’m really glad to hear that, Premier. I know Jean-Paul was the low-hanging fruit I think was the phrase that he used, and the Acadian museum and 811 were two of the – I don’t remember how many there were, but

I remember that being two of them so I’m really glad to hear there’s some movement.

Thank you, Chair.

Chair: Thank you.

The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Chair.

I was wondering if this is where the agreement with the federal government is administered. The French community is talking about it, one and a half million dollars of which they feel a million of it has been improperly allocated. Is this the department – is this where it comes in?

Premier MacLauchlan: I think you’re better to talk to the hon. Minister of Education, Early Learning and Culture –

Mr. Trivers: Okay.

Premier MacLauchlan: – about that.

Mr. Trivers: Once again, this is all provincial money in this area?

Premier MacLauchlan: It is. On a number of the points there, under our federal-provincial arrangements, there’s a potential – some of these funds are matched by federal funds.

I’ll give you an example. One of the new expenditures in this area is to hire a bilingual – I’ll say communications person. She’s got multi-skills. For example, she will support – actually, that position, that (Indistinct) communication was a good example – she will support the Lieutenant Governor in areas where she’s obviously happy to have that additional support as part of her team – also to support, indeed, some of the communications around our French language schools.

So that position is – we got a 50% cost recovery because of the arrangements with the federal government. There is also in this budget a position – it’s a term position – to support the Congrès mondial acadien, the world Acadian congress, which will be jointly hosted by southeast New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island in 2019, which is a very big thing.

Mr. Trivers: Exciting, yeah.

Premier MacLauchlan: As it happens every – it might be every four years that the congrès mondial takes place. First time Prince Edward Island has been host, and the position that is budgeted for here is in fact 50-cent dollars.

Mr. Trivers: Okay, great. I notice you do give a grant to the French daycare located at Ecole La-Belle-Cloche, and that's of course sort of direct-related to the education portfolio as well. Do you have any plans for expanding grants to the various different French daycares in the province?

Premier MacLauchlan: The relationship with Belle-Cloche was a one-off to help them get started. Those daycares may indeed qualify for funding through early learning, and indeed do.

Mr. Trivers: One other question: I notice that provision of translation services is part of the responsibility here. That's one thing I know in the opposition office, we love to put more of our press releases out in both official languages. I don't know if any of the translation services here are available outside of the Executive Council or how does that work?

Premier MacLauchlan: This is a core service that supports other departments of government. It's certainly worth inquiring to see the extent to which the Legislative Assembly draws on that service through the Speaker.

But those translation services and personnel are concentrated in this group for government as a whole.

Mr. Trivers: So just to be clear, would you recommend we work through Legislative Assembly staff or just contact Acadian and Francophone Affairs Secretariat directly?

Premier MacLauchlan: I think it best to work through the Assembly, through the Clerk or the Speaker.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you.

Chair: Thank you.

The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Parkdale.

Ms. Bell: Thank you.

Mr. Premier, following on from the question from Rustico-Emerald, has there been any thought on – this may not be the right section, but has there been any thought to sort of future requirements to be able to provide translation in more than French with the changing nature of our Island population and incorporating perhaps even Mi'kmaq?

Ms. Biggar: (Indistinct)

Premier MacLauchlan: There's nothing in any of the budget that we're talking about today for that purpose. I guess that's the most simple answer –

Ms. Bell: Yeah.

Premier MacLauchlan: – I can give at this point. It is, certainly, is not beyond the foreseeable.

Ms. Bell: Yeah, okay.

Thank you. That is just something that has come up a couple of times. I appreciate the follow-up.

Thank you.

Chair: Shall the section carry? Carried.

Shall Total Intergovernmental and Public Affairs carry? Carried.

Communications and Public Engagement

Departmental Communications and Engagement

“Appropriations provided for departmental communication officers and public engagement.” Administration: 13,000. Salaries: 1,203,900. Travel and Training: 10,700.

Total Departmental Communications and Engagement: 1,227,600.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Chair.

Just before you called to carry that line, I know the hon. Member from Charlottetown-Parkdale has a question, or maybe even two or three or how many.

I did have a couple of questions, but I wanted to, sort of, incorporate them between the departmental communication engagement and the strategic communications and outreach, would that be permissible?

Chair: Can you save your question for strategic until we get to that section?

Leader of the Opposition: I can. I just don't want to be told that we've already carried that –

Chair: No, absolutely –

Leader of the Opposition: – section and we have to go to that section –

Chair: – not.

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

Thank you.

Chair: You're good?

Leader of the Opposition: I'm good to wait until we get down to strategic communication –

Chair: Perfect.

Leader of the Opposition: – then we'll roll the two in together.

Chair: Thank you.

Leader of the Opposition: You're welcome.

Chair: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Parkdale.

Ms. Bell: It was, thank you, Chair, a relatively simple question, which is, there has been a slight increase. I know you have 12 comm staff, a PR manager and a director, currently in this, which is the primary expense for this section.

Do those staff work only on the

communications, like the production of communications, and that, kind of, goes somewhere else to actually be done? It might be actually connecting to what my colleague has just asked. The clarification of those roles would be very helpful.

Premier MacLauchlan: The main body of people that we're talking about are the communications officers that are located with the various departments; including with Health PEI.

Ms. Bell: Okay.

Premier MacLauchlan: Then, they comprise a 15 person team. A 15 person team, including a deputy minister, who, strictly speaking is looked after under other budgets, and of those 12 are with departments; 12 departments and agencies.

Ms. Bell: You mentioned there is a deputy minister in another department. Can you share what other department –

Premier MacLauchlan: Well, for –

Ms. Bell: – it comes under.

Premier MacLauchlan: – precisely it's Paul Ledwell.

Ms. Bell: Oh, okay.

Premier MacLauchlan: Who is the clerk, who is also the deputy minister responsible for the communications activity. He's also deputy for policy and priorities, and Aboriginal affairs and francophone affairs.

Ms. Bell: A few other things, yeah. That's it.

Thank you, Chair.

Chair: Shall the section carry? Carried.

Mr. Trivers: (Indistinct)

Chair: In that section?

Mr. Trivers: (Indistinct)

Chair: Sure.

The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Chair.

I was just wondering if the ads we see in the newspaper, on the radio, or television or on websites or Facebook or Twitter, any of these social media platforms.

Does that come out of this budget, departmental communications and public engagement, or is that strategic communications and outreach or where does that come from?

Premier MacLauchlan: It's in the next section.

Chair: Next section. Can you save your question for the next section?

Mr. Trivers: Yeah.

Chair: Just about to read it, thanks.

Strategic Communications and Outreach

“Appropriations provided for a range of services such as: communications planning and strategy development, advertising, photography and video production, editorial, media, web, social media and public outreach to all Government departments and agencies, and the Legislative Assembly.”
Administration: 24,100. Equipment: 67,800. Materials, Supplies and Services: 342,900. Professional Services: 30,000. Salaries: 1,272,600. Travel and Training: 17,300.

Total Strategic Communications and Outreach: 1,754,700.

Total Communications and Public Engagement: 2,982,300.

Total Executive Council: 7,478,800.

Hon. Leader of the Opposition, did you have a question?

Leader of the Opposition: I did, Chair.

Thank you very much for coming back to me.

I guess my first question would be: Why do we have these two separated rather than combined into one? It appears to me that they both fulfill communication responsibilities.

Can you define exactly why there would be a difference that would require them being separated?

Premier MacLauchlan: I think the best way to say it is probably captured by the question from the Member from Charlottetown-Parkdale; one is the team and the other's the production, you might say.

Leader of the Opposition: Okay.

Premier MacLauchlan: It's really budget, you know, kind of a historic way this has been addressed in the budget.

The further piece is that the strategic communications and outreach does include what, in an earlier day would have been called audio/visual or variations on that, sort of how communications have evolved, in terms of, you might call it, in-house technical support.

Leader of the Opposition: Okay.

Thank you very much for that explanation.

Under professional services, for 2017-2018, there seems to be a significant increase from what was estimated to what's actually forecasted there.

I was wondering if you could explain the increase there.

Premier MacLauchlan: If you look at the handout for – on – it's called page –

Leader of the Opposition: Two of two?

Premier MacLauchlan: – two of two. You'll see there, there's a total expenditure of a hundred and –

Leader of the Opposition: Ten, 368.

Premier MacLauchlan: –110,368, and the significant part of which is reimbursed from Innovation PEI.

This is Prince Edward Island promotion in various initiatives. You'll see the people, who are doing the work there, and the scale of the expenditure. It's a combination of profiling our province, recognizing that's it's good for us to, kind of, be on the map, you might say. And, to also profile the talent

of the people, who are doing this work; it's principally smaller Prince Edward Island media producers, who've had the chance to, frankly, it's a good place to spend some money.

You may have seen, and this is a good example of it, a very fine, a short video, that was called *Why PEI?* It features a number of people; younger professionals, sort-of entrepreneurs, people talking about lifestyle, and so on. It verges into attracting Islanders to stay or people to move to Prince Edward Island. That's, sort of, the impetus behind it.

Leader of the Opposition: Okay.

Thank you, Premier, for that explanation.

Within strategic communications and outreach, obviously, this is where a lot of the, as you said, the advertising and creative would take place.

From department to department when press releases are sent out, or advertisements are printed in the different mediums, would those costs, for specific media buys go back to the department that they originated from, or would they be captured in here?

Premier MacLauchlan: They're principally captured in here. There is some billing back. The total in 2017-2018 is 317?

Karen Stanley Manager: Yes.

Premier MacLauchlan: And then the amount billed back would be, oh, on the order of about \$80,000, I'd say, between \$80,000 and \$90,000.

Leader of the Opposition: Chair, I wonder if we could be provided with a breakdown of the spend per media outlet?

Premier MacLauchlan: Sure, there's no reason not to. Sure.

Leader of the Opposition: You can bring that back?

Premier MacLauchlan: Yeah.

Leader of the Opposition: Do you have it available this evening?

Premier MacLauchlan: I probably do have – I don't see any reason why we can't (Indistinct)

Karen Stanley Manager: Yeah, we can.

Premier MacLauchlan: I've got a single page here, but, maybe someone could make a copy –

Leader of the Opposition: I'm sure we could find someone with that capability.

Premier MacLauchlan: Okay.

Mr. R. Brown: (Indistinct)

Leader of the Opposition: The Minister of Communities, Land and Environment's not doing anything right now.

Chair: Are you tabling that, Premier?

Premier MacLauchlan: Sure.

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

Thank you, Chair.

That's my last question that I had.

Chair: Perfect, sorry. You're all done?

The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Parkdale.

Ms. Bell: Thank you, Chair.

So following on from the questions from the Leader of the Opposition, a comment on a question is: It's fantastic to see that spend happening with these local companies and to see it being spread across that range of companies. I know all of them and they're all fantastic and they're all PEI and it's really important. I'm hoping we're going to see that from economic development and tourism in that same kind of spread because it's a significant amount of money to these companies and they're the ones that can best tell these stories.

I know you've also got a lot of staff internally as well. Has there been any emphasis on having PEI talent within the skill set of the staff that work in this department as well?

Premier MacLauchlan: These would be people, mainly, who've been with government over a period of time and, in fact, they're all PEI folks. So to perhaps combine the question or the spirit of the question: In addition to using the resources of those smaller, smaller and very talented outside companies, I know that in the work of the team – I'll just call it an audio visual – I'm sure there's some better word I'm supposed to use – they have placed an increasing emphasis on using PEI music for their soundtracks.

Ms. Bell: That's great.

Premier MacLauchlan: There's almost a – I'll call it an ethic about this. I don't mind saying – from time to time the Premier asks whether we can do more of this.

Ms. Bell: Proper thing. Yes.

That's really encouraging. It's something you know you've heard me speak about before in terms of really needing to sort of look to local first in terms of putting our money where our mouth is and this spend is significant – so when we are looking at professional services to ensure – and that's in many things and in that encompassing piece.

I appreciate that and I appreciate seeing that the bulk of that professional service allocation is going out into (Indistinct). I just wanted to ask about the reimbursement for PEI promotion – just the process on that – where you've got that line item in the professional services with that reimbursement from Innovation PEI. I might have missed the explanation on that one. How does that work?

Premier MacLauchlan: Innovation PEI and the Department of Economic Development and Tourism is one place that we look to implement the population action plan and in so far as an important objective of that new media work is to attract people to move to the Island, or people to see the opportunities here. You'll see there's a significant component about entrepreneurship that lines up with the function or the mandate of Innovation PEI or economic development and tourism and it's in that way that we sort of reach over

there in order to find the resources to make sure that this work gets done.

Ms. Bell: My last question is: There's a reallocation of funds back from Innovation PEI back into your budget because it's coming from a different fund line.

Premier MacLauchlan: I think it even shows on that page in the handout: There's an \$80,000 – is it – in the bracket?

Ms. Bell: \$85,000.

Premier MacLauchlan: \$85,000, so that's it. It's an internal transfer of budgetary kind of capacity you might say.

Ms. Bell: Okay. That's great. Thank you very much.

Premier MacLauchlan: I don't want to have said AV as if it's somehow a relic. The group in that team is constantly multitasking and shifting to new platforms and working in a collaborative way that is quite remarkable even in the time I've been involved – to see how this is a continuously, I'll call it, reskilling operation.

Ms. Bell: Thank you very much.

Thank you, Chair.

Chair: Shall the section carry? Carried.

Total Communications and Public Engagement

Shall the section carry? Carried.

Total Executive Council

Shall the total carry? Carried.

Thank you, Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Thank you.

Chair: Thank you, Karen.

Premier MacLauchlan: Thank you, Karen.

Karen Stanley Manager: Thank you.

Chair: Hon. members, we are going to continue on now with Health PEI. We're on page 96. We're at the bottom: Provincial

Clinical Services has been read, but the section has not been carried yet.

Permission to bring a stranger to the floor?

Some Hon. Members: Granted.

Chair: Allow her to get set up.

Ms. Bell: (Indistinct)

Chair: Did you hear that question?

Mr. Palmer: Yes, I did hear the question and yes, we will have it in advance.

Chair: Thank you.

Ms. Bell: Thank you very much.

Mr. Mitchell: Good bunch.

Chair: Good evening. 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.

Hon. members, we had discussion on the last section: Provincial Clinical Services.

Shall the section carry? Carry.

At the top of page 97: Ambulance and Blood Services

“Appropriations provided for delivery of ground ambulance, air ambulance, and the administration of blood and blood product supply.” Administration: 45,400. Materials, Supplies and Services: 59,400. Professional Services: 2,030,500. Salaries: 460,600. Travel and Training: 33,600. Grants: 15,313,100.

Total Ambulance and Blood Services: 17,942,600.

The hon. Member from Tignish-Palmer Road.

Mr. Perry: Thank you, Chair.

Minister, I know that you guys have a program for those seniors who are 65-plus

that they have free transportation in an ambulance if it's urgent. I think it's \$150 if it's non-urgent. What happens if those seniors are out-of-province – let's say they're in New Brunswick and they need an ambulance to bring them to a hospital over there? Is there any coverage for that?

Mr. Mitchell: An ambulance from Prince Edward Island to New Brunswick?

Mr. Perry: No, sorry. If they're in, let's say they're in Fredericton and they're in a mall shopping and they are weak, an ambulance is called to take them to the hospital – is there any programming out there to help those seniors who – and I'm asking because I know I have one in my area who was over a couple of weeks ago and was probably two kilometers from the hospital, felt really weak, someone called the ambulance, and she received a bill for like \$650. There's no programming or nothing – no assistance out there?

Denise Lewis Fleming CEO: Not that I'm currently aware of. We strongly encourage all Islanders, seniors included, to carry travel insurance when they travel outside of the province, not just outside of the country, in order to cover a cost such as that – which are not part of the PEI health plan.

Mr. Perry: Okay, great. Thank you.

Chair: You're good?

Mr. Perry: Yes.

Chair: The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

Mr. LaVie: Thank you, Chair.

Is there any plans in the future for more ambulances?

Mr. Mitchell: More ambulances?

Mr. LaVie: Yes.

Purchase more vehicles?

Mr. Mitchell: We're adding one rapid response in the near future – I'll say May-June-ish.

Mr. LaVie: Where's that rapid response going to be posted?

Mr. Mitchell: In Queens County.

Mr. LaVie: Queens County.

How many ambulances do we have now just for transportation? Just for transports?

Mr. Mitchell: For transports?

Denise Lewis Fleming CEO: We don't have a designated number for transports –

Mr. LaVie: Oh, okay, I thought –

Denise Lewis Fleming CEO: – for all ambulances in the fleet, is that what you're wondering?

Mr. LaVie: Yeah. Out of all the ambulances, any of them designated just for transportation? For transfers?

Denise Lewis Fleming CEO: No, they coordinate –

Mr. LaVie: Oh.

Denise Lewis Fleming CEO: – through their dispatch system.

Mr. LaVie: Okay.

Denise Lewis Fleming CEO: We work to schedule our dispatches through that.

Mr. Mitchell: One thing I neglected to mention when I mentioned the adding of the rapid response.

The rapid response are also moving from a five-day to seven-day coverage, as well, for 12-hour days.

Mr. LaVie: There's going to be, if you're adding hours to the rapid response, there's no decrease in the ambulance itself, is there?

Mr. Mitchell: No.

Mr. LaVie: No.

Mr. Mitchell: No.

Mr. LaVie: I was with the understanding with the former minister, two ministers ago

that we were designating ambulances just for transfers.

We didn't do that, did we?

Mr. Mitchell: No.

Denise Lewis Fleming CEO: There are ambulances that have primary responsibility for transfers during the day. Usually we have two, but they are available to be called to other emergency calls should the fleet need that assistance.

Mr. LaVie: Okay.

I misunderstood.

Chair: Are you good?

Mr. LaVie: Yeah.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you, Chair.

I just want to know if the entire ambulance budget would appear in this section, or would it be in hospital services west, for example?

Denise Lewis Fleming CEO: I'll say, the majority of the ambulance budget is in this section. There are, occasionally, some individual ambulance transfer costs that might show up in the hospitals, but it's a very minimal amount.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Okay.

Is this where we would find, then, the new Island EMS contract, the \$450,000 that was granted, or would that be in a different section?

Mr. Mitchell: That's in here.

Denise Lewis Fleming CEO: Different section.

Mr. Mitchell: (Indistinct)

Denise Lewis Fleming CEO: The funding for that program, because it's part of our health –

Mr. Mitchell: Home care.

Denise Lewis Fleming CEO: – home care accord, that would be found in home care budget.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Home care budget, okay. I'll save my questions for then.

Thank you.

Chair: Shall the section carry? Carried.

Long-Term Care

“Appropriations provided for operation of the nine provincially-owned manors and Sherwood Home.” Administration: 1,030,700. Equipment: 278,200. Materials, Supplies and Services: 6,696,700. Professional Services: 260,800. Salaries: 59,358,900. Travel and Training: 171,200.

Total Long-Term Care: 67,796,500.

The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you.

I'm looking at the overall budget and it's gone up one and three-quarter million dollars, approximately about 2.5% of the budget.

I'm wondering if that is – does that increase include new beds or is that just to cover cost increases year to year?

Mr. Mitchell: I believe that was the arbitration settlement?

Denise Lewis Fleming CEO: Not in this section.

Mr. Mitchell: Okay.

Denise Lewis Fleming CEO: But, I can speak to those pieces.

Mr. Mitchell: Address (Indistinct)

Denise Lewis Fleming CEO: Sure.

There are increases in this section, some in relation to operational costs, as the Leader of the Third Party would see, our forecast was \$67,119,000 compared to our budget of \$66 million.

There were some operational pressures for

staffing in a variety of manors. Then, part of the increase into this current year is there are some additional operational costs that will come with the new manors that are going to open in Riverview and Tyne Valley. This also factors in those operational increases.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: I see the salaries budget is up about \$2 million. How many new positions are being created with that \$2 million?

Denise Lewis Fleming CEO: Most of those are through the operational costs, the pressure points from year. They would, not, I don't believe, generate a number of new positions. There might be a few causal positions that are converted to permanent. The majority of those costs are actually our collective agreement increases in long-term care, as well as we have, in there, nurse practitioners; funding for that, in order to support primary care for residents that are in our public manors.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: To clarify that, Denise, actually there are no, you mentioned that there were some, perhaps, part-time or temporary positions created, but that salary increase reflects an increase in general costs across those already hired in those positions already.

Thank you, Chair.

Chair : Shall the section carry? Carried.

Chair (Perry): Grants to Private Nursing Homes

“Appropriations provided for payments made to private nursing homes for health care services provided to all residents and for accommodation subsidies for residents who qualify.” Professional Services: Nil. Grants: 28,539,700. Total Grants – any questions?

Dr. Bevan-Baker: (Indistinct)

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: This budget is up \$3 million, which represents about 12%. So, how many new beds are included in that? I presume that's not just a CPI increase.

Mr. Mitchell: Fifty-six new beds.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Fifty-six.

Mr. Mitchell: This is the arbitration costs that are in this section.

Chair: Are you good?

Dr. Bevan-Baker: No.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you.

There are lots of different models that private nursing homes use in terms of their non-profits, co-ops, social enterprise, stuff like that.

Does government have sort a preferred model with it comes to the private nursing homes, or do you just let them do their own thing?

Mr. Mitchell: No preferred; whatever is acceptable for the community or to meet the needs.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you.

Does government give any extra support, if you have no preferred model, I'm assuming the answer to this will be no, but for non-profits or social enterprise, co-ops, for example, or you just give – it's the same to everybody –

Mr. Mitchell: It's the same for us for everybody.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: – you treat everybody exactly the same. You don't offer incentives to go one way or the other?

Mr. Mitchell: No, not from our perspective from what we're trying to achieve here.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you, Chair.

Chair: Total Grants to Private Nursing Homes: 28,539,700.

Shall it carry? Carried.

Total Emergency Health Services, Long-Term Care and Hospital Services East: 292,218,200.

Shall it carry? Carried.

Chair (Casey): Family and Community Medicine and Hospital Services West

Prince County Hospital

“Appropriations provided for delivery of a range of programs and services offered through the Province's second largest acute-care hospital, including: Emergency Department and Outpatients, Surgical Services, Ambulatory Care, and Inpatient Services.” Administration: 634,700. Equipment: 33,700. Materials, Supplies and Services: 8,963,800. Professional Services: 422,400. Salaries: 34,513,800. Travel and Training: 97,900.

Total Prince County Hospital: 44,666,300.

The hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid.

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you, Chair.

Minister, the CEO search, is that part of corporate services? I'm trying to find where I would ask those questions about the CEO.

Mr. Mitchell: The CEO?

Mr. MacEwen: Yeah.

Mr. MacEwen: It was probably –

Mr. Mitchell: You want to know the expenses of the search.

Mr. MacEwen: No, just questions around the CEO.

Mr. Mitchell: The human resources section, but feel free to ask whatever you'd like.

Mr. MacEwen: Okay, thank you.

I hope this isn't awkward, but, Denise, are you the new CEO?

Mr. Mitchell: I'll answer–

Ms. Biggar: I hope so.

Mr. Mitchell: – Denise is the new interim CEO as of –

Mr. MacEwen: But what about the new CEO? The new, new CEO?

Mr. Mitchell: Currently, the board –

Mr. MacEwen: I hope so –

Chair: It'd be very wise –

Mr. MacEwen: – too.

Mr. Mitchell: – of Health PEI has a committee struck doing a CEO search.

Mr. MacEwen: Yeah.

Mr. Mitchell: The former CEO's contract expired on the 30th of April, and that's when Denise came in as interim CEO until such time as the CEO search has ceased and that's, right now, in progress.

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you, minister.

Mr. LaVie: We're rooting for you.

Mr. Mitchell: What?

Mr. MacEwen: We are.

Mr. LaVie: We're rooting for you.

Mr. MacEwen: You need some help, for sure.

When I snuck into the meeting there in January, they felt pretty confident –

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct)

Mr. MacEwen: Sorry.

Ms. Biggar: Did you have a mask on?

Mr. MacEwen: I was just being funny

When I got into the meeting in January, they were doing pretty well. They thought they had good candidates, that we had a good discussion around the table around it. Are we pretty close to – because I expect once you hired Keith for six months, you were planning on being able to roll into – not saying that I wished Denise would stay there for another couple of years, but I'm sure you're thinking you were going to announce this before the six months was up.

Do we know when we're going to announce the new CEO?

Mr. Mitchell: I'll tell you.

There were a number of candidates that were selected for the interview process and as that was occurring, several of those candidates for various reasons stepped away. One found another CEO position at another place. One family; health reasons. A third – I just can't recall the reason for that.

So, the numbers changed significantly in about a four-week period. Therefore, the pool reduced greatly so it was decided that the prudent thing to do was to take some time and continue on that search. The original – it started off at 40, dropped to 10, dropped to five. So because – when you're down to the last five and several of those dropped away, I'll say, at the last moment or 11th hour, the thing to do is to see who else is out there, but also maybe to revisit some of the previous 10 that had been off the list at that point in time.

The process is going. There's no definite timetable. If it's one month, six weeks, eight weeks – whatever it takes. The search is ongoing and we'll look for the best suitable, possible candidate.

Mr. MacEwen: I think that makes sense, minister.

If you had –

Mr. Mitchell: I got the best one.

Mr. MacEwen: Yeah, we're in good hands for the time being, for sure.

Mr. Mitchell: Absolutely.

Mr. MacEwen: But I think that makes sense to me.

If you did have some strong candidates that left the process for various reasons, it is a good idea to wait that little bit of time and get it done right. And they very well could have done that –

Mr. Mitchell: I appreciate your support.

Mr. MacEwen: They could have done that at the public meeting this week. I think they had their first official public meeting of the Health PEI board, maybe, on Tuesday. But, it was during the Legislature so I couldn't go.

Mr. Mitchell: (Indistinct) two. That was the second meeting.

Mr. MacEwen: No, I think it was the first.

Mr. Mitchell: No, it was two. We were looking for you at both of them.

Mr. MacEwen: The one before was –

Chair: Hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid, do you have a question?

Mr. MacEwen: I do, yes.

Chair: Thanks.

Mr. MacEwen: Actually, I've got lots of comments now that the minister has gone there.

Mr. LaVie: (Indistinct) get the truth from Denise.

Mr. MacEwen: No, the first one was just this week.

Mr. Mitchell: There were two.

Two, right?

Mr. MacEwen: Do I gotta bring this up in Question Period tomorrow?

Mr. Mitchell: Go ahead, there were two.

Leader of the Opposition: (Indistinct) what the questions are going to be now.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Oh, I'm so sorry.

The –

Mr. Mitchell: (Indistinct)

Mr. MacEwen: (Indistinct)

Chair: Come back.

Mr. Mitchell: I didn't realize that.

Chair: Go ahead.

Mr. Mitchell: I've been meaning for that to happen, by the way.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: I know there was an issue with the helipad at PCH that there were concerns about being able to get emergency flights in and out. Has that all been sorted?

Mr. Mitchell: That's all been sorted as of a number of months ago. They increased the size. They changed the parking area. They added lighting. They met all the federal rules for it so it's working.

I had the number that will go out on that helipad every year. It's a significant –

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Yeah.

Mr. Mitchell: It's a surprisingly significant number. I had it, and I don't – it just left my mind.

Everything is up to where it needs to be there currently.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Great.

That's the only question I had.

Thank you.

Chair: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Parkdale.

Ms. Bell: Chair, thank you.

Please excuse me if you had asked this while I was out of the room, but I wanted to ask about the progress that's being made with the women's wellness program and the sexual health services in terms of moving towards offering fertility services.

Mr. Mitchell: Fertility services?

Chair: We're coming to that section.

Ms. Bell: I thought we were in – I'm sorry. Am I in the wrong section?

Chair: Yeah, there's a public health women's wellness and children's developmental services. Would that be in that?

Ms. Bell: Oh, there it is.

Chair: Would that be in that?

Ms. Bell: It's not under PCH. It's in a separate –

Chair: Yeah, it is.

Can you hold until then?

Ms. Bell: I can hold it.

Thank you very much.

Mr. Mitchell: Just one thing in regards to the women's wellness and the helipad at the other end of the hospital. They're getting ready to add the new piece on for the women's wellness, so it's – they probably broke ground since I was there a few weeks ago. So, that's progressing nicely.

Chair: Shall the section carry? Carried.

Mr. LaVie: Great minister.

An Hon. Member: Great CEO

Mr. Mitchell: Great CEO (Indistinct) –

Chair: Community Hospitals – West

“Appropriations provided for service delivery and program needs for Western and Community Hospital O'Leary to deliver a variety of medical hospital services, including short-term acute care, outpatient and emergency services, convalescent/rehabilitative, palliative, and respite care.” Administration: 242,000. Equipment: 46,800. Materials, Supplies and Services: 2,072,300. Professional Services: 312,300. Salaries: 8,302,000. Travel and Training: 51,200.

Total Community Hospitals – West:
11,026,600.

The hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid.

Mr. MacEwen:, Thank you, Chair.

How are we doing with the physician that's in Western from Tyne Valley?

Mr. Mitchell: The intention there is that that physician will return to Tyne Valley in a short number of weeks. I want to say four to six, something like that, will return to service as a regular service back in Tyne Valley.

Mr. MacEwen: Is that a physician coming back, or is that the nurse practitioners that are graduating are helping that problem?

Mr. Mitchell: That will be the physician will be returning. I wish I could tell you if it's four weeks or six weeks, (Indistinct) it's in a short period of time.

Mr. MacEwen: Have you been up to the Western Hospital, minister?

Mr. Mitchell: I have been.

Mr. MacEwen: That was my first job after I graduated up there.

Mr. Mitchell: Oh, was it?

Mr. MacEwen: Yeah.

Mr. Mitchell: It's a nice hospital.

Mr. MacEwen: Yeah, did a couple of projects up there.

You should look into –

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct)

Mr. MacEwen: What's that?

You should look into co-op industrial engineering students for these smaller hospitals. Many of our health care systems and corporations in Canada have quite a few industrial engineers. Students, they do some really great projects and if you could get them into those smaller hospitals, it might be a real great idea.

Mr. Mitchell: We'll take it under advisement.

Were you there as an employee of the department of health or the department of – what we'd call infrastructure and transportation? Were you an engineer there doing structural design for the province? Is that how that would work?

Mr. MacEwen: As fascinating as I know the other members are with this conversation –

Chair: Yes.

Mr. MacEwen: – industrial engineering is about saving –

Mr. LaVie: (Indistinct)

Mr. MacEwen: – time and energy. It's all about efficiency. It's designing systems to improve efficiency.

You have a staff member, Lauren Kelly – I'm not sure if it's still Lauren Kelly or not. She's systems utilization in the department of health. She actually used to do a lot of projects and I understand that now that's eliminated and now we do just these projects across the board and it's great that we're having this conversation, actually, because I can get into this because she and her team would have helped – and Denise correct me if I'm wrong – would have saved a lot of money or improved a lot of efficiency in a lot of different projects within Health PEI.

Now, I understand that instead of her and her team, if she's still – I think she might have moved onto another position, actually, but instead of having that dedicated person doing project by project which helps out so many individual departments; it could be scheduling, it could be – there's a whole number of things.

Mr. Mitchell: Okay.

Mr. MacEwen: What happened, I think, was each silo started getting trained in, not six sigma, but those types of things and from talking to people on the inside, it sounds like it's not working as well as having someone come in with a dedicated team and help.

Now, is that anywhere near the truth? Or how are we getting along with those? Because having someone dedicated to that team must have been such a great help.

Mr. Mitchell: Denise will –

Mr. MacEwen: I think it's great.

Mr. Mitchell: – (Indistinct) but I do know that when I was touring at Health PEI, too, they had a group on the six sigma type of thing. They were kind of strategizing and putting things down and efficiency pieces, but that wasn't internal. I guess that would be external work, but Denise can add to that.

Denise Lewis Fleming CEO: We do, actually, still do have a small team, our utilization management.

Lauren has move onto another position. She's a great resource within Health PEI and still works nearby the team, so we do have a utilization – I forget his exact title, but a utilization person that does do those teams. We are currently looking at how we support more efficiently the projects and, in particular, this year we're focused around patient flow and we also have a utilization manager that we put in place to try and reset and provide more supports to advance those projects because we do realize they've been struggling over the past year.

Chair: The hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid.

Mr. MacEwen: Thanks, Denise. Actually, it was under provincial health service authority when I graduated and I worked with Keith Dewar, ironically he was the CEO back then and utilization was one department that we were in, but it's exactly what you talk about. It's more of a patient flow. And what I understand this system optimization group did was dedicated projects and what I'm hearing is that these efficiency – is it designated efficiency people in all the different areas – it's another thing added on to their plate – another thing added on to your plate.

I'm wondering if it's getting the attention that it deserves because when you had one dedicated team going in and would go into the pharmacy and help do a certain project, or go in to a unit and redesign the front desk for flow. Are we losing efficiency by designating one person in each area to say: Now you're in charge of that and that's tenth on your priority list?

Mr. Mitchell: Well you've heightened my awareness and interest in it because – good points.

Mr. MacEwen: And I know I don't have it all exact, Denise, but maybe just keep that bug in the minister's ear for sure because I think it's an important role and I do understand that it has been kind of switched around that way, especially with her moving on so.

Mr. Mitchell: What year were you there? That would be quite a number of years ago – your experience?

Mr. MacEwen: It's just like yesterday I graduated.

Chair: Shall the section carry? Carried.

Mr. LaVie: We will be doing a follow up in Question Period.

Mr. Mitchell: No doubt, yes.

Leader of the Opposition: He does have more (Indistinct)

Chair: Renal Care Services

“Appropriations provided for operation of Renal Care and Dialysis Program, providing treatment of hemodialysis and peritoneal dialysis, and support to patients and families.” Administration: 18,800. Equipment: 256,700. Materials, Supplies and Services: 2,737,200. Professional Services: 2,800. Salaries: 5,660,300. Travel and Training: 62,300.

Total Renal Care Services: 8,738,100.

The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you.

I'm just looking at the salaries line there. I see we're up about half a million dollars. Are there are a couple of new positions in there, or?

Denise Lewis Fleming CEO: There will be new positions going into this area. We do have an increasing number of patients that require hemodialysis support, so this will allow us to expand the number of sittings that we can have through the hiring of additional staff.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Okay.

I'm just wondering – there's been a lot of talk in the House here recently about transplantation and donors and what appears to be a pretty big uptake in the number of people who are putting their names down to be donors. Clearly there's a cost involved in surgeries to replace somebody's kidney – probably a very large cost – but what are the

long-term savings when somebody receives a kidney, assuming they don't need dialysis anymore after that? But how much does it cost per patient for dialysis in the province? Approximately, I know it would vary.

Denise Lewis Fleming CEO: I believe the average cost per patient on hemodialysis would be about \$55,000 a year.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Okay.

Putting aside personal costs, in terms of the inconvenience, and having to sit there, and the quality of life impact of that, do you have any sense of how much the surgery costs to replace somebody's kidney or do a kidney transplant?

Denise Lewis Fleming CEO: Not off the top of my head, but I'm just going to go back and check the out-of-province hospital section because that is where the cost would be covered under.

Mr. Mitchell: I'd just like to add a couple of parts to what you're talking about there: I had the opportunity a short time ago at the QEH to go down and look – it's down in the, I'll say, the lower level there, in the ambulatory care – where they're putting a new renal clinic in there. A good part of that new renal clinic is working early so you avoid the hemodialysis – the peritoneal work done there, so there's a big move to treat early for prevention of getting to those stages where we can avoid transplants.

We've come a long way from just a short number of years ago where everybody was going to Nova Scotia, right? So the treatment here now, it's phenomenal. I got to see where that is. That's in – I don't even know what stage of construction now – it's just cement walls when I was down there, but it's going to be a very phenomenal part of the hospital when it gets done, but I did have the opportunity to go out and tour the hemodialysis in Souris, QE, Alberton, as well. Making some good roads there too with new chairs in some of the areas and Alberton looking at kind of revamping the whole thing or adding some chairs. So, a lot of work going on in the renal parts of Health PEI right now and if any of that takes down those costs of transplant eventually – that's kind of the goal of it all.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Of course.

Mr. Mitchell: I don't know if you found that cost there in the book.

Denise Lewis Fleming CEO: So the approximate cost of a kidney transplant is about \$36,000.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thanks.

Clearly it would be lovely if we didn't have to do any peritoneal dialysis or any – if the cost for this department went to zero, that would be fantastic.

Mr. Mitchell: Perfect, yes.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Obviously that's not realistic – certainly not in the short term. I'm wondering approximately how many Islanders are waiting for a kidney transplant today.

Mr. Mitchell: I don't know that I have that.

Denise Lewis Fleming CEO: I think I do.

Mr. Mitchell: Think you do? Okay.

She thinks she has that.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: I'm sure she does. I have no doubt.

Mr. Mitchell: The nephrologists that we have, too, are second to none over there.

Mr. MacEwen: (Indistinct)

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct)

Mr. MacEwen: Oh, right. Sorry. My bad. You guys promised that last time.

Mr. Mitchell: What was that?

Mr. MacEwen: (Indistinct)

Denise Lewis Fleming CEO: Apologies. Going from memory, I believe it's currently 12 people waiting for a kidney transplant on PEI and it ranges – the number of kidney transplants per year can range from two to six. The most recent year that just ended, we had six kidney transplants.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Okay, wow.

Great, thank you, Denise.

Thank you, Chair.

Chair: Thank you.

Shall the section carry? Carried.

Primary Health Care

“Appropriations provided for general administration of the Division, primary health care program development, delivery of the provincial 811 Service, and operations of provincially-owned health centres.” Administration: 303,300. Equipment: 46,600. Materials, Supplies and Services: 374,700. Professional Services: 395,100. Salaries: 12,297,300. Travel and Training: 102,600. Grants: 158,700.

Total Primary Health Care: 13,678,300.

Shall the section carry? Carried.

Chronic Disease Management

“Appropriations provided for delivery of a wide range of programs including Integrated Chronic Disease Prevention and Management, Provincial Diabetes Program, Organized Stroke Care, and colorectal and cervical cancer screening.” Administration: 19,800. Equipment: 7,900. Materials, Supplies and Services: 98,800. Professional Services: 47,900. Salaries: 1,120,400. Travel and Training: 25,900.

Total Chronic Disease Management: 1,320,700.

Shall the section carry? Carried.

Public Health, Women's Wellness and Children's Developmental Services

“Appropriations provided for leadership, management, program development and service delivery of Public Health Nursing, Family Nutrition, Speech Language Pathology, Audiology, the Women's Wellness Program and the Pediatric Psychology Unit. This section also provides leadership and coordination of services to children with complex needs.” Administration: 174,100. Equipment: 10,000. Materials, Supplies and Services: 151,200. Professional Services: 140,400.

Salaries: 8,494,300. Travel and Training: 144,500. Grants: 41,900.

Total Public Health, Women's Wellness and Children's Developmental Services: 9,156,400.

The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Parkdale.

Ms. Bell: Thank you, Chair.

Further to my previous inappropriate question. The question was regarding the progress that's being made with the offering of fertility services at the Women's Wellness Program and Sexual Health Service clinic.

Mr. Mitchell: Denise will answer that question for you.

Ms. Bell: Fantastic.

Denise Lewis Fleming CEO: We are, as you're probably aware, working to build and expand our community-based services for the Women's Wellness Program.

They currently have implemented and are offering the services on sexual health education and counselling; how to deal with infections, screening, testing, pregnancy testing, also prenatal care for expecting mothers without a primary care provider, menopausal support.

They are currently doing the workups for individuals that are having challenges with fertility. However, we do still refer individuals off-Island for the care of a specialist. That is something we are working on building into the future on the information and navigation and the coordination of those fertility services. That's something, as we build up the program over the next year that they're working to implement.

Ms. Bell: Super. Thank you very much.

I have another question. And you had previously mentioned that the expansion that's happening in the physical space –

Mr. Mitchell: Yeah.

Ms. Bell: – which would allow for, obviously, expansion of programming. Is some of this programming also going to be offered outside this one physical space? Is some of this programming being offered –

Mr. Mitchell: Some of it will be –

Ms. Bell: – it already is –

Mr. Mitchell: – some will be specific to there. But, some of it– it's already spread out –

Ms. Bell: Yeah.

Mr. Mitchell: – to other facilities.

Denise Lewis Fleming CEO: We are offering it in four locations across PEI on the community-based side. Here in Charlottetown, at the Harbourside clinic in Summerside, in Souris and in Alberton and O'Leary, in order to make sure we have it spread out across the Island to offer those services.

In this 2017 year. There were 838 services that were offered through those four locations to individuals accessing it.

Ms. Bell: There was another aspect in this one, which caught my attention, which was around the Children's Developmental Services and the providing leadership and coordination of services to children with complex needs.

Could you speak a bit to that aspect?

Mr. Mitchell: What that type of need would be?

Denise Lewis Fleming CEO: This is the group in where we have housed the program coordinator for children with complex needs. And, one moment –

Ms. Bell: Yeah.

Denise Lewis Fleming CEO: It includes things like the speech and language pathology supports, audiology services and the school therapy occupational program, as well as the Eye See ... Eye Learn™. There are a variety of components that are in there that deal with the complex needs.

The pediatric psychology is also within that group, and supporting those children. The quick update on that is, the wait time, for example, in the autism spectrum disorder assessment is currently at seven to eight months. It has decreased from 22 months from four years ago. There's been a lot of work to improve that service.

Ms. Bell: This is the first time I had heard about that coordination services, so it's really exciting to hear about that.

I know that the Women's Wellness Program, you – people, who want to access those services can contact the centre directly. They don't need to go through their GP, which helps the process of that potential delay. Is that the same case for the child psychology support, or is that still via referral?

Denise Lewis Fleming CEO: It's typically referrals do originate from a pediatrician. However, we do allow for referrals to come directly from nurse practitioners or if there is within primary health care centres if there's – and also a referral from public health nursing that will also allow for those pieces to flow in.

Ms. Bell: That's very interesting. Thank you very much.

Chair: Shall the section carry? Carried.

Provincial Dental Programs

“Appropriations provided for services to achieve and maintain good dental health under the Children's Dental Care Program, Preventative Orthodontic Program, Long-Term Care Facilities Dental Program and Cleft Palate Orthodontic Treatment Funding Program. Administration: 29,200. Equipment: 11,900. Materials, Supplies and Services: 81,800. Professional Services: 718,400. Salaries: 1,852,500. Travel and Training: 44,000.

Total Provincial Dental Programs:
2,737,800.

The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you. I can't let this section go by, Chair, without saying something.

I know that there's, in – there are a couple of other provincial elections on the go at the moment and there are very bold promises being made about expanding dental programs in those jurisdictions.

I'm just wondering whether there is any talk or appetite at all to expanding publicly-funded dental care here – I think, by the way, let me preface that by saying: this is a fantastic program and the goodness this does for children across PEI is beyond measure, as far as I'm concerned.

I'm just wondering if whether there is thought to expand it?

Mr. Mitchell: Like into adults, is that –

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Yes –

Mr. Mitchell: – what you mean?

We haven't had a lot of discussion on that since I took the chair. I guess I'd have to do some research on that to say, you know, how much, how many inquiries we had, or how much – how many calls that we had looking for that service.

I know, from time to time, and I'm sure everybody that sits in the Legislature has had a senior that has had some issues. I know they get dealt with. There are opportunities for seniors depending on their income for assistance. Tomorrow, even, right? I guess that's something I'd have to take under advisement to do some research on to see what is the need in that – between school-aged to 65 range to see how are their needs met today? Does the most of them have some kind of insurance? Is there any other means that they have.

I'd have to do some more research on that before I could really give you a comment.

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

Thank you, Chair.

Chair: Shall the section carry? Carried.

Home Care, Palliative and Geriatric Care

“Appropriations provided for operation of Home Care and Support Program, the stand-

alone Palliative Care Facility and the Provincial Geriatric Program.”
Administration: 184,400. Equipment: 35,300. Materials, Supplies and Services: 463,600. Professional Services: 480,600. Salaries: 20,353,500. Travel and Training: 766,200.

Total Home Care, Palliative and Geriatric Care: 22,283,600.

Shall the section carry? Carried.

Total Family and Community Medicine and Hospital Services West: 113,607,800.

Shall the total carry? Carried.

Mental Health and Addictions Services

Acute Mental Health

“Appropriations provided for delivery of specialized acute and long-term care treatment and rehabilitative psychiatric services, primarily at Hillsborough Hospital, to Islanders who have serious and persistent mental illness and psychogeriatric patients.”
Administration: 238,100. Equipment: 72,500. Materials, Supplies and Services: 1,805,900. Professional Services: 689,300. Salaries: 18,756,500. Travel and Training: 60,100.

Total Acute Mental Health: 21,622,400.

The hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid.

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you, Chair.

Minister, after we had the discussion about the Alzheimer’s, dementia patient in Unit 9. I had someone reach out to me, who actually happened to be watching estimates that day, which was great to see.

They had told me, confirmed that they had a close, personal friend with serious dementia in the Hillsborough Hospital. I just wanted to bring that up, that these examples are popping up.

They’re comment to me was, this person’s mother is in a dementia unit in another long term care facility, and that all the wonderful resources and activities and everything they do there and if there is an episode or something goes wrong they have the staff

and the resources there to deal with that with the dementia patient, where this other person I’m not sure would have access to all those types of care.

So, not a question, just a comment that it’s obviously going on and it probably isn’t great.

Mr. Mitchell: My only question would be, hon. Member, would you know if that individual would be under 60 years of age or over 60 (Indistinct) –

Mr. MacEwen: Over.

Mr. Mitchell: Over 60?

Mr. MacEwen: Yeah.

Mr. Mitchell: Okay. We do have one unit for under 60 years of age in dementia. It’s –

Mr. MacEwen: I understand.

Mr. Mitchell: – prevalent –

Mr. MacEwen: That’s not ideal either.

Mr. Mitchell: (Indistinct) early as 40s right now so I’m just as curious if that was related to (Indistinct) –

Mr. MacEwen: They’re coming out more and more.

Mr. Mitchell: Appreciate that.

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you.

Chair: Shall the section carry? Carried.

Community Mental Health

“Appropriations provided for mental health services which focus on community mental health teams, counseling, support, after-care, community outreach, community maintenance program and special projects focusing on primary prevention, research and standards.” Administration: 171,000. Equipment: 6,900. Materials, Supplies and Services: 197,500. Professional Services: 262,800. Salaries: 11,873,800. Travel and Training: 147,700. Grants: 1,316,400.

Total Community Mental Health: 13,976,100.

The hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid.

Mr. MacEwen: The CMHA received funding to do a suicide strategy, did they not?

Mr. Mitchell: Yes.

Mr. MacEwen: Do we have that strategy?

Mr. Mitchell: We don't but it's just about at completion. We'll have it in the next few days, actually.

Mr. MacEwen: There's a lot of stuff happening in the next few days, I find; like, a lot of stuff.

Mr. R. Brown: Every day work, work, work (Indistinct)

Mr. Mitchell: Well, (Indistinct) –

Mr. MacEwen: Is there a polling period coming?

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Mr. Mitchell: There's a lot going on in this department –

Mr. MacEwen: Is there a polling period coming out?

Ms. Biggar: (Indistinct)

Chair: Hon. members, let's just have one person speaking.

Mr. LaVie: (Indistinct)

Mr. Mitchell: So we have our seniors' strategy at the final end of it –

Mr. MacEwen: Yeah, I (Indistinct) –

Mr. Mitchell: – and we have a suicide strategy. Actually, I had some work this morning –

Mr. LaVie: Chair?

Mr. Mitchell: – so we're looking to that wrapped, rolled out really, really soon.

Mr. MacEwen: Okay.

Mr. Mitchell: Yeah.

Mr. LaVie: (Indistinct)

Mr. MacEwen: When I talk to –

Mr. LaVie: I think everybody is.

Mr. MacEwen: – people inside the Richmond Centre, inside our mental health system, their big concern is – and perhaps we're part of the problem – but the psychiatrists, psychologists, all of that is the big focus. It's my understanding, even at Richmond Centre, that staff isn't being increase even though the workloads are increasing, increasing, increasing.

We know that family physicians are referring more. We know that four new psychiatrists will be referring more, but they also come through the system at Richmond Centre. I know talking privately with people that they feel that the resources there in that – not triage, but you know what I mean, in that system, the flow-through is limited or being reduced and we know the demand is increasing.

The numbers have been increasing year over year I'm assuming, and that's what they tell me; but they don't feel like they're getting the necessary resources to do their job and how that should be increased. Is that reality or is there a problem there we need to look at? Like, as far as that portion of it. We do, we talk about it in here a lot. The big words are psychologists, psychiatrists; let's get them; but what about the mental health therapists and the mental health nurses and that type of thing?

Mr. Mitchell: Good point.

I haven't had, I'll say, any of those entities reach out specifically to me; however, I know we're making inroads and having some success but we're not where we want to be. An overnight solution is not available. So we just kind of keep moving forward, but Denise can probably help me out with this, too, like as far as – I don't believe there's been a reduction of resource.

Because obviously, you're correct. There's more prevalence, there's more people showing up with mental health issues to be corrected upon. It's about getting the proper service at the proper time by the proper professional, whether it's a social worker,

whether it's a psychologist, whether it is indeed the psychiatrist's that needed. It's about identifying those needs and matching them up and getting good outcomes as quickly as you can.

I do know we need to look at the psychologists. We have an issue there. We definitely need to get a couple more psychiatrists. The social workers and the resource people at the frontline and Richmond Centre and those – are we okay where we're supposed to be there?

Denise Lewis Fleming CEO: Other pieces where investments happen as well is, for example, in our Seniors Mental Health Resource Team, it's called the smart team, and that has been expanding over the past couple of years as well. So I would definitely agree with the minister's statement that there has not been contraction of the services that are there.

As the House is probably very well aware, with our mental health and addictions strategy that began a couple of years ago, there has been a lot of work that Verna Ryan and Dr. Keizer have been leading within the mental health and addictions group in order to look at how their work is approached, in order to look at the evidence-based approaches and how we can more effectively use our resources.

Change, as it happens in people's workplace, can sometimes be a challenge as they work through those pieces, but we're doing our best to support them and introduce more pieces like that.

Mr. Mitchell: I think, too, if you look at our out-of-province requirements now, they're getting to be minimum with the Strength Program and the INSIGHT Program now for our youth age. So we're having measurable success now, but obviously there are still holes and gaps that we've got to try to work on.

Mr. MacEwen: That's great that we're starting to see some measurable success, for sure.

But I guess – the mental health resource teams are wonderful, and that's great for me to say here, but when you're inundated with that constant pressure of being on the

frontline of, say, Richmond Centre every day, and I'm told just barely keeping your head above water, losing people; and I'll have to confirm the resource part about numbers there, or I can get you to confirm it, but when they hear that about those resources going there, no doubt they're like: Oh, that's great. Even though they're struggling so hard.

Mr. Mitchell: I get it. I get exactly what you're talking about. I think or I guess I'll hope that the mobile response team will take some of those pressures off too because they'll go out into the community and deal with –

Mr. MacEwen: Long-term?

Mr. Mitchell: Yeah.

Mr. MacEwen: Long-term, that's the hope for sure, but not –

Mr. Mitchell: Yeah, and if we can get that rolled out in the next short period of time, that would be great; but that doesn't fill the gap, as you said, that exists today. I'm sure there are challenges there when the door just keeps opening. I'll do more research on that; too, to figure out if there's anything that we can do there quickly.

Mr. MacEwen: When a family physician refers someone to a psychiatrist, is it true that that used to be actually referred to a place like Richmond Centre where mental health nurse or someone at the frontline would triage them and say: You should go to this service or you should go for this help. Is it true that now that actually, no, they've been directed to: Nope, that person goes on the list for a psychiatrist? Is that the strategy now?

Denise Lewis Fleming CEO: Not that I'm aware of, but I can –

Mr. Mitchell: And not that I'm aware of, but there are assessments done. If you need to see somebody immediately, you see somebody immediately. If it can wait two days or five days, those assessments get done as well. I don't really – what you suggested earlier, I'm not aware that that's happened.

Mr. MacEwen: How hard would it be to get the complement at Richmond Centre year over year for, say, the last three years?

Mr. Mitchell: The amount of referrals they see?

Mr. MacEwen: No, the staffing complement.

Mr. Mitchell: Staff complement?

Mr. MacEwen: Yeah.

Denise Lewis Fleming CEO: I can (Indistinct)

Mr. Mitchell: You could get that probably, yeah.

Mr. MacEwen: Just a period of time to see, and because I know there's been some structure changes –

Mr. Mitchell: You want comparisons, like two years ago to last year, is that kind of what you're looking for?

Mr. MacEwen: Yeah, just – and comparisons in structure and total complement.

Mr. Mitchell: We'll get you those numbers.

Mr. MacEwen: If it's –

Mr. Mitchell: I think we probably can get that.

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you, Chair.

Thank you, Minister.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Mr. MacEwen: You'll come back with that?

Mr. Mitchell: (Indistinct)

Dr. Bevan-Baker: I just want to go back to the mental health and addictions strategy that's been mentioned a couple of times here. I know that's a 10-year strategy and we're only just sort of at the beginning of that, but is there any estimate of what the cost of that is going to be and do we have the sufficient resources within the budget

lines today to implement the 10-year plan, strategy?

Mr. Mitchell: Denise could probably help you out with that, but our federal agreement, the agreement that we just signed with the federal government, that's a 10-year agreement with two focuses: Mental health and home care. Right? So, we do have some dollars now that we can kind of (Indistinct) they exist and we can put them towards the mobile response team, other needs that we need to have filled in for at least for the next 10 years.

We know that funding – but do you have – is there kind of an estimated cost?

Denise Lewis Fleming CEO: I don't have the estimate here for the 10-year strategy, that particular piece.

Is all the money in this current budget? No. It wouldn't be. It's going to need to be spread out and planned over the remaining eight, yeah.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Yeah, and I get it. Sorry, I wasn't specific enough with my question. That's exactly what I meant. I understand that you wouldn't budget it all in one year, but do you feel that within the budget we have now plus the federal funds that are coming specifically for mental health –

Mr. Mitchell: If you look at investments from our end – like last year, \$3 million, this year \$4 million – we anticipate increases moving forward. But, with the secured funding from the federal government, it make it's easy to work with as well. We'll be in pretty good shape for the next 10 years as far as the strategy goes and as far as the work that we need to have done and as far as the dollars that will be available, from my perspective at this point.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: I have a very specific question about the Richmond Centre; I'm sorry. Not about the Richmond Centre – about the Hillsborough Hospital, excuse me.

I realize we've gone past that section, Chair, but I hope you will indulge me.

It's about the comfort of the place and whether there is air conditioning throughout the whole hospital. I was speaking to a

worker there who said that there are parts of the hospital – and I don't know whether it's a problem with the machines there or whether it's just not in place – but is there air conditioning throughout all of the in-patient departments of the Hillsborough Hospital?

Mr. Mitchell: I don't know that there's central air, but I do know that some areas have air conditioning units. It's hard for me to answer that at the moment.

Denise Lewis Fleming CEO: I have to admit, I honestly could not answer that one off the top of my head. I'd have to ask and send you a note.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Yeah, and it was only brought to my attention a couple of days ago and so I unfortunately can't give you which departments they were talking about. And of course, because the hospital is not going to be around for very much longer, I can imagine why you wouldn't want to put a heavy capital cost into that, but what Denise was saying about the – or was it you, minister – about having the ones that sit in the window and provide the same level of comfort –

Mr. Mitchell: And there are ones that sit on the floor, you know?

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Right.

Mr. Mitchell: I guess if you're talking to that individual again, obviously talk to the first-line supervisor to indicate there's an issue and it'll come through the channels – appropriate channels.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: I'll do that.

Thank you, minister.

Thanks, Chair.

Chair: The hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid.

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you, Chair.

Minister, you talked about measuring outcomes earlier. It kind of intrigued me. Are we measuring outcomes of the Strength Program?

Mr. Mitchell: Yes, we are.

Mr. MacEwen: How?

Mr. Mitchell: We are measuring outcomes like we know who is going through the program. We know once they leave; how they maintain after that. So yeah, we are getting measurables there. The Insight Program as well, same thing. The children's wellbeing programs will take some time to determine those measurables, and we have data collected from the mental health walk-in clinics as well.

If you combine those things over time, it will give us a really good snapshot of where we came from and where we're at. The numbers are increasing, so we want to be best prepared and we want to be in front of the curve as best we can as well. With all those predictions – and as far as the Strength Program, we have minimal leaving the province now to go to Homewood and those types of places. We're having really good success.

Mr. MacEwen: Would you get an update then, as minister? When you talk about the Strength Program – I think it's wonderful that you're sitting here saying that no, there's less and less people going and we're thinking it's because of the Strength Program.

But, what are we actually measuring? Is there something that you could give me that says: This is working because we –

Mr. Mitchell: I could probably take you with me some day and go for a drive up to Summerside and talk to them there.

Mr. MacEwen: That'd be a good idea too.

Mr. Mitchell: I was there and I talked to the staff, and I talked to –

Mr. MacEwen: But, you're saying we're measuring outcomes. Is there something? Do you get an update? Does the person in charge of (Indistinct)

Mr. Mitchell: Well, I guess I never got a paper document, but I've had those close-to-the-ground discussions, both with the residents and those that are running the programs.

Mr. MacEwen: Anything you talked about –

Mr. Mitchell: I don't know if we can get data or even if that's –

Denise Lewis Fleming CEO: Some of it is a qualitative piece because they do track the number of admissions to the Strength Program. For example, particularly to the Insight, and they track the number of individuals who completed and did not complete and if there are readmissions. They also do track the number of readmissions to the program and whether or not you completed.

What the staff of the community and mental health continue to reinforce is that we have a harm-reduction approach and so that is not considered a failure if you do not complete a program, and so we try not to view a success or failure in that particular piece. It's just helping somebody as they need to come back. It's kind of like quitting smoking, right? Sometimes you're not successful the first time and you have to come back around again.

Mr. Mitchell: Relapse is a normal part of the process, but that doesn't mean failure. But, it does aid to the steps of progress or success; graduation even, you know what I mean?

Mr. MacEwen: That's great.

I think we do need to be careful when we say we're measuring outcomes, though, because that's not really, probably, the definition of measuring an actual outcome. That's all good data and qualitative – no doubt there is some quantitative, too.

For example with the mental health walk-in clinics, we've made an investment there. There are all kinds of reviews. We've heard lots of good stuff as well. But, what are the outcomes there? What are we measuring there so that in two-years time when we think: Okay, those resources were working, we should continue with this. Or: No, we should have more mental health teams in schools. Or: No, we should go to the Richmond Centre.

What are we going to measure success against with the mental health walk-in clinics?

Mr. Mitchell: You're always paddling against strong currents here when you're dealing with mental health, right? So, the qualitative-quantitative pieces, we grab onto those and use them as good data.

To your point, I guess your vision of measurable success and mine may be different. The hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque, he may have a different one yet. So, I do have to rely on staff and numbers that they see and go from there.

Denise would like to add something too.

Denise Lewis Fleming CEO: As the House may or may not be aware, is that there is also work going on at the Canadian Institute for Health Information, at CIHI, of defining indicators in relation to mental health and using those as measures. That is a report that's released, if the members wanted to go and look at that particular piece.

It is, I understand, very challenging and we deal with it day to day in trying to see the causal link between the long-term outcomes and work that's happening now. But, some of the shorter-term ones that we do look at, for example, are what are admissions or readmissions to hospitals for mental health reasons and if we can manage those rates, they're helping to decrease by providing better primary care or access to mental health services. That gives us an indicator of the programs that may or may not be working, along with the other data that they have.

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you.

So, Denise or minister, is that what we're using? Are we using those CIHI to measure outcomes? I guess –

Mr. Mitchell: (Indistinct)

Mr. MacEwen: If the answer is yes, we're measuring outcomes, is that what we're using? I'm looking specifically: Does the senior management measure things the success of?

Denise Lewis Fleming CEO: Dr. Keizer and Verna Ryan have been working to identify the indicators as part of the mental health strategy in order to be able to do those measures. The CIHI mental health indicators that I mentioned, that is just a very recent report so we're looking at those on how do we build the systems we need to do in order to collect the data and to be able to report and then compare ourselves nationally.

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you.

That's good to hear. Do we know any kind of a timeline on when we could begin that measuring process? Like: Okay, now we know what we want. We've figured out from our reporting and from CIHI, and then we start measuring going forward. Is that this year? Is that the plan?

Denise Lewis Fleming CEO: I can't say there has been a timeline developed right now because we need to look at the resources and the information systems that we have. Unfortunately, I can't commit to a timeline right at the moment.

Mr. Mitchell: I haven't sat down with Verna in that regard or Dr. Heather either. We've had meetings on other things, but I can't give you a timeline today on it.

Mr. MacEwen: That's kind of my point I'm getting to. I mentioned earlier about the efficiency and being 10th on the list of things that that person that's supposed to be doing that in the department.

I've been there. Evaluation is, it's the – you have to put out the fires first. Evaluation always seems to come at the end even though we know we're in this for the long haul and I guess I'm just saying, minister, I think that's – especially with some of the – mental health walk-in clinics, let's hope it's a short-term goal kind of thing.

The new mental health campus, long-term goal. We're at a stage, probably, now that we – and I guess CIHI is in agreement, that we can start measuring these outcomes and that should be bumped up the priority list. Not the 10th thing on their list. I know that all those people you just mentioned are running full out, but I would encourage you

to lead by example in the department and speak about measuring outcomes quite a bit.

Mr. Mitchell: We will do that.

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you, minister.

Thank you, Chair.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you.

Firstly, I want to say, I really appreciate the line of questioning of the previous member. Thank you.

Of course, with mental health evaluation of outcomes is extremely difficult. It's not like a kidney transplant? It's either successful or it's not successful. Or, in my old field, you come in, you have a toothache, you take the tooth out or whatever and you can tell whether you've done a good job or not.

In mental health it's not that cut and dried. A lot of it becomes very subjective. People who are depressed are depressed. There is no test that one can do to determine what level that is.

I'm wondering whether you do any, what – you could call them exit interviews for somebody, for example for the walk-in health clinic. Somebody goes in, in distress, anxious or whatever their mental state is, but they're clearly distressed enough that they want to go and see a professional. Do you ever follow-up with a subjective survey of the people, who went to those clinics? You know: That I received a fantastic service. I feel so much better. Or, is it a: Oh my gosh, that was a waste of my time. I don't know why you have these clinics.

Denise Lewis Fleming CEO: Yes.

In a variety of programs that are offered within the community mental health. They do surveys of families and individuals when it's appropriate to include the families in those pieces to do the evaluation.

I believe Verna Ryan is actually working with the University of Prince Edward Island in order to do some of those evaluations components on certain programs.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Okay.

Denise Lewis Fleming CEO: Yeah.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: That's good to know.

Thank you, Chair.

Chair: Shall the section carry? Carried.

The hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid.

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you, Chair.

The overall budget for mental health and addiction compared to our health care budget, do we track or compare that versus national and international ratios?

Do we know where we kind of stand on our spend on mental health and addictions?

Denise Lewis Fleming CEO: I don't have that information right here with me. We do look at it from year to year whenever we're developing our budget. It's just not something I have here with me.

Mr. MacEwen: Would that be hard to gather up in the list of things to bring back? Just comparison across the country, perhaps?

Mr. Mitchell: I'm just trying – I'll look at the ratio, this year, for PEI. We have a new investment of \$32 million and \$4 million of it is mental health. If you look at that ratio, just for now, anyway, until we give you other ratios, or comparables from other jurisdictions.

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you, Chair.

Chair: Shall the section carry? Carried.

Addiction Services

“Appropriations provided for policy and program development, and delivery of community, inpatient and specialized provincial programs including detoxification services, rehabilitation, prevention and early intervention, and services to support addicted persons and their families by offering treatment and counseling related to alcohol, tobacco, and other drug and gambling addictions.” Administration: 171,000.eq 27,900. Materials, Supplies and

Services: 692,000. Professional Services: 100,200. Salaries: 11,097,900. Travel and Training: 126,900. Grants: 270,800.

Total Addiction Services: 12,537,000.

Total Mental Health and Addictions Services: 48,135,500.

The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you. We're at the cusp of the legalization of cannabis. I've spoken to many, many Islanders, of course, about all of the various facets of this. It's incredibly complex.

One concern, I've heard repeatedly, and I don't know whether the studies support this or not, but with the legalization of cannabis, we should expect that we're going to have a higher level, a higher number of addicts here in the province.

Can you give us any sense of whether, in other jurisdictions, that has been the case when cannabis has been legalized?

Mr. Mitchell: I don't – do you know that?

Denise Lewis Fleming CEO: I can't say I've seen numbers on a higher level of addicts. I know that the only, we'll say, research data that has been gathered is out of the US and the states that have legalized cannabis in that area.

What they have seen, in the initial part, is actually increased presentations to the emergency department. Those are the ones where Dr. Morrison, our Chief Public Health Officer took the lead and has made arrangements for our clinical information system to gather new information that is – are any of the presentations that are coming forward cannabis-related so that we can track that information and determine what impact, if any, we will see here on PEI. Then, communicate with the department and with government about what those impacts might be.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you.

I – yeah, one of the concerns is about the age that we appear to be setting it here, at 19-years-old and the fact that, at that age, the brain is not fully developed and

psychotic incidences could be triggered with the use of the more potent cannabis THC that's out there out now.

I think the concerns that were brought to me, and I'm not saying that I think these are valid concerns, I'm just asking the questions of people, who know more than I do, is that it wasn't an addiction to cannabis itself that they were concerned about, it was cannabis as, as they put it; a gateway drug to something of more concern.

Are there any statistics or studies out there that suggest, again, after legalization of cannabis that you have higher addiction problems in other areas.

Mr. Mitchell: Is there studies on that?

Denise Lewis Fleming CEO: I haven't –

Mr. Mitchell: I haven't had an opportunity to see any studies. I've had conversations with those in the medical field or clinicians that have concerns the same as yours. I don't have any validation of them, as you don't as well. But, there probably is something, maybe, available that we, that I could try to see if there is.

Our chief public health office is working very hard at education pieces; collecting as much data as can be collected in regards to it to get out in front of things to the best of our ability.

We don't have all those answers, of course. Some of it's population. And, some of it is just, it's a reality. It's coming so let's get ready. That's where we are. The public health office is kind of taking the lead role; not kind of, they are taking the lead role for the department on it.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you, Chair.

Chair: Shall the section carry? Carried.

Shall the total carry? Carried.
Nursing, Allied Health and Patient
Experience

Chief Nursing Office

“Appropriations provided for operation of the Chief Nursing Office which provides nursing leadership and strategic direction to

ensure the delivery of quality nursing care across the Province.” Administration: 2,000. Equipment: 2,900. Materials, Supplies and Services: 700. Salaries: 496,300. Travel and Training: 10,300.

Total Chief Nursing Office: 513,300.

Total Nursing, Allied Health and Patient Experience: 513,300.

Shall the section carry? Carried.

Leader of the Opposition: Call the hour.

Chair: The hour has been called.

Hon. members, there has been a request to extend the hour, to maybe carry these two pieces. Are we agreeable to that?

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Chair: No? Okay.

The hour has been called.

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

Chair: Shall it carry? Carried.

Mr. Speaker, as Chair of a Committee of the Whole House, having under consideration the grant of supply to Her Majesty, I beg leave to report that the committee has made some progress and begs leave to sit again. I move that the report of the committee be adopted.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. McIsaac: I move, seconded by the hon. Member from Charlottetown-Lewis Point, that this House adjourn until tomorrow, Friday, May 4th, at 10:00 a.m.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

The Legislature adjourned until tomorrow, Friday at 10:00 a.m.