

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY



Speaker: Hon. Francis (Buck) Watts

Hansard, Published by Order of the Legislature

Third Session of the Sixty-fifth General Assembly

Friday, 18 May 2018

MATTERS OF PRIVILEGE AND RECOGNITION OF GUESTS	2840
STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS	2840
VERNON RIVER-STRATFORD (4-H 100 Year Anniversary)	2843
MONTAGUE-KILMUIR (MarineNav).....	2843
RUSTICO-EMERALD (Lennon Recovery House)	2844
ORAL QUESTIONS.....	2845
LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION (Deposit forfeits in PNP program)	2845
LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION (Dollars collected from PNP deposits)	2846
LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION (Trust of government in immigration program (further)	2847
GEORGETOWN-ST. PETERS (Business relationship to CanAchieve).....	2847
GEORGETOWN-ST. PETERS (Foreign immigration companies and support to PNP clients)	2848
GEORGETOWN-ST. PETERS (PEI's reputation in immigration).....	2849
RUSTICO-EMERALD (Property tax bill and election brochure)	2850
RUSTICO-EMERALD (Cost of brochures to Island taxpayers).....	2850
RUSTICO-EMERALD (Advertising with taxpayers' dollars)	2851
CHARLOTTETOWN-PARKDALE (Appointment of referendum commissioner (further)	2852
CHARLOTTETOWN-PARKDALE (Registration deadline for referendum advertisers)	2852
CHARLOTTETOWN-PARKDALE (Confirmation of election timeline (further).....	2853
CHARLOTTETOWN-LEWIS POINT (Summer employment for students).....	2853
CHARLOTTETOWN-PARKDALE (Options for student applying for jobs).....	2854
MONTAGUE-KILMUIR (Plans for old Riverview Manor in Montague)	2854
MONTAGUE-KILMUIR (RFPs and interests for Riverview Manor).....	2855
BORDEN-KINKORA (Dollars spent on legal fees on e-gaming lawsuit).....	2856
BORDEN-KINKORA (Tabling of breakdown for e-gaming lawsuit).....	2856
BORDEN-KINKORA (RCMP and OPP criminal investigation)	2856
BORDEN-KINKORA (Destruction of public documents re: e-gaming).....	2857
STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS	2859
PREMIER (New Brunswick Flood Relief)	2859

HEALTH AND WELLNESS (Family Doctor Day)	2860
COMMUNITIES, LAND AND ENVIRONMENT (2018 Family Fishing Weekend).....	2861
TABLING OF DOCUMENTS.....	2863
COMMUNICATION FROM HIS HONOUR THE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR (Transmission of Supplementary Estimates).....	2863
ORDERS OF THE DAY (GOVERNMENT)	2864
ESTIMATES	2864
FAMILY AND HUMAN SERVICES.....	2864
SECOND READING AND COMMITTEE	2876
BILL 31 – Cannabis Taxation Agreement Act.....	2876
ADJOURNED.....	2887

The Legislature sat at 10:00 a.m.

Matters of Privilege and Recognition of
Guests

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Good morning everyone. Welcome colleagues here; those joining us in the gallery and folks viewing via various devices - our seventh Friday of this spring sitting. I'm sure we're all in a good mood, being Friday and with the amount of headway that we're making.

I want to recognize, in the gallery with us, today we have; Dr. Charles Duffy; his mother Anna, his wife Linda and Charlie the third, right?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Premier MacLauchlan: The minister of health will be having more to say about the reason that the Duffys are with us, as well as representatives of the Medical Society.

This being the Victoria Day weekend, we'll have an opportunity to reflect on the reasons for that holiday. I suppose it will be evermore, even further on our mind with this - tomorrow being the royal wedding when Prince Harry and Meghan Markle are married. It's my understanding that Charlottetown will be one of four places in Canada from which there will be some televised events around that royal wedding. In any event, we wish the royal couple all the best.

Today is Bike to Work Day. I know a lot of people have been biking to work. Some do it year-round. For those, who don't, it's an opportunity to be reminded of the benefits of the exercise, as well as the fresh air.

Tomorrow, I'll be attending the Special Olympics bowling medal presentations. I'm sure we're all proud to see that the Team PEI ten pin group won a bronze medal. I know, as others have commented about that championship, everyone is a winner including those of us who have the opportunity to see the performances and to

share in the accomplishment and the camaraderie, special camaraderie, of those competitors and their supporters.

We have in the gallery with us today Joyce Moase, who is an instructor at Holland College in the English as an acquired language program. We welcome the group of students, who are here with Ms. Moase and welcome you to our province, and wish you well in your studies and in all of the other ways in which we will benefit together from you being Prince Edward Islanders.

I'll close by welcoming some of our regulars in the gallery; Lorne Yeo and Wayne MacMillan. I wish everyone a great holiday weekend.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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

It's also a pleasure to rise today and bring greetings to those that may be watching the proceedings from the Internet or via Eastlink.

I would also like to recognize some individuals that have joined us here in the gallery today. As the Premier indicated, we have a very large group of new Islanders, who are participating in the English as a second language program at Holland College. It's wonderful to have you here. It's always great to look in the gallery and see new smiling faces here. And, of course, to their instructor as well, Joyce Moase, for all the great work that you and your colleagues do.

I'd also like to recognize Dr. Charles Duffy, Linda Duffy, Charlie the third. In particular, I'd also like to recognize Anna Duffy.

Anna, is, many of you are aware is a member of the Order of PEI. Anna has done tremendous work here on PEI for many, many years, in various organizations and degrees. She's actually a childhood friend of my mom's as well. I know we had a brief encounter there back around Christmastime when we ran into Anna. My mom's face just

lit up when she saw her. They sat for about 20 minutes and had a wonderful discussion.

Of course, as the Premier said, it's also Victoria Day weekend. There's a big celebration taking place across the pond tomorrow. I'm sure lots of people will be getting bright and early to tune into that. I'm still waiting for my invitation in the mail. So, as soon as the proceedings are over today, I'm going to run home to see if it's there so I can catch a flight. I'm not holding my breath.

I'd also like to wish our fishers all the best this weekend and over the next couple of days. I know they've had a couple of rough days out on the seas with heavy seas and I'm sure that they're enjoying much calmer waters today.

Just in closing, I also would like to recognize this being Bike to Work Day. I know that the residents in Stratford and area across the Hillsborough River are just waiting with bated breath for that active transportation lane to be finally added to the Hillsborough Bridge so that more and more people can become active and actually bike to work, not just one day but as many days as they possibly can.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

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

I'd like to welcome everybody in the gallery, particularly the folks from Holland College, the English as a second language students here, and their instructor Joyce Moase, welcome to you.

This morning, the Leader of the Opposition was talking about calmer waters for the fishers. I try, if I can, to have a little walk along the beach before I come in here. It's therapeutic and beautiful, and this morning on Victoria Beach on the eve of Victoria Day weekend, it was one of those perfect PEI mornings. The sea was perfectly calm, the tide was out and it was just a lovely way to start the day. I want to wish everybody an extended, lovely, long Victoria Day weekend.

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 the Duffy family here today and Joyce Moase and her students from Holland College; it's great to see you. I see we have Lorne Yeo with us today, too, so welcome to you all.

I didn't quite get a walk on the beach like the member of the Third Party, but my treadmill in the garage doesn't stand up to the beach. I'd like to compliment the Member from O'Leary-Inverness on his achievement of getting the West Point lighthouse on the cover of the telephone book today.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

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

It certainly is a real pleasure for me to rise today and to welcome all visitors to the gallery. Of course, my great friend Wayne MacMillan is back this Friday. I missed him last Friday, so it's good to see him in this week. As well, with us today from the college of family physicians, we have Dr. Kristy Newson is in the gallery today as well as Rosemary Burke-Perry. It's great to have them with us today.

But as the Premier mentioned earlier, we have some very special guests today in the gallery. Dr. Charles Duffy is here today with his wife Linda and son Charlie, and I'll be recognizing Charles a little bit later. Of course, Charles is a great family friend of mine. We grew up in the same community so I'm really proud and pleased to make a little statement a bit later on.

I truly went to recognize another wonderful lady that's in the gallery today and it is Dr. Charles' mother, Anna Duffy. Of course, as has been alluded to, Anna Duffy she's a strong community supporter for the area that I grew up in, Fort Augustus, whether it was St. Patrick's church, whether it was the Fort

Augustus rec centre, Anna and her husband Charlie were always at every event, making sure things went well. They were very big supporters. Anna spent a number of years in the Seniors' Secretariat doing great things with seniors there.

As well, I know for a fact she's a very strong supporter of the Leader of the Opposition, and in fact, of the total Conservative party, and she's always working very hard for them and we've never held that against each other; but honestly, the most important role that Anna Duffy has had for the last 55 years is as my godmother, so I'm very pleased to have her as my (Indistinct)

Some Hon. Members: [applause]

Mr. Mitchell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you, Minister.

An Hon. Member: Is that like *The Godfather*?

Mr. Mitchell: Exactly.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. MacDonald: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

First of all, we welcome everybody in the gallery, especially those training for English as a second language. We're more than happy to have you here on Prince Edward Island. Also a shout-out, right at this time – right at 10 o'clock, I think – my daughter is graduating from human resources management and her business studies program at Holland College. I wish her all the well. Last year she graduated from St. Thomas and now she's telling me she plans on taking her chartered human resource professional as her next move. So I'm pretty proud of her. As we all know as members of this House, sometimes our jobs get in the way of some of those celebrations but we are more than thinking about that at all times.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

I'd like to welcome all the students here as well and especially, I want to talk about the Duffys. Anna, of course, is a neighbour of mine, just up the road and she is a super 4-H leader too. She's got a lot of accolades about her but I recognize her as 4-H. and that's absolutely terrific.

The McIsaacs and the Duffys, I think it seemed like every time one of them had a child the other one had a child. There were a lot of us the same age going through the school system, and I was in class with Charlene. But I want to recognize Dr. Charles, too, and young Charlie and Linda as well. Absolutely fantastic constituents of mine, live in a beautiful area down off Old Post Lane there in the Pownal-Alexandra area; terrific people altogether.

A cousin-in-law of mine, Ms. Jessica McCann is here with the students, I guess. It's absolutely awesome to see you here. And I want to put a shout-out to all the constituents of Vernon River-Stratford and I hope everyone gets the opportunity to take in the weekend of free fishing this weekend. I know every time I go by Johnston River bridge, I see we have a lot of immigrant people fishing there as well. Everybody seems to be enjoying, but this weekend it's free, so everybody get out and really enjoy it and take home a nice feed for Saturday or Sunday evening.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Casey: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Good morning, I, too, would like to rise like all of my colleagues and welcome all the visitors to the gallery and I, too, would like to especially welcome the students from Holland College and their instructor;

Nihao, mahaba, namaste, hola, bienvenu.

I thank you for choosing Prince Edward Island as your new home. Prince Edward Island is Canada's smallest and most beautiful province and we hope that you all stay here for a very, very long time.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid.

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I know you like to make sure we keep our greetings to new people in the gallery, but I think when Anna Duffy is here, and her family, we can make that exception. I certainly don't know Anna as long as many of the other members that have spoken about the family so far, but in my short time in politics, what a wonderful example of a community leader. We all have them in each of our communities across PEI and Anna, and her whole family, is the perfect example of that, the people that keep the communities going out there in Fort Augustus.

Yesterday and today and over the coming few days, the students and teachers are writing their student assessments across PEI, Grade 3 specifically. I know my wife has been busy preparing and getting students ready and the students will be getting ready. My son, as well, will be writing. So I just want to say good luck to all those out there that are taking on that task.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Statements by Members

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

4-H 100 Year Anniversary

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

It's a pleasure to rise today in this House and congratulate 4-H PEI on an impressive milestone, 100 years as an organization. For the past 100 years, 4-H PEI has been helping youth to "earn to do by doing, as their slogan states. With spring in full force, this means farmers are back out on the fields and 4-H members are hard at work. I thank and congratulate each and every one of them for their tireless efforts

Originally, 4-H began as one club for the entire province, but throughout the years has transpired into 20 local clubs, 225 leaders,

over 525 members in the five districts across Prince Edward Island.

4-H gives our youth knowledge they would not learn anywhere else and allows them to become respectful and intelligent citizens. With ages ranging from nine to 20 years old, this organization has been a staple in rural PEI for getting kids engaged and excited about learning new trades and skills.

Initially focusing on agriculture due to our rural background, 4-H today focuses on citizenship, healthy living and science, engineering and technology programs. Having a prestigious organization such as 4-H is an excellent way to shape our leaders of tomorrow and really set them on the right path as they grow and discover their skills and abilities.

Just recently, they have paired up with PEI BioAlliance to introduce the Bio Futures Project where 4-H members are paired with bioscience companies to help attract and build a suitable flow of skilled talent to support growth of bioscience on PEI.

I cannot express enough what 4-H has done for myself and so many Islanders alike. I want to congratulate the 4-Hon. movement on 100 years as an organization here on PEI.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The Hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

MarineNav

Mr. Roach: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Today I am happy to rise and recognize MarineNav located on Panmure Island. It is owned and operated by Kevan Merson. They were established in 2005 and have since had a tremendous impact on our local economy.

The business currently manufactures multiple product lines including bespoke navigational equipment, rugged Maritime displays as well as MarineNav Advanced Vessel Monitoring systems.

MarineNav's team of 20 employees includes engineers, designers and technicians with decades of experience in the marine,

information technology, precision machining and manufacturing industries. They have formed a number of partnerships and developed specialized products and solutions for clients in governments and industry, nationally, internationally and globally.

Since they began, they have been known for their superior design and quality along with their innovative ways of doing things. They have grown immensely and the surrounding areas have been impacted positively because of this.

Much of their recent commercial success comes from defense contracts with equipment being used by NATO countries throughout the world, and their tactical Remote Operated Vehicle systems (ROV), quick deploy systems. A remotely operated vehicle is an unoccupied underwater robot that is connected to a ship by a series of cables.

These units are currently utilized by the Canadian Coast Guard for various duties including search and rescue operations, and marine life monitoring and observation. The ROV line is also heavily used by the aquaculture industry and for subsea inspection.

Their growth is evident and truly inspiring. MarineNav is a great asset to Prince Edward Island.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. R. Brown: Great.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Lennon Recovery House

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I am happy to rise today and recognize Lennon Recovery House and the special work it is going to do, the grassroots community work that has shown the leadership to initiate it, and all who've contributed.

Lennon Recovery House was brought to life through the hard work of Dianne Young, whose son, Lennon Waterman, struggled

with mental health and addiction issues for over a decade and took his life in 2013. Since then she has been an advocate for mental health and addictions, someone who is showing leadership and, most importantly, taking action.

Lennon Recovery House is dedicated to supporting the recovery of individuals from substance abuse and subsequent mental health challenges. Lennon Recovery House will work at giving individuals new opportunities to live their life free from addiction, promote independence, encourage personal development and most importantly, create hope.

The Lennon Recovery House is located in Rustico. The Diocese of Charlottetown offered Dianne Young and her group the Belcourt Centre. It is an excellent location for the recovery centre and the community has really rallied around Lennon Recovery House, most recently raising over \$28,000 at a benefit auction at the Cymbria Lions Club. I would like to publicly thank and say a special thank you to the Diocese of Charlottetown for their generosity, and the community of Rustico and the surrounding area for their support.

Mental health and addictions supports is something our PC caucus has been advocating for for some time now. The Leader of the Official Opposition's plan for a mental health campus is a forward-thinking idea that will better the lives of all Islanders and help those who need it. Thank you for pushing forward on that.

Theo Fleury's message yesterday on the floor of the Legislature moved every one of us. Although the bill was about legislating leave from work for survivors of domestic violence, intimate partner violence and sexual violence, Theo urged that this is the opportunity to show leadership and let those suffering from all types of trauma know we understand it and it's safe to acknowledge and talk about their trauma and seek help.

Theo directly connected trauma to mental health issues, to addictions. His message about being safe and the need for personal connection rings so true. At the most basic level, people need a connection and need to be loved. That's how trauma can be prevented and how those who have

experienced trauma can be healed. Indeed, this is the message of many advocated, like Dr. Sarah Stewart-Clark and Dianne Young, and others. That's what Lennon Recovery House is all about. As Theo Fleury said, good leaders lead with humility and compassion. Let's come together and show leadership and get the work done to support and help Islanders who need it.

I implore this government to provide the supports needed for Lennon Recovery House and thank the leaders of this community-driven project, and all, who have contributed. The Lennon House board of directors being; Dianne Young, Linda Young, Jessie Sampson, Jamie Larkin, Gordon McNeilly, and Claire Woodhead.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Responses to Questions Taken As Notice

Questions by Members

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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

Over the last couple of weeks, we have been discussing revelations about how fast and loose government has been with the management of our immigration programs. Many have pointed to the millions in PNP deposit forfeits as the reason why.

Deposit forfeits in PNP program

Question to the Minister of Economic Development and Tourism: How much has government taken in from deposit forfeits in the PNP program since 2008?

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

Mr. Palmer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Our government is proud of the success that we've had in the immigration program. We have lots of new Islanders that are coming to our province every year. They are making significant contributions to our economy; to our life; to our culture. We're very glad they're here.

We know they have helped in making our population younger for the first time in 50 years, we're getting younger. That is a significant contribution. We know new housing sales are high. Car sales are high. Those are significant contributions and we are proud to continue the immigration program and have more immigrants make PEI their home.

Mr. R. Brown: Great.

Mr. Palmer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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

This minister that just stood has a perfect track record for the last two weeks of not answering a single question so I'll answer it for him.

Between 2008 and 2017, the province collected over \$102 million in deposit forfeits. \$102 million, that's a massive amount of money to take in over 10 years.

Question to the same minister: Do you think that your government has exercised sufficient oversight for a program that makes government over \$100 million in profits?

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

Mr. Palmer: Mr. Speaker, our program continues to get better. We continue to attract new Islanders and we're very happy to have that.

Again, our population is getting younger. That's a big deal. That doesn't just happen by itself. There's a lot of hard work. We are very grateful to all the immigrants, who have come to PEI; who have helped in our economic success. We're proud that they're able to make a significant contribution to our culture, as well.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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

The minister stands and says our program is getting better. If the program was getting better, then we wouldn't have immigrants defaulting on their deposits.

\$102 million only includes the deposit forfeits.

Dollars collected from PNP deposits

Question to the same minister: How much has your department collected in interest on the PNP deposits during that time?

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

Mr. Palmer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Again, the economic contributions that are made by the new immigrants coming to PEI is tremendous. We're very glad. They're making a significant contribution to our culture. They are making significant contributions to the economy. With those expansions in our economy, we are able to make key investments into things like education, more frontline workers in health care. We're able to continue to grow the economy.

I don't know why the opposition doesn't want the economy to grow and they don't want to invite a lot of new immigrants to our community; well I certainly do and this government certainly does.

Mr. MacKay: We want them to stay.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct) check and look around (Indistinct)

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

Leader of the Opposition: What we think, on this side of the House, is that the Provincial Nominee Program is a good program if the government follows the rules –

Mr. Myers: They can't –

Leader of the Opposition: – but what –

Mr. Myers: (Indistinct)

Leader of the Opposition: – we're talking about here today, is not retention of immigrants. What we're talking about here today is \$102 million in deposit forfeits over the last 10 years –

Mr. Myers: Oh, shameful.

Leader of the Opposition: – and that's shameful. Again, it just clearly shows a government that's not following the rules.

This is the problem. Government's attitude is that, as long as cash is flowing, the details don't matter. I dare say that Canada Border Services sees this differently, as well.

Question to the same minister: Can you see why so many Islanders feel like that you're using immigration simply as an ATM?

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

Mr. Palmer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I can see the opposition doesn't like the program. I don't know why they wouldn't want to –

Mr. Trivers: It's not (Indistinct)

Mr. Palmer: – because it's continuing to –

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct) said.

Mr. Palmer: – grow our population –

Mr. Trivers: (Indistinct)

Mr. Palmer: – we're continuing to grow the economy. There are lots of new investments that are happening in the province all the time and we attribute that to a strong immigration program. We know that it's continuing to get better. Our retention rates are getting better. We're very happy the immigrants can be here to help with expanding our culture, our economy and we're very glad to have them.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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

Again, on this side of the House, we support the program when the rules are followed. Again, we are talking about \$102 million in forfeited deposits. That's not about immigrants that are staying here. That's about immigrants that are paying a deposit, and then leaving so this government then can collect the money.

Millions in HST revenue; \$102 million in PNP deposit forfeits; soon to be tens of millions dollars in carbon tax. This government cannot keep its hands out of the wallets of Islanders. It simply can't help itself. It's all it knows.

Trust of government in immigration program (further)

Question to the same minister: Why should Islanders have any confidence that you'll change your ways when your government is addicted to the revenue it squeezes out of Islanders?

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

Mr. Palmer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I think Islanders do have confidence in our immigration program. Our retention rates continue to climb. We continue to invest in settlement services. We invest, as well, in education. We invest in health care. We know our economy is continuing to grow. Our culture is getting more broad. We know that this is a great program and I don't understand why the opposition doesn't want this program on PEI because it makes great sense.

You can look around. Look around in the gallery today. Walk around Charlottetown. There are lots of places you can go and you can see the successes of our immigration program.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm sure there are many people in the gallery today that would clearly understand that your only goal to have them here is to have your hand in their pocket; that you're not trying to help settle them here, at all.

Some Hon. Members: Oh! Oh!

Mr. Myers: As part of the Border Services investigation, there was heavy surveillance on several PNP clients on 2015.

One common thread appeared to be court documents that was an immigration consulting firm known as CanAchieve Consultants.

Business relationship to CanAchieve

Question to the minister: What business relationship does your province have with CanAchieve?

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

Mr. Palmer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We had an open and transparent process when we engaged in improvements –

Mr. Trivers: Answer the question –

Mr. Palmer: – in our project – in our program. We have some new agents that are helping us out to continue to grow population and immigration right across PEI. We've engaged communities so they can welcome immigrants to it. I don't know why the opposition, maybe, in Georgetown they don't want immigrants, but I can tell –

Mr. MacKay: Oh, come on –

Mr. Palmer: – you in Summerside, they certainly do. We'd invite them –

Mr. Myers: We do.

Mr. Palmer: – in Summerside.

Mr. MacKay: (Indistinct) give your head a shake (Indistinct)

Mr. Palmer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

That's a pretty weak answer. Number one, I live in Cardigan. I don't know how you can brand entire Georgetown based on a question I asked you about somebody who was cheating the system. I'm not sure: do you think we're all cheats in Georgetown, or what? But, that's your cross to bear, not mine.

According to the court documents – so this is all court documents that we received. Border Services has under surveillance this Kowloon office of CanAchieve Consultants.

Question to the economic development minister: Has your government ever had a direct business relationship with CanAchieve?

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

Mr. Palmer: Mr. Speaker, our office has a lot of engagement with a number of agents. We continue to work to bring the very best immigrants to PEI that we can. We have a new expression of interest model. We encourage immigrants to work with municipalities; to talk about their business plans; to go into other communities, so that they can spread the wonderful cultural experiences that they have, and can help with our economic development in all of our communities.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

CanAchieve, their website lists a range of services for potential clients: free pick-up service, free assistance to customers to arrange temporary accommodations, free assistance to clients with viewing and renting.

Foreign immigration companies and support to PNP clients

Question to the economic development minister: How do foreign immigration companies like this work with your government to support PNP clients?

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

Mr. Palmer: Mr. Speaker, we continue to support immigrants as they come here to PEI. We want this to be their home. We want them to stay here. We know that they fill important labour gaps for us. They continue to grow the economy. We need new people coming to the province to help us grow our business so we can expand our exports – which we've done for four years in a row and we're going to continue to do that.

We know that immigration is an important component of that and we're very happy that we can continue to do that and we're very welcoming to immigrants.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

So if the government really believed in immigration and they really believed that they want to have immigrants in this province, they wouldn't be charging them \$200,000 a head to get them here. It's a scheme that government has to put money in their own pockets and their friends' pockets.

CanAchieve website also promotes free assistance to customers in opening bank account, free assistance for bank loans, introducing free, reputable accountants and lawyers.

Question to the economic development minister: Does this sound like the type of firm we want associated with PEI's immigration program?

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

Mr. Palmer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We continue to invest in settlement services. We want immigrants to stay in PEI. We want them to continue their lives here to

make our lives richer, to make our economy grow, to fill key labour gaps, to give us new business ideas, to help us increase our exports, to do all of the things that we see are happening right across PEI that's making this more of a dynamic place to live and we know that a key component of that are the new immigrants that come to our Island.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

For some reason the minister is completely avoiding my questions and he doesn't want to answer. He's getting some advice from the former minister there now so maybe he'll be able to answer the next one. The member from Montague had his hands in this too. It appears that he doesn't want to answer it.

All I want to know is why there's an immigration company that's in China that isn't an intermediary here on Prince Edward Island – has a direct linkage into our system. I only found this by court documents. We went down to the court and got the documents. This isn't something – I'm not inventing this. This is part of the border security investigation. This is part of the federal government's concerns. This is part of the reason why you need to clean up your act.

Clearly, these PNP clients end up investigated because some of the work of this CanAchieve company. CanAchieve website also hails our social safety net here in Canada and it refers to it as 'milk gold', believe it or not. Are you comfortable, minister, with companies promoting citizenship to Canada in this fashion?

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

Mr. Palmer: Mr. Speaker, I'm very comfortable with our economy continuing to grow. I'm comfortable that our culture is growing, that new immigrants are coming here. They're raising their families, their kids are going to school, we're learning from their culture, they're opening business,

they're helping export, they're filling major labour gaps that we have.

We're also to make contributions to additional settlement services so that they can stay here. We're making contributions to the education system and to the health system so that we can provide the very best service we can so immigrants will continue to stay here in PEI.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

So the minister appears to be very comfortable at making all these things happen at all costs – even the cost of the reputation of Prince Edward Island, even the cost of the reputation of the immigration program here on Prince Edward Island. None of those things seem to matter to him because they're addicted to the money that they're getting by charging \$200,000 a head. So much so they're willing to allow companies in China to promote our social programs as 'milk gold' to come to Canada. Come and get free everything. CanAchieve also promotes free assistance for clients for social insurance and medical cards.

PEI's reputation in immigration

Question to the economic development minister: Do you think international companies that market immigration this way helps Prince Edward Island's reputation in immigration, or hurts it?

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

Mr. Palmer: Mr. Speaker, I don't understand why the opposition doesn't seem to be able to grasp this program. It may be back to their roots in the Conservative Party and they follow along with Stephen Harper culture of defeatism, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Mr. Palmer: Because things are good in PEI. I don't know why they can't get it. It's okay that –

Mr. Myers: Watch Trudeau get pounded in the next election. Watch Trudeau get pounded (Indistinct)

Mr. Palmer: – we've got four years of consecutive export growth, four years of consecutive tourism growth. We're continuing to get better and it's okay, it's okay that we're getting better. Don't be afraid of it. It's very good. It's good in the economy. We're continuing to grow and we're going to continue to do that through our population action plan.
Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Ms. Biggar: Just getting warmed up.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As Islanders open their property tax bills in the mail this year, for the first time ever, they're finding an extra gift – an extra gift from this government in the form of an election-style brochure.

Mr. Myers: Oh.

Property tax bill and election brochure

Mr. Trivers: Question to the finance minister –

Mr. Myers: Shameful.

Mr. Trivers: – did your office sign off on this election brochure, or did this idea come straight from the fifth floor?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. MacDonald: I think it's important to note that not everybody reads brad.com and we need to get the message out. We had one of the most successful budgets in the history of Prince Edward Island and we want to ensure that everybody's aware of all the investments that this government has made to make – first of all: seniors, most vulnerable Islanders, students and those with mental illness – to make them aware of the programs that are available to them. We know that they're going to get the message because the opposition's not going to deliver the good news.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct) a budget.

Mr. R. Brown: Post it on brad.com

Mr. Trivers: Yes.

Mr. Henderson: He probably scanned it and posted it.

Mr. Myers: They're rowdy over there today, Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

In fact, it's bradtrivers.com, just for the record. At any rate, for 150 years, Islanders received their tax bills. There was no political propaganda in it. This is a blatant attempt to influence Islanders. The only thing that's missing from this brochure is the Liberal logo. Tens of thousands of these brochures were included in this year's property tax mail.

Cost of brochures to Island taxpayers

Question to the finance minister: How much did these brochures cost Island taxpayers?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. MacDonald: Thanks, Mr. Speaker.

I fully understand that the opposition's not pleased with the way the budget has come out and to start nitpicking on how we deliver the message to people across Prince Edward Island, I think it's more important for everybody to go back to the constituencies and tell people about the personal exemption; to tell people about the reduction in electricity; tell people about the small business corporation tax reduction; tell people about the \$4 million in mental health; tell people about the \$32 million investment in health care.

But, I will say this, that: When you have the opportunity to help Islanders, you do it, and that's exactly what we're trying to do.

Mr. Myers: 500 meters of pavement (Indistinct) call an election.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Mr. Speaker, I mean, the strategy's pretty simple: Take taxpayer dollars, spend it to simply try to buy their votes in the next election.

Mr. Myers: Oh, that's exactly what Liberals do. (Indistinct)

Mr. Trivers: Mr. Speaker, I really don't think Islanders are falling for it. Production and distribution of a mail-out this size, it would cost thousands of dollars.

Mr. Myers: Yes, hundreds of thousands.

Mr. Trivers: The minister didn't answer the question, but I think it'd be thousands.

Question to the finance minister: Why do you consider this a responsible use of taxpayer dollars?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. MacDonald: Actually, taxes being mailed out are actually free, hon. member.

This morning I was reading and listening to the radio about Atlantic provincial economic council and it's unbelievable; the first four months of 2018, we're up in weekly earnings, we're up in job gains by 3%, our employment rate is up 2.6% – double the national average.

Mr. R. Brown: Oh, great.

Mr. MacDonald: We're the third fastest growing economy in Canada, the first in Atlantic Canada. We're doing things right and that's why.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. R. Brown: Three balanced budgets.

Mr. Trivers: Three balanced budgets?

Mr. Myers: Zero balanced budgets.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Mr. Trivers: Mr. Speaker, I'd hardly call a full-colour brochure 'free' when it's printed. I'm not sure where the finance minister is trying to go with this 'free' angle.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Mr. Trivers: But normally, these types of mail outs would be done by a political party at their own expense.

Mr. Roach: (Indistinct)

Mr. Trivers: This is the same government – you can barely turn on the radio without hearing one of their ads. Their ads are plastered all over Facebook and the taxpayers of Prince Edward Island are paying for them.

Mr. Myers: They are. Yeah, they are.

Mr. Trivers: I want to know –

Mr. R. Brown: Is that all you do on the Internet?

Advertising with taxpayers' dollars

Mr. Trivers: Question to the finance minister: Why does your government keep blurring the line between public and partisan advertising with taxpayer dollars?

Mr. Myers: Good question.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. MacDonald: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm glad to see the hon. member got the brochure and I hope he circulates it to everyone in his community and everyone in his riding, because it's extremely important that we get the message out. It's extremely important that these programs get utilized, and we save every cent that we can save for each and every Islander from one end of the Island to the other because that's the type of government we are. We're helping as many individuals –

Mr. Fox: Tax, tax, tax.

Mr. MacDonald: – as possible and we're continuing.

If the hon. member keeps chirping tax, tax, tax – yes, we did reduce the taxes.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. R. Brown: And electric rates.

Ms. Casey: Zing. That's a zinger.

Mr. R. Brown: (Indistinct) expansion.

Mr. Roach: (Indistinct) again.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Ms. Biggar: (Indistinct) all that money (Indistinct)

Speaker: Okay, I think there's another member wants to ask a question.

The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Parkdale.

Ms. Bell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Yesterday, I asked the Premier a number of questions relating to the extraordinarily short time period between the introduction of his election system referendum act and the appointment of the first commissioner.

He didn't seem to think there was any undue haste, although if even one-tenth as much urgency had been placed on hiring a registrar for the registered health professions act, there would be a lot of happy midwives and parents in the province right now.

Premier, you clearly described the process to get from where we are to where we need to be. You said: First we have to pass the bill, at which point the Legislative Management Committee will have a job to do, at which point the Legislature will have a job to do, to consider a resolution and at that point, perhaps the rumour mill will move onto something else.

Appointment of referendum commissioner (further)

It is exactly two weeks until June 1, 2018. Do you actually think a commissioner will be in place in two-weeks' time?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, to pick up the opening theme of the hon. Member from Charlottetown-Parkdale about haste, I recall on the 9th of November, 2016, that the Leader of the Third Party introduced a motion to implement a whole new electoral system for Prince Edward Island and they were through talking about in about seven minutes.

So, maybe they want to go back and look at their own timelines and see what a rush they were in in the fall of 2016.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Bell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Registration deadline for referendum advertisers

Also to the Premier: If it is not possible to have a commissioner in place by June 1st, how will eligible referendum advertisers register by the July 1st deadline?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, I think the question, the supplementary question, answers the first question. There's a reason we need a referendum commissioner, which is its integral to the whole administration of the law that will be brought in place by this bill.

May I remind the member, and I'm sure I don't have to remind anyone else in the House, that sometime within the next, whatever, several weeks, this House will finish its spring sitting. It is anticipated that that bill, which has been introduced, will be adopted in some form by this House and it will be highly desirable to have a referendum commissioner in place to implement and to lead the administration of that law.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Bell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Yesterday, I wondered why there was so much haste when our next election isn't scheduled until October 2019, and I asked whether the Premier intended to call an early election. He refused to answer.

Confirmation of election timeline (further)

Once again, Premier, I'll make this a really simple and clear question: Do you intend to call an election between now and the end of 2018? No or yes?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: I'm glad to note that I was given the choice of answers in alphabetical order.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Premier MacLauchlan: I will also remind the House, as we have before, that our elections act offers a number of options when it comes to when the next election may take place, and that includes retaining the constitutional ability of the Lieutenant Governor to act to initiate an election –

Mr. MacKay: (Indistinct)

Premier MacLauchlan: – and our *Election Act* did not take that away, nor have other election acts across the country. I think most of us can see that in the fall of 2019 there's another election taking place and I hope all of us will have that in mind.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Casey: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

My question this morning is to the Minister of Workforce and Advanced Learning.

Minister, I was pleased to hear that our province over the last few years has created 4,000 new jobs, including 3,500 full-time jobs. However, this is the time of the year where students –

Mr. Myers: Mike Currie created 30,000.

Ms. Casey: – are trying to secure their summer employment, and there are lots of great jobs in our province for students.

It can be overwhelming for a student sometimes to know what all their options are.

Summer employment for students

What is your department doing to make this process easier for students to find a job?

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

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

Thank you, hon. member, for the question.

As was indicated earlier, Prince Edward Island is leading the country in many ways and thanks to the business community things are very busy out there in our Island economy.

Yes, I do agree with the hon. member. It can be confusing for students sometimes to navigate the job market and we understand that. We're trying to do better by streamlining the application process through government. We do encourage the use of the employment assistance services such as Career Development Services Inc. to help these students navigate the process.

They can also contact workpei.ca as well.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Casey: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Minister, some of the concerns that I've heard – and I know you said you were going to streamline the application process – students are telling me that there are multiple applications to apply for a job with the same employer, our provincial government.

In streamlining that application for students, does that mean that you're going to make it one application where a student looking for

a post-secondary job or Jobs for Youth will be able to fill out just one application and maybe check a couple of boxes that makes it easier for the student to have an application processed by the province?

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

Mr. Gallant: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As I had indicated earlier, yes, we are trying to streamline this to make the process easier for students and as a first step, we've combined two applications into one and we're looking at collaboration with other departments. So by this time next year, we may have an easier process for students to apply for jobs in government.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Casey: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Students, besides looking for a job with our government in the summer, are also looking to work either in the private sector or in the community.

Options for student applying for jobs

What options does your department have to help a student find the job in those sectors?

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

Mr. Gallant: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

There are many job opportunities and right now there are approximately 2,000 jobs on PEI registered for students, or any Islander, to apply for. We recently invested \$1 million in extra funding for these sector councils and groups to help students get jobs, and the Jobs for Youth and the post-secondary programs are very important for students and for the business community and private sectors for students to get summer employment.

I encourage all Island students looking for work to check out the different programs such as Team Construction, Team Seafood,

Team Trucking and the new Team Farming program we have in place.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Roach: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Minister: I asked the minister of infrastructure last week about the new manor in Montague. She affirmed that it will be completed in 2019. This means when residents move into the new one, the old Riverview Manor will be empty.

Plans for old Riverview Manor in Montague

What plans does your department have in place for this old manor?

Mr. R. Brown: Good question.

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

Ms. Mundy: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The manor is currently owned by the PEI Housing Corporation. We are in close contact with our colleagues over at transportation, infrastructure and energy and we are very aware of the timelines for when the residents of the old manor will be moving into the new manor. We are keeping an eye on that.

However, there are a number processes and steps that we have to go through before we determine what we will be doing with that manor. Because we can't do anything with it until the clients move out.

The first step is to take a look at all the government departments to see if there is any need, if there is any interest within government and we will be starting that process very shortly.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Roach: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I thank the minister for that answer. I take it from the answer that you will be able to go internally before they actually move into the new manor. I hope that's the case.

Minister: there's a lot of information out there, a lot of people are talking about it. Has there been any interested parties stepped forward and approached your department with respect to taking ownership of that property, or possibly doing something with it?

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

Ms. Mundy: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

With all of the talk about the provincial housing action plan, there has been a lot of discussion out there about housing and the housing needs on Prince Edward Island.

Yes, we have been receiving numerous calls about, not only that manor, but we've been also receiving calls from many communities across Prince Edward Island, who are interested in helping Islanders with their housing needs. We are very open to partnerships. We are very open to investment.

Actually, I've met with community groups in O'Leary, in Georgetown. I've met with community groups in Bedeque, as well as helped the hon. Member from Belfast-Murray River to create a questionnaire to send out to residents in their community.

Housing is a priority for this department. We will continue to meet with developers and if you have any developers that are interested in meeting, please, send them my way.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Roach: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

With that, and it's great to hear, that that's taking place. Should no other internal government departments show interest in the property, at what point, then, will your department turn the property over to the Department of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy.

RFPs and interests for Riverview Manor

How quickly will it be, at that point, that we can expect request for proposals, or expressions of interest to be put forward, kind of, in a public manner?

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

Ms. Mundy: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I think it's very important to note – I thank you for the question, I thank you for your passion and advocacy for your community.

I think we're a little bit too soon to ask when an RFP. We still haven't determined whether or not that piece of property is something that we want to deem surplus. It is a very important piece of property. We are still on the internal, I guess, discussions with our department as to whether there is a need.

We have a provincial housing action plan that we will be launching very shortly and that property is one of the properties that we are discussing as part of that action plan.

I want to assure the hon. member that housing, again, is a priority. I think it is very evident in the third consecutive balanced budget that we did present a little over a month ago, and the investments that are making in housing on Prince Edward Island to help those, who need it most.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Borden-Kinkora.

Mr. Fox: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Actually, if I could beg with a little bit of indulgence for me for recognition of guests?

Speaker: Go ahead, hon. member.

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct)

Speaker: No, not until after Question Period.

Mr. Fox: Thank you.

On April 11th, I asked the Attorney General for a breakdown of how much Island taxpayers have spent on legal fees for government and people named in the defendants of the \$50 million e-gaming lawsuit.

His words were: I don't have the direct answer to that question with me here today but I will see what I can do to get that information and bring it back.

Dollars spent on legal fees on e-gaming lawsuit

Question to the Attorney General: It has been five weeks now that you've been dragging your feet on bringing back this information, what are you hiding?

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

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

I stand by that commitment. I'd note that this is a matter that's before the courts and it's ongoing. Cost is, in fact, a matter that would as well be before the courts. We will do what we can to get information back to the House in a timely manner on that matter and I stick to that.

Thank you.

Mr. R. Brown: Good.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Borden-Kinkora.

Mr. Fox: Mr. Speaker, you'd be guaranteed the lawyers involved are putting in their claims to you guys as quick as possible, so you should have the answer.

Along with the province, 13 other people were named in the \$50 million lawsuit. These include; lawyers, a premier, two Cabinet ministers, former deputy ministers, three former MLAs involved with the government, and five current deputy ministers all being represented by the same lawyer.

Tabling of breakdown for e-gaming lawsuit

Will you table a breakdown on legal expenses for defending your \$50 million e-gaming lawsuit, I asked for five weeks ago?

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

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

I would just like to be careful in noting that there are numerous lawyers involved. Government lawyers are defending government actors, or members in relation to this matter. There are separate counsels for other folks that have been involved in the lawsuit.

Certainly, as I indicated, we will get a breakdown at an appropriate time for this matter. It's a matter that's ongoing; cost is a matter that is dealt with by the court. At an appropriate time, legal bills are put before the courts for consideration. We've seen that government has been awarded costs previously in relation to this matter and we will get information related to that back.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Borden-Kinkora.

Mr. Fox: Mr. Speaker, it's like the debt clock is bradtrivers.com, it's going so fast, you can't keep track, probably.

Some (Indistinct) have noted a similarity between the e-gaming and the Ontario gas plant scandal with the respect to the destruction of personal and government public documents.

RCMP and OPP criminal investigation

Question to the Attorney General: Can you confirm today whether the RCMP consulted with the Ontario Provincial Police to tap into special expertise investigating criminal destruction of documents at the highest level of governments?

Ms. Biggar: (Indistinct)

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

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

I'm not going to get into arguing this matter here in this Chamber. It's a matter that's before the courts. I would note that it has been reviewed by the Auditor General and it has been reviewed by the RCMP. We will continue to let the lawyers that we have retained to do that work; do their work in the courts.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Borden-Kinkora.

Mr. Fox: Let's be very clear: the Auditor General had a lot of concerns. The courts must have a lot of concerns because it's back before the court.

The similarities between the e-gaming and the Ontario gas plant scandal are striking; improperly destroyed public documents in the premier's office; criminal or civil legal actions as a consequence.

Question to the Attorney General: With all of these similarities, do you think the OPP should have been consulted by the RCMP for their expertise in document destruction?

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

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

I certainly am not going to get into speculating as to who the OPP should have consulted in relation to an investigation in an entirely different province.

I would note, in respect to the question or the preamble to it, that this lawsuit is a matter that was brought forward by an individual or a company that came to Prince Edward Island and did not pan out the way that they were supposed to. It's an action that he's taking as a result of that.

We will continue forward with our defence of this in the courts and we will, again, let the lawyers that we have retained to carry that defence do their work.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Borden-Kinkora.

Mr. Fox: Let's be clear, we're not talking about the OPP consulting with the RCMP; we're talking about very similar events in two provinces. The question was: Did the RCMP consult with the OPP on a similar matter? We don't know the answer.

The appearance of impartiality is an important principle in justice, that's why the Attorney General recused himself as vice chair of the Public Accounts when the committee's review of e-gaming bumped up against potential legal conflicts that the minister properly declared.

Destruction of public documents re: e-gaming

Question to the Attorney General: Will you consider making and asking an independent prosecutor to review these matters involving improper destruction of public documents in the e-gaming scandal?

Mr. Myers: Oh, he can't answer. He can't answer it.

An Hon. Member: Whoa.

Mr. Myers: He's tied too close to it.

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

Mr. Palmer: Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to respond to this, which I have before in the House and at Public Accounts, actually. I will read a quote from the Auditor General, who said: For us to complete our work and issue the report, the work we did was sufficient in terms of who we interviewed and the questions we asked.

Mr. Myers: (Indistinct)

Mr. MacKay: (Indistinct)

Mr. Palmer: I have the list here of the 56 people that were interviewed by the Auditor General and I also have – if anybody wants to hear the answer to this, which was a published report by CBC on April 12th by the RCMP

An Hon. Member: Can't get any better than that.

Mr. Palmer: – that said: After an extensive investigation into allegations in relations to what is known as e-gaming, including conducting over 50 interviews, there was no evidence of criminality or grounds to lay any charges – which I'll be happy to table as well.

Thank you.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Borden-Kinkora.

Mr. Fox: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I see we have a new Attorney General.

Many Islanders are asking how two very similar situations resulted in such different investigative outcomes. Two almost exact same events with just two different companies, basically. They cooked the books and they destroyed documents.

Some Hon. Members: Oh!

Ms. Casey: Unparliamentary.

Mr. Fox: They went and investigated it.

Mr. Myers: Absolutely.

Ms. Casey: Unparliamentary.

Mr. Fox: Question to the Attorney General –

Mr. Roach: No confidence (Indistinct)

Mr. Fox: Can you explain why the illegal destruction of public documents – let's be clear, the destructing of public documents in the Premier's office – is a crime in Ontario, but it's not in Prince Edward Island?

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

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

I must say that I do find the hon. member's statement somewhat troubling and I will say that is what I would say they are: statements.

Mr. Myers: We get it.

Mr. J. Brown: Coming from a former chief of police, I would have thought that there would be more respect for his fellow police officers in the RCMP. As I said, there have been investigations conducted in relation to this matter by the Auditor General and by the RCMP. The hon. minister of economic development read out the quote from the RCMP indicating that they did not feel that there was any evidence –

Mr. Fox: Cover-up, cover up.

Mr. J. Brown: – that would result in charges, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Roach: By the RCMP?

Mr. Fox: Cover up.

Mr. J. Brown: That speaks for itself.

Mr. Fox: (Indistinct)

Mr. Roach: (Indistinct)

Mr. J. Brown: I have confidence in the RCMP in this province.

Mr. Fox: (Indistinct)

Mr. Roach: I don't care where you (Indistinct)

Mr. J. Brown: I will reaffirm my confidence in the RCMP here today. It would be nice if we could get off of this trend of a lack of confidence in public bodies in this House, which seems to be ongoing this session.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Myers: Can't wait to tweet that out.

An Hon. Member: Go ahead.

An Hon. Member: You don't tweet.

Mr. Roach: I'm going to now.

Mr. R. Brown: Once he gets an account.

Mr. Myers: Go and open an account right now.

Ms. Casey: Alroach.com.

Statements by Ministers

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

New Brunswick Flood Relief

Premier MacLauchlan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The recent catastrophic floods in New Brunswick have caused extensive damage, forced people from their homes, and damaged personal belongings. The Canadian Red Cross has registered more than 2,093 adults and children from nearly 925 households as having evacuated or been otherwise affected by the flooding.

The Red Cross has been working closely with local authorities to respond to the needs of those impacted by flooding such as registering evacuees; arranging emergency lodging; and food where required; and providing financial assistance

Red Cross volunteers, including those from Prince Edward Island, arranged emergency shelter for close to 300 people displaced by flooding. More Prince Edward Island volunteers are prepared to head to New Brunswick if needed. As recovery from the flood will be a lengthy process and the Red Cross has committed to offering its help as long as necessary.

It is the Island way to help our neighbours in times of need. I'm very pleased to announce that our province is providing \$25,000 in support of the New Brunswick Flood Appeal. The Red Cross is working diligently to help New Brunswick bounce back from this devastating event and we want to support these efforts.

In addition the Prince Edward Island Liquor Control Commission will begin accepting donations in aid of the Red Cross efforts at each of their stores across the province for the next two weeks.

I want to encourage Islanders to help our neighbours in New Brunswick in any way that we can. Donations can also be made online at www.redcross.ca; by texting FLOODS in all in capital letters to 30333 to make a \$10 donation; by calling 1-800-418-1111, or by contacting our local Canadian Red Cross office

Our hearts and our efforts are with our friends and neighbours in New Brunswick as they clean up, rebuild and persevere.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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

It's hard for us here on Prince Edward Island to even fathom the issue that our neighbours and friends in New Brunswick have faced over the last several weeks with the flooding and the circumstances that surround such a terrible health or weather occurrence.

The Premier speaks about \$25,000 donation, and I congratulate the government for that. Of course I would also encourage any Islander that has it within their means to make a donation as well, particularly to the Red Cross.

The Red Cross is an organization that does tremendous work. I know back just a few years ago when Kent Scales headed up the drive to build a new facility, there was an outpouring of support from our community for that. We've seen several times over the last number of years, Haiti, included, where we've had members of PEI Red Cross go down and help out there as well. It's only natural that they would go across the Northumberland Strait to assist our neighbours in New Brunswick.

While the major part of the flooding may have subsided and the water certainly has gone down, one of the things that we have to keep in mind is that this isn't just over when the water goes away. There's contaminants, whether it be petroleum products; sewage that also contaminated the waters that flooded the areas. We're talking about homes. We're talking about businesses. We're talking about cottages, trailers, personal belongings.

As of right now, I believe I read in a CBC story where the damage and the recovery costs just from this flood alone could well exceed \$80 million. My heart, my thoughts go out to our neighbours in New Brunswick, and anything that we can do as Islanders to

assist our neighbours, I encourage anyone to do so.

Thank you very much Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Parkdale.

Ms. Bell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's great to hear this announcement of support from the province, so I thank the Premier for having confirmed, once again, that Islanders will step up with support for neighbours, whether they're across the Strait or as we see with the Red Cross and the hon. member mentioned, have travelled far and wide.

The Red Cross is one of those steadfast organizations in the province that we can always count on to provide support, whether it be from a house fire; they're the first responders, when there is a house fire in terms of providing immediate support with comfort kits – and clothing and emergency shelter, to sending responders, including from 9/11, to Haiti, to around the world.

We have an incredible expertise here for responding to emergencies. It's something that we should value, because it's another aspect of what it is to be a great Islander and a great community supporter.

Thank you, Mr. Premier, though, for support from the province.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Recognition of Guests (II)

Mr. Mitchell: Before I begin my statement, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to recognize a couple of guests that have recently entered the gallery with your permission.

Speaker: Yeah, go ahead.

Mr. Mitchell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

At the far side of the gallery today, we have some more guests that recently entered; siblings of Dr. Charles Duffy, who is with us on this side of the gallery. We have; Patrick

Duffy, his brother; his sister Charlene and her husband Brian have come into the room today. I know the siblings will lay some claim today for what a great physician that their brother turned out to be. It's great to have them in the room today, as well.

Family Doctor Day

Today is Family Doctor Day. An opportunity to recognize and celebrate the tremendous contributions of our family doctors across Prince Edward Island. As part of this celebration, it is my great privilege to announce that the PEI College of Family Physicians will be awarding its highest honour, family doctor of the year for 2018 to Dr. Charles Duffy.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mitchell: Dr. Charles Duffy is here with us today in the gallery; joined by his wife Linda, his son Charlie, and of course his mother Anna. Welcome to you all and congratulations, Dr. Duffy on this terrific accomplishment.

We also have in the gallery from the College of Family Physicians; President Dr. Nadine Sampson, President-Elect Dr. Kristy Newson and Executive Director Rosemary Burke-Perry, thank you, as well, for joining us here today.

The Family Doctor of the Year award recognizes an outstanding family physician who best exemplifies what being a family doctor is all about. Dr. Duffy's award selection states that he truly cares for his patients and he has worked in various communities and continuously demonstrates leadership in family medicine, education, and research.

I also want to recognize Dr. Keith Baglole and Dr. Katherine Bell, who are receiving this year's Awards of Excellence from the College of Family Physicians. As well, I want to recognize Dr. Megan Armstrong who is the recipient of the Dalhousie Family Medicine's Prince Edward Island Preceptor of the Year Award for 2018.

The Awards of Excellence recognizes College of Family Physicians' members who in the past 12 to 24 months have made an outstanding contribution in a specific area

of work. Dr. Baglole and Dr. Bell were unable to join us today, as well as Dr. Megan but we want to recognize their accomplishments and thank them for their excellent support for our Islanders and with our health care system.

Family doctors get to know their patients and serve as trusted health advocates, tailoring the care and advice that they provide to meet each patient's changing needs and stage of life.

We want to thank all of this year's award recipients for their dedication and hard work. They're extremely deserving of this recognition. The awards will be officially presented at annual family medicine conference in June 15th here in Charlottetown.

In closing, I want to encourage members of this House and all Islanders to celebrate our family physicians and thank them for the work they do each and every day.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[Applause]

Speaker: The hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you so much for the statement, minister. I know it is very special for you with the connection to the Duffy family. Congratulations, Dr. Duffy; your whole family, your extended family that's all here today. Welcome to the medical society that is here joining with us today as well.

This just goes to show you how important it is for our home-grown talent here and to recruit at such a young age coming from such a wonderful family like that. It's not hard to see why Dr. Duffy is being named as the family doctor of the year. Our home-grown talent here is pretty tough to beat. I encourage the minister to get in there early, recruit our finest, and you see what happens here.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

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

Thank you, minister for this lovely announcement. Huge congratulations to Dr. Duffy and your family for being here today.

I also heard in your announcement, minister, the name Dr. Keith Baglole –

Ms. Casey: Yay!

Dr. Bevan-Baker: – again a home-grown doctor. The doctor apparently of Charlottetown-Lewis Point. I've known Keith for many years and his family, and it's wonderful to see these young Islanders go through medical school and come back here and hopefully, maybe, 40 years from now, Keith will be sitting exactly where you are, Dr. Duffy.

Doctors, of course, have a long tradition of being caregivers; givers to their communities, not only here on Prince Edward Island, but across Canada, and through institutions like *Médecins Sans Frontières*, Doctors Without Borders, going in to places where they are needed most.

It's a hugely honourable profession. And to be chosen as the top of that honourable profession is just something very special. Congratulations to you.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

2018 Family Fishing Weekend

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

First of all, I want to welcome all the newcomers to the gallery here today.

Today is the start of the Victory Day long weekend, which for some people marks the beginning of family fishing weekend. When everyone can fish for free without a licence.

This is a great weekend for Island families to head out to the rivers and ponds to enjoy the traditional outdoor activity. Island waterways boast some of the best trout fishing in eastern North America.

I want to really thank the watershed groups and the many young people that work for the watershed groups that go out and improve these rivers and streams. That's the reason we have such good fishing here on Prince Edward Island.

More and more Islanders are coming to appreciate the great fishing here on Prince Edward Island and we have seen participation in fishing grow in recent years. Fishing is an inexpensive healthy, outdoor activity that can be enjoyed by the entire family. We have published a Public Land Atlas to identify lands that people can access for a variety of uses, including fishing.

I want everybody to enjoy the weekend. Get out with your family and enjoy the great streams and rivers we have here on Prince Edward Island, and catch yourself a good meal.

Thank you.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Borden-Kinkora.

Mr. Fox: Mr. Speaker, I figure I've got about 30 minutes, I can talk about this right –

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct)

Mr. Fox: – thirty minutes?

Speaker: Thirty seconds.

Mr. Fox: This is something I, so much support, when we're talking about getting youth and families outside in the wilderness, in streams and brooks fishing. Whether they be in ponds, Scales Pond or at a jetty that's not even opened yet, somebody mentioned a second ago –

Mr. R. Brown: (Indistinct)

Mr. Fox: – but I'm confident the minister is actually working on that jetty and we're going to get it open.

I don't think we can say enough about the watershed groups and the farmers and the private landowners that allow access in streams and in their brooks behind. I'm thinking of Lenny Johnston up there, right now. You can go down a little road and

behind the Elton Murphy's place up there. There's a nice little brook down there. You can go down and go into the Dunk River. It's phenomenal. I always like seeing the pictures on social media and Facebook or Twitter of where you'll have a father and a son or a mother and a daughter out fishing. I'm thinking of Krista Hagen right now and Jamie Hagen. They take their kids out fishing. When they're out there, they do something, I believe, in, you know, is pick up some garbage. When you see something in the brook or on the side of the shore, you pick it up and you get it out of there. I think it goes also, to the member's bill that he talked about, last night, in the House.

I can only encourage the government, maybe we should have, maybe two weekends or three weekends of this a year. Maybe one in the spring; one in the summer; one in the fall because maybe there are times where a family can't get out on this weekend, and would like to get out. Maybe we can look at opening that up a little bit more.

Thank you.

Mr. R. Brown: We'll put that in the next brochure.

Speaker: Also responding to the minister's statement –

Mr. Fox: Hide the taxes going up again.

Speaker: – the hon. Leader of the Third Party.

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

It was only just over a month ago that we celebrated opening day on April 15th, and it was actually not a dissimilar morning to today. It was a crisp morning, it was clear. That day, I don't think the temperature was much above freezing. It's lovely to have this free weekend of fishing for all Islanders when the days are bit longer; the weather is a bit warmer; the water is a bit warmer. It's something that I used to enjoy when my kids were younger, taking them out.

I think it is important that we acknowledge the work of all of the watershed groups who do incredible work to maintain the health

and vitality of our waterways, but we must also remember that there were some problems there.

Last evening, the minister, who just made the announcement and the Premier and I were at a celebration of 30 years of the NAPA legislation here. There were many landowners who were celebrated for giving their land – deeding their land to the province. I had a lovely chat with Daryl Guignon, who many in this room will know, and he was lamenting the health of many of our waterways – our waterways that have become silted up that are no longer suitable for salmon spawning. Some have just disappeared entirely. So while it's a lovely weekend to go fishing, let's not forget that our waterways are precious and they're vulnerable, and we have to look after them.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Presenting and Receiving Petitions

Tabling of Documents

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, I present herewith a message from her honour, the Lieutenant Governor which said message is signed by her honour.

Speaker: Hon. members, I will ask the Clerk to read the message from her honour.

Hon. members, please stand while the message is being read.

Clerk: Honourable Speaker of the Legislative Assembly
Coles Building,
Charlottetown

Dear Mr. Speaker,

Her Honour, the Honourable Antoinette Perry, Lieutenant Governor of the Province of Prince Edward Island, hereby transmits the Supplementary Estimates of Expenditure of the Province of Prince Edward Island in support of the *Supplementary Appropriation Act 2018*, that were required to carry out the public services of the province for the fiscal years ending March 31, 2017 and March 31, 2018.

In accordance with the provisions of the *Constitution Act, 1867*, the Prince Edward Island Terms of Union, 1873, and the *Financial Administration Act*, Her Honour recommends the same to the Legislative Assembly.

Commended by
Paul T. Ledwell,
Clerk of the Executive Council
and Secretary to Cabinet

signed by
Her Honour
Honourable Antoinette Perry,
Lieutenant Governor

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, By Command of Her Honour, the Lieutenant Governor, I present herewith the Supplementary Estimates of Expenditure for the Province of Prince Edward Island in support of the *Supplementary Appropriations Act, 2018*.

I move, seconded by the hon. Minister of Finance, that the same be now received and do lie on the Table.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. Minister of Finance, that Consideration of the Supplementary Estimates in Committee of the Whole House be added to the orders of the day until such time as they are dispatched.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Minister of Economic Development and Tourism.

Mr. Palmer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, by leave of the House, I beg leave to table a full list of witnesses interviewed by the Auditor General in relation to the e-gaming file and I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Communities, Land and Environment, that the said document be now received and do lie on the Table.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, by leave of the House, I beg leave to table this election-style brochure – notably contains –

Mr. Henderson: Full of information.

Mr. Trivers: – every colour of a political party but blue. It talks about some information that would be benefit to Islanders, but primarily, it talks about the benefits that this government perceives they've given 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?

Mr. J. Brown: Can we get one for each of us?

An Hon. Member: There is blue, it's light blue.

Mr. Trivers: I can e-mail it to you.

Mr. R. Brown: There's a little bit of blue there.

Reports by Committees

Introduction of Government Bills

Government Motions

Orders of the Day (Government)

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

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

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

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

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. 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'll ask the hon. Member from Charlottetown-Lewis Point and the Deputy Speaker to come and chair the Committee of the Whole House.

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

Hon. members and for those watching, we are now discussing the Department of Family and Human Services budget estimates. We are on page 73 under social programs. The section has been read, but it hasn't been carried.

I have a question from the –

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct).

Chair: Yes, sorry.

Before I go to Charlottetown-Parkdale, permission to invite a stranger to the floor?

Some Hon. Members: Granted.

Great, we'll allow him to set up.

Ms. Mundy: Thank you.

Chair: Could you please introduce yourself and your title for the record.

Lane Pineau Director: Lane Pineau, Director of Finance for the Department of Family and Human Services.

Chair: Welcome.

The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Parkdale.

Ms. Bell: Thank you, Chair.

We had spoken yesterday around the Disability Support Program and I had a question relating to the Social Assistance Program and how it connects to disability

support. I know from speaking to community partners that a large percentage of people on social assistance are people with disabilities. In fact, there's so many that it actually is in its own way a Disability Support Program.

I know you've done this transformation project, with the new DSP; how has the consideration of those on long-term social assistance been considered in that transformation project that you spoke about?

Ms. Mundy: That is a great question. One of the first things we looked at when we were discussing transforming this program is how do we give those people who are permanently disabled who may never attach to the workforce their dignity back so that they are not relying on social assistance for support.

So we will be separating our disability support from our Social Assistance Program, and we will be implementing what we're calling an accessibility basic amount that we will be giving them, versus being on a social assistance case roll, so they will be separated.

Ms. Bell: That's really interesting and really exciting actually. Are you able to indicate how and when that program may be coming into effect?

Ms. Mundy: The Disability Support Program, the transformation, we won't be calling it actually, Disability Support Program anymore, it will be the accessibility program and we will be rolling that out in June.

Ms. Bell: Oh, yay. Exciting. I am so excited about this.

Ms. Mundy: So am I.

Ms. Bell: Minister, are you – this is also hugely significant. I can't tell you how excited I am to hear about it. What –

Chair: Hon. members, there should only be one person speaking at a time and the Member from Charlottetown-Parkdale has the floor.

Thank you.

Ms. Bell: Thank you, Chair.

Let me catch my breath for excitement. What coordination has there been with the community partners we know – obviously the PEI Council of People with Disabilities and Community Inclusions – there's so many amazing partners out there that have a very direct role in supporting and assisting navigation and access to these services. How are they going to be prepped to assist with this rollout?

Ms. Mundy: Another great question. And actually, we appointed an accessibility advisory council to help guide the work of the disability support transformation and very strong advocate for persons with disability, Marcia Carroll, is actually sitting at that table. So we have been taking many of her recommendations, if not, probably all of them, to heart. You know Marcia –

Ms. Bell: Yes.

Ms. Mundy: – she's a very passionate and strong-willed individual. We have been very blessed to have her at that table. She has that lens on the transformation, so I'm very confident with the recommendations that will be coming forward, that there will be a community partner aspect to it – very strong. That's something that this government and this department is really trying to get more involved with is that – rather than a top-down approach, grass roots up approach. We are very, very interested in community capacity, collective impact, and that is our direction with this program going forward.

Ms. Bell: Absolutely, minister, having that integrated continuum of service – looking at the community, into the department, and then back through it. You're right. Having Marcia onboard is pretty much a strong direction there. That's really exciting.

One of the things around this that I think is really important that I stressed and I that I hear is the sort of removal of that expectation that people with long-term disabilities are – should be expected to get into the work force. It's that recognition that there are genuinely a number of clients who need support who we cannot put that expectation on and for that not to be punitive. That's a very different lens. I really commend your department and the work that

– it sounds, at this point, very positive as a step towards that approach. I thank you, minister.

Question, just then in a similar piece around where you have put funding into the shelter rates, and I raise this somewhat with the AG Report discussions, but there's a big gap between the actual market rate that's available and the money that's being put in for shelter rates. It still doesn't bridge that gap. How are you going to begin to continue to work on getting it closer to be able to meet market rate demand?

Ms. Mundy: Right. As indicated when you asked me in the House the question about what prompted the increase in the rate. That was that \$500,000 investment. That was a platform commitment that we had made during the 2015 election. That was a platform commitment that we wanted to implement and we knew it was something important, especially with all the discussions around housing and the fact that we are rolling out a housing action plan provincial, first-ever provincial housing action plan. So that is something that has been talked about at every table.

We have two tables that are working together. We have the Housing Supply Task Force, as well as the co-development team.

The co-development team is made up of advocates, who live housing issues every day. We have people there from We have people from the Housing First. We have representatives from the John Howard Society. We have representatives from a person's council with disabilities. I think your mom comes to some of the meetings, or she's been at some of the meetings.

We have co-housing, which is a really interesting prospect moving forward. We have pretty much anyone and everyone who has some sort of expertise about housing, especially for vulnerable population, sitting at that table. That is something that has been brought up.

We've heard it through our engagement process; through the surveys we sent out through all of our engagement – through municipality engagements that that is an issue. That will again be something that will be discussed. I'm looking forward to the

report that the two committees are going to put together and present to me. I'm sure that's something that we'll see in there.

Ms. Bell: One of the other things that I asked about in the past in regards to looking at that kind really large bucket of funds and that the allocation, what it sounds like with the Disability Support Program is taking a different approach and funding in a different way.

Not to devalue that work happening, but is there a prospect of doing that kind of work with the Social Assistance Program?

Ms. Mundy: We're actually currently, I guess, transforming and modernizing the Social Assistance Program, and I'm hoping that the next couple of weeks to come out with some initial – actually, huge changes that we'll be making.

That is the broader piece will be done during the poverty reduction action plan. We have a wonderful advisory council that has been together and doing those exact consultation. They've been out there listening to community. We have a discussion paper now online. We have many ways that people can interact. We have public consultations. We have private consultations. We have stakeholder engagements. They're already out there talking to the public and talking to people about housing and poverty and how we can reduce it.

The Social Assistance Program, although we are modernizing and transforming it, it will be also continued to evolve during the, I guess, the poverty reduction action plan, as well.

Ms. Bell: My last question on this section is: one of the things that we hear quite a lot from constituents, who are engaged with the suite of social programs social. It's not, only, obviously the complexity of navigation, which we have talked about, but also that if they do not feel that they've had a fair assessment that there isn't really a way they can have somebody to advocate for them.

Is there any consideration for the role of an ombudsperson for social assistance clients to assist when they do have challenges? Effectively, what I'm hearing, for instance,

is I have a client who feels that their rent cheque was being held and basically: You must comply with what we need to you do or you won't get your rent cheque.

So, whether that is accurate or not, the perception of that hold that someone has in social assistance, in terms of the holding of the money makes people feel very powerless. That role of a third-party, independent advocate is something I'm hoping is appearing in the poverty action plan or being taken as a very critical priority.

Ms. Mundy: It's a good point you make. It goes back to a comment that I made actually, last night about, again the lack of awareness of the programs. At any time, if an individual on social assistance doesn't feel that they – there's two avenues, actually.

The first one, they don't feel that they were treated fairly, or if they have a question, there's a social assistance appeal board –

Ms. Bell: Okay.

Ms. Mundy: – which is made up of – there is somebody on the board that would have been in receipt at some point and had to navigate a social assistance program, and there is that avenue and independent arm's-length.

Actually what we're finding within the last two years since we've kind of moved from, as the Premier likes to say; eligibility to capability, looking at the clients' needs versus policy, what the policy states the client needs. Actually, our social assistance caseload has gone down. It's reduced by half, or not the caseload, sorry, the appeals have reduced by half. That's because we are meeting needs. However, that is an option for clients if they do not feel.

Another option, something again that, you know, I have introduced, you know, since we have been in government, and the hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald actually acted on it, is at any point in time, again, we state in here that each and every member of this Legislative Assembly is an advocate for their constituents, and the hon. member has actually sat in with his – we just get the client signed a piece of paper saying: It's

okay for you to be there and advocating for them and sit in.

Some people are facing multiple barriers and they just need to have somebody sitting there with them to say: This is what this means and this is what that means. We allow that as well. If you have any of your constituents that are having problems navigating, or they disagree with the decision that was made. Reach out to us and I can help you.

Ms. Bell: Thank you, Chair.

Recognition of Guests (III)

Chair: Hon. members, before I move onto the next person on my list, I would like to draw your attention to the gallery and welcome Stavert Huestis, who was an MLA for 4th prince from 1984 to 1996

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Chair: Thank you. Mr. Heustis has brought along his grandson John to watch the procedures. Thank you, sir, for your service to our province. Also thank you for taking the time to take – to introduce John to the important work that you did in the past. And the important work that we're doing here on the floor. Welcome.

The hon. Member from West Royalty-Springvale.

Mr. Dumville: Thank you, Chair.

In regard to family human services, the community grants, the social programs, there's 23 here, and they're all worthwhile. I notice most of them are over a \$100,000. I bring your attention to number seven. The Easter Seals Society, 2017, 2018 budget estimate was zero, but the budget forecast is \$10,000. Then, for 2018-2019, it's zero again.

I don't know if you're aware, but the Rotary Club of Charlottetown has a franchise for Easter Seals for the province. Last year, we raised \$153,000. That was for 2017. I'm just wondering, \$10,000 in regards to other worthwhile entities here, it doesn't seem like very much money.

Could the province do better in regards to Easter Seals because it's all about the children?

Ms. Mundy: You're right hon. member. It is all about the children. That's why for this year for the first year, possibly ever?

Lane Pineau Director: For our department.

Ms. Mundy: What's that?

For our department, when we ended up with a surplus at the end of next year, we decided to fund them with that year-end. It's not typically one of our community partners that is funded through our department. We felt it very necessary.

There hadn't been a specific ask from them, but we did agree that they are a very worthwhile community organization that does wonderful work. It was right around the time that we were having the Easter Seals tour, the school tour. We allocated \$10,000 for them this year. So it wasn't something that was budgeted for. It was that year-end allocation.

Mr. Dumville: We appreciate the \$10,000. Don't get me wrong.

Do you think that number could be up in subsequent years, minister?

Ms. Mundy: Again, hon. member, they're not typically one of our community partners, like they aren't someone who comes to with us a budget request each and every year.

I'm not sure where that is at. I can check into it. Again, it was a one-time – I don't even think it was an ask there. It was a one-time offer that we had these surplus funds and wanted to make sure. I can follow-up to see if there is an ask from them. They were very grateful, and it did come as a complete surprise to them.

Mr. Dumville: We run the campaign every year, the Rotary Club. Would it be appropriate if our Easter Seals committee contacted the province for a donation to our campaign?

Ms. Mundy: I can get back to you on that. I'm not sure how that would work. I'll follow-up. You and I can have a side bar on

that. I can get some more information from my department.

But I do know, from personal experience, having been one of the co-chairs one year on the fundraising committee with Stephen Cudmore. We did some great work with Gus Hillstrom to develop that video: *I've Got a Name*. There was a song actually written for it.

It's something that is very close to my heart and an organization that does wonderful. I did spend some time this year on school bus tour with my colleague from education, Minister of Education, Early Learning and Culture. I got to spend some time with Brayden as well.

We can follow-up on that.

Mr. Dumville: Thank you very much, minister.

Thank you, chair.

Chair: The hon. Member from Borden-Kinkora.

Mr. Fox: Minister, I'm wondering, how much consultation is there done between the department and the Attorney General's department on the home study reports and that kind of stuff?

Ms. Mundy: I'm not sure what you mean on home study reports.

Mr. Fox: If there's a court ordered home study in regards a two parents, who have split, and there are children involved. It's going to affect the future custody of those – that child going to parent A or parent B, they do a home study.

Ms. Mundy: What you're talking about, I think you're confusing with child protection. The only time our department would be involved is if there was a concern for the safety of that child. Then child protection would be called into then assess the –

Mr. Fox: No. I'm not talking about –

Ms. Mundy: You're not into social programs, right? You're not in social programs.

Chair: We're not in that section, yet, hon. member.

Mr. Fox: We're not in child and family – okay.

Chair: No, sorry.

If you could just hold that question –

Mr. Fox: Yeah, no problem.

Chair: – until the next section. Thank you.

Shall the section carry? Carried.

Child and Family Services

Child and Family

Total Child and Family: 22,329,500.

Total Department of Family and Human Services: 121,425,800.

Mr. Fox: Question.

Chair: The hon. Member from Borden-Kinkora.

Mr. Fox: Is that question in this section, then?

Chair: Yes.

Ms. Mundy: Yes. And, in answer to your question: If there was concern for the child's safety –

Mr. Fox: No, there's not. So, what we have, you have parent A and parent B, who basically, parent B has full custody. Parent A has visitation rights. Now, they're involved in doing a home study to find out if parent A's visitation can be expanded from what they are.

Ms. Mundy: That wouldn't be us, would it? No.

Mr. Fox: There's no –

Ms. Mundy: Not through my department. My department deals strictly with child protection.

Mr. Fox: Okay, that's what I was wondering, if there was any corresponding.

Thank you. Carry it.

Ms. Mundy: (Indistinct) through the department of justice (Indistinct)

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you.

Firstly, a legislative question. I'm just wondering where we are in terms of the implementation of the child protection review, a couple years ago?

Ms. Mundy: Yeah. We have been making some great progress on that. A lot of the recommendations overlapped other departments, around the – strengthening the voice of the child.

We worked with my colleague in justice and public safety to implement the child lawyer. I think recommendation-wise, I think we're at about 20% of – there were 66 recommendations in all. We had highlighted six priority areas that we were going to act on. I think out of the whole 66, we are about 20% compliant.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you.

The people, who came forward with the recommendations in that review, had three foundational that had be done prior to priorities, or come prior to the others. Are those three fundamental recommendations, have they been implemented?

Ms. Mundy: There were two areas. When you talk about fundamental – just refresh my memory.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Yeah, I don't –

Ms. Mundy: – we had two. There were two areas. There was policy and priority and there was, what was the other? There were two streams. We combined the two streams under the six priority areas that we were going to.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: I'm afraid I don't have a copy of the review with me, but I do remember, in reading it and reviewing it that there three fundamental requirements or recommendations that they felt had to be in place before the other 63 –

Ms. Mundy: Right.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: – could be properly, or the most effectively and efficiently carried out.

Ms. Mundy: Right.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: I think they were legislative, but I'm not sure.

Ms. Mundy: There were some that were legislative, but actually there were six; not just three. It was six –

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Okay.

Ms. Mundy: – yeah, it was six.

Where we're at with that; we have done some of the legislative changes. Last session, it was the hearsay evidence, that was one of them. Again, trying to lessen the exposure of the child to traumatic –

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Yeah –

Ms. Mundy: – so we –

Dr. Bevan-Baker: – I remember that, now –

Ms. Mundy: – did that legislative change. That was one of the legislation – the child lawyer was strengthening the voice of the child. The supervised access and exchange, and the parental coordination, that was also around strengthening the voice of the child.

We've been acting on many of the six priorities. That's where our focus is. But to say we're totally compliance with all six? No, because that would encompass all 66.

That's why I kind of went to we're about 20% compliant of the 66. Each of the six encompassed, I guess, the 66. If that makes any sense?

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Just to carry on, I wish I'd brought a copy of the review up –

Ms. Mundy: Yeah, I wish I –

Dr. Bevan-Baker: – with me –

Ms. Mundy: – had it, too.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: – and I could refer to it.

Ms. Mundy: Yeah.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: I think it was 2015, was it 16? It was –

Ms. Mundy: It was (Indistinct) we started the – we appointed the committee in November of 2015 and consultations started in January. I'm trying to remember when, I think it was, was it April of, I think it was April of 2016, or fall of 2016 that we – and again, I'm sorry. We can sidebar on this after –

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Sure.

Ms. Mundy: – I can bring you back information.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Okay.

Ms. Mundy: Yeah.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Just one final point on that.

If it has taken us a couple of years to get 20%, do you have a, sort of, idea of timeframe when the majority, or, perhaps, all of those recommendations, assuming you accept them, will be implemented?

Ms. Mundy: We did accept them all. We did. We had a five-year work plan is what we anticipated that it would take to be fully compliant with all 66 recommendations. We did accept each and every one wholeheartedly.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: I'll move on now. I think this is the correct section for the grandparents as primary –

Ms. Mundy: Yeah.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: – caregivers, right?

I see that in the supports for children, that's gone up \$1.5 million. Is that entirely the – due to that program?

Ms. Mundy: Let's take a look here: 1.5 would be attributed to the Grandparents and Care Providers program, and that's all I have in here.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: I know there were some issues with the announcement and rolling out of this program. There were some concerns from the grandparents themselves about eligibility requirements and also the CRA claw back, which, sort of, didn't appear immediately, but later on in the process. In February, if I remember right, when that issue came up.

Has that been completely resolved now? The potential for claw back from CRA on that \$700?

Ms. Mundy: Absolutely. Actually, it kind of overwhelms me, when I think about the impact that we've, not only had on little PEI, with the challenge that we made to CRA, but to the landscape of Canada. I think it was about a month ago, CRA announced that they would be making amendments to the *Income Tax Act* so that, not only Prince Edward Island grandparents and caregivers, who were part of this program would not have to claim any of that. They would not touch their Canada Child Benefit, but they were changing the act. That's huge, so that any –

Dr. Bevan-Baker: It is.

Ms. Mundy: – other province in Canada, who wanted to follow our lead could now develop and implement their own program, so that was huge.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: That is. I must congratulate you for that. I know, I don't know if it was unexpected to you, but I know to many of us that challenge was – or that pushback from the feds was unexpected. I'm really glad that's what worked out, not just for the grandparents or great-grandparents, or extended family here on PEI, but also for all Canadians, that its opened that door.

I have a few other questions –

Ms. Mundy: Sure.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: – on the grandparents program here.

Can you tell me how many grandparents or great-grandparents or extended family were approved in phase 1 of that roll out?

Ms. Mundy: It's kind of ironic that you brought that up because initially, when we were developing this program, this has been, you know, a program that has been near and dear to my heart for many years; something I've been championing. When, we – when my department came back to me with, I guess a, kind of a high level look at what the program could look like. One of the first questions I asked was: How many children, right now, are at risk of having to go into foster care or leave a family member that – or go into a group home, or leave a family member, someone who would be open to caring for them and loving them and providing them the support they need. The department told me there were 54 children. I said: We can't wait. We cannot wait until a full program is developed. We need to provide supports to those children and to those families and keep them from becoming wards of the province.

That's why we decided to roll it out in two phases. The first phase was going to deal with those immediate children that needed the help right away and then the second phase would deal with, if you want to call them, for lack of a better word; the historical ones. The ones that we didn't know about; the ones that had just taken the children into their homes anyway and had been caring for them for one, two, three, 10, 15 years, which was many of the grandparents that I was dealing with, right? But, we didn't – they hadn't been identified.

I said: If we can roll it out into two phases, we can deal with the immediate need, and we can identify those that we don't know about. So, and we can do the other supports that we were looking at, as well. We can do the legal portion of it, the social work portion of it, which would help a social worker help the grandparent, you know, if it was a grandparent or the caregiver, navigate systems because it's something they might not have ever done, or hadn't done in 30 or 40. That was going to be the second phase.

But, when we rolled out the first phase, there were so many people that were calling saying, do I qualify? What's this about? I'm hearing about this. Then, I think the word was, kind of, getting distorted, as we all know, if I tell you something and you tell the hon. member next to you something and it was getting distorted. We said: We can't

wait. We are going to take everyone, who applies and we are going to go through an assessment process to see where they are. We are going to ask for patience and we're going to say, this is where we're at. We can, you know, we will get to you. You are in the queue. We will be looking at your situation, and assessing it. We didn't say no to anybody at first.

Then, as we dealt with again those initial 54, we then started to work. We opened the program within weeks to everyone and expanded the program. Now, I'm very pleased to say, we've got 105 families, grandparents and caregivers that are providing support, and are getting support for 139 children who may have otherwise come into the care of the director of child protection; ended up in a group home; ended up in a foster home – which is a loving home as well.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Yeah.

Ms. Mundy: Now, are receiving supports.

Another one of my urgencies, and I will say, was a little selfish on my part, was the age of some of these grandparents. Summerside group, in particular, held a very special place in my heart and there was many times, when I sat around the table with them, they spoke about, they weren't worried about themselves, they were worried about the next generation coming up, and getting supports for them, and that they would never live to see a cheque come in the mail to them. Again, I wanted to make sure that they were getting the support.

There was one of the women, Jackie Agnew, and I just want her name to be in the record – sorry. Her cheque came on Thursday and she passed away on Friday. Again, that was some of the urgency to get this program out the door and get help to the people that need it. She knew it was coming, which I guess does my heart good, is she knew it was coming.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you, minister, and I'm so sorry to hear that story. It's quite clear how moved you are by this whole process.

Just to recap. Let you recover a bit. There were 54 children in the initial phase for the

safety reasons and now there are 139, in just over a hundred households, is that correct?

Ms. Mundy: Right.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Okay, great.

Do you have a sense of how many of the grandparents who would qualify under the criteria of the program, have not been captured in that 139 number?

Ms. Mundy: It's something that was actually very interesting to us, because of our early intervention and our quick intervention on the initial 54, the majority of those have been reunited with their biological parents.

Again, through placing them, getting them out of the situation that they were in, and into a safe and loving home, and our social workers being able to interact with the biological parent and work on a safety plan to return that child, the majority of that 54 have been returned and we're continuing to monitor it. The majority of those 139 children that are receiving supports are from –

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Second phase –

Ms. Mundy: – are historical cases.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Interesting.

That's a real – that's a lovely success story –

Ms. Mundy: Yeah.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Whether the program engendered that or not, who cares.

That's really – I'm so pleased to hear that, minister.

Ms. Mundy: Yeah.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: So phase 2, which took effect on April 1st of this year, I know there was some question about the retroactivity of that; whether those who registered during that time between December 1st, when the program was announced and April 1st, when phase 2 was rolled out, whether, if they qualified on April 1st, whether their payments would be retroactive?

Can you update the house on the decision that was made on that?

Ms. Mundy: There was, yes. Anyone, who had applied for the program prior to March 31st and including March 31st, would receive, and if they were approved, they would receive payments retroactive back to when the program launched. Which was I think December 1st –

Dr. Bevan-Baker: December 1st –

Ms. Mundy: – we launched the program.

We still have people that are waiting for that, but they still will get their retroactivity. Going through the process, I guess, of assessing a family sometimes can take a little bit longer because sometimes we're hunting for information going back 10 years, right?

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Yeah.

Ms. Mundy: So some people are still waiting, however they know that when they are approved and we can, you know, we can kind of indicate if what we're seeing here on the surface is what we're seeing here on the surface, you will be approved.

Something else I want to mention – we did and we got out before the March 31st deadline, is we got out to both community groups, or actually any grandparent or caregiver who had applied or called our offices for information about the program, we had two information sessions, one in Summerside and one in Charlottetown.

We had our team go to each and we also brought an expert from Grant Thornton to give his interpretation on the tax, because we hadn't resolved that – give his interpretation which he felt, based on his expert opinion it would not be taxable and should not be clawed back. Just to give some peace of mind to those caregivers.

We also brought people from CRA, and we brought representatives from Service Canada in just to talk about other government programs that they might be missing out on. We did that again prior to the March 31st deadline because we wanted anybody who was sitting on the fence or didn't know or have the correct information,

to be able to come there; get the information they needed and then apply.

We were taking applications on the spot. We had social workers there taking applications on the spot. In both of those cases, we had caregivers who ended up finding out they were eligible for other federal –

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Programs (Indistinct)

Ms. Mundy: – programs they didn't know about.

There were two grandmothers in Summerside that ended up getting survivor benefits that they didn't know they were entitled to.

It was wonderful again to kind of go outside of what, you know, the black and white of the program said – again, it was this program was designed; it was to do the right thing, number one. It was designed from the heart. It was something that we wanted to make sure that – and people left there claiming it was a wonderful engagement process.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: I know having spoken to some of the grandparents who attended both of those meetings, or one or other of those meetings, how appreciative they were of the information they received. So thank you for that, minister. And I know that the reason for holding it then was – am I right that if you apply after April 1st it would not be retroactive? You would not get that – it wouldn't be retroactive to the beginning of the program, is that correct?

Ms. Mundy: Right, yes.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: If you weren't registered?

Ms. Mundy: Yes.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Great.

Have you had many people who have registered since April the 1st?

Ms. Mundy: I'd have to get back to you on that, but the last time I checked, it's just people who are now in active child – there haven't been many historical cases, or maybe not even any historical case. The

cases that are coming forth now are more active child protection cases, right?

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Right, new ones.

Ms. Mundy: Yes, new ones.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Just to check, this is not a means-tested, or income-tested program that is – your eligibility is not at all related to your status – when I say the status of the grandparent or great grandparent who is offering the support, is that correct?

Ms. Mundy: It is not mean tested. This is in the best interests of the child and this is to provide supports for the children.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: I know we call it grandparents as primary caregivers, but it's not just grandparents and there are great grandparents and other family members who are doing it. So is there a definition attached to this program of the family member who would be eligible if they weren't a grandparent?

Ms. Mundy: Actually the program is called grandparents and care providers program.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Okay, my apologies.

Ms. Mundy: That's okay.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: So how wide does that go? Are the parameters beyond which you would not qualify?

Ms. Mundy: Certainly there are. And to the point I made to your seat mate, I recommend – I highly recommend, and I said this to both of the groups: Do not screen yourself out. Just because the criteria say this, do not screen yourself out. Call child protection, call the number, ask for an assessment, and let the social worker walk you through the program, rather than listening to what I'm going to tell you, or what you're going to tell you. So come and be assessed.

If you are caring for a child who has had to leave his biological – his or her biological parents for safety reasons, call. Whether it's mental health, whether it's addictions, call and be assessed.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: I know one of the criteria is that the grandparents or caregiver provide

100% of the support for the children, because we have grandparents who look after the children maybe every day after school and every weekend, provide them with clothing and food and pay for their sports and dental appointments and on, and on, and on.

What is the time – the sort of percentage of time that to the grandparent or caregiver has to be the custodian of that child in order to qualify for the program?

Ms. Mundy: The care provider has to be the primary caregiver for that child.

So if it was in the case – sorry, just to clarify – if it was in a case of a grandparent watching a child after school or something like that, there may be supports through the child care subsidy program for that parent to help cover off the cost of – you know, if the grandparent's going to charge.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Okay. So can you tell us what, if any, involvement CPS will have with these grandparents as primary caregivers?

Ms. Mundy: Child protection – there will be a social worker assigned to every family.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Will there be routine checks? I know that some of the grandparents were concerned about intrusiveness and not wanting to be sort of viewed as being anything other than just loving grandparents.

Ms. Mundy: The support that will be given, it's not – I wouldn't call it a check, per se. And again, this is where I advise everyone to go in and actually talk to the worker. The social workers' involvement is for support. It is – in many cases, these children have suffered trauma, so it's to make sure that the trauma is dealt with and that the child is growing and thriving. It is also – like, it has prevented the child coming into protection under the director of child protections, so we don't really – it wouldn't be the same kind of situation as if we had to remove a child and take – there was nobody else there and the child was now a ward of the province. Well then, that's where those checks come in to play.

But the social work that is assigned to the child is there to make sure that the family, it has support. It's not for checks.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Sure, final question.

I appreciate your patience, chair and minister. The point you just brought up about – I know it's the desire of the province as much as possible to stay away from being the carer of the child. We don't want the province to step in there. And the kinship program, am I right, it's actually a – or that kinship program is essentially the province taking care of the child?

Ms. Mundy: Right.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: So this grandparent program, it offers an alternative to that and I presume one that you would rather see children go to, is that correct?

Ms. Mundy: Absolutely. Yes. That's where we developed it.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Final comment. Thank you.

I know I gave you a rather hard time when this was rolled out, but I'm very pleased today at where the program sits, and I know because I've spoken to many of these grandparents that they're also very satisfied with how things have evolved and are very grateful for the program. Thank you, minister.

Ms. Mundy: Thank you very much.

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

Mr. R. Brown: I know a lot of your staff down there, they do a tremendous job and they really like the new approach the department has taken. Thank you.

Ms. Mundy: Thank you.

Chair: Thank you.

The hon. Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy. You're good?

Thank you.

The hon. Member from Borden-Kinkora.

Matters of Privilege

Mr. Fox: If I could have some indulgence here, I'd like to express my thoughts right now with something that's tragically happening in to the states. There's been another shooting down there in Santa Fe, Texas and it's going on right now. They're trying to secure the school and there's multiple people been killed, so express my thoughts to the people of Santa Fe and the school.

Chair: Thank you.

Mr. MacKay: Carry the (Indistinct)

Chair: Shall the section carry? Carried.

Shall the total carry? Carried.

Shall the total Department of Family and Human Services carry? Carried.

Thank you, minister.

Ms. Mundy: That's it?

Chair: Thank you, Mr. Pineau.

Ms. Mundy: Madame Chair, I move that the Speaker take the chair, and that the Chair report progress and beg leave to sit again.

Chair: Shall it carry? Carried.

Mr. 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 the report of the committee be adopted.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Mitchell: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. Minister of Finance, that the 13th order of the day now be read.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk Assistant (R. Reddin): Order No. 13, *Cannabis Taxation Agreement Act*, Bill No. 31, ordered for second reading.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Mitchell: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. Minister of Finance, that the said bill be now read a second time.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk Assistant: *Cannabis Taxation Agreement Act*, Bill No. 31, read a second time.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Mitchell: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. Minister of Finance, this how do now resolve itself and a Committee of the Whole House to take into consideration the said bill.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

I will call on the hon. Member from Vernon River-Stratford, if you wouldn't mind coming and chairing this bill.

Chair (McIsaac): The House is in a Committee of the Whole House to the house to take into consideration a bill to be intitled *Cannabis Taxation Agreement Act*. Is it the pleasure of the committee the bill now be read clause by clause?

An Hon. Member: Overview, Chair.

Chair: Overview? Great.

The hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. MacDonald: This bill simply gives us the power to sign an agreement with the federal government and is an act of legislation required to allow the province to cooperating and collect the tax on behalf of the federal government.

We do not have a detailed agreement yet, but we know what was agreed by finance ministers in December, 2017. Tax revenue will likely be collected by the federal government at a supplier level and tax will be distributed to the provinces based on volume sold to each province. Tax will be split 75% to the provinces and 25% to the feds. Maximum federal share is \$100 million. This is the amount the feds were

committing annually to spend on their various programs that support legalization, education, policing, et cetera.

A federal tax revenue exceeds \$100 million of the shared per cap with the provinces. The revenue split has been agreed for the first two years after legalization. Federal and provincial ministers will revisit the revenue split between the provinces and the feds during the second year of legalization. Tax is \$1 per gram unless the product is greater than \$10 per gram, which is the case – tax is 10%. Cannabis is also subject to HST. The excise and HST revenue is included in the provincial estimates.

Chair: Questions?

The hon. Member from Georgetown-St. Peters.

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Chair.

My concern with this arises from the fact that we don't really have an agreement in place. So I understand that you met in 2017 and you have – the finance ministers all talked about what they want, but I guess, how can you trust that Ottawa is going to listen to what the finance ministers had decided on?

Mr. MacDonald: Well, hopefully, since all the ministers signed it, I think Ottawa would have quite a fight on their hands if they tried to divert from the original plan on cannabis.

Mr. Myers: So overall, you're talking about \$1 a gram, plus you get to collect 10% if it's over a certain amount and HST. What is the federal government's take in it all?

Mr. MacDonald: What is their take?

Mr. Myers: Yes, on taxes.

Mr. MacDonald: On taxes? Well 10% is coming to us, so 25% to the federal government. On a 100%, 75%'s coming to PEI and 25% is going to Ottawa, up to \$100 million.

Mr. Myers: Is that on the total taxes or the total profit? I don't understand (Indistinct)

Mr. MacDonald: The excise tax.

Mr. Myers: The excise tax.

Part of what had been going on with tobacco for a long, long time now – it's been going on forever, is the excise tax brings the price of the product up to the point where it becomes a black market item. I'm not sure that that's going on right now. I certainly don't hear it; but it'll happen again, like over time it comes and goes and it becomes a thing and then government either cracks down legally or government will lower the tax to make it so the business model isn't there in the black market anymore?

What assurances, I guess, do we have in place – because the taxation can be pretty rigid, when you're setting it at a price of \$1 a gram, and you have all your percentages down, so it makes it a really rigid product as far as being able to move or shift the price. What assurances are there in your pricing model that the black market isn't still going to be cheaper?

Mr. MacDonald: Well, I don't think there's any assurances in the black market, and I'm sure the black market for a period of time will likely be cheaper. I think what we have to do is educate people to know their source and I think we have to go at it at that angle, but I think there will be space there to maneuver. As everybody knows there's no set price yet from the producers, either, so I think everybody's going to have to work together to make this work. So the producers want to make money, and obviously the federal government and the province is kind of at the tail end, so I think we should be in good shape but it is without a doubt, you're right, going to take a while.

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

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Chair.

This for me, this is one of the flaws that I've seen in it since its inception is that, and I've talked about it in the House already. It's not really a new topic for me to talk about, but the strength of the – I'll call it black market but it's not really a black market – although it's 100% illegal at this point, so it's drug dealers and organized crime, and that's kind of the crux of that industry as it exists right now, or I even caution to call it an industry.

I understand what you're saying is you're going to do a kind of a know-your-source campaign. Is there inherent risk in that by advertising in that manner that you're going to put it in front of young eyes?

Remember how Canada has outlawed any advertisement for tobacco products. So you can't advertise for tobacco anymore because over the years the big tobacco companies were targeting 8-year-olds and driving it into their heads – well, they were – that this was cool, so they grew up with the idea that it was cool. I smoked when I was in high school. I probably fell into that category. They advertised in *The Hockey News* and stuff like that. When looking back, it's pretty ridiculous to think that that was allowed, but it was.

So is there an inherent risk of putting it in front of the wrong eyes? And I understand what you're trying to do, but when you advertise, it's a lot harder now to blot it out of certain demographics. What's your plan around making sure it gets in front of the right eyes?

Mr. MacDonald: Well, there's an RFP that was prepared and sent out via the chief health officer's office yesterday or the day before, I guess it was, and it's not a marketing strategy by any means. It's an educational component that you're actually talking about the risks of cannabis, you're talking about – which a lot of people forget, but the rights of people that don't smoke cannabis, as well, so there's a whole education and health compartment to that.

So they're not – I see where you're coming from in *The Hockey News*, and yes I remember that, but I don't think this is going to go that route, hon. member, I think it's going to be actually – it will be taken out and put into the schools and run through organizations like MADD Canada, which they're already doing, and that type of thing.

Mr. Myers: That is good to hear, because that would be a concern that I would have with this.

The other concern, I guess one of the concerns I have is enforcement and something that popped into my head here – it was this morning, actually, because I was driving in and I had a couple of stops to

make so I was down over on the other side of town but I was coming up, and it kind of triggered in my mind that – the no smoking in workplace or, you know, the rules that are currently in place just for smoking.

There was one particular street, and I won't name where it was, because it doesn't really matter, but there was a group of people out smoking, and it was obvious that they were from a single organization; but they were right on the sidewalk, but as people were walking to work they were forced to kind of walk through them. Now I might have been one of those people back at one point in my life and I understand the desire to smoke, for someone who does, but I also understand the desire for clean air for somebody who now doesn't smoke and desires clean air.

What kind of enforcement will be put in place on how you handle that part of the act? Because I like the public campaign in the schools and how you're going to – so I like that, but how do we make sure that people understand that, because you said part of your campaign will be impact on others. So how do we kind of make it well known that there's regulations where it's allowed, but a lot of it has to do with other people's choices.

Mr. MacDonald: Public spaces.

Mr. Myers: Yeah, yeah. So how do you –

Mr. MacDonald: Well –

Mr. Myers: What kind of enforcement will there be around that?

Mr. MacDonald: Part of the RFP was going to be about that. Smoke-Free PEI, I think that's the name of the organization, we've also had discussions with them. Frank Morrison and Gary MacDougall, actually, did a presentation.

So we'll work towards – you just have to educate those individuals, but it's also the building owners and the areas that are surrounded, whether it's a dwelling or a professional building. I think there's additional signage and there are all kinds of things I think they can do, but that will be part of the RFP As well.

Chair: We're straying a little bit from the act, but anyway, Rustico-Emerald has a question.

Mr. Trivers: Thanks, Chair.

I was wondering if you can outline right now what the projected excise tax is going to be on cannabis, for the record, and what you're going to use those tax dollars for.

Mr. MacDonald: Well, as I said from the outset, I think the tax dollars will be used for – and basically policing it'll be used for and we'll see.

We talked a little bit in the House about municipalities; we talked about a percentage going to them.

This is a – it's all new, so for us to indicate exactly what's going to be required in certain areas, we're working with health, we're working with justice, we're working with transportation. Until we know exactly what levels of revenue and then where that revenue is required the most, is it required in the education program, is it required through transportation?

It's pretty hard to depict exactly the amount of money, because you really don't know your – there's no gauge out there to tell you how many people are actually smoking cannabis at the present time. Like there's no way to track that at the present time. So your research is very limited on your business plan, if that's what you're –

Mr. Trivers: Is one of the objectives of this act to increase government revenue?

Mr. MacDonald: Well, I think no. I mean, this is coming from the federal government, so if it does increase government revenues then so be it, but that money from that revenue is going to be put back into programs.

Mr. Trivers: Have you considered trying to make the implementation, the legalization of cannabis and the cannabis taxation agreement sort of taxation-neutral by not providing anymore tax burden on Islanders?

Mr. MacDonald: I don't know. We're not going to tax Islanders because we're taking

in sales of cannabis. I'm not sure what you're (Indistinct)

Mr. Trivers: Well, you're planning right now to make money, make additional tax dollars by legalizing and selling cannabis, from the sale of cannabis. Have you considered trying to say, you know, we just want to break even?

Mr. MacDonald: Yeah, well, I think the whole purpose of this, and I mean, again, this is a federal initiative, so for us to deal with it, and until we know exactly what those sales or revenue, whatever you want to call them are going to be, working with health, working with education, where that money goes back out to, I think is undetermined until we can resolve what those sales are going to be.

Mr. Trivers: So why do you feel that introducing cannabis legally on the Island is going to have a negative impact on health and education?

Mr. MacDonald: Well, I don't; but we've got four departments working together. I think you raised it at one time, about the research pending if youth use cannabis. We need to educate youth from the ages of – what was it that I quoted? From 15 to 24-years-old, they've used – one in five youth smoke cannabis.

There's also studies it out there that youth think that they can drive while they're high. If they were travelling with friends, the friends that were all drinking; the individual that's high decides they can drive. That's the education component. We have to get to that level and ensure that we're doing everything possible to educate the youth, which is likely the most vulnerable.

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald, are the questions on this bill, per se?

Mr. Trivers: Yeah.

In the cannabis taxation agreement, have you given anymore consideration into how you might make that agreement so that, indeed, most of the administration and the profits, if any of that come from legalized sale of cannabis, actually, and the operations

all reside within the private sector instead of going government?

Mr. MacDonald: I think what – if I read what the finance minister's meeting, and I wasn't there at the time, it was December, 2017. It was actually that's what they actually talked about, that the monies that are gained through this are actually going back into policing and education and so on and so forth.

Mr. Trivers: One final comment. I know we didn't have a recorded division or standing vote on *An Act to Respond to the Legalization of Cannabis*, and I just wanted, for the record, to get out that I did vote against that act, and I don't agree with government's approach to legalizing cannabis here on Prince Edward Island.

Thank you.

Chair: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Parkdale.

Ms. Bell: Thank you, Chair.

Minister, can you just advise, has there been discussion around that passing this act doesn't preclude further changes for ongoing negotiations with First Nations?

Mr. MacDonald: Sorry, I can't hear.

Chair: Order! Can you repeat that –

Ms. Bell: Sure.

Chair: – the hon. Member from Charlottetown-Parkdale?

Ms. Bell: Minister, passing this act doesn't preclude any further or future changes for ongoing negotiations with First Nations?

Mr. MacDonald: No, but First Nations has been – there have been discussions with First Nations in regards to this. Also, obviously, at the national level, you're seeing where that's playing out as we speak. It will likely depend, at that level, and then have a trickle-down effect.

Ms. Bell: Okay.

For that basis, I understand that you can't really specify what we're specifically going

to do with the funds because those funds could change depending on what happens at the federal level. Is that part of the consideration?

Mr. MacDonald: I think there's additional organizations, too, I mean, just from the municipality discussions we've had in the House.

There are going to be different avenues for some of the revenues to be dispersed. To what extent, I can't really talk about that until we know where the issues or the –

Ms. Bell: That's good.

I'm great.

Thank you, Chair.

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

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Chair.

Further question on the structure of how this money is coming in; my understanding from the other bills that are on the floor, that it's coming into general revenue. That's the way the corporation was set-up anyway.

Was there any stipulation from the federal end of it that that had to be the case, or was that just an internal decision?

Mr. MacDonald: No. I don't believe there was anything in the bill. There might have been a paragraph on that, actually.

No, I don't believe there is.

Mr. Myers: It says that the part of this bill authorized the minister to make payments out of the operating fund in accordance with the cannabis taxation agreement and on behalf of the government and with the approval of Cabinet to enter into an agreement.

What is the, makes payment out of the operating funds, how does that tie back into entering into an agreement? Do you have to pay Ottawa – you're collecting all the tax and paying Ottawa, is that the deal?

Mr. MacDonald: No. Ottawa is collecting the tax on the excise, right? Because it's

coming from the (Indistinct) from the manufacturer. We're doing the, obviously, the 10%. We, it says, "The Minister may make payments from the Operating Fund in accordance with a cannabis taxation agreement."

That allows us to set-up, basically very similar to liquor control commission.

Mr. Myers: Can you explain the 10% again? Because you – there was a \$1 a gram you talked about, then you talked about you'll collect HST if it's over a certain amount.

Is it 10% always applicable –

Mr. MacDonald: Yes

Mr. Myers: – or only sometimes? It's always applicable?

Mr. MacDonald: It's either \$1 or 10%.

Mr. Myers: It's either whichever is greatest?

Mr. MacDonald: Yeah.

Mr. Myers: Okay. So, it's either \$1 or 10% whatever is greatest, and always HST then, on top of that?

Mr. MacDonald: Yes.

Mr. Myers: Okay.

I know this was asked before, and I know it's a tough question because you haven't sold any yet, but you must have some sort of an internal projection of what you kind of hope to sell. You'll have four stores running. You'll cover the majority part of Prince Edward Island.

Do you have any kind of projections of what – you must have had to order product, so you must be, kind of, hedging your bets one way?

Mr. MacDonald: We signed the MOUs, which you're aware of.

Mr. Myers: Yeah.

Mr. MacDonald: They're not legal binding, obviously. It was demand and supply that

were concerned about; that when we opened these stores, we wouldn't have any product to sell.

To be quite honest with you, I haven't heard a figure yet from anybody about how much we could sell. I think, personally, it's going to take two to three years before this becomes normalized on Prince Edward Island.

Mr. Myers: (Indistinct)

Mr. MacDonald: There are people, actually, buying it now, through e-commerce. But, still there's really no way for us to track what's being purchased out there, if they're going to continue to purchase from BC or Ontario, or wherever, or are they going to do it locally? I – it's a hard call.

Mr. Myers: You brought up a good point about the e-commerce part. Obviously, people are using e-commerce more and more for all kinds of transactions, not just to buy cannabis. They're using it for – to buy sneakers and –

Mr. MacDonald: Groceries –

Mr. Myers: – and groceries now, books. You name it. E-commerce is, kind of, a growing trend that's growing and growing all the time and more and more; a bigger demographic is mixing into that trend all the time.

It was something that has been brought up to me twice, actually, this week. It had to do with border services and the supposed inability of maybe not being able to get into the States, if you're credit card transactions became available to border services and they say that you were buying weed.

Is that something that's ever crossed government's – because it was honestly put on my plate twice this week. I'd never really thought of it that way until it was put to me. Is that a concern? Have you heard that?

Mr. MacDonald: I haven't heard that, but it's a very interesting thought. It'll be something that I'll into consideration. Maybe, take a look at and –

Mr. Myers: Yeah, I'd love to –

Mr. MacDonald: – make sure –

Mr. Myers: – hear more on it –

Mr. MacDonald: – (Indistinct) trends on it, but –

Mr. Myers: – because, as you know, sometimes people do things because they're easy. They might not do them if they knew they couldn't enter the United States for the rest of their lives.

I'm not saying that's the case, but people, who brought it to my attention seem to feel like that could be the case.

I'm wondering, maybe just if you could look into for us –

Mr. MacDonald: Yeah.

Mr. Myers: – and give us some feedback.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you.

It's, sort of, coming at the same problem or the same question from a different angle.

Was there any, sort of, formula used in, either on PEI or across the provinces for anticipated grams per capita of consumption?

Mr. MacDonald: I don't remember seeing one. Again, it's – I think we're following a lot that what happened in the United States and trying to scale it based on what they've done. There is someone here today, actually from Colorado.

We're looking at best practices. We haven't ordered anything as far as – knowing the amount the product, it may require some tweaking as we move forward. It may be something in six months that you're saying, why did we order so much, or why didn't we order enough?

I think, again, it's a tough – you're put in a tough position because you really don't know what the market is going to bear.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: I did read some time ago about the Colorado experience. I think they way underestimated what they need, but

they were, sort of, an island of legality in a sea of –

Mr. MacDonald: They're surrounded by millions of people.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: We, in our, situation, is entirely different. I'm glad there is somebody here from there, but I know that they sorely underestimated.

I realize how difficult this is, but – so, you have no, sort of, even ballpark figure –

Mr. MacDonald: I haven't been told –

Dr. Bevan-Baker: – of what you're imagining –

Mr. MacDonald: – anything. If someone knows, they haven't revealed it to me. I'm sure it's an ongoing thing. They're likely looking at New Brunswick, and seeing what they're doing. And Nova Scotia, seeing what they're doing.

You're right, Colorado is surrounded by states that were, was it was legal – illegal and all of a sudden it was – so.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Okay.

Thank you, Chair.

Chair: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Roach: Thank you, Chair.

My question has – in relation to my first question is in relation to section 3 (2) where, "...may make payments from the Operating Fund in accordance with a cannabis taxation agreement."

I guess don't have the same level of anticipation that we're going to be making any money on this for a while. Contrary to what others seem to believe.

Can you assure me that no Island taxpayers' dollars, in what they pay in taxes, is going to be – money is going to be moved towards supporting cannabis sales and locations across Prince Edward Island?

Mr. MacDonald: Yeah. When we set out to do this it was revenue-neutral, basically.

That's been the target ever since we started, ever since I started and I'm sure since you started, as well.

Mr. Roach: From that answer, can I take it then that any costs associated with cannabis sales and taxation and any other funds that are required to come out of there to go towards leasing or advertising or anything else to do with cannabis is going to come from any profits of taxes that are received from the sale of cannabis products, similar to alcohol?

Mr. MacDonald: Yes.

Mr. Roach: Thank you.

Mr. R. Brown: Carry the bill.

Chair: One more question, the hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Roach: Just one more question?

Chair: No, well. Go ahead.

Mr. Roach: I guess this is going along the lines of a statement that the Leader of the Third Party said.

I've been following what has been taking place in Colorado and Washington and California. I've been following that very, very closely. I believe that the Leader of the Third Party is absolutely right. What took place in Colorado cannot be –

Chair: Write that down.

Mr. Roach: – any way compared to what we're going to experience here because, as one province makes it illegal here, all provinces are going to make it legal. We're all going to fall in the same boat. You're not going to be surrounded by illegality. You're not going to have, what would I call, a tourism rush to go to any particular province.

Has that been anticipated by your staff, in terms of what it's going to cost you to set-up and how many years you really think it's going to be before you're going to start seeing any kind of profit from this?

Mr. MacDonald: When we did the retail outlets, I think the amortization period on

those alone was 10 years. I think it was, if I remember, somewhere in the vicinity between \$300 and \$350 a square foot.

Mr. Roach: I guess another question or a thought is: This is new.

Every provincial government is going to be in the same boat on this. We're all going to be new people in that market. I think it's important for us to, at least, in this province, recognize that and that there are people, who have been in that market for decades.

They're not going to have to worry about growing it in certain conditions, or using or not using pesticides and all the rest of it. The production from the illicit side of the market is not going to change very much.

It's my belief that they're going to be able to continue to produce it, and to illegally put it on the market, for, at least, a while, certainly cheaper than any government in Canada can; any provincial government can.

There's also the issue of customer loyalty, if I can call it that. Where, it's been – and I've known from my experiences, that those other organizations will let the sales – run up a tab. We're not going to be running up any tabs, I take it.

Again, having said that: Has there been a recognition that there's other players in the market, albeit illicit and illegal, that we're going to have to confront as we move forward. Having said that, price point adjustments as we go along to try to compete and get rid of that black market. That will reduce our profits greatly.

Mr. MacDonald: Yes, I believe so. I've stated earlier that it's the unknown, right now. That's why there's not price sets. That's why it will be held back rightly until the last minute before the price is determined, to ensure that the illicit drug suppliers don't know ahead of time what our market value is, at that point in time. It will take time to eliminate them.

Mr. Roach: Thank you, Chair.

Chair: The hon. Member from Borden-Kinkora.

Mr. Fox: Thank you, Chair.

Before I lose my train of thought, picking up on something the hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir went and said: I recognize the fact that you say it's going to be revenue-neutral, and we're going to keep the costs to actually pay for what the service is, but what happens if the other players do considerably flood the market or lower the cost, where it becomes – you know, where basically government's forced to basically get in a trade war and give it away? What about the cost then on to the government or the people?

Mr. MacDonald: I hope the other side of that is the legal side, where we start – continue to enforce it as we do every day now. I don't think the illegal side is going to – the people that are going to come through the front door of a retailer, the majority of them are not going to go out behind the garage to buy their dime bag of marijuana now. They're not doing it now, so, you know, I don't know – 80%; there's a study that 80% of the people that utilize marijuana are not going to change the amount they smoke, but they may change where they get it. Well, obviously they're going to, right? Or most of them, I hope, do.

Mr. Fox: Yeah.

Mr. MacDonald: I don't know if that answers your question, but I think if you look at both sides of it, they're doing – it's there now. We're not going to see – you're saying we're going to see the Hell's Angels increase their business platform by triple or quadruple for \$1 a gram, maybe.

An Hon. Member: Will they? Do you know?

Mr. MacDonald: Well, it's true. Who does know?

Mr. Fox: Like –

Mr. MacDonald: I agree with you but –

Mr. Fox: I think the member –

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Mr. Myers: (Indistinct) business.

Mr. Fox: I think the member over there will probably agree with me. I don't think we

ever won the war, as you might say, on stopping the selling of marijuana. I don't think we ever did.

Mr. Roach: (Indistinct)

Mr. Fox: Yeah, and I don't think we ever really had a grasp of how much was actually out there in the legal trade – or, pardon me, in the illegal market.

Mr. Myers: It's a great discussion (Indistinct)

Chair: Do you have an answer?

Mr. Fox: So –

Chair: Go ahead.

Mr. Fox: You want to add anything to that there, member?

Chair: I've got an interjection from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Roach: Thank you, Chair.

I think one of the big differences here now, at least that I think, is that when we do have a legal market in terms of sales and that sort of thing, there's certainly going to be a number, a lot of people out there who are going to feel a lot safer going to a regulated government store to get that.

The other side of the coin is that if you're out there walking around or you're in your house or wherever you are, and you have a cannabis product on you, I think you're going to have to have a sales receipt from the local store to show where you bought it and where that particular product came that you have in your pocket.

So it's not going to be a free pass for everybody out there who's got it in their pocket today, because there's packaging requirements, there's requirements from when you pick it up in the store and take it home. You can't have it in the dash of your car for two weeks or any of those kinds of things. So I think there's going to be a lot of things in there that are going to prevent anybody who's going to say: Well, it's legal, I've got it in my pocket so I'm good to go. I don't think that's going to be the case

because of the way the regulations are going to be around that.

Chair: The hon. Member from Borden-Kinkora.

Mr. Roach: That's a key difference.

Mr. Fox: And I would agree with you. I think the education is going to be a big part of that. It's not going to be just willy-nilly open. So the education is going to be (Indistinct) part of it.

The question I do have, though, is: Did the government ever have a chance to say we want to be the grower of the product in the province and have a tighter control? Do we ever have that opportunity? Then we're controlling it from start to finish to taxation.

Chair: Minister.

Mr. MacDonald: We did have a grower here, actually.

Mr. Fox: But I'm saying, my question is –

Mr. MacDonald: For the province to own it?

Mr. Fox: – don't have them at all, completely under the province's control. Did we ever look at that? Was that ever considered or anything?

Mr. MacDonald: I think private industry can likely do things better than government sometimes.

Mr. Fox: Yeah.

Mr. MacDonald: This is likely to be one of those times that I think you want this in the private sector and drive competition. I don't think government – I shouldn't say it, maybe they could do it just as good or better, but I think private sector would be the way to go.

Mr. Fox: I see your point but I'm wondering where we're talking about a substance that is a drug.

Mr. MacDonald: (Indistinct)

Mr. Fox: It is a drug.

Mr. MacDonald: Yeah.

Mr. Fox: It needs to be controlled. I almost have to wonder in this case, would it have been better to keep it totally government-controlled?

The question I have is going back to the taxation part.

Chair: Order, order!!

Mr. Fox: Going back to the taxation part and picking up on the comment from the member: What conversations did we have with police agencies and the RCMP on their requirements for training or extra equipment or whatever? Did we have any conversations with them (Indistinct) taxation?

Mr. MacDonald: I believe under justice – Jordie?

Some Hon. Members: Carry the bill.

Chair: Minister of justice?

Mr. J. Brown: Carry the bill.

Mr. MacDonald: Do you want to repeat that for him? Because he was (Indistinct)

Mr. Fox: I'm just wondering what actual conversations we had with the RCMP and the police agencies on what equipment they might need, that that money might have to come out of taxation to pay for specific equipment.

Mr. J. Brown: Yes. We had all kinds of conversations. We discussed this during estimates (Indistinct) you know, aside from that; but yes, we have; and we have regular conversations and we have a committee set up with them and – yeah.

Mr. Fox: Carry the bill.

Some Hon. Members: Carry the bill.

Chair: We have a question from the Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: I think you just all of a sudden thought you became the hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir or something.

Leader of the Opposition: I know there's been questions around additional resources

for police services and things like that, and I can empathize with the dilemma that you're in, being asked questions, specific questions around the amount of taxes and sales and quantities of the cannabis that would be sold; but I'm wondering, has there been any direct conversations or consultations with either the medical society of PEI or the college of surgeons and physicians?

The reason I'm asking that is I know several emergency room doctors and I've had in-depth conversations with them and they're very concerned about what they would perceive – and I take their word as expert advice, because they are in the field – that they're extremely concerned over the dramatic increase in psychosis that will start to appear, particularly in the ER rooms.

I'm wondering: Has there been any mathematical equations done or any estimates on what additional resources we would have to put into the health care system?

Mr. MacDonald: Well, they sit on the committee, the formal committee that's been set up. Dr. – Rob, who sits on the committee on their behalf?

Chair: Minister.

An Hon. Member: Minister.

Mr. MacDonald: Minister, sorry.

Mr. Mitchell: (Indistinct)

Mr. MacDonald: And?

Mr. Mitchell: (Indistinct)

Mr. MacDonald: Yeah. Dr. David Sabapathy has been the lead, actually, and even the RFP that came out yesterday came from the chief health officer's office, so there's been all kind of discussions from everywhere, from all angles. There are four departments very involved in it, and they were meeting, I believe, likely once a week leading up to this.

Leader of the Opposition: That's fine, but I guess what I'm asking: Has there been any specific asks of a budget increase? You mentioned the chief medical officer responsible for mental health and addictions.

Well when we had Dr. Keizer at committee, she emphatically stated – in her expert opinion, I might add – that we shouldn't be selling cannabis to Islanders under the age of 25 because of the developmental of their brains.

But yet, your government has decided to ignore her expert advice and go with the same as the drinking age. So has there been any communication back and forth with regards to what this could mean?

Mr. MacDonald: There has and there was discussion surrounding a possible percentage and things like that and again it comes back to let's see what the first six months or a year entails; but that committee's staying together and if there's resources that are required in that area, then we'll increase those resources.

Leader of the Opposition: Just one last question, and it stems from what the hon. member from Montague was discussing, with regards to transportation or carrying of the product. I know we discussed this a little bit a few days ago with regards to the packaging, but what would happen if a person was walking down the street or there was a search conducted by a police officer and an individual was found with a baggy with a couple of grams on them, but it wasn't in a government-approved or a government-specified package or pouch as such?

Mr. MacDonald: Well, there's basically, actually, if I could add – can I get Gary on the floor to (Indistinct) –

Chair: Can we bring as stranger on to answer that question?

Mr. MacDonald: Gary's right here for another reason so I'll get him to answer that for you.

Leader of the Opposition: Okay.

Some Hon. Members: Carry the bill.

Chair: Just get one answer. Come on up.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Chair: We'll extend it a little bit.

Mr. MacDonald: It'll make your trip worthwhile.

Chair: Can you introduce yourself and your title there, Gary, please?

Gary Demeulenaere Director: Gary Demeulenaere, Director of Legal and Policy Services with the Department of Justice and Public Safety.

Mr. Myers: Finally a half-decent lawyer in this Chamber.

Chair: Did you hear the question? Would you like to repeat the question just quickly there, Leader of the Opposition?

Leader of the Opposition: Sure. Essentially I was just asking with regards to if an individual was searched by a police officer and they were found to have a couple of grams of cannabis – marijuana on them, but it wasn't in a package from a licensed government outlet, what would the repercussions be?

Gary Demeulenaere Director: Well, recognizing I was here to deal with a different act and I don't have that act in front of me, but essentially their transport would be in the purchase of the package from the store itself, but if they were caught, for example, with a couple gram – baggy, the officer, or whoever would potentially be an inspector could ask them for the source of the product. There's a requirement in the act for them to be able to cooperate with that.

For example, if somebody had a medical prescription in terms of packaging itself, but recognizing that persons can share product under the federal regulations, so it's conceivably possible that you would have product on you potentially from home cultivation, for example, or that you borrowed from your friend, as long as you didn't pay for it, that would be in a non-identified package on your person, so long as it didn't exceed the grams.

Leader of the Opposition: The three grams.

Thank you.

Chair: Shall the bill carry? Carried.

Thanks, Gary.

Mr. R. Brown: He saved the day.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

[Laughter]

Mr. MacDonald: I move the title.

Chair: Shall it carry? Carried.

Mr. MacDonald: I move the enacting clause.

Chair: Be it enacted by the Lieutenant Governor and the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Prince Edward Island as follows.

Shall it carry? Carried.

Mr. MacDonald: Mr. Chair, I move the Speaker take the chair and the Chair report the bill agreed to without amendment.

Chair: Shall it carry? Carried.

Mr. Speaker, as Chair of a Committee of the Whole House, having had under consideration a bill to be intituled *Cannabis Taxation Agreement Act*, I beg leave to report that the committee has gone through the said bill and has agreed to the same without amendment. I move that the report of the committee be adopted.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. McIsaac: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. Leader of the Third Party, that this House adjourn until Tuesday, May 22nd, at 2:00 p.m.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Have a good weekend, everybody.

The Legislature adjourned until Tuesday, May 22nd, at 2:00 p.m.