

# PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY



Speaker: Hon. Colin LaVie

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The Legislature sat at 2:00 p.m.

Matters of Privilege and Recognition of  
Guests

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier King:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Welcome back to everybody, it's great to rise in the Legislature today and welcome all of our guests in the public gallery and those who are watching online and also on EastLink television. Welcome all members back today.

I had the pleasure today to participate in a celebratory tea for Marie Kenny, who was recently elected the new Chair of the United Nations Committee for Associated Country Women of the World. A great honour for Marie who has been a long time member of the Women's Institute, not just in Prince Edward Island in our community of Brackley, but a representative in Canada and now on the international scene.

It was a wonderful celebration there with lots of her friends and colleagues wishing her well, hosted terrifically by Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor, so it was nice to be there at Fanning Bank.

I also want to pay tribute to two of the new members of the Order of Canada recently announced this morning. Walter Learning is no stranger to Prince Edward Island, the former artistic director for many years at the Confederation Centre of the Arts and also Chef Michael Smith, who is internationally known, best known, down in your parts or in at Bay Fortune and fireworks and all of his other entities so congratulations to those two most worthy individuals.

I would be remiss if I didn't mention a couple of birthdays on this side of the House. We have the hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir who is now at the ripe old age of –

**Mr. Deagle:** 28.

**Premier King:** 28, to be so young again. Also, to my principle secretary Adam Ross who, also celebrating a birthday today; 29 to

Adam. I said I wouldn't say anything more than that, but happy birthday to all those and the best of luck to everyone here today.

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

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

I'd like to welcome everybody to the House, of course, and particularly those in the gallery.

A few people I'd particularly like to pick out; I see Judith Bayliss there, nice to see you Judith and Marie Burge and also Beth Johnston is with us today, so lovely to see you Beth.

Last evening I was in Victoria By The Sea, beautiful Victoria By The Sea and they are doing their first performances, preview performances of their play there which is "Where Are You?" I think it's called, and it opens on Friday.

I know the Premier's son is involved in the Watermark Theatre and they are also preparing a couple plays there, "Boeing Boeing" and "Crimes of the Heart" I think is the other one and Jacob is in both of those shows I understand, I had a great interview with him the other day.

The Confederation Centre of course, the granddaddy of them all here on the Island, they have their openings this weekend on Friday it's Kronborg and on Saturday it's the longest running musical in the world, "Anne of Green Gables" which opens. We have such a rich tradition of theatre here on the Island, both in small halls and of course we just finished a Small Halls festival which was enormously successful. No theatre in that but, other than some storytelling, a little less than perhaps some would have wanted – storytelling and music and some dance.

Theatre tradition here on Prince Edward Island is really strong and those professional theatres, I just mentioned, along with some other ones in some small theatres, really keep that part of our Island tradition and culture going here so I wanted to give a shout out to all the theater companies here on PEI.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

Certainly, once again, it is always a pleasure to rise and welcome guests to the gallery. I see a lot of familiar faces, but some new faces as well and it's always great to have folks come in to see just what goes on inside the rails of the Legislative Assembly PEI.

Also, I would like to say hello to my mother, Agnes Mitchell who is a resident at the Mount. I haven't taken an opportunity to do that while I'm at my feet. She's probably a little bit annoyed about that, so I'll get that out of the way today. It's always good to hear that she's watching in from the Mount.

As well, I'd like to bring attention to a fairly major event that's going on tonight at the Red Shores, CDP at Red Shores, there's a qualifier race there tonight with a particular horse named "Roll with it Harry," an 11-year old stallion who came to PEI to stand as a stallion at Bruce Wood's farm out in Marshfield. But low and behold, at 11, he still had a lot of race left in him, so they brought him back to the track last year to re-race and he won a number of races, five I believe.

So this year they're bringing him back once again and it's a very nice twist to what Mr. Wood is doing with this horse and others. They are selling shares on him so you can own a piece of "Roll with it Harry," costs a very small amount, \$60, and what's beautiful about it is, all the money that is raised from this will go towards the Harness the Hope event that's being held a little later on in July at the Red Shores raceway as well.

All of those shared dollars go directly back to breast cancer on Prince Edward Island.

So last week, the Member from Cornwall-Meadowbank and myself were out and purchasing shares, as well as Karen Lavers, our candidate from District 9. At that point in time, they had 93 shares sold, so doing the math that's over \$5,000 that will go

towards breast cancer on that Saturday event.

So a little bit of a challenge to all members on the floor of the Legislature, I urge you to contact Bruce Wood or any of the people that are involved with it, and get your names on the shares. We'll be able to go down and get our pictures all taken when the horse wins at probably many events this summer.

With that, I'll end as always wishing all viewers that are viewing in from home today, a very day on Prince Edward Island.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

I stand here today honoured to represent District 8 and privileged – Stanhope-Marshfield.

I'd also like to welcome some guests. I see Beth Johnson and her son, Charlie. He's a really good baseball player that probably ended my team's dreams there last year on his own pitching. He's a great pitcher.

Also want to inform the House that I had the privilege to visit the Glen Annandale House the other day, the 1972 estate of Captain John MacDonald. Mary Gallant was gracious enough to give me a tour, and it's a beautiful treasure of PEI that we need to preserve and everyone should go out and take a look at that.

Thank you for bringing up Bruce Wood's initiative there. He's a good friend of mine, and I will accept your challenge.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Economic Growth, Tourism and Culture.

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

Thank you everyone for being here again today. I'm looking for another productive session.

I would like to give a shout out to everybody back in my district, especially Grant Mann.

Grant Mann is an avid follower, I usually run into him every Saturday. He's not scared to tell me what I'm not doing, and he's certainly willing to tell me what we are doing well, so I always look forward to Saturdays when I talk to Grant.

Also welcome to the gallery, Beth Johnson and son, Charlie, as well as Sue Gallant who is here from New Brunswick. We've got a statement here a little later today, so welcome to the gallery.

Thank you.

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

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

I would like to welcome the visitors in the gallery, and I'd like to draw special attention to George Hunter who comes all the way from Kensington on the public bus to hear our wonderful goings-on here.

It's a credit to George; it's a credit to our public transportation system. I didn't even know that there was such a service as a bus for Kensington.

Of course, a credit to this Legislature that we are such an entertaining bunch that people want to travel from the city of Kensington.

Thank you.

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

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

I don't get up and give greetings too often, but when District 7 – one of the most important members of our district, Marie Burge is here in the gallery, we like to say hello and thank you for all of the work that you do in PEI.

It's also one of my most favourite days of the year. It's kind of a bit of a different day. When you're out on the water, and you would know this too, Mr. Speaker, on the first day after school ends, all the kids – a lot of the kids are out.

A lot of the sons and daughters are out fishing with their parents. It's usually a pretty relaxed time of year, there's not a lot of heavy moving and stuff.

So it was wonderful this morning early on the water to see all the little heads poking up – sometimes a couple hours later after they came out of the bunk maybe after a little nap, but it's wonderful to see that being passed onto future generations and they love getting out there.

So a special thank you to all those fishers that are out there sharing that with their kids.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

#### Statements by Members

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

#### **Charlottetown Farmers Market**

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

Too many pieces of paper here today.

The Charlottetown Farmers Market Cooperative is Charlottetown's original and biggest market, located on land leased from the Federal Department of Agriculture at the Experimental Farm on Belvedere Avenue.

I don't know if many remember that the Charlottetown Farmers' Market was originally located on the bottom of Queen Street. I had a booth there when I was 9, selling eggs every weekend and crafts at Christmas.

In 1997 when I returned to PEI from living and working abroad, I, again, had a booth at the market for many years, which eventually led to starting a craft wholesale business which helped me pay my way through college.

In fact, the Charlottetown Farmers' Market is a welcoming starting point for many crafts people, artisans, local producers and newcomers with a wide range of international food, traditional market fare, arts, crafts, and garden products. It's the place you can guarantee you're buying local and can choose organic, get a coffee or a smoothie, enjoy fresh oysters, a spicy

sausage on a bun, a bowl of noodles and dumplings or Island smoked salmon with all the trimmings.

It's also a bustling community hub where family, friends and neighbours connect every week. The art collective 'this town is small' provides gallery space for local artists; and community groups sell raffle tickets at the front door. Regulars and visitors alike will be greeted almost every weekend at the main door by Miles Arsenault, who has been selling *The Guardian* at the market for years.

The Charlottetown Farmers' Market is now open on Wednesdays for the summer season (until Thanksgiving) in addition to the regular Saturday 9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

A final note on these important community fixture – markets are a critical part of the local economy, providing direct-to-vendor sales. Cooperative markets are owned and managed entirely by their members, which takes a huge amount of coordination, time and commitment from vendors in addition to them just making a living.

While tourism-driven spaces like Founders Hall receive significant government investment and support to get up and running, the Charlottetown Farmers' Market Cooperative has quietly but effectively been completely sustainable for years. It is currently facing some significant challenges, like the need for new ventilation systems, and expansion to its primary structures, that are stretching the capacity of its members to be able to respond. I strongly encourage the Minister for Economic Growth, Tourism and Culture to consider the value of this market to our economy and the fabric of our community, and I'm hopeful that we will continue to celebrate this wonderful space for many more years to come.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Victoria Park.

### Equity in Architecture

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

I would like to recognize an Island woman who is working to improve the representation of women in architecture.

Shallyn Murray is an architect and partner at 9 Yards Studio, a National award winning architecture and design firm. You might know this firm for its urban beehive project, for which Shallyn and Silva Stojak recently won a national award. It is one of my family's favorite destinations when we're out walking our golden retriever Xena. Or you may know this organization for its infrastructure projects like the renovation of the Confederation Centre Main Stage and the College of Piping.

Shallyn noticed that while the gender ratio was 50/50 coming out of architecture school, women make up less than 20% of the workforce and the representation of women is even worse at the partner level.

Shallyn is now lending her talents to the establishment of a PEI chapter of building equality in Architecture Atlantic. The P.E.I. chapter will offer networking and mentoring opportunities for women in architecture and the chapter will also be open to related professions, such as interior designers, contractors and builders. The hope is that the group will help keep more women in the industry. The official launch was last Friday evening at the Rivershed in Oyster Bed Bridge.

This is a great example of how Island groups are taking steps to engage women and truly understand and value the unique voice and diversity that women bring to the table.

I thank Shallyn for her efforts to improve her gender representation within her profession and I would encourage all leaders in PEI to recognize the valuable contribution women make in the workplace and take steps to encourage better gender representation in their respective fields.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### Do It Now

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

There's a real urgency in combating our climate crisis. While would we discuss a "Net Zero Building Now" program for provincial government projects. There are plenty of supportive actions that the residents of Brighton and indeed any resident that PEI can take to reduce emissions right now.

Transportation is the largest source of emissions on PEI and we should each look at changing our car habits. Consider car pooling with a neighbor or a coworker, if you're looking for a new car, consider a hybrid plug in. This car will do your entire city driving using a battery and will only use the gas motor when the battery runs low or doing long distance driving.

There's federal grant money available to help you buy and there are plenty of savings to be had from not buying gas.

When it comes to your home, efficiencyPEI offers grants for pumps and extra insulation. I call it a virtual Christmas in July. Even low-income families are covered. Grants increase significantly for lower-income families and in certain cases, efficiencyPEI will come in and do all the work, such as air sealing, for free.

However, if you have the means, I recommend that you, too, go all the way to create your own net-zero home. Insulate it so well that (Indistinct) on your own roof provide all the energy need. Not only will your energy bills be zero, but if you experience a power outage your house can be heated only using your own body heat and a few candles.

The investment is significant and it may take a while to pay back, but it will still give you an excellent return on investment. There are hundreds of actions we could take right now to address climate change. Please do as many as you can. Our planet's health, and your own health, depends on it.

Thank you.

#### Responses to Questions Taken as Notice

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

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

Yesterday, the hon. Member from Tyne Valley-Sherbrooke raised some pertinent questions with regards to the renovation project at Three Oaks Senior High School. In response to those questions, I'd like just to add; as a parent myself, I can appreciate the concern students and parents have brought forward surrounding the construction at Three Oaks High School.

While we are confident, based on the findings to date, that students have not been subject to health risks, we know that we need to do better, be more transparent and proactive as a government going forward with major school construction.

That's why our government will work to establish a registry to confirm students who were enrolled at Three Oaks during the construction period in case this needs to be further reviewed at a later date. Families who are concerned about potential health impacts can choose to have students added to this registry.

I do commit to this House that I will be releasing the full report in the very near future once we have taken the appropriate steps of protecting personal information contained in the report as per the *Health Information Act*.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

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

In response to a question last Friday from the Leader of the Opposition asking about an update on the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission findings and how they are being implemented here in Prince Edward Island, I'm pleased to offer that, as well as a status update of current programs to support these recommendations.

Do I do that now or do I do that after I have a full –

**Speaker:** Tabling of Documents.

**Premier King:** Okay, so – and once again, I apologize for the delay in getting it here but I'm certainly glad to be able to table it today.

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

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

Yesterday, the hon. Member from Mermaid-Stratford asked how many growth studies have been undertaken to look at amalgamation or annexation of communities to create a larger, regional municipality.

Infrastructure funding through transportation and infrastructure renewal is available for municipalities considering these projects. As well, our department has resources to support communities in this area.

There have been two groups working on growth management studies recently; the West River group and the Evangeline area.

You asked what applications – there are no active proposals at this time. I can restate my comment from yesterday: There are no applications before the government or before IRAC on any further amalgamation, but our department will continue to work with municipalities as they go forward and guide them through the *Municipal Government Act*.

#### Questions by Members

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

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

Once again, I appreciate the timely responses.

I'm concerned about comments made by the Minister of Economic Growth, Tourism and Culture a few days ago.

When the minister referred to the province's economic plan and I quote: Being prepared by the partnership for growth – I thought he had misspoken. However, the minister continued and again, I quote: We need a wide range of voices around that table, but we are in no position to dictate to the

partnership who should be included in the discussion as we are only a member of the partnership.

#### **Economic plan handed to business lobbyists**

A question to the Minister of Economic Growth, Tourism and Culture: Why are you handing off the development of our province's economic plan to business lobbyists?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Economic Growth, Tourism and Culture.

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

Member, like I say, this is six-weeks into it and I'm learning as I go every day here. So the first question the other day on the plan itself, obviously through our department itself, there has been some open discussion of where we can move forward on that. I don't think we're handing it off to anyone in particular. We're there for a partner with the group as well; obviously we're still working behind the scenes in our own department and bouncing ideas around.

Six weeks into it, I can't say I've a master plan over the term of our government here, but we're trying our best and we'll work hard every day to get there.

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

**Leader of the Opposition:** Thanks, Mr. Speaker.

I'm not sure under what circumstances we would ever give control over provincial planning to a group other than government. Government's job, of course, is to act in the public interest.

Government should be able to freely consult with community members and organizations as they feel necessary when it comes to new initiatives. After all, that's how we ensure that government's plans reflect the will of our community and the makeup of our entire province.

#### **Economic planning process re: stakeholders**

Again, a question to the minister: Why would you accept an economic planning process where the government has no right to invite stakeholders to the discussion?

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

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

Member, we're not giving up anything. This is working with everybody. Obviously the hon. member from Morell has the lead in this, he's working, and he's passing on ideas as well. Starting stage of this is open communication and I don't think anybody is excluded from it.

So feel free, like I say, if there is anybody that does feel they are excluded from it, please bring it to us and we'll work with it.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

I just want to go back to my very first question where I quoted the minister just from a few days ago where he said that the economic plan is being prepared by the partners for growth, not by government, but by this partnership for growth, so I need some clarification on that.

Five years ago when your party was in opposition, the current leader at that time told this House and again, I quote: I believe that our government should be providing the leadership to move on economic development and to listen to our business community when they present sound advice for policy initiatives in economic advancement. It's astonishing that the only economic plan being developed for our province is being initiated by our chambers. That was a quote from the leader of your party at the time.

It looks to me as though this government is doing exactly the same thing that it criticized the previous government from doing.

**Leadership on file**

Question to the minister: Why did your party change its mind about providing leadership on this file?

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

**Mr. MacKay:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker and thank you hon. member.

The last thing I think anybody would compares us to is the previous administration. We're six-weeks into this and some of the changes we've made already have been phenomenal.

One of my department alone is with the loan is with the loan write-offs at \$100,000. We're only six weeks into this and every day I go to work to learn. We're sitting with our colleagues and our staff; we've opened up to opposition parties as well. This was all open discussion, this is early days. So to say we have a master plan at the end of it, I'd be sitting here and I can say not, we don't. This is just the start.

I'm sorry you're feeling that way, but like I say, to be compared to a previous government – we've gone above and beyond in the last six-weeks and we're just going to continue moving forward.

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

**Partnership for growth re: plan**

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

I just want some clarification, minister and I'm going back to my first question again, when you were referring to the development of the provinces economic plan, this is what you said: the plan is being prepared by the partnership for growth. Could you tell us what you meant by that, minister?

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

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

Member, I probably misspoke on that. Like I say, it was the first question that came out possibly maybe the second – it took me a minute to clue into what we were even

talking about at the time, so I'd say it was more my wording as a mistake and I do apologize for that.

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

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

On May 9<sup>th</sup> when the Premier announced his cabinet, he also announced that he had tasked the Government House Leader with a special commission, to work with the 21 members of the partnership for growth and other community organizations to realize the vision for sustainable economic growth on Prince Edward Island.

In this capacity, the MLA will work with his cabinet colleagues and all members of the Legislative Assembly.

#### **Government House Leader's role with commission**

Question to the Premier: Can you provide more details on the Government House Leader's role with regards to this commission?

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier King:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you to the hon. member for the question.

All of us as we were running in the election campaign were presented with this partnership for growth that was put forward by 20 community groups – to refer to them as lobbyists, I think would be a mistake. These are individuals from all across PEI, from all across the economic sectors, who are looking to band together to provide some good vision as we move forward with our economy.

One of the commitments they asked us to do, all of us as a party, was to put forward a commitment to actually help with that process. I couldn't think of anybody more skilled and talented than the hon. House Leader, from Morell-Donagh to be able to work with all of those individual groups,

with all of those people who will come forward.

With all of those who will be asked to participate and the go forward plan has always been to try and do the very best we can for Prince Edward Island and to make sure this economy is strong, so that we can make the investments that Islanders want us to make, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

One thing that I found puzzling in the Premier's announcement was the phrase that the government House Leader was and again, I quote: To work with his cabinet colleagues. That struck me because the House Leader is actually not a member of Cabinet, not a member of Executive Council and he does not work for the executive branch. So, strictly speaking, he is not a cabinet colleague at all.

#### **Role of Government House Leader**

Question to the Premier: Will the House Leader be sitting in on Cabinet meetings and acting as an agent of government? Or, will he retain his independence as a private member of this Legislature?

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier King:** Mr. Speaker, obviously not and only the members of Cabinet will sit in and take part in Cabinet.

The hon. House Leader, when I refer to as Cabinet colleagues, I mean those individuals who are his colleagues who are in the Cabinet. Obviously, so to be able to split hairs a little bit here to utilize the line of questioning, to try and create something that isn't there, I think is not accurate.

As I say, I have nothing but fantastic respect and belief in the Government House Leader to be able to carry through his duties and I would say what we've been able to accomplish in just a few days in this Legislature with all of the House Leaders who are working there, my colleague is one of those, I think is a testament to what we're

doing here differently, it's a testament to the abilities of all the house leaders and I don't think this gentlemen takes a backseat to anybody, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

I appreciate the clarification Mr. Premier but let's talk about something that very much is there because of this position.

One of the nice things about government, it is included under the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* which means that government has requirements to preserve and produce records that the public can request, which helps, of course, in all of us holding government account.

The Legislative Assembly is not covered by FOIPP, so not only is this economic plan being led by private organizations who are not covered, of course, by the freedom of information legislation. The government lead on this initiative is a private member whose records, I suspect, are equally exempt from the freedom of information legislation.

### **Economic plan and transparency**

A question to the minister: You've indicated to this House that you will support transparency wherever possible, why would your government develop an economic plan using a process that is not subject, at all, to the highest levels of transparency.

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Economic Growth, Tourism and Culture.

**Premier King:** I'd like to answer that Mr. Speaker because I believe –

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier King:** Mr. Speaker, thank you very much.

I believe there is a bit of, an unintended sinister nature to the suggestion that we're trying to do something here in secret, which is exactly what we're not doing.

The partnership for growth is all across Prince Edward Island, community groups, individuals, leaders who want to do the best they can for Prince Edward Island. We're trying to work with them to encourage them to provide advice; absolutely nothing is done in secret.

I'm not sure of the FOIPP requirements that are here but I think it's fair to suggest that I could ask the Government House Leader to make sure any information that he is talking about when it comes to the partnership for growth can be shared with anyone in this House.

There's absolutely no secrets here; as I say, we're just trying to do the very best we can to make sure the economy of Prince Edward Island stays strong for the years going forward.

**Speaker:** The hon. member from Summerside-Wilmot.

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

Housing is an issue that I hear about almost more than any other issue in Summerside. I was pleased to see the significant commitment to dollars invested for building new housing, but I have some questions about the process for how that money will be used.

### **Issuing of RFPs for new housing projects**

A question to the Minister of Social Development and Housing: Can you advise the House if new RFP's will be issued for these projects?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Social Development and Housing.

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

I'm sorry hon. member; I did not catch the last part of your question.

**Speaker:** Then hon. Member from Summerside-Wilmot.

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

My question to the minister of Social Development and Housing was: Can you

advise the House if new RFPs will be issued for these projects?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Social Development and Housing.

**Mr. Hudson:** That would be my full intention.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Summerside-Wilmot.

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

### Number of housing units for Summerside

Question to the Minister of Social Development and Housing: Could you advise the House on the number of units planned for Summerside?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Social Development and Housing.

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

I don't have the exact number, but I will bring that back to the House and to the member tomorrow.

Thank you.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Summerside-Wilmot.

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

The variety of needs for housing runs the spectrum.

Question to the minister of Social Development and Housing: Can you provide an update on what percentage of the new units that will be planned for Summerside are affordable or accessible?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Social Development and Housing.

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

Again, my apologies, I don't want to give an indication that is not completely accurate, so I will bring that information back tomorrow as well.

Thank you.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Summerside-Wilmot.

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

I completely appreciate that.

Ensuring that an appropriate percentage of the new housing stock is accessible takes planning, and, in many jurisdictions, it's legislated.

### Inclusionary zoning

Question to the minister of Social Development and Housing: Are you familiar with inclusionary zoning?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Social Development and Housing.

**Mr. Hudson:** Again, I'm sorry member; I did not catch the very end of your question.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Summerside-Wilmot.

**Ms. Lund:** My apologies for that, I'll try to speak up.

I'm wondering if the minister is responsible – excuse me, is familiar with the term inclusionary zoning?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Social Development and Housing.

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

Again in all honesty, I am not.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Summerside-Wilmot.

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

Inclusionary zoning mandates that a certain percentage of developments are affordable or accessible.

Question to the minister of Social Development and Housing: Would you consider including some similar inclusionary criteria in these new RFPs or any other housing projects supported by the province?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Social Development and Housing.

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

Thank you for the brief lesson there with regard to the term.

Certainly as we move forward on housing initiatives, whether it's for seniors, whether it's for low-income, and I've said before, I am more than happy to take anything under consideration. I'd be extremely happy to meet with you at some point in time to have discussion on this.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Tyne Valley-Sherbrooke.

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

The Employment Development Agency offers wage support and job opportunities seasonally for students and through rural initiatives. Individuals who have faced labour market barriers and challenges are supported to succeed in employment through these opportunities, and many not-for-profits and small businesses also benefit.

### **Process of job allocations through EDA**

Question to the Minister of Fisheries and Communities: Can you describe the process through which jobs are allocated – sorry job allocations are made through the EDA?

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

**Mr. Fox:** Well thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The staff actually at our EDA actually work with the non-profit groups and other applicants as they put forward their request, and it's based on a need and also based on the population or where the needs are across the province.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Tyne Valley-Sherbrooke.

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

Regional EDA staffs assess applications and distribute available job opportunities to individuals who have faced labour market challenges and assign job allocations for non-profits in small businesses, just as the minister described.

### **Role of MLAs in allocation process**

Question to the Minister of Fisheries and Communities: What role can or should MLAs play in this allocation process?

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

**Mr. Fox:** Well thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Any MLA that receives a request should actually forward that on to our staff, and then they will do the placement and look at the application on a need-to-need basis.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Tyne Valley-Sherbrooke.

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

Since being elected, I have been approached by multiple individuals as well, as a wide range of organizations and businesses that are under the impression that I, as the MLA for the district, am the gatekeeper for gaining access to jobs through the EDA.

Question to the Minister of Fisheries and Communities: Why do you think these individuals and organizations believe that MLAs have a direct role in EDA job allocation?

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

**Mr. Fox:** Well thank you, Mr. Speaker.

That's a good question, I think that all MLAs should point their constituents who have requests for employment into the proper staff within the Department Fisheries and Communities and let the staff place the people on a need-to-need basis.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Tyne Valley-Sherbrooke.

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

Clearly there are ethical concerns involved when individuals are under the impression that an MLA gave them a job, such that they may feel obligated to vote a certain way to gain or maintain employment.

Question to the Minister of Fisheries and Communities: Given that we agree that MLA's should have no direct involvement in job allocation through the EDA, what do you intend to do to ensure that MLA's don't exert improper influence in allocating these jobs?

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

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

Staff has been directed in the department that if a request comes forward by an MLA to look at it, go over the guidelines and the proper practices of the department and follow them guidelines and practices.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Summerside-South Drive.

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

### **Targets for energy from renewable sources**

In the PC platform it says and I quote: A Dennis King PC government will work with Islanders to make a commitment to achieve a carbon-neutral society. That commitment will include targets for consuming a fixed percentage of our energy from renewable sources.

Question to the minister: what are these targets?

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

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

I'll have to be honest, I don't know what the targets are but I can tell you what we're doing. As you know, we have wind farms right across the Island here; we are in the early stages of bringing another one online; we are kind of in a planning part of that now. When that's done that's going to increase our wind capacity by quite a bit.

There are all kind of different proposals that come through energy every single week that may address this issue that talk about how we may store energy because we know that wind has peak times and that sometimes we need to store the energy to be able to use at the off-peak wind producing times.

While I don't know the targets, I can tell you that there's a whole department up there that's working diligently everyday to help bring more wind online and deal with some of these issues.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Summerside-South Drive.

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

In order to hit our target of a carbon-neutral society, we will need to undertake an immediate and large scale transition. We have half a million dollars committed to engage Islanders in this transition and so far as energy solutions accessible to Islanders go, this will put a few solar panels up across PEI, which is good, but nothing more significant that what has already been happening every year on PEI.

Will the minister commit to setting evidence based targets and making the green infrastructure investments necessary to achieve those goals?

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

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

So since Jamie Ballem brought windmills to this province, we have been committed to doing exactly that and what I've talked about here in my first answer was exactly that, we are doing that, we're bringing more wind online and it's going to be a great addition to wind power here on Prince Edward Island. It's going to be a really good opportunity for Prince Edward Island to produce more green energy right here on Prince Edward Island.

On top of that as you mentioned, the solar program that we already talked about that's going to be a residential solar program, we at this point don't know what the uptake is. As I've said, I wanted to be aggressive, as I

said I wanted to reach as many people as I can, this is only the beginning.

As the program goes on year after year, we'll see what we have to do to change to bring more people into it to be more efficient, what changes we need to make to allow groups to create their own power together. Those are things that you and I have talked about, but those are things that I think are important.

I think we're doing a lot of the work, I think we have a lot of the plans and we're going to continue to go down that (Indistinct)

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Summerside-South Drive.

My question was about setting some of the targets. We used to have some targets built into our *Renewable Energy Act* and we had those removed just because we had already hit those targets and there was not really any need to report back that we had already hit those targets, so I would encourage the minister and set some new targets.

### **Success in targets for green energy**

If we don't know the targets, how will we know if we succeeded?

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

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

You want me to measure it on a specific target and that's fine, I'll take it back to the department, but I do think that we are doing great things and I do think that we have a department that's trying really hard to get greener and they've been doing it for a long time.

Like I said, we have another windmill farm that's coming online and there's a plan for another one even further down the road than that, that's going to bring us even more energy to our grid.

So we have long-term plans in the department, all this stuff costs money, these are major, major investments that we have to make in order to do that. These projects are big, it takes a long time, we have to work with communities, we have to work with

landowners, we have to get approvals from people to bring a wind farm of this size into their community. That's where we are today with our current one, the ones we have in the future, down the road, we do even have planned sites for yet. But those are kind of, all in continually in the work so.

A measurable target fine – like I said, we'll go back and talk about (Indistinct) the measurable target, but that doesn't mean we don't have plans and that doesn't mean we're not trying to grow our sustainable energy here on Prince Edward Island, because we are.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from O'Leary-Inverness.

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

My question is actually for the Minister of Health and Wellness.

Under Community Hospital West section in the recent budget, it only shows a 1.7% increase to the budget over last years, with most of those increases assigned to salaries and administration. The PC Platform: It's all about people, promises to expand cancer care by offering intravenous treatments at hospitals in each county and recruit more oncologists.

### **Commitment of cancer treatment in Western PEI**

For people in rural Prince Edward Island, this is important but yet I don't see any increase to the budget for this particular commitment. Minister, when will that commitment for cancer treatment services be implemented in PEI and specifically, when will that service be offered in communities in Western Prince Edward Island?

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

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

I'd like to thank the hon. member for the excellent question. Yes, that was certainly in our platform and we intend to fulfill that commitment. As the previous minister of health yourself, you would know the

recruitment process can be a little bit (Indistinct) and we're certainly continuing round recruitment on that and I look forward to being able to announce here at some point in time during our mandate, but sooner than later, that we will be rolling out that very important aspect of cancer treatment across the Island.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from O'Leary-Inverness.

**Mr. Henderson:** Of the 125 PC promises in their platform, this commitment is for cancer patients, probably our most vulnerable people that require in health care. PC Platform promises do not specify how this initiative would be rolled out.

### **Cancer treatment availability to all Islanders**

Minister, maybe you can give us a little more information: Will this service be rolled out to all community hospitals at the same time? And when will, and how will, Health PEI decide the first community hospital to be providing this service to rural Islanders if it's not all at once.

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

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

The intention of this government will be to have this service available in various locations across Prince Edward Island. Obviously, currently, we already have it in Charlottetown and Summerside but we'd like to have it as well offered in King's County, Prince County.

The target for that is definitely within our mandate and what we're going to be doing internally, along with, I already said around recruitment of those specialized health care professionals, but we will be working internally as well with those health care facilities to ensure we have the proper infrastructure in place and the space. We just can't simply take and set up a mobile and provide it there. This is very important work, its critical work for Islanders that are suffering from a terrible disease. We will do

it compassionately and we will do it properly.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from O'Leary-Inverness, your second supplementary.

**Mr. Henderson:** Mr. Speaker, as the hon. minister would well know, the community hospital in O'Leary has a new training lab, an ambulatory care RN already in place and these investments were done by the community and many by the hospital foundation and it has reduced wait times in our emergency rooms in Prince County and Western hospitals.

The O'Leary hospital foundation is also very eager in supporting the purchasing of new equipment for any new particular services, as the minister would well know.

### **Support from O'Leary hospital foundation**

Minister, would you not agree that O'Leary with a central West Prince position and location would be a perfect spot, to either pilot this service to Islanders in Western PEI and what particular equipment would be required to support this particular service, and we could get this up and running very quickly, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

And again excellent question, I was very happy to have toured that facility not that long ago, just within the last couple of weeks and I expect before I sit down, I'm already going to have an email from Eva Rodgeron on this very subject.

But you know, the foundations we have across Prince Edward Island, the incredible work that they do. I mean, an announcement was made last night by the St. Dunstan University Board where they committed to \$500,000 towards purchasing of equipment.

The foundations, as I said, do incredible work so as we move forward and we determine what those services are actually

going to be, along with through consultation with the professional healthcare providers, I'll be better able to advise the hon. member of the exact type of equipment and locations that will be establishing these centres in.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Cornwall-Meadowbank.

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

My question's for the Minister of Health and Wellness.

### **Wellness and activity tax credit to Islanders**

The PC platform promises to provide a \$500 wellness and activity tax credit to help all Islanders improve their overall health and wellbeing.

Minister: Could you inform the House how much this tax credit will cost your government this year and how many Islanders can take advantage?

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

The hon. Premier.

**An Hon. Member:** Oh, here he is.

**Premier King:** No, I just think – I find a trend coming here from the Third Party. I think it's their hesitancy to adjust to the new style of politics that Islanders want us to play.

**Mr. MacDonald:** Answer the question.

**Premier King:** We are in a minority situation. I say it again –

**An Hon. Member:** It's your platform.

**Premier King:** It's our platform. How many recommendations from your platform have not been implemented?

**An Hon. Member:** We're not the government.

**Premier King:** Well, we're not the government either.

**Some Hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Premier King:** We're all the government. This is a minority government, and Islanders want us to work together so there's a lot in our platform that hasn't been implemented.

There are lots in the Green platform that hasn't been implemented. There's a whole lot from yours that have not been implemented, but guess what? We're all trying to work together.

We're all trying to do the very best we can, and in what consultation process do you get everything that you want? In what negotiation do you go through with three parties that you get everything that you want? That's not the way that it works.

Islanders want us to work together. They want us to work differently here. We didn't get to all of them.

We're six weeks into government. It didn't say in the platform we're going to deliver this on June 27<sup>th</sup>, give us time to get there. Give us time to work together.

Let's work together.

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

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

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Cornwall-Meadowbank your first supplementary.

**Mr. McNeilly:** Just something in the first year, just something. Just one thing.

**Mr. MacDonald:** So it says about the people, perhaps it should say about the platform.

**Some Hon. Members:** Oh!

**Mr. MacDonald:** This is not in the budget, that's why I'm raising it. It's in the platform. It's not in the budget, but it was talked about.

Quote the Premier, April 12<sup>th</sup>: They feel that they have a significant tax burden and that they've carried for a long time. Now that our economy is turning around, it's time to share some of that success with Islanders.

We've sat here school lunch program, women's health fund yesterday and now the \$500 wellness activity tax credit.

**Mr. Trivers:** (Indistinct)

**Mr. MacDonald:** Is there a trend? There's no trend over here, the trend is on that side of the House.

Could the minister inform the House when the government intends to deliver the \$500 wellness and activity tax credit?

### **Delivery of wellness and activity tax credit**

**An Hon. Member:** Next budget.

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier King:** Once again, we are here trying to work together.

What Islanders said was guess what? We don't want any one party to run this show. We've seen that for too long.

We don't like the results of that, so let's do this. Let's send three parties into the Legislature and let's make them work together, which is very easy for me because that's what I've been promoting since I started to run. Let's work together.

I have to take a little water in my wine. If the people of Prince Edward Island said: I want you to implement the entire Progressive Conservative platform, they would have given us a majority of seats, but they didn't. They could have wanted the Green Party to put in their entire platform, they would have given them the majority, but they didn't.

So we have to work together. We have to take a little water in our wine. You've taken some, the Green Party's taken some, and the government has taken some. We can't do it all for everybody.

The former minister was in the position, he knows. You can't give it all to everybody, but have we delivered? Absolutely. Ten suggestions from the opposition party, guess what? We implemented them. We didn't give them all they wanted, but we give them a little bit.

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

Recommendations from you, we give you a little bit, we didn't give it all, but guess what? We're working together and we're getting there.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Cornwall-Meadowbank your second supplementary.

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

Just a further note to the recruitment, you talked a little bit about with the other minister on recruitment. Year to year estimates show that a measly \$52,000 has been added to recruiting, so it's going to be tough to fill some of the issues that he had.

But let me say – this is new in a collaborative government, but prior to this it was old-time politics because what they've done is they've promised the world and now they're not going to deliver and they're hoping Islanders forget about all of these promises.

But I can tell you this side of the House, including the opposition, are not going to let them forget because these are important – these are some of the issues that are – this food program, women's health fund, the \$500 wellness tax credit – the hon. Premier got up and spoke about him going to the gym. We all can't afford personal trainers. We need those tax credits.

### **Implementation of tax credit**

I ask again to the hon. Premier: When is he going to implement the \$500 tax credit?

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier King:** Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member could afford a personal trainer from the past four years of his salary.

But anyway, we'll move forward. As I say, our plan would be to try our very best to implement all of the platform that we have put forward, but realizing that we're in a different time – we're in a different climate. Islanders have asked us to work together and I would think what we have been able to do in a very short time is something extraordinary.

When I go to the grocery store, Islanders stop me and they say: I can't believe how well it's working. I can't believe you're working together so well. I hope you can keep it up.

To quote the late Helen Keller: Alone we can do so little, together we can do so much.

Get on board, third party. Get on board – there's so much we can do together.

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

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

We'll keep the onslaught coming here.

Last fall I'd asked a question of the government without identifying a minister and I did so to prove a point. It was to prove a point about the lack of coordination around autism services.

#### **Minister responsible for autism services**

So with your indulgence, I'm going to ask again of this government: Which minister will be responsible for autism services in the province?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Education and Lifelong Learning.

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

To answer the member's question, I am the minister responsible.

I remember when the member was on the floor with Peter Rukavina last fall bringing this excellent act to the Chamber which did pass so the *Autism Coordination Act* that was enacted in the fall will have an autism coordinating committee of deputy ministers. That's what it establishes, and they will be reporting to me as minister.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Morell-Donagh, your first supplementary.

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

Thank you, minister, for that answer.

Under the former government, there was an *Autism Coordination Act* kind of working group that was formed from deputy ministers and that type of thing and they met a few times and they were starting to implement the process.

But one thing that seemed to be absent from it was input from private groups and from private organizations.

Will the minister commit to making sure that this coordination committee will involve the people with autism and those supporting them in all of their discussions and planning as they lead up?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Education and Lifelong Learning.

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

We're just at the beginning of this file, but my deputy minister has met with Mr. Peter Rukavina to start off with and what we're looking at now is getting an Executive Council order to authorize the autism coordinating committee to meet and Peter is going to go and present his discussion to the Autism Society and Stars for Life.

But, what we've also done is we had something that we're calling – it's a little jargoned – but a committee of government depth that has done an inventory of all the services offered that are related to autism and now we're going to decide how best to consult with those, especially the people who have autism, their supporters and the various different autism groups. I look forward for input from the member as to how we consult and who we consult with, as well as from the different parties and opposition.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Morell-Donagh, your second supplementary.

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

To be quite honest, I think that Executive Council order – that memo should have been done already and I appreciate the expediency on that.

Peter Rukavina is a fantastic advocate, but there's a lot more out there than just Peter

and he would admit to that too. Let's keep all of the people involved.

Another part of this was about accountability.

### **Annual public reporting on progress**

Will the minister reaffirm the government's responsibility to accountability under the *Autism Coordination Act* and commit to annual public reporting on the progress that's made?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Education and Lifelong Learning.

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

I'll commit to getting the authorization order for the Autism Coordinating Committee to Executive Council as soon as possible, hopefully the next meeting. Of course, I will commit to providing that annual report, to show that the government is accountable to those who are on the autism spectrum.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Summerside-South Drive.

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

### **Uptake of electric vehicles**

Another action item that Islanders can help with is the electrification of transportation. In the government platform, it's mentioned that incentivizing electronic vehicles will be pursued. I see no mention of it in the budget or in the throne speech. In light of a lack of funding to create incentives, how will the government be working to encourage the uptake of electric vehicles by Islanders?

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

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

I'm glad I get to come here every day and learn what was in our platform because I don't know if I read it as close as everyone else here did, but I'm still here and still needed here.

So like the Premier talked about earlier and I've talked about this already in this session alone, not all promises are going to be

delivered this year. The one that I'm the most committed to and I've talked to this Assembly here about it, is solar and I've said openly that the next phase in my opinion and the next natural phase is how do we get people into electric cars?

We've been trying to buy them here in government and it takes six weeks for us to get one. You know, we want to get a program that we work together with the car companies here, the people that are selling cars here, so that we make sure that they have them on the lot whenever we announce this.

We want to make sure that we have charging stations put across Prince Edward Island and we want to make sure there's a major uptake in our solar programs so that people can become self-sufficient, where they can go home and they can plug in and charge their car with their own electricity. So we haven't forgotten about it, I want to get this first step done first; I'll work with you on the second step just like I'm working with you on the first step.

**Speaker:** The hon. member from Summerside-South Drive.

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

Time is against us in the effort to transition. The time for small measures is past. If we're serious about getting to our goals we need to take action as soon as possible.

Large sums of money have come to the government from Federal partnerships, such as the Low Carbon Economy Fund and the Investing in Canada Plan, that are available to be used to help transition us towards a low carbon economy.

### **Breakdown and allocation of funds from federal partnerships**

Will the minister commit to providing a break down on what funds have come in from these and where they've been allocated?

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

**Mr. Myers:** Yes I will, I'll bring back whatever has gone through our efficiency

program. I think that the minister of environment actually gets that money; we just get to spend it for him. But I will bring back to the House what we spent out of those funds, what we have allocated and what our plans are going forward.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Victoria Park.

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

In this budget, the PC government announced 74 new front line workers for the education system.

### **Timeline for new front line workers**

Question to the hon. Minister of Education and Lifelong Learning: When will the people hired to fill these new positions begin work?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Education and Lifelong Learning

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

The member across, as a former teacher herself or a current teacher I guess, waiting to maybe go back some day – the current staffing process is continuing as it normally would. What we did was we had to issue a memo to allow them to staff the status quo because of course, there was no budget tabled by the previous government when the election was called. So that put them a lot behind and now the principals are required to spend some time staffing this summer and they're going to staff as soon as possible.

I'll have to go back to the Public Schools Branch to find out exactly what deadline they have and the *Commission Scolaire de Langue Francaise* to see if they have a deadline but they would be starting work this fall when school commences.

**Speaker:** The hon. member from Charlottetown-Victoria Park.

**Ms. Bernard:** When I spoke with different principals I asked about status quo and they actually weren't told the staff status quo, they were actually told to staff based on the numbers from the previous government, so they were actually down.

### **Summary of current staffing formula**

A question to the minister: Can you please provide us with a summary of the current staffing formula used to staff schools.

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Education and Lifelong Learning

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

That is an interesting point. My memo and my memory and I should get the memo and table it, was to staff according to status quo numbers, but as you do point, there was a draft budget in which the teaching numbers were down from the previous administration.

What I'll do is I'll get the ministerial directive that really guides the staffing process and I'll table it. There are some changes that need to be made there and I don't know the details off the top of my head. One of the ratios I know that the member is really interested in is the 400:1 ratio for students to school counselors and of course that's one we need to look at and change.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Victoria Park, your final question.

**Ms. Bernard:** On May 24<sup>th</sup> principals were told their staffing numbers for next year, they were also told there were more positions coming, they are still waiting.

As a result, principals and vice-principals have been scrambling to figure out how to meet the needs in their schools for next year and will be forced to volunteer their time this summer hiring staff.

As a result of election timing and the date of budget release, schools are in a panic.

### **Commitment of fixed election dates**

Question to the Minister of Education and Lifelong Learning: Will your government commit to fixed election dates to ensure that this stressful mess does not happen again?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Education and Lifelong Learning.

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

**Mr. Trivers:** I think the reaction on this side of the House and the reaction from that side of the House is a definite resounding support for that question and I can give an unequivocal yes.

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

[End of Question Period]

Statements by Ministers

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Land, Justice and Public Safety and Attorney General.

**New Business Corporate Registry**

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

I'm happy to talk about we have made it easier for businesses to interact with government, business interactions like incorporating a business, registering a trade name, these are all examples of things businesses need to do so they can grow and contribute to our strong economy.

There is a lot of paperwork when you deal with government, nobody likes it. You have to find the form, print the form, fill out the form, return the form, mail the form – I've done this before.

As of May 3<sup>rd</sup>, the new online business registry went live. It means businesses have new easier ways doing these paper transactions.

The registry streamlines; what needs to be done, it's all online.

What that means, is it saves time, it saves money, you can do it anyway anyhow, at home, coffee shop, while you're running errands and that means business can focus on what matters to them and their business.

The new online system also includes Canada Revenue Agency's nine digit business number. That's important. It's a foundation that makes businesses lives easier. That business number allows them to interact efficiently with the federal government.

It is also going to let other parts of the provincial government talk to each other quicker and easier. These are small innovations but they have big impact. Everything we can do to make things easier. We can make our economy more competitive, and we want that.

In the last few years our economy has been growing and that's great. We want that trend to continue so all Islanders can benefit from a strong economy.

Making paperwork easier and faster will let businesses focus on what they need to grow and succeed. Businesses and Islanders are embracing these small but significant digital upgrades. I want to thank the staff in Justice and Public Safety and IT for working together to create this platform.

I encourage all businesses to use this great new tool.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Summerside-South Drive.

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

Yeah. That's a great program, I actually was one of the folks who piloted that program to help get it going for Justice and Public Safety, so it is great to hear that it's going to be easier for business owners to register their business and get all of their information into government. I would also like to see it flow the other way so that the information would more easily come out and be accessible to folks so that you could search by a director to see how many numbered companies for instance that they were a director on.

I would encourage the minister to look at those kind of improvements as well.

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

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

I'm certainly pleased to rise and thank the minister for bringing forward this very major information.

Obviously business on Prince Edward Island will certainly appreciate this online ability; it makes it much more efficient for them to do this. I got to also compliment former minister Jordan Brown who worked very hard to get this -- a lot of work that's been done with the department in the past number of months because there's no question about this, this was certainly a pet peeve of Jordan Brown's when he was minister and all the red tape that would be involved in that.

I echo the member of the opposition, anything that you can do to reduce further red tape, I certainly encourage you to look further into that, and have your department who are very diligent workers to continue to work and improve all areas of this for online (Indistinct)

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

Just indulge me for a second; I'd like to recognize Russ Compton here in the gallery. I think he's leaving, but I think Russ --

**Premier King:** He doesn't want it.

**Mr. Fox:** Yes. I want to mention, I follow Russ quite actively on social media and through other platforms on the NorCan 222 Project. I think it just goes to show what's available, and what our entrepreneurs in PEI are doing.

Just a shout out to Mr. Compton, and what he's done on that project.

### **Jobs for Youth Program**

**Mr. Fox:** The Jobs for Youth program provides valuable work experience for students and enables organizations to benefit from their energy and their talent. This program has operated for more than 20 years, and I know that all members recognize their contributions across the province.

Last fiscal year, the Employment Development Agency invested close to \$1.2 million for the Jobs for Youth Program. This program provided support -- and I must say

direct support -- for 251 projects and jobs for 378 students across this Island. Students and employers have recognized great success as a result of the program.

Because the program has been in operation for that long period of time, a review was undertaken to determine how well it was achieving its objectives.

Today I am pleased to announce that this review has been completed. Here are the key findings:

Firstly, students and employers both agree that there is a need for this program, and that it continues to be relevant to their needs.

Secondly, although there are similar wage subsidy programs available, there was very little overlap with this program.

Thirdly, overall both students and employers are quite satisfied with the program, but had some suggestions about the application and selection process.

This review made three recommendations:

The first is to review similar programs for high school and postsecondary students, with a view to consolidate or streamline services and increase efficiency.

The second recommendation is to change the program process by developing more formal guidelines and improve program delivery to ensure consistency in the approvals.

The final recommendation is to develop tools for performance measurement and regularly track performance using these tools.

The Department of Fisheries and Communities is now implementing and bringing forward these recommendations. I welcome the ongoing suggestions of all members on how we can continue to improve the impact of this program for the benefit of students and employees.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Tyne Valley-Sherbrooke.

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

Thank you to the minister for bringing forward the findings from this review. It was a review that happened at the request or the insistence of what was the third party – colleagues of mine here now in the official opposition.

So we are pleased to hear that that has gone through, and I look forward to reading the full report on that review.

I also – this was brought up in Question Period about this program. Jobs for Youth is a fantastic program that does help so many young people, and I think the EDA is providing some essential services, particularly for workers who face barriers in the labour market.

My questions were around what MLA involvement could or should be in these job allocations, and I think it's sort of the elephant in the room around these programs. It's sort of whispered, you hear that MLAs are giving people jobs or getting people jobs. My hope is that that has just been a misconception.

I think that one of the things that contributes to that is what the minister described in Question Period would be MLAs giving people's names to the workers for the EDA, so just passing that on. I'm not sure why that step needs to happen.

I think that what I have been doing is making sure that when people come to me with these requests that I'm making sure they have the proper information – contact information, know what forms to fill out, and that they're submitting those directly to the EDA workers. I don't have any role in that, so there's no confusion because it is so important to me that no one should ever feel that they have to vote for me in the future because they felt I got them a job. I never want anybody to be confused about that. That's unethical.

I just want to add that we've been told – our Caucus met with representatives from the Employment Development Agency and the Jobs for Youth Program in particular, we were informed that that is a program with equal allocation across the districts on this Island.

We are awaiting information on that, and that is important to us that that continues – that it is evenly distributed across the Island. I think in doing that as well it takes away any perception that there might be undue influence.

Again, thank you for bringing this up; and I look forward to reading that full review.

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

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

I want to thank the minister for making a statement today, and for bringing the results of the review. I look also forward to seeing it a little more in-depth.

The Jobs for Youth Program is a great program, it's been available here on Prince Edward Island for a number of years. It provides our youth with some very valuable work experience; as well it's a great assistance to employers in the private, non-profit, and the public sectors.

It's a program that offers, like I said, right across the province, but it is particularly appreciated more in rural PEI where employment opportunities for youth are often not so readily available.

So I want to thank the minister for this statement, and I want to thank all of those who are involved in the Jobs for Youth program.

As an MLA, one of the most enjoyable thing that happened to me is when a student comes in looking for direction for a job. So I'll direct them to the employment centre in Tignish, they have listed all the federal student summer jobs, and, also with the provincial, when their lists come out we give them that direction to make an application.

For any employers in the area, it's my job as an MLA to give direction especially in one of the extremities on Prince Edward Island. I'm the go-to person for anything government, so it gives me great pleasure to help anybody out and give them direction.

Thank you.

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Economic Growth, Tourism and Culture.

### Water Safety

**Mr. MacKay:** Here on Prince Edward Island, we're blessed to be surrounded by water. Drive in any direction and you'll eventually hit the shore. We are so lucky to have such beautiful beaches in our province.

But unfortunately, a beach that can bring much joy can also bring immense tragedy.

July 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2017 was a tragic day. We lost Danny Gallant who drowned after being pulled out to sea by a powerful rip current.

The exact same day, Beth Johnston and her son, Charlie, got caught in a rip current and survived.

Each person had a similar experience on the North Shore that day. For Beth and Charlie, they were lucky to have a different ending.

Sue Gallant, the widow of Danny Gallant, who joins us in the gallery today, has become an advocate for water safety. So has Beth Johnston, who also joins us in the gallery today with her son, Charlie.

Together Sue and Beth, along with our Provincial Parks staff, Parks Canada, the East River Fire Department, Canadian Red Cross, and the Life Saving Society PEI formed the PEI Rip Current Advisory Committee. Today I am proud to share the work the committee has done so Islanders and visitors alike can have a safe and enjoyable beach experience.

By the end of this week, both supervised Provincial and National Park beaches will have a newly designed rip current image that's more realistic with improved wording, updated signage that aligns with international signage, and an international flag system to report surf conditions.

An educational program will also be launching soon to inform beachgoers about ocean hazards that will help them make informed decisions when taking part in activities on or near the water.

As minister responsible for tourism, we must protect and educate our Islanders and

visitors about rip currents and other beach hazards.

Thank you to the PEI Rip Current Advisory Committee for their leadership in making these initiatives happen. I ask all Islanders and visitors to take notice of these new initiatives at our supervised beaches this summer.

They're here to protect you.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

I commend the Minister of Economic Growth, Tourism and Culture to take on this important task. Our summer visitors are indeed are sort of, in our charge and care, and this is a really, really important issue.

I'm glad so many sectors of the community have been involved in developing this new approach. I was wondering, I think rip currents are created in quite visible channels that run perpendicular to the shore, as any aerial survey of those channels being used to help locate where the rip currents are.

Anyway, thank you for the effort.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Evangeline-Miscouche.

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

I also want to thank the minister for this statement and send my heartfelt condolences to the families and for the ones that survived the experience.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Education and Lifelong Learning.

### Retirement of FLSB Chair

**Mr. Trivers:** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge with great appreciation the

contributions made by Anne Bourgeois-Bernard to our French Language school system.

We've recently been advised that Anne will finish her term as chair of the French Language School Board on August the 23<sup>rd</sup>.

*L'arrivée d'Anne a fortement contribué à une synergie positive à la construction identitaire des étudiants de la CSLF.*

*La construction identitaire est fondamentale pour la vitalité de la communauté acadienne et francophone.*

*Nous sommes reconnaissants des efforts ardues d'Anne et nous la remercions grandement pour sa passion autant pour la langue de Molière que pour l'avenir de la communauté.*

Over the past six years, Anne's passion for French language education and culture has resulted in many benefits for students.

Under Anne's leadership, enrolments in Francophone early childhood centres and French first language schools have grown significantly. Students now have much greater access to programming.

Many of our French schools and community centres have received significant capital improvements. In fact, all six Acadian and francophone communities now have a place of learning and a place to celebrate Acadia.

The integrated model of community and school infrastructure is unique has proven to be quite effective and the French culture has been strengthened in many Acadian and Francophone communities throughout the Island.

We are very grateful for Anne's great work and commitment and we wish her the very best in the future.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Victoria Park.

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

It is so tough when a board loses a committed, passionate and capable member such as Anne Bernard-Bourgeois.

*Je suis désolée d'apprendre la démission d'Anne Bernard-Bourgeois, directrice générale de la Commission scolaire de langue française. Le conseil l'a félicitée. Elle est très fière de ses travaux dans les domaines d'inscription et de collaboration avec des groupes communautaires en éducation et en développement de la petite enfance. Il est toujours difficile de remplacer quelqu'un aussi passionnée et capable comme elle, et j'aimerais leur souhaiter bonne chance. À Anne, merci pour votre service. Nous vous souhaitons le meilleur dans vos projets futurs.*

I am sorry to hear about the resignation of Anne Bernard-Bourgeois, Superintendent of the Commission scolaire de langue française. The Board commended her. She is very happy with the work she has accomplished in terms of enrolments, and with the collaborations that have been established with community groups in the fields of education and early childhood development. It is always difficult to replace a passionate and capable individual like her, and I would like to wish her well. To Anne, thank you for your service. We wish you the best of luck in your future projects.

To Anne Bernard-Bourgeois, thank you for your service and commitment to Acadian and Francophone communities.

Thank you Mr. Speaker.

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

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

Certainly I'd like to take this opportunity as well to thank Anne Bernard-Bourgeois for her service to the French Language School Board.

When we say that she's been around for six years, it doesn't seem like six years ago when I met Anne for the first time when I was a member of standing committee on education and she came in, in her early days and presented to the committee on her vision and where she'd like to see the French School board get to. I think it's no secret, that she managed to get through a lot of those accomplishments or successes – are well known, as mentioned, enrollment has increased; there was a lot of progress made

within the school board system, during her tenure.

She was a person that you know, you could tell early on that she was very capable, she was very dedicated to her role and would do it with great passion and there's no question that she did.

I certainly would like to wish Anne all the best in her future endeavors and I hope that things go well for her in the future. And, it was really great to have gotten to know her over the last number of years.

Thank you.

Presenting and Receiving Petitions

#### Tabling of Documents

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier King:** Mr. Speaker, by leave of the House, I beg leave to table this status update on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, pertaining to PEI's progress and I move seconded by the Honourable Minister of Finance, that the said document be now received and do lie on the table.

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

Reports by Committees

Introduction of Government Bills

#### Motions Other Than Government

The hon. Member of Charlottetown-Belvedere.

**Ms. Bell:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. Member from Mermaid-Stratford, that the 12<sup>th</sup> order of the day be now read.

**Clerk (Doiron):** Order No. 12, *Government Advertising Standards Act*, Bill No. 101 ordered for second reading.

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

**Ms. Bell:** Mr. Speaker, my apologies and we are going to change that order number.

**Speaker:** Apology accepted.

**Ms. Bell:** I move, seconded by the hon. Member from Mermaid-Stratford, that the 14<sup>th</sup> order of the day be now read.

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

**Clerk:** Order No. 14, *An Act to Amend the Employment Standards Act*, Bill No. 104 in committee.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member of Charlottetown-Belvedere.

**Ms. Bell:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Member from Mermaid-Stratford that this House do now resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole House to take into consideration the said bill.

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

The hon. Member from Tyne Valley-Sherbrooke will you please Chair?

**Chair (Altass):** The House is now in a Committee of the Whole House to take into consideration a bill to be intitled *An Act to Amend the Employment Standards Act*. Is it the pleasure of the committee that the bill be now read clause by clause?

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

**Chair:** Would we like to bring a stranger onto the floor?

**Ms. Bell:** Yeah, permission to bring a stranger to the floor, please.

**Chair:** Permission to do that – permission to bring a stranger onto the floor?

**An Hon. Member:** Granted.

**Chair:** Thank you.

Would the stranger please like to introduce himself?

**Nathan Hood:** I'm Nathan Hood. I'm the Senior Policy Advisor to the official opposition.

**Chair:** All right.

**Ms. Bell:** If I can remind, perhaps, Chair – just to give a reminder of where we were;

we had actually read I think the whole bill, and we were having a discussion around some of what the bill included, but the bill has already been read into the record.

**Chair:** I won't read it again, then.

Are there any questions from the floor?

The hon. Minister of Social Development and Housing.

**Mr. Hudson:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

When debate on the bill was wrapped up during the other evening, just prior to that, one of the things I had asked about was clause 3(b), economic conditions within the province, which to me, is a very vague statement. And again, if I could ask you for clarification of just what would be taken into account in the determination of just what those economic conditions would be and how they would be used in the formulation, if you like, on a go-forward basis.

**Chair:** Minister, we got a request if you could please speak up. They can't hear you on the other side.

**Mr. Hudson:** Okay, certainly. Yes.

**Chair:** Thank you.

**Mr. Hudson:** We seem to be having that problem today, don't we?

When debate on the bill had finished up the other evening, and it was with regard to clause 3(b), economic conditions within the province, and I had asked for some clarification as to just what those economic conditions would be that would be relevant or would be taken into account, in the determinations.

Certainly to me, that clause 3(b), it's quite broad, quite vague.

**Ms. Bell:** Thank you, minister, for the question.

(Indistinct) part of (Indistinct) what we said when we spoke about this previously, is that clause was not actually written by us. It's a direct repeat of the clause that's in the existing legislation. So it is what has already been in place.

What we've done when we've amended this is we've actually added the measures of poverty, which is the section (c), so we've just had to restructure the section, which is why the entire thing has been repeated. But that particular clause, in fact (a) and (b), are ones that are already in the existing legislation.

So these are what are considered by the existing Employment Standards Board, and as we had spoken about previously, we're not advising or informing with this legislation on exactly what they need to do to consider giving them some frameworks and that particular one was pre-existing.

As an example, we do have the report that was –

**Nathan Hood:** (Indistinct) press release.

**Ms. Bell:** Oh sorry, the press release. Thank you.

The press release that came out with the last minimum wage increase, and they give examples in that of some of the things that they considered at that time. So for instance, they do talk about economic growth, gross domestic product numbers, export growth, manufacturing growth, and how the minimum wage needs to reflect whilst there's a significant economic growth, but PEI is also experiencing the highest level of income equality in the country and that the minimum wage increase was being increased based on economic factors in the province and on input received from the public.

In fact, last time the board gathered input from 12 organizations and 14 individuals. But as I said, in the last time that we discussed this, and again today, what we are doing is adding additional measures which are those ones detailed in section 3(c) and the other text in that section is as per the existing legislation as it now stands.

**Chair:** The hon. Minister of Social Development and Housing.

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

And thank you, hon. member, for that update or clarification.

I guess when you were looking at bringing forward this act to amend the *Employment Standards Act*, when you did look over the *Employment Standards Act*, as it presently exists, do you have any concerns with regard to the vagueness and with regard to clause 3(b) as it presently exists in the act?

**Ms. Bell:** Perhaps I'll start and then (Indistinct) for my colleague (Indistinct) quick piece on this as it was with the other piece of legislation that we tabled and that was passed previously, the *Rental of Residential Property Act*, we are quite clear that the *Employment Standards Act* as a whole needs significant update.

For example, we have heard that there needs to be significant work to reflect the needs of migrant workers in PEI. That; however, was not in the scope of the work that we were able to do in this case and so as it was previously, we are looking at a very small and focused change which reflects our priorities and our commitment to Islanders in terms of bringing a voice for those who are living in poverty.

And so we didn't review the act in its entirety because that wasn't in the scope of this particular piece of work.

**Nathan Hood:** Yeah, and if I can add specifically to what you're saying; one of the good things about this amendment is that the report is made public once the order is announced.

The vagueness around what economic conditions are being considered disappears because that is very clear which ones were being considered in that process.

**Chair:** The hon. Minister of Social Development and Housing.

**Mr. Hudson:** Okay and I do appreciate that that when that report would be issued that those parameters, if you like, would be detailed there. I guess my concern is that in the preparation, if you like, that it's still that vagueness is still there.

Anyway, I'll leave that for right now.

Going back to 3(c), measures of poverty, and I do just want to reiterate that I do have

a concern. We had the discussion the other evening what is used on Prince Edward Island right now is – basket –

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

**Mr. Hudson:** The term escapes me right off, but you know – the basket measure of poverty as compared to other measures. I do have is a concern that that is not specified completely here which measure is going to be used, because as we had discussed the other evening, there is a substantial difference between what outcomes you will see with regard to the level of poverty in the province, dependent upon which measure that you do utilize.

I guess my closing comment would be; and it was brought forward by my colleague the other evening, I would personally love to see this go to standing committee for additional input.

Thank you.

**Ms. Bell:** Thank you, minister.

I think what's important in this, looking at the three pieces of change, the small changes, but again, impactful change that this legislation brings forward, it codifies existing and very good consultation processes that the independent Employment Standards Board currently engage in through legislation to make decisions and recommendations on minimum wage.

It adds poverty measures which do not exist at all in the current legislation. And as you mentioned, the market basket measure is one measure which is used by the social assistance department. This is not that department. This is about legislation that's reflected for all Islanders and in some cases perhaps the broad scope of the other considerations that are there, it aligns well with the other language that has been used in the bill which is partly why it is written the way it is, so it doesn't provide overly onerous or prescriptive guidelines to what is, again, an independent board.

And then the third impact it has is the one on reporting. So in terms of whilst we would like to see a committee absolutely be tasked with an overhaul of the *Employment Standards Act* for a much broader scope

than this, at this point this is an immediate and impactful measure that could be taken into account during the considerations that are currently happening for the Employment Standards Board and its recommendations for minimum wage increase is to come forward this fall.

**Chair:** The hon. Minister of Fisheries and Communities.

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

I'm hung up measures of poverty and I'm wondering was there any geographical scan done of different areas across the province and how they might, or could impact, or should be taken into consideration with this.

**Ms. Bell:** Thank you minister for the question.

We have actually discussed, quite extensively, measures of poverty and there are two factors with that, one of them is that poverty measures on a very micro scale on PEI are not available because nobody collects that data.

We often have statistical data for our region, let alone for PEI, so Stats Canada does collect data for the province as a region and for Atlantic Canada as a region and we have some quite deep demographic data in some aspects of that collected by Stats Canada.

With the recent passage of Bill C-97, there will be more extensive data collection because the poverty strategy is now a mandated part of the federal legislative activity.

Most poverty measurement work in PEI has been done by non-profits with whatever resources they have available. The data that's available to us, it's the data that's used by the CRA, by Stats Canada, and by Health Canada. So if we figure that if it's acceptable for those federal departments to use to determine things like tax rates, food measurement rates, and so on, then that would be acceptable for the province to use as well.

**Chair:** The hon. Minister of Fisheries and Communities.

**Mr. Fox:** So it's fair to say from your answer, then, we really don't know what the impacts are in different areas across the Island because the information has not been available.

**Ms. Bell:** That's one of the gaps in the Poverty Action Plan.

**Chair:** The hon. Minister of Fisheries and Communities.

**Mr. Fox:** With that, and what the minister said a minute ago, should we not take the appropriate measures and put this to committee and do a geographical scan by the committee across the whole Island to understand what the different measures of poverty could be or what the different poverty scope is?

**Ms. Bell:** Minister, that would be a very exciting thing to do in terms of informing your Poverty Action Plan. This is a piece of legislation to enforce and strengthen – sorry, to strengthen the Employment Standards Board on its decision-making for minimum wage.

So we are including measurements of poverty that are currently available on a national or provincial basis to add to how those decisions are made by that independent board, but absolutely, it would be very exciting to look at more extensive consultation and collection of data to inform the overall Poverty Action Plan for the province. Because to be frank, as the official opposition, we feel that wasn't done.

In this case, we are looking at in the same way that this economic conditions within the province are also currently only assessed on the available things that we measure, like GDP or sales tax collection or economic growth. They don't, for instance, measure well-being of economic impact – sorry, impact on well-being – the other way around.

So this is a small change but an important one to include the measures that we currently have available that we already use. We can always use more data. We work with what we have and the Employment Standards Board already makes well informed decisions. When we consulted with them, they were very comfortable with

this being something that they felt would strengthen their capacity to make evidence-based decisions in terms of the context of the work that they do.

**Chair:** The hon. Minister of Fisheries and Communities.

**Mr. Fox:** Thank you.

So going back years ago, when I was in a further role, I remember if we had – we needed data on a certain issue, we could contact Stats Canada, and they would do a geographical scan for us, collect the data, and come back.

So did you consider contacting Stats Canada to have them do some kind of specific geographical review of PEI?

**Ms. Bell:** It wasn't relevant for this decision, minister, because this is specifically about using the measures of poverty that are currently available and are already used for things like economic development and economic impact, which is where, primarily, the minimum wage sits. As I said, if we want to talk about the broader scope of the Poverty Action Plan, we absolutely need better data. And I would love to be having that conversation around the Poverty Action Plan.

**Mr. Fox:** That's my point, Chair.

**Ms. Bell:** Minister, then that's something perhaps you could discuss with your colleagues around the implementation and expansion of the Poverty Action Plan.

**Chair:** The hon. Minister of Fisheries and Communities.

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

Can you bring me a quick brief on Bill C-97?

**Ms. Bell:** No, minister, I'm not an expert on the bill. I'm only familiar with it in terms of having made sure that I am aware of any bills that cross impact into the work that I do in my own files and in files that are relevant for my Caucus.

I can certainly table the summary that's available through the Government of

Canada, but it went through third reading towards the end of the last session, and it was an omnibus bill. It had quite a broad scope. There were a couple of key pieces in there. One of them was around the importation of alcohol across provincial lines and the other was – that caught my attention – was specifically around measures of poverty and the National Poverty Strategy. So I can bring that forward perhaps next week for you, minister.

**Chair:** So we do have others on the list. If it's all right, we'll come back to your question.

The hon. Member from Evangeline-Miscouche.

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

This question may have been asked the other day –

**Ms. Bell:** Sure.

**Mr. Gallant:** – but I'll ask it, if it has you can tell me.

Where is our poverty line on PEI and how many people live in poverty? Could you tell this House?

**Ms. Bell:** Really good question.

There are –

**Nathan Hood:** The short answer would be that there's a brief on the government website that has the different measures of poverty and it kind of breaks it down by region using the three main measures we have available. I wouldn't have that at my fingertips.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Evangeline-Miscouche.

**Mr. Gallant:** Do you have the number of persons?

**Ms. Bell:** A rough number that we tend to use is between one and five and one in six people in Prince Edward Island are living in what would be considered poverty.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Evangeline-Miscouche.

**Mr. Gallant:** And to your amendments to the bill, so you'd indicated that (b) was just what was in the last one.

**Ms. Bell:** That's correct.

**Mr. Gallant:** Are the other two (a) and (c) new ones? Are they new amendments you want to see?

**Nathan Hood:** C is the new addition, and (a) and (b) were in the previous subsection.

The reason why we had repealed the previous subsection and are replacing it with this one, is that we had to reword it, so we're making it clear that the board is issuing a report and then at the very end of this subsection we're saying that they shall make this report public.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Evangeline-Miscouche.

**Mr. Gallant:** Have you consulted with any of the chamber of commerce's or the business community on your bill?

**Ms. Bell:** I actually shared the amendment with the chamber of commerce who is also represented on the Partnership for Growth. They're well aware of the content of this. What they are comfortable with is, it is an independent Employment Standards Board, so the piece of this is it is not interfering in any way with the function of the board and what they're happy to see is the reporting piece which is what they've been advocating for for a long time.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Evangeline-Miscouche.

**Mr. Gallant:** Thank you, and thank you for that answer.

The Employment Standards Board has done a tremendous job –

**Ms. Bell:** They do.

**Mr. Gallant:** – in the past. A number of provinces have brought their minimum wage up and then they capped it to CPI.

What do you think of that scenario?

**Ms. Bell:** We actually talked about that during our consultation with the board. We had a really interesting conversation about it. They were pretty clear they weren't a fan of that approach. I'm trying to think – I think it was that it doesn't allow for changes in the environment.

If you look at all the different factors they're considering here and you think about the press release that kind of came out around the increase last time, there was a very specific story about why they came to the decision that they did.

If you cap it or link it to only one aspect of the market condition, you're not taking into consideration other aspects. The fact that they – they're okay with having their job be more complicated by needing to take so much into consideration because then they felt it was a true reflection of the need in the community.

It was a very interesting conversation, very reassuring, that the commitment was there from the board.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Evangeline-Miscouche.

**Mr. Gallant:** Just one final comment.

I know it was mentioned in this House a few times by a previous member, that had it been tied to CPI, let's say for the last 10 years, minimum wage may have went from approximately \$8.35 to about a little less than \$11 in the last 10 or 12 years.

By the board doing the study they do looking at all the economics, it seems to be a better fix than CPI. That was my take away from it too, yeah, definitely.

**Mr. Gallant:** Thank you.

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

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

I have a couple of questions; I'd like to talk about the ESP deliberations that have gone on previously, prior to this amendment coming forward.

Can you tell us what factors they would have taken into account then and was there

any way that the public could have known how they came to their final decision on whether or not to increase the minimum wage?

**Nathan Hood:** Well, I'll go in reverse.

So, the way we would find out if there was a change in the minimum wage would be that an order is issued in the *Royal Gazette*, which informs the public that there will be an increase, or it'll remain the same or it'll decrease.

As far as the evidence that they use to support that decision, really we've been relying on government press releases. I think that was really only last year where that it was very clear here are some of the factors that we use in informing our decision.

Before we would see, just you know the order in the *Royal Gazette* and that's a very specific thing. That's just to let you know there's a change, the *Royal Gazette* is not there to justify why a decision was made. That has been one of the challenges, I guess if you're on the outside, is that it can be unclear what's guiding that decision.

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

**Leader of the Opposition:** So, if I were to ask for the central purpose of this bill, would it be to make that decision more apparent and more open and transparent to the public of Prince Edward Island? You're not – okay let me ask that question first and then I'll ask a second.

**Nathan Hood:** Yes, that would be one of the primary purposes. The other, I think, would be to introduce measures of poverty as a guaranteed factor in those considerations as well.

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

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

We've talked a few minutes ago and we have talked several times about the prosody of data when it comes to measurements of poverty here on Prince Edward Island. Obviously there's a concern among some members on the government side, regarding the insufficient information that we have.

But if I look through the current regulations – I'm sorry, the current statues that we have on the books for this department – we come across *Family and Child Services Act*, *Social Assistance Act*, *Social Workers Act*, *Welfare Assistance Act* we have *Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons Act*, all of these acts fully developed in place, proclaimed and working in this province with the same prosody of information.

So, I'm just wondering why, or if you think it's reasonable to imagine that a small amendment to an already existing bill should be subject to a higher level of information being available in order for it to come forward.

**Ms. Bell:** Thank you to the hon. Leader of the Opposition for the question and for the observation and the short answer is, no.

This is pretty straight forward; its small changes come from small places. It's good to start somewhere, but as I pointed out in my previous comments, if we want to ensure that we are looking at the impacts and the data related to poverty, we should be including that in our strategy for how we address poverty and all the associated legislation that reflects that.

And, in many of the legislations that are currently in act in the province, there are no measures or there is no consistency of measures, or it's not even mentioned at all. So, we should start in the places where it matters the most. In this case, we felt that it mattered enough to include it in this change, we could have left it out and just asked for the report to be published but we felt that it was important that poverty measures are included when we address minimum wage and hopefully they will be included in those other places too.

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

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

Just a final comment on that; in my understanding of this, by the same logic that we should send this bill to committee for further study and development of the data that we currently do not have, we should send all of those other bills to committee as well because they're relying on exactly the

same information. So, I just wanted to have that on the record.

Thank you, Chair.

**Chair:** The hon. member from Charlottetown- West Royalty.

**Mr. McNeilly** Just a quick question.

A few minutes ago we were talking about the poverty rates in PEI, and I think from that table, we were talking about one in five people or one in six people live in poverty. That's between 16% and 20%, is that accurate?

**Ms. Bell:** Yes, it is.

**Mr. McNeilly** It's because the last time I think we were talking, I think it was 5.9%. What was the number?

**Ms. Bell:** That number was for a very specific measure, which basically puts it against an income benchmark.

So one of the things, the reasons why we have different measures of poverty, is because sometimes measurement of poverty needs to be a number, around the income in your household because that then makes you eligible, or not eligible, for government programs, which are based on income.

So, for instance, social assistance or child care rates or disability allowance, or rental subsidies. But other times we measure it based on how much money do you actually have left in your bank account by the time you get to the end of the month? So the more months than money, which is when we talk about things like food insecurity and so measurements of poverty are often subjective.

What may sound like a lot of money to one person, sounds like it's impossible to imagine how you can live on that much money to somebody else. But, the actual outcome, rather than the number, is often what matters when we measure poverty.

So one of the numbers we talk about a lot of food insecurity and that is literally people don't know whether they're going to have any food today, and there are one in five Islanders who, on a regular, basis do not

know if they are going to eat today. That's 20% of Islanders, mean, women and children and that's the measure of poverty I think we should be talking about more often and it's got nothing to do with how much you earn.

**Mr. McNeilly:** No, exactly.

That's good, thank you very much,  
**Chair:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier King:** I really have enjoyed the debate, I'm sorry I missed the first part; I was out talking with –

**Ms. Bell:** We've repeated most of it Premier so you're okay.

**Premier King:** That's good.

Just, forgive me if this has been asked but what exactly changes between now by adding this? Like what do you see is just the overall?

**Ms. Bell:** Simple but impactful changes. Three main things, one is section one codifies the review process which is currently informal. Very, very good that the Employment Standards Board does but it's not codified. So by putting it into the legislation, it ensures that consistent quality of written and impressive submissions continues to happen.

The second section or the second impact is, including the measures of poverty, as you just heard us talk about, in terms of consideration for submissions.

The third piece is that they will issue a report and that that report will be made public. So its codification, measures of poverty and public reporting, so openness and transparency, Premier.

**Chair:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier King:** Yes, so Mr. Hood said that currently you just find out now by a news release or something like that.

**Ms. Bell:** An Order in Council, the *Royal Gazette*.

**Chair:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier King:** I would tend to agree that sometimes we should resist the urges to kick a lot of these things down the road, particularly when they're simple things that need to be updated. I don't see any major reason not to be supported of this. Like I believe it's in the best interest, I think any time you have an opportunity for Islanders to participate in the information that goes into the decision-making process, that it's actually a good thing and it should be welcomed.

I do think that in picking up on the conversation about the Poverty Reduction Plan; perhaps that is a better opportunity at the standing committee level to have a more fulsome discussion and explanation on that.

So thank you for bringing (Indistinct)

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

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Evangeline-Miscouche.

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

Forgive me; I just want to go back to something that you said. You said one in twenty people live in poverty and then you said regardless of how much they make. What were you alluding to there? I just caught the end of that, I'm sorry.

**Ms. Bell:** Sure. So because we often talk about poverty in terms of measurement of money and the income that someone may have. An example is very much people who earn minimum wage. Earning a minimum wage is about \$25,000 a year if you work full-time, which is not very much money.

But if you have two people earning a minimum wage, you say well they must be better off because they're earning \$50,000 a year. But if that couple has children and they have childcare costs and rent and all the other things, then they may actually not have enough money ever, to be secure in how much food they can have in their house.

So how much money you have is not always a measure of the experience that somebody is having in terms of their ability to live in a happy, safe and healthy life, which includes food. Food insecurity is probably one of the most accurate measures right now that we

have on the Island of how much poverty is impacting people on an everyday basis, more month than money.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Evangeline-Miscouche.

**Mr. Gallant:** I don't know if anyone else in this House heard it, but during the campaign, and through the year you hear it sometimes from the business community, have we ever given thought to a two-tiered system?

Not to take away from our youth and the value of their work, it's just that somebody 15-16 do they need to make as much as somebody that's trying to –

**Ms. Bell:** I think my colleague actually answered this one previously –

**Mr. Gallant:** – go to university or somebody that's trying to feed a family.

**Ms. Bell:** But if you want to speak to that one briefly again.

**Mr. Gallant:** If I may before you answer it, like one individual said that if that was tilted maybe the employer could pay a little more wages because they're not paying the flat \$12.25 an hour. I'm just throwing that out there.

I think it's not a bad idea for this to go to a committee and I will be supporting the bill. I just wanted to ask that question.

**Nathan Hood:** I think the simplest response to that is that the same work should be paid the same amount. So regardless of who's doing the work, if it's the same work, each person should be earning the same amount.

This is a debate that's going on in Alberta right now where they're actually implementing a similar change. And a lot of students in Alberta are not happy with that, because these are students who have to pay for school and the cost of school, you know, is increasing from year to year.

It's just making it harder for them to afford it, when if they had the rate consistent with other workers, it would be much more easy for them to cover their expenses.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Evangeline-Miscouche.

**Mr. Gallant:** Just one final comment. Just to what you said – what I mean by my comment – was say, somebody 15 to 17 is still in high school. This individual said to me: do they need to make as much as somebody that's in post-secondary? So, you know, the bump would only come once you went to university sort of thing.

**Nathan Hood:** Well, again I would say that if they're doing the same work, they should be paid the same. These are students who are probably saving for post-secondary.

We also have to be careful because we don't know the family conditions that these students are coming from. Sometimes you see that where you have young children who are basically working to help support their family because their parents are living in poverty.

So we don't want to restrict their ability to support families if those are their circumstances.

**Mr. Gallant:** Well, thank you very much for your comment.

**Chair:** The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Land.

**Mr. Thompson:** That's a big handle.

Thank you, hon. member.

Just a quick question: I know campaigning out in your district you see how people live and suitable standard of living. What is the measurement used now or it that related to the measurement of poverty? Is that the same thing or?

**Ms. Bell:** Yes. It's a very – again, it's one of those ones I think we could probably talk about a lot in committee is that there aren't consistent measures because it depends on what it is you're asking about.

Are you asking how much food somebody has? Are you asking about the conditions of where they live, about can they heat their home? Do they have electricity? Do they have running water?

These are actually conditions that people in PEI experience. But there's also different expectations and different spaces as well about what is acceptable. So it's very difficult for government necessarily define that, and therefore to measure it.

**Nathan Hood:** And if I can add a comment to that as well.

I know like in Nova Scotia when they were doing their report, they basically looked at the measures of poverty and they look at what someone would earn on minimum wage if they were working 50 weeks in a year at full-time. And they ask if this person is working full-time and their salary is still less than the poverty line, that's probably not a good rate.

So that's sort of the intent of that to ensure that if you are working minimum wage full-time, you shouldn't be living in poverty.

**Chair:** The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Land.

**Mr. Thompson:** So, thank you hon. member.

So will the board need different expertise or experience to now or is it –

**Ms. Bell:** Well one of the things that they do, minister, is significant public consultations.

So the consultation period is open now, and as we heard with the last round, they had input from 12 organizations and 14 different individuals. So, some of those organizations and individuals are either advocacy groups for those in poverty who can speak to an experience that others may not have. –

**Mr. Thompson:** To and for –

**Ms. Bell:** Exactly.

So lived experience can be, you can achieve that or you can get information on that through somebody else in their advocacy role.

The Cooper Institute, Marie Burge was here earlier today and she's the Cooper Institute, and that's one of the things that they do is for advocacy for those in poverty; very

critical to have those people in our community.

**Mr. Thompson:** Absolutely.

Thank you.

**Ms. Bell:** And if I may add to that.

They do have staff who are able to do the research. I would suspect as part of their research, they'd be able to reach out to various departments and (Indistinct)

**Mr. Thompson:** Thank you very much.

**Chair:** The hon. Minister of Economic Growth, Tourism and Culture.

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

Couple questions.

We talked the other day on the public report, and you had mentioned Nova Scotia. How did they put that report out? How's it go public?

**Nathan Hood:** I believe it was the minister head appointed a commission, and it was kind of – imagine like a comparator to what we have as an Employment Standards Board. So they had a – it was a four person board, they had two labour reps and then two like employer representatives.

So they basically were tasked with looking at the minimum wage and determining whether it was still adequate in today's age. So they used different measures. So we chose one that they had used, one of those measures of poverty, because that's what they had used in a previous report kind of updated it. They looked at how are we even measuring this?

Because one of the things they had realized is that we're using, you know, what would someone earn if they were working 40 hours a week. But stats shows that people are working more closely to 37.5 hours a week instead of 40, so how does that affect how you calculate it?

But generally yes, it was similar to the process we have. It was appointed by the minister for that specific purpose, as

opposed to kind of remaining in place from year to year to assess it.

**Ms. Bell:** But minister, are you asking about how is the report published?

**Mr. MacKay:** Yes.

**Ms. Bell:** When the *Royal Gazette* publishes a notice of the minimum wage order, then we would expect that the report supporting that minimum wage order would be made public on the government website. So you would be able to do a press release, and with a link to the PDF. I mean, it would be very straightforward.

**Chair:** The hon. Minister of Economic Growth, Tourism and Culture.

**Mr. MacKay:** And what provinces other than Nova Scotia are doing this now?

**Ms. Bell:** Alberta for sure.

**Nathan Hood:** I don't know if Alberta is actually.

**Ms. Bell:** Well, they did, but that may be different now.

**Nathan Hood:** It depends on the province because each province determines minimum wage differently. So because we have an Employment Standards Board, the process goes through that board and they make a recommendation to council who makes the order in the Gazette.

Some other provinces it's simply the minister that makes that statement. So at any point they can change the minimum wage and report on it. In other cases, they set the targets clearly in legislation, and that's how it is determined.

**Chair:** The hon. Minister of Economic Growth, Tourism and Culture.

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

Hon. member, your own personal opinion, what do you think minimum wage should be set at? Do you have any of your own thoughts?

**Ms. Bell:** Oh that's an easy question. I actually can't answer that, but I can answer

with: I would like our minimum wage to be closer to a living wage, minister. I know that the living wage and the minimum wage right now are very far apart.

And my hon. colleague – my colleague mentioned – he is honourable – mentioned when we know that if someone earning full-time – doing full-time hours at the minimum wage is still by all measures below the poverty wage then it's a problem.

But we also know that you can't – from an economic perspective and I also have my economics hat on – you can't just put a number out there because the market would be shocked. You need to get to an increase on a gradual basis, and we know that the market needs to have fair warning and planning because there's cost involved in terms of just doing planning, for example.

But consistent, bold increases would be a very good way to get us closer and closer to what looks more like a living wage.

One of the pieces of data that would be fascinating to do in our extended research should we get there as the Minister of Fisheries and Communities has suggested, would be to actually assess what a living wage would look like for PEI. In Nova Scotia, it's \$17.80 an hour, because they have done the homework there.

**Chair:** The hon. Minister of Economic Growth, Tourism and Culture.

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

Just a couple more. I guess that's where I'm trying to get my head at. Where should the livable wage be at?

**Ms. Bell:** It's higher than \$15 an hour.

**Mr. MacKay:** It is higher than?

**Ms. Bell:** It is. It is and obviously the more pressures we have on our regular working people and things like with rent and so on, the more the gap is going to be.

So it's how do you find a balance between those things. And this is why the Employment Standards Board is so important because they will take considerations of impact on business and

impact on individuals into account. So we could see aggressive increases like 70 cents or 75 cents at a time if that's what they recommend, and that's okay.

But it will have to be continual and we will likely always be behind.

**Chair:** The hon. Minister of Economic Growth, Tourism and Culture.

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

So I still feel that this is not so much the bill itself, but we do need to go to committee at some point. I do think this is something that needs to be addressed. Poverty is obviously a reality here in Prince Edward Island and I think it would be a good task for a new committee to certainly put forward. I support your bill.

The only thing, I got a small amendment that I'm hoping you'll support, and it's just to put: the act comes into force April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020.

That way it will give us some time to get to that point.

**Ms. Bell:** Minister, the review is currently – they are currently doing this now with an order due to come.

So they are open for consultation at the moment and then the considerations of that board happen once the consultation period is closed in October. If we wait until April, 2020, then they won't be considering these factors and that report will not necessarily be made public until the year after.

**Mr. MacKay:** Okay.

**Ms. Bell:** Because the next support is going to be published sometime between October and April. That will be the only consideration with that. I understand the point of your amendment but you would actually be delaying it by two years, not one.

**Chair:** The hon. Minister of Economic Growth, Tourism and Culture.

**Mr. MacKay:** I didn't realize that, chair, so we certainly won't do that.

**Ms. Bell:** Thank you, minister.

If I could suggest to the committee if there is support for the bill, that would be very good to do something at this point, but I've heard very clearly from a number of ministers about the appetite to have a more fulsome discussion in committee.

If I could be so bold as to suggest to this committee that we make a recommendation perhaps when we return to the House or in some other manner that this is a matter of priority for the appropriate committee to take into consideration as a priority. Then that would perhaps satisfy the needs of the House to discuss in more detail the impact and the considerations of poverty on a broader scope, whilst still enabling this bill to move forward and be enacted with a more immediate impact. Perhaps that would be considered?

**Chair:** The hon. Minister of Social Development and Housing.

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

Certainly appreciate the last comment from the hon. member. It's something that I put forward, that my colleague, minister Mackay had as well, so I do appreciate that.

Not to harp on this, but I think one of the things that we do need to address because of the tremendous discrepancy between the different ways that we can measure poverty, between the market basket measure, for example, and the different rates based on that. It's an important thing for us, whether it's with regard to this act or policy regulations that we do know exactly what we are speaking about there.

Just want to make that comment as a wrap-up comment.

**Ms. Bell:** Thank you, minister.

**An Hon. Member:** Call the question.

**Chair:** Okay we have a request to call the question.

Shall it carry? Carried.

Shall the bill carry specifically? Carried.

**Ms. Bell:** Sorry, I think there's a question on the floor.

**Mr. Trivers:** What are you going to call, all in favour all against, or?

**Chair:** All right, we will do that then.

All those in favour signify by saying 'aye.'  
**Some Hon. Members:** Aye!

**Chair:** All those opposed signify by saying 'nay'.

**Ms. Bell:** The aye's have it.

**Chair:** The ayes have it then. So the bill is carried.

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

**Ms. Bell:** I move the title.

**Chair:** *An Act to Amend the Employment Standards Act.*

Shall it carry? Carried.

**Ms. Bell:** 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.

**Ms. Bell:** Madam Chair, I move the Speaker take the chair and that 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 intituled an *Act to Amend the Employment Standards Act*, I beg leave to report the committee has gone through the bill and has agreed to same without amendment. I move that the report of the committee be adopted.

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

The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Belvedere.

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

Mr. Speaker, I move seconded by the hon. Member from Charlottetown-Victoria Park, that the order No. 12 – no, did it again. Order No. 14 be now read.

I got the numbers the wrong way. I do.

**Speaker:** That's alright.  
The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Belvedere.

**Ms. Bell:** That's what happens when you write it on one list and not the other, I apologize.

Mr. Speaker, I move, second by the hon. Charlottetown-Victoria Park, that Order No.12 be now read.

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

**Clerk:** Order No.12, *Government Advertising Standards Act*, Bill No. 101 ordered for second reading.

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

Mr. Speaker, I move seconded by hon. Member from Charlottetown-Victoria Park that this House do now resolve itself – that's not right either, is it? Is this the first time or second time?

**Leader of the Opposition:** Second time.

**Ms. Bell:** Mr. Speaker, I move seconded by Charlottetown-Victoria Park that the bill be read a second time.

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

**Clerk:** *Government Advertising Standards Act*, Bill No. 101, read a second time.

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

**Ms. Bell:** Now we can go.

**Ms. Bell:** Mr. Speaker, I moved, seconded by hon. Member from Charlottetown-Victoria Park, that this House resolve itself as a Committee of the Whole House to take into consideration the said bill.

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

The hon. Leader of the Opposition, you're Chair?

**Leader of the Opposition:** Actually, I'm the mover of the bill.

**Speaker:** Oh, you're the mover, you're Chair, oh good.

**Ms. Bell:** I'm Chairing.

**Speaker:** Oh, good.

**Ms. Bell:** The House is now in a Committee of the Whole House to take into consideration a bill to be intituled *Government Advertising Standards Act*. Is it the pleasure of the committee that the bill be now read clause by clause?

**Some Hon. Members:** Yes please.

**Speaker:** Permission to bring a stranger to the floor?

**Some Hon. Members:** Granted.

**Chair:** Would you like to begin with a general statement of the bill's intent?

**Leader of the Opposition:** I would Chair, thank you very much.

Thank you, members. I look forward to the discussion on this bill.

The purpose of this bill, which was actually tabled in the last session, is to establish standards for government advertising here on Prince Edward Island. It deals with the spending of public money on advertising and communicating government activities to ensure that that is done in a nonpartisan manner.

Government spends hundreds of thousands of dollars every year on advertising, and we want to make sure that those public funds are being spent and used appropriately.

This bill establishes standards for government advertising and establishes the role of the Auditor General in upholding those standards. It further requires all government advertising to state that it is paid for by the government of Prince Edward Island. The bill provides a mechanism for members of this House to

hold government accountable if they believe that government has funded partisan advertisements with public money by having the Auditor General investigate a complaint.

If government is uncertain of whether an advertisement that they plan on using meets the standard, they are able to have the office of the Auditor General review that advertisement and assess its compliance with the legislation.

Chair, we reviewed legislation from Ontario and New Brunswick and a previous bill that was actually tabled in this House in 2004 by former premier Robert Ghiz which was actually re-tabled in verbatim by the Member from Morell-Donagh last session.

So, Chair, I'm looking forward to some active debate on this bill, and given that government had promised just such a piece of legislation in their platform and the fact that both the Liberal and Conservative caucuses have brought forward bills very similar to ours in the recent past, I am optimistic that we'll proceed to pass this without much contention at all.

Thank you, Chair.

**Chair:** Thank you very much.

We'll start with the hon. Member from Morell-Donagh.

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

The hon. Leader of the Third Party, when they were in government, liked to distance themselves from that time back in 2007, so I'm not sure if you'll get complete agreement with it.

It time machine talk back then and all kinds of things; but I suspect now, in the essence of collaboration or consultation depending on what words we use, the six members of the third party will have a much different perspective.

Just a couple of –

**Mr. Henderson:** As (Indistinct)

**Mr. MacEwen:** – a couple of – no, I'll keep the same way, don't worry.

**Mr. Henderson:** (Indistinct)

**Mr. MacEwen:** A couple of quick overview questions: One, just to confirm, this is the identical act that was brought to the House before?

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

**Mr. MacEwen:** Okay.

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** Yes. The one – I think it was Bill No 126 in the previous session, Bill No. 104 this time.

**Nathan Hood:** And there was a tiny change to –

**Some Hon. Members:** Oh! (Indistinct) Oh, no!

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** (Indistinct) in the House already.

**Nathan Hood:** There is a tiny change to the –

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

**Nathan Hood:** – to the definition of advertising. I don't have the previous bill that was tabled with me, but it was only a minor – I don't think – it was just to tighten it up a little bit.

**Mr. MacEwen:** That's why we bring experts to the floor.

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** Right.

**Mr. MacEwen:** Chair?

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Morell-Donagh.

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

I think this likely was asked last time too, but as far as consultation with the AG, because the first – when someone reads this bill for the first time, like, what in the name of God are we tasking the AG with something like this, maybe as minor as this or maybe something as minor as this? What did the AG's office have to say about this?

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** Yeah, thanks for the question, Member.

We met with the Auditor General prior to tabling the bill in the last session and she was supportive of the bill.

A couple of things: There are two ways that current bills of this nature are policed. One is with a proactive approach where every piece of legislation is run by the Auditor General in order for him or her to rubber stamp it. The other is on a complaints-based mechanism, and we chose the latter mechanism for this to reduce the burden on the office of the Auditor General.

The other thing about it is even with the previous capacity within the office, she seemed comfortable and confident that they would be able to deal with whatever workload came their way; but I also note that in the government's platform and budget, I believe, there is increased funding for the Auditor General's office. So if they could do it before, they could certainly do it now.

**Mr. MacEwen:** That's good. We can get into the details, unless –

**Chair:** The hon. Premier?

**Premier King:** Yeah, my questions are more around just details as well, so if you want to progress through – my questions are more just around what you would consider an example of a difference between government advertising versus partisan advertising.

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** Sure.

**Nathan Hood:** Would you like me to answer that?

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** Yeah, sure.

**Premier King:** Do you want to do that now or do you –

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** Yeah, certainly, because it's a critical part of the bill.

**Premier King:** Yeah.

**Nathan Hood:** Well, I think probably what would be best is just to progress through the bill and it will outline the mediums to which these standards apply and what are examples

of the standards that they have to meet and what are exceptions to those standards. So –

**Premier King:** Sure. All right; that's fine, Chair.

**Chair:** Should we proceed section by section? Would that be acceptable to the committee?

**An Hon. Member:** Yeah?

Section 1. Definitions

Shall it carry? Carried.

Section 2. Designations

Shall it carry?

**Mr. MacEwen:** Sorry, Chair?

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Morell-Donagh?

**Mr. MacEwen:** Can I go back to that first one again?

**Chair:** Section 1. Definitions

**Mr. MacEwen:** Yeah, just on the – when you said about the advertising change –

**Chair:** So definition in the act,

b) “government advertising” means advertising material that, in return for the payment of public money, is produced or published by or on behalf of a government office.

**Mr. MacEwen:** Did reading that bring back any memories of what changed from the previous one?

**Nathan Hood:** I believe ‘material’ was one of the words we had added to that because when we talk about advertising and you see that kind of later in the – with the definition of ‘item’, right? We're talking about a singular piece of advertising. I think the way it was framed before was that it was kind of a more general advertising without actually making a reference to a specific piece of advertising. So we just wanted to tighten that up a little.

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

**Chair:** Section 1. Definition

Shall it carry? Carried.

Section 2. Designation

Shall the section carry? Carried.

Section 3. Application

Shall the section carry? Carried.

Section 4. Advertising Standards

Shall this section carry?

Question from the hon. Member from Morell-Donagh.

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

So I understand when they're reviewing this that there's an exception in the Ontario act that they're considered as additions to this section included other than social media websites like Facebook and Twitter and stuff that would automatically identify themselves as advertisements.

Why wouldn't you include that as part of this legislation?

**Nathan Hood:** So why wouldn't we include social media?

**Mr. MacEwen:** No, like, in the Ontario act they, like, for social media that already just says that it's an ad, why do we need to say it's an ad within the ad so to speak?

**Nathan Hood:** That's a good question. I think really the only requirement is that there is a small message that it's paid for by the government, which, I mean, you can probably see in the fine print on – I know in the, I believe it was the Robert Ghiz bill, something like 20% of the advertisement had to be covered with a statement that said it was paid for by the province.

I think it's just to ensure that it's very clear, like in no uncertain terms, that the advertisement that an individual is seeing is sponsored by the government.

**Leader of the Opposition:** Can I just add something? Because this actually goes back to the Premier's question of earlier as to what is acceptable and what would be

considered to be just simply the dissemination of information rather than advertising.

So there are four different things here listed. I may as well just read through them.

It must be a reasonable means of achieving one or more of the following purposes. This is to designate that it not be considered advertising.

Firstly, to inform the public of current or proposed government policies, programs, or services that are available to them. So and you see a lot of that, of government advertising either in *The Guardian* or *Compass* or whatever. These are policies and programs that are available to you.

Secondly, to inform the public of their rights and responsibilities under the law. I can think of during an election, your voting rights and responsibilities.

**Unidentified Voice:** Don't drink and drive.

**Leader of the Opposition:** Don't drink and drive. Exactly; DUI.

**Unidentified Voice:** (Indistinct)

**Leader of the Opposition:** Yes, exactly.

The third thing, which would not be covered by this act, is to encourage or discourage specific social behaviour in the public interest. That actually would be –

**Nathan Hood:** Actually, what it's saying is that it has to have a reasonable means of achieving one of these purposes.

**Leader of the Opposition:** Yeah.

So that would be the third thing.

The fourth is to promote any part of the province in which the advertising comes as a good place to study or live or work or stay. All of those would be considered to be reasonable uses of government funds for advertising.

**Chair:** The hon. Premier?

**Premier King:** So as an example then, when I was at the opening up the Small

Halls event in Indian River, the Indian River Festival has a booklet which I am in as Premier, welcoming people and congratulating them for having their upcoming season. Would you consider that as a reasonable use of this, or is that something that we wouldn't do if this bill were to pass?

**Leader of the Opposition:** No, I think that would be an entirely appropriate thing to do and many ministers and myself, and members of the third party and members of the official opposition, we'd also be invited to and provide those sorts of comments, so that would be absolutely fine.

**Chair:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier King:** So, I share your frustration with this from the past, obviously, because I think what we've seen and certainly in the most recent past were, if you look at the debate around carbon pricing and things like that and the way some government advertising was portraying certain parties and colours and things like that – which is what I would say would be a blatant misuse of government funds – so I certainly understand, but there is a fine line obviously in some of these things.

Are you comfortable that what we're laying out here sort of allows that fine line to be – and the reason I ask that hon. member, is I wouldn't want the Auditor General infiltrated with –, I didn't like the way they said 'us' or 'them' or that kind of thing, you know what I mean.

Do you understand (Indistinct) –

**Leader of the Opposition:** Yeas, absolutely.

**Nathan Hood:** This legislation outlines exceptions to some of the circumstances. So colours was one you had mentioned, so obviously, you come from a party that has particular blue, so let's think of –

**Premier King:** It's a lighter shade of blue though.

**Nathan Hood:** Let's think of something like, the government decides to put out like a water strategy or something like that. Well

waters something that we normally consider to be blue.

**Premier King:** So that would be ok?

**Nathan Hood:** Well, I mean, that's an example of, you know, it could reasonably be reflective of the contents of that document. So that would be something that would be exempt in (Indistinct)

**Leader of the Opposition:** Can I just add something to that?

There are also provisions in the act that give the Auditor General some discretion as to what she can – the rules – there are standards that are stipulated in the act but then there are two other sections which allow her some latitude in terms of how she would interpret things.

**Premier King:** Can I just have one more, Chair?

**Chair:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier King:** I agree certainly in principle with where we're going with this.

One of the things that I always thought was petty and it's almost a waste of money. I mentioned this to the hon. Minister of Economic Growth, Tourism and Culture today, sometimes what has happened in the past when governments changed, the teas that you would give out at the government golf courses would go from blue to green or red or whatever, and I just thought that was so petty and so small minded.

So I do certainly, as we go through this, I certainly support the principle of what we're trying to do here and I think we do have to be good stewards of the public person to make sure that were using the advertisement.

We also have to recognize (Indistinct) think you are in the bill that are our avenues to advertise are changing drastically compared to what they were before. So I'm just interested as we go through this to make sure that the changing media platform going forward is addressed in here.

**Leader of the Opposition:** You go first.

**Premier King:** He's only your boss. (Indistinct) don't worry about stepping on those toes.

**Nathan Hood:** One of the things in this legislation is that under the regulations you can effectively set additional medium centre included under the legislation, or include additional standards. If you feel as we progress and technology progresses and there were things that were left out of this legislation, you're able to add to that list.

**Leader of the Opposition:** What he said.

**Premier King:** We obviously –

**Chair:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier King:** Sorry Chair. I'm getting used to the process here.

It applies to paid advertising but there's also that slippery slope of social posting and things like that. I'm not active on social media anymore but I understand there's lots of things on there that would give the appearance that I am and I'm just wondering, is that sort of a part of the pushing of the line here in terms of what's covered in here? I know it might not be under the advertising standard, but that is another avenue of utilizing those resources, sort of, and making sure they don't do so on a partisan nature and we would all be under the same guidelines, obviously by that.

But is that sort of dealt with somewhere along the way, hon. leader?

**Nathan Hood:** That goes back to our definition of advertising. So, you know, the material in return for the payment of public money is produced and published by or on behalf of a government office. So you know, if you're on your personal Twitter account and you're saying Premier King is the best, fill your boots.

**Premier King:** We'd never say that. We might re-tweet it if someone said it.

**Nathan Hood:** Well no, a public Twitter account.

**Premier King:** Thank you, Chair.

**Chair:** Shall Section 4 carry?

A question from the hon. Member from Morell-Donagh.

**Mr. MacEwen:** Thank you.

So you're talking about Twitter, so, if the government tweets something, how and – if you've got a limited space for example, do you have to write in the tweet that this was paid for?

**Nathan Hood:** It's an interesting question, I would suspect –

**Mr. MacEwen:** It's just coming from the department, with the whole thing that if it already identifies itself as a paid advertisement on one of the social media platforms, do you have to keep putting it in, whatever it is now. Typically it's probably more of a graphic or something like that right, where you might have something like that. Bu I guess the question is, if it's a straight tweet?

**Nathan Hood:** It's a good question because I see what you mean; you don't want to have to overlap these things.

One of the, I guess the easiest fix to that, probably would be in the regulations there's a clause that Cabinet can add additional rules that might make it easier to fulfill the intent of the act. That might be one where you say, you know, we're already listing it, it's already identified as sponsored, so we might not need to do it again.

**Mr. MacEwen:** Could you do that in regulations though?

**Nathan Hood:** Might be able to.

**Mr. MacEwen:** If the act specifically says it doesn't allow for the exception?

**Nathan Hood:** I would say it would still fulfilling the intent of that section.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Morell-Donagh.

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

What's your opinion on in cases where there's a government like word mark, that clearly states it's from a government, it's

from a department, there's contact information on there? Do you feel that that is a potential exception, where the viewer or reader would automatically assume that if the word mark is there and there's contact information that, that is paid for by the government?

**Nathan Hood:** Not necessarily.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Morell-Donagh.

**Mr. MacEwen:** Could you give me an example of where that might be misused?

**Nathan Hood:** I don't think it's so much that it might be misused but I think if you're spending money on the advertisement, people might not realize that its public money. I think by assuming that because someone's name is on it, that people would understand that it's paid for by government might not be true.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Morell-Donagh.

**Mr. MacEwen:** Thank you.

I guess that's another one that was in the Ontario act as well, where they had kept exceptions out.

Another one I'm wondering about is where the government partners with somebody for an audit. You guys had mentioned the don't text and drive campaign and if that's partially funded by the Insurance Bureau of Canada, how do we deal with that? Should there be an exception made for that, like if government is partnering with somebody on that?

**Nathan Hood:** So subsection 6, section (4) deals with that a little bit.

So the standards don't apply with respect to a notice to the public that is required by law, an advertisement about an urgent matter affecting public health or safety, a job advertisement or an advertisement about the provision of goods or services to a government office.

Now our definition of advertising includes things that using public money are produced either, by or for, a government office, so if the feds had come in and say we will

sponsor this ad, that's still being used, it's still being produced for a government office. So that'd be subject to the act.

**Mr. MacEwen:** I'm still concerned about the whole regulation part and regulations versus legislations, because I'm confident that you can't make a regulation that goes against that changes the ad.

So if you're saying well we can just deal with that in regulations, which allows for exemptions, if the act says don't exempt it, how do we do that regulations?

**Nathan Hood:** Well I wouldn't view it so much as an exemption, as I think you're saying that the notice on the platform that the post is sponsored by the government office, constitutes a notice that is – but I guess going back, you might have a point there where –

**Mr. MacEwen:** It seems to me that you'd be good in a government department.

**Nathan Hood:** It says that it's sponsored. It says that it's a paid ad, but doesn't necessarily say that it's paid for by the province.

**Leader of the Opposition:** Government of Prince Edward Island (Indistinct)

**Chair:** Hon. members, if I could interrupt – we have completed our time available for debate at this time.

We'll be going to the third party, so if I could ask the promoter of the bill –

**Leader of the Opposition:** Madam Chair, I move the Speaker take the chair and that the Chair report progress and beg leave to sit again.

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

Mr. Speaker, as Chair of a Committee of the Whole House, having under consideration a bill to be intituled *Government Advertising Standards Act*, I beg leave to report that the committee has made some progress and begs leave to sit again. I move that the report of the committee be adopted.

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

The hon. Member from Evangeline-Miscouche.

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

I move, seconded by the hon. Member from Charlottetown-West Royalty, that Motion No. 4 be now read.

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

**Clerk:** Motion No. 4: Referral of childhood vaccination to the appropriate standing committee.

The hon. Member from Charlottetown-West Royalty moves, seconded by the hon. Member from O'Leary-Inverness, the following motion:

**WHEREAS** vaccination represents one of the greatest public health achievements in the prevention and control of diseases;

**AND WHEREAS** Prince Edward Island Immunization Program offers free vaccinations at Health PEI Public Health Nursing offices for children under the age of 18;

**AND WHEREAS** vaccination is an effective tool in preventing a range of childhood diseases;

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Legislative Assembly recognizes the importance of vaccinations to the health of Island children;

**THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Legislative Assembly urges parents to have their children immunized in consultation with Healthcare professionals;

**THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that childhood vaccination be referred to the Standing Committee responsible for health for review.

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

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

It's a great pleasure to stand in support of this motion and I think it's pretty important.

We all have children, or most of us have children, and we realize how important they are to our lives and our families' lives and we want to do nothing more than keep them safe and I really think this is where it starts.

Globally thinking about how this has affected – we're in Canada. We're able to vaccinate. It's pretty – what I thought was pretty standard – until a few months ago when we started to see it on the news maybe and different events happening in our country. We realized that we have to have good strong policies here on PEI, which I do believe we have. But, we have to continue that and make sure that this House strengthens that every day and make sure our children stay safe.

I do believe that this motion when we're looking at things, the health of a child really starts at the hospital. In Prince Edward Island, you talk about getting information and your doctors are there and everybody is there to keep that child healthy. We've got to make sure that we strengthen our brain and our heart at that time and make sure that the body is able to fight off diseases. In 2019, you think about where we are with this and where we have to get to and we got to make sure that everything stays strong and our kids stay healthy and happy.

According to the World Health Organization, vaccinations and immunizations save up to three million lives every year, most of which are children and the most vulnerable segment of society.

The WHO has listed vaccine hesitancy – has anybody ever heard of that? Well, vaccine hesitancy is defined as 'reluctant or refusal to be vaccinated or have one's child vaccinated' as one of the top 10 health threats in 2019.

And just a little while ago I remember listening to a CBC article on one of the evening shows, not the current, but the evening, one and I was listening to this family really promote against vaccination and some of the things that they said were that they were afraid of their children getting autism and I want to dispel that myth right now; dispel and thimerosal does not cause autism. I think I might have messed up that word, but anyway.

Let's just put that to bed right now and realize that we have to keep moving forward and strengthen and make sure that this House gets together and strengthens the health of our children.

In Canada, the anti-vaxxers movement is small but their voices are amplified by celebrity endorsements and the use of social media to push misleading and incorrect information.

We just talked about various aspects of social media in this House and we have to understand that you cannot believe everything you read on social media, and this is one of those things. When it involves vaccinations, our kids and the health of our children, we have to make sure that we are strong and stay firm in our resolve to keep them healthy.

I do believe this is the start of a holistic model of care for children; making sure that we have access to immunizations and vaccinations at an early age becomes incredibly crucial.

I'm not sure if you realize, but 20 to 30% now of parents in Canada have questions about vaccinations and their affect on children. That is a pretty amazing enormous number and the facts are clear.

We have medical professionals that we need to back and make sure that we all listen to their strict and sound advice. We don't have to look very far from here, a mere few hundred kilometres to see important vaccinations play inside our lives. Just this month, New Brunswick experienced a measles outbreak in the St. John area that left more than 2,000 people – 2,000 people – potentially exposed to infectious diseases. June 1<sup>st</sup> there were 12 confirmed cases in that area. All were linked to one particular case coming back in to the country. So that's how important this is that we need to take care like I said, of our most vulnerable and that starts with our children.

With measles, approximately 20% lead to hospitalization and infections can lead to endoftalmitis— help me?

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

**Mr. McNeilly:** Yeah, that's swelling of the brain – pneumonia and death from neurological respiratory complications.

So just kind of wrapping up, this falls under public health and I want to know and I want to send a big thank you for all the people in the province who work for public health and make sure that we keep our children safe.

I think this motion is a very important one and I think we should all probably get together and strengthen it and look at strengthening it into the future.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from O'Leary-Inverness.

**Mr. Henderson:** Mr. Speaker, I want to rise in support of this particular motion by seconding this motion.

As a former minister of health in the Province of PEI, I got to be keenly aware of the importance of vaccinations and the importance of our public health offices and our nurses and our Chief Public Health Officer, Dr. Heather Morrison was there while I was minister and a fabulous person.

I think there's real importance out there to make sure that we're providing a so-called heard immunity when it comes to providing our public health to our residents in this province, as well as our country of Canada.

I would say to any of those people out there that are anti-vaccinationers, your family and community's health is at stake here and I think it's probably the most important thing that you can do is to make sure that you're using good science and good judgment when it comes to protecting your family, as well as your community.

Vaccinations, I think if you read any of the science on this, it's been a proven and an effective measure of preventing disease, preventing disease outbreaks, and we know that diseases aren't aware of what a border is. They don't understand the Confederation Bridge, they wouldn't understand a ferry. They don't understand boundary lines. So these things are communicable. They can travel, and our society has become very

mobile today. We travel all over the world. People are coming and going.

My wife just came back – I have a daughter that lives in Germany. She just came back the other day from that.

Myself, I had the opportunity to travel in a few occasions representing the province, I remember going to Arusha, Tanzania. Really my first kind of time I ever went to a really foreign continent and the department said: well if you're going, you have to make sure you get all your needles.

I didn't really know much what I was in for in that regard, but anyway they sent me down to the public health office for travel. Man, like a pin cushion by the time I was all done with the different needles that I had to get to go to that particular country.

Then later on as minister of agriculture, I had the opportunity to go to represent Canada at the World Potato Congress down in Cusco, Peru, and thinking, well I probably had all my needles to go travel in that particular case. Sure enough no, another whole round of needles for other communicable diseases that are out there.

So I think that sort of shows the importance that even though those places may seem to be very exotic, we do tend to travel to those places from time to time. So it just sort of emphasizes the importance of those particular concepts.

I believe it was actually –when it comes to medicine – vaccines are considered the number one public health achievement of our globe. We've seen immunization issues that have prevented a lot of diseases that we don't hear of anymore.

Since I have had a little more time since being over in the opposition side here before the Legislature came in, I decided to do a little bit of work on my genealogy and started doing some work on that and finding out that when I'd check – find some pictures online and things of that nature of tombstones and things of that nature – you start finding, you know, my great-grandparents, found their tombstone, and yet there was another name on the tombstone that was a child that passed away at maybe one-year of age or two years of age or what

have you. When you start to find out that there was certainly lots more diseases back then, whether it was polio or whether it was diphtheria, measles.

Those are the types of things that have occurred in our world, but those things are pretty much eradicated. (Indistinct) never hear tell of somebody dying of diphtheria anymore. When you see the amount of people that did die at a very young age, you start to then ask the questions why.

When you start to follow up on that, you find out vaccinations wasn't really in place back then. That stuff became really even more knowledgeable more in maybe the 50s or something. When you go back to the 1900s and you start to see that, you start to raise some awareness of that. I think it's very important that we continue on with that process, and at least we can look at studying this in much further detail.

Recently, we've obviously had the information in New Brunswick where a lot of people have come down with the measles. Now all of a sudden there's a whole kind of an outbreak of measles in that particular area. And those are the types of things that we have to make sure that we're advocating for and that they don't occur here.

So from that perspective, I know PEI has always been very good at participating. I read some of the reports, and we're certainly in exceeding the 80 percentile range of people that are getting their vaccinations here on Prince Edward Island. But we have to make sure that we're doing our due diligence, and making sure that that doesn't decline.

I know the Minister of Health and Wellness would be very good at instructing his department to continue on in that path and would see that there'd very few changes in that. But I know Dr. Heather Morrison is a big advocate of vaccinations and immunization and the impacts that that can have in reducing our health care costs and I look forward to supporting her.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I am going to conclude my comments, and I'm very pleased to second this particular motion.

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

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

I appreciate the former minister of health's comments on this very important topic. I know he talked a lot about getting needling. He didn't talk about getting needled here in the House, but I do know what he feels like. I want to thank the members of the third party for this motion. We have an outstanding children's immunization program right here on Prince Edward Island with an approximately 95% uptake.

This is a program that each member of this House should be very proud of and support.

Our public health nursing staff provide safe and effective vaccines that protect Islanders against many communicable diseases, known as vaccine preventable diseases. Public health nursing starts following our Island children right from birth. Our immunization schedule starts at 2 months old and, throughout their early years, children receive free vaccinations for – just to name a few – diphtheria, tetanus, hepatitis B, polio, measles, mumps, rubella, polio, and the seasonal flu virus.

As Minister of Health and Wellness and as a father, I am extremely supportive of the great work happening in our children's immunization program. I'm also open to finding ways we can further improve government initiatives. If the third party feels that we can advance this program and that the standing committee can suggest ways of moving us even further ahead on immunization, then I am in full support of this motion.

Our government is open to having real discussions, hearing what Islanders have to say, and listening to ideas members from all parties can bring to the table. If the standing committee can recommend ways we can enhance this already successful program, we would be happy to hear those suggestions.

We know that immunization works, and we have the statistics to prove it. Before the polio vaccine was created, over 2,500 Canadians suffered annually from polio.

Since the vaccine was introduced in 1955, that number has now dropped to zero.

Prior to 1969, almost 15,000 Canadians would be diagnosed with rubella every year. Now since the introduction of a vaccine, we only see one case of rubella per year on average in this country – 15,000 to one. That's pretty good stats.

I know that in the last several weeks there has been an extensive coverage in the news about vaccination, particularly in regards to the measles. We are learning that unfortunately in some jurisdictions there are significant numbers of people who have chosen not to vaccinate themselves and their children against communicable diseases.

And as we have seen, this choice exposes people to risk from diseases that could otherwise be prevented. Measles is one of the most contagious viral diseases known. If not vaccinated, over 90% of susceptible people who encounter measles will become ill.

The people who forego vaccination, not only put themselves at increased personal risk, but they also increase the risk to those people in the community for whom vaccination is not possible, such as newborn infants, people who are considered immune compromised, and the elderly. Those who choose not to be vaccinated may not know what they are increasing the danger of illness to themselves, their family, and also to their communities.

Thankfully, the vast majority of people in PEI do choose to vaccinate their children.

As the motion points out, vaccination is one of our greatest public health success stories. It is one of the most cost effective health interventions, and has proven to be an effective tool in preventing a range of childhood diseases.

The government recognizes that, and because we see the importance of vaccination, the PEI Immunization Program offers free vaccinations at Health PEI public health nursing offices for children under the age of 18, as well as many vaccines for those at risk for certain diseases over the age of 18.

Right now in PEI, we have a tremendous rate of vaccination.

**An Hon. Member:** Call the hour.

**Speaker:** Members, the hour has been called.

Recess until 7:00 this evening.

**The House recessed until 7:00 p.m.**

**Speaker:** Good evening everyone.

**Some Hon. Members:** Good evening.

**Speaker:** Did everyone have a good supper?

**Some Hon. Members:** Good. I had wings – wings.

Orders of the Day (Government)

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

**Ms. Compton:** Mr. Speaker, I move seconded by the hon. Premier, that the 2<sup>nd</sup> order of the day be now read.

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

**Clerk:** Order No. 2, *Government Reorganization Act*, Bill No. 2, ordered for third reading.

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

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

I move seconded by the hon. Premier that the said bill be now read a third time.

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

**Clerk:** Bill No. 2, *Government Reorganization Act*, Bill No. 2, read a third time.

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

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

I moved seconded by the hon. Premier that the said bill do now pass.

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

This is a bill introduced by leave of the House, read a first time, read a second time, committed to a Committee of the Whole House, reported agreed to with or without amendment, read a third time and it is now moved that the bill do pass.

All those in favour say ‘aye.’

**Some Hon. Members:** Aye!

**Speaker:** Contrary, ‘nay.’

Carried.

The bill is carried.

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

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

I move, seconded by the hon. Premier, that the 1<sup>st</sup> Order of the Day be now read.

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

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

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

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

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

I will now ask the Hon. Member from Member from Tignish-Palmer Road, to Chair.

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

A request has been made for the floor?

**Some Hon. Members:** Granted.

**Chair:** Would you please state your name is title, please?

**Jeremy MacEwen:** Jeremy MacEwen, Manager of Accounting.

**Chair:** Okay, we left off on page 36 on Business Development and Innovation. That section was read.

Are there any questions on the section?

**Mr. MacKay:** Just before we go any further, Chair.

**Chair:** Sure.

**Mr. MacKay:** I've got questions back from everyone that I didn't have yesterday, so my department worked hard all day to get them. So if there's any missing, feel free to let us know. I'll get the page to hand them out as well – and also, Summerside-Wilmot, I do have a list of the grants you requested yesterday.

**Chair:** Okay, Total Business Development and Innovation.

Are you tabling that?

**Mr. MacKay:** Yeah, sure.

**Chair:** Okay.

Again – Total Business Development and Innovation: \$1,776,002.

Shall it carry? Carried.

Programs: “Appropriations provided for the development of business, PEI tax incentives: 23,300,000. Business Expansion and Product Development: 10,970,400. Trade and Export Development: 1,000,000.

Total programs: 35,270,500

Shall it carry?

**Ms. Bell:** Question.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Belvedere.

**Ms. Bell:** Thank you.

I know that this section includes a lot of various programs, and I'd like to ask questions about a couple of specific ones to start with and I think my colleagues have questions on some of the others.

The section on small business support development fund, which is one of the most significant chunks of allocations – I think the total development fund is 9,061,000 in this detail and it covers a very broad spectrum.

I'm curious as to when it's a question called Small Business Support, why it would include 1.4 million for Mill River Experience, 1.2 million for the City of Charlottetown, about 500,000 for the Food Island Partnership, 250,000 for the ignition Startup Zone, and a number of other significantly large funds to significantly large organizations that are not what I would consider small business. I was wondering if the minister could give some detail around why those things are in this fund.

**Mr. MacKay:** That's one question I'd actually noticed and asked a couple days ago as well. I'm going to get Jed to help you out here and explain it.

**Jeremy MacEwen:** (Indistinct)

**Mr. MacKay:** So the Mill River, that was the six million that was carried over from the previous administration to finish off the renovations of that. The 1.2 was the Fitzroy Parkade and –

**Ms. Bell:** Yes.

**Jeremy MacEwen:** Sorry, what was your last one you were wondering about?

**Ms. Bell:** I had mentioned the Food Island Partnership, the ignition Startup Zone – there's actually a line that I didn't even hear regarding artist grants and then LaunchPad PEI and the PEI BioAlliance were some of the other major organizational funds.

**Jeremy MacEwen:** The Food Island Partnership is just a bunch of different supports. One supports the Fall Flavours, another with the Food Xcel and Food Propel and then some core funding for 19/20.

The ignition Startup Zone, again, that's some operational funding and the 25,000 is actually a 2018 Invest Atlantic.

The LaunchPad – those are going to the different locations that we have. Some are operational grants that we have, so the ATC

LaunchPad, the Holman LaunchPad, and Montague as well.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Belvedere.

**Ms. Bell:** While I understand you're new to the file and we've looked at these, very similar things, last year as well, I was wondering if the minister would have some thoughts of putting operational grants and purchases of parkades into a Small Business Support Development Fund.

**Mr. MacKay:** I agree, member, and like I say, I had asked these same questions a couple of days ago because they jumped out at me as well, I can't explain why the previous administration would have done it that way but going forward obviously all those grants will be looked at a little different.

**Ms. Bell:** Sure.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Belvedere.

**Ms. Bell:** Thank you minister.

There are obviously – I know when you look at programs and program development and the names of programs and what they're for, that can often happen very organically and I expect that sort of a longer-term thing may be that like we talked about, why do we have so many and what are they are for?

**Mr. MacKay:** Exactly.

**Ms. Bell:** But in the interest of transparency, when you are looking at – and don't get me wrong, I think funding things like LaunchPad and Startup Zone is great.

**Mr. MacKay:** Yeah.

**Ms. Bell:** Putting operational grants or consultant grants or large chunks of money to buy capital things under what really should be small business support is not necessarily the best use of a transparent process and when we have talked a lot about who gets operational funding and where does it go, this is part of the reason why it's so challenging –

**Mr. MacKay:** Right.

**Ms. Bell:** – to follow that thread. So I would really hope that we can sort of take that forward and not be seeing this again next time around, Minister.

**Mr. MacKay:** Certainly. Yeah, no, like I say, I plan as soon as the House sitting is over with, is to go down and sit with the department individually, go through all this, every grant, every program. I just got the list of programs out there now. Once again, it's quite complex. We've got a whole bunch of different streams, you know, can we tighten that up a bit or what can we do to improve it so certainly I'll take them recommendations back.

**Ms. Bell:** Thank you, Minister; and to be clear, I would not want anyone to misconstrue that I am suggesting that we cut programs that support this good work. It is about transparency.

Following up on one other piece of this before I hand it over, is I noted a couple of key funds, a Pilot and Discovery Fund and the associated Development and Commercialization Fund, there's only one line item for either of those and it looks like it's a kind of closure. I was wondering if those funds are formally cancelled or on hold?

**Mr. MacKay:** No, no change.

**Jeremy MacEwen:** No, no change.

**Ms. Bell:** Okay. We had seen, obviously, a lot of focus on the Ignition Fund, which is a grant based program. These programs are also ones that really significantly help new startups and startups that were heading into a growth and commercialization phase. So again, in program review, it would be good, because we haven't actually seen any call for applications or activity on those for a couple of years now, and they are potentially really helpful ways to access what is very limited funding.

Another question please, Chair?

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Belvedere.

**Ms. Bell:** Thank you. I would also add again, there's a line item in here with no

funds allocated, which is the post-doc and grad scholarship piece, which is again yet another part of that story of the role of innovation.

Competition-based funding is one aspect of how we can provide funding to startups; but funding which is based on good, solid business planning, which these programs were, is also a very important part of our innovation story here in PEI. There's a lot of organizations that we can look to now, who are significant employers who got their start because of – I mean, I think perhaps even a couple of tech companies that you work with for Internet went through this program.

My other point, Minister, that I would like to make, is just around the impact of the web development program but also the limits of the web presence program still being capped at \$500.

**Mr. MacKay:** I agree, yeah.

**Ms. Bell:** And I think I'll say that every year that I'm here, Minister.

**Mr. MacKay:** Yeah, no, I agree with you on that one. We've had – obviously, when I was on that side of the House, that was a call that I used to get quite often as well: 500 doesn't go near far enough, so that's something we can certainly look at down the road.

**Ms. Bell:** Super. That's it for now, Chair. Thank you.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Mermaid-Stratford.

**Ms. Beaton:** Thank you, Chair.

I just want to touch base on the tax incentive section under programs. Can you tell me what qualifies somebody for tax incentives?

**Jeremy MacEwen:** Is there a certain one you're looking at or –

**Ms. Beaton:** Just in general and then I'm going to kind of go down a little bit; I just want to know what qualifies it.

**Jeremy MacEwen:** So there's different programs: there's the advanced marine technology, there's the aerospace tax rebate,

bioscience tax rebate, the Enriched Investment Tax Credit, and the PEI labour rebate. (Indistinct)

**Ms. Beaton:** Thank you; but in general, in order for a company to qualify for tax incentives, what criteria is it?

**Mr. MacKay:** I can summarize a bit of it here, just – there's a few of them here, but the Advanced Marine Technology rebate is a new support that has been modeled for the success of aerospace industry. P.E.I. has gone from limited advanced marine technology, so \$5 million to a growing sector with staffing members close to 200.

This would be it here?

**Jeremy MacEwen:** Yeah.

**Mr. MacKay:** So, new and existing advanced marine technology companies with a minimum of 15 PEI staff and a minimum payroll of \$700,000.

**Ms. Beaton:** Okay, so it has to do with the number of employees and –

**Mr. MacKay:** Payroll by the look of it, yeah.

**Ms. Beaton:** – and payroll that they –

**Jeremy MacEwen:** For the larger ones, yeah.

**Ms. Beaton:** For the larger ones that would – okay.

I guess what sticks out is there's some pretty well known companies, well-established and doing really well. So is there ever a time where they no longer qualify, like that would expire to be able to qualify for tax credits? Or is that ongoing?

**Jeremy MacEwen:** I mean, they're also paying into taxes too, right?

**Ms. Beaton:** Right, yeah.

**Jeremy MacEwen:** So the Department of Finance is receiving it on their end. So they'd have to be profitable in order to get the tax rebate back.

**Ms. Beaton:** Right, okay.

Just to move on then, I just want to touch on some of the programs. Do these umbrella programs have any caps on them? Is there an envelope of money that you would not go above and beyond within each of the categories? So like –

**Jeremy MacEwen:** Yeah. Each one is different. For marketing assistance, I think there's a cap of \$40,000 that total spend and you'd get 40% back depending on what you do or 25% back if you're going for like a trade marketing show. Professional services are capped at \$500 or \$1000 depending on the line of thing you're – like, bookkeeping services are \$500 and business plans would be \$1000.

**Ms. Beaton:** So I guess what I'm wondering is, if you just look at cultural development and – no, sorry, I went back, I went too far; but anyway, if you just take, for instance, the small business support development fund. Does Innovation say: Okay, well we have x millions of dollars that we can allocate to anybody who applies for that grant? And then are there people that it turns down because we've exhausted that envelope of money?

**Mr. MacKay:** That's a good question. I'll have to get back. I'm not sure if anyone gets turned down on it or not. I can try and find out and get back to you.

**Ms. Beaton:** Okay. I think that's it because I'm just wondering: if some of them are big pockets of money, do we exhaust it or do we (Indistinct) because I don't see a comparison from year to year in this section, so I don't know if we would be – you know, estimate, what we estimated last year and what the forecast would be.

**Mr. MacKay:** You want to make sure that it all doesn't go to a certain – that it's spread out across and everyone's on a level playing field?

**Ms. Beaton:** Yeah, and I also kind of what to know in the estimate section if – yeah, I guess if it doesn't all go to one particular fund where it does actually get spread out and so there's none that are kind of being pushed aside, so that other funds get more. Do you know what I mean?

**Mr. MacKay:** Yeah, I'll certainly check into that.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton.

**Mr. Hammarlund:** Yes, thank you.

Permit me just to go back to a question that was answered somewhat last time, which was about the grants that Innovation PEI grants to itself. It was my understanding

**Mr. MacKay:** For the consultants?

**Mr. Hammarlund:** For consultants. If they are consultants to the grant getter, are they consultants to the grant getter or are they consultants for you to process the grant?

**Mr. MacKay:** They're through for Innovation.

**Jeremy MacEwen:** They're through – yeah.

**Mr. MacKay:** Yeah, for Innovation, through the department. .

**Mr. Hammarlund:** So shouldn't it be probably listed under as a part of that administration cost, like professional services for instance?

**Jeremy MacEwen:** I said consulting as an example yesterday, but they're not all consulting work. Basically, if Innovation PEI directors come up with a strategic initiative that they want to do and nobody comes up with eligible (Indistinct) grant funding, then they put it through an internal program assistance fund through Innovation like that. So, it's not necessarily – it's not a grant, but they could hire somebody to do the work and that's where they'd get paid from.

**Mr. Hammarlund:** Okay. It still seems a little bit odd that you grant yourself money, somehow. Kind of along the line with grants, you can't really complain about the details of the numbers here. They're down to – the smallest month I found was \$93 to a company that's named. So the questions that immediately come to my mind: If you can go into that details with your grants with this, the good thing – after all, you are spending tax dollars – what's the objection to give information on loans below \$100,000? I was just wondering about the –

**Mr. MacKay:** Yeah, so that's through Finance PEI. It's not through this department, but –

**Mr. Hammarlund:** Okay, my apologies, I'll get back to it.

**Mr. MacKay:** Okay.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton.

**Mr. Hammarlund:** I have some other more general questions.

Whether you go in and internally assess how the annual Innovation PEI expenditures benefit the PEI economy through an internal audit and that.

**Jeremy MacEwen:** (Indistinct)

**Mr. MacKay:** So there are external auditors that come in every year to do that.

**Mr. Hammarlund:** Oh.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton.

**Mr. Hammarlund:** I didn't so much mean to audit the numbers whether they're correct, I'm sure you do excellent accounting.

But presumably, each position you create, for instance, results in associated personal and sales taxes and stuff like that that sort of gets directly into the provincial coffers and stuff like that.

Is that one way you look at it?

**Mr. MacKay:** Truthfully, I don't know.

**Mr. Hammarlund:** How are you expenditures actually benefits the economy? Which I'm sure they do.

**Mr. MacKay:** Yeah, I can go back to the department and ask how they view it.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton.

**Mr. Hammarlund:** You've also – you have mentioned a couple of times that there's a

shortage of business park spaces as well as availability of workers. Would you agree that those needs – that part of those needs fall into other areas, not necessarily directly under your department, such as provision of housing and economy and training?

My question is, if you coordinate with other departments to make sure that you put the money where it's needed the most?

**Mr. MacKay:** Yes.

So, you know, in the short term we've been here – I've been in touch with my colleagues as well. We're all getting to learn the department a bit and so forth, and trying to figure out how to navigate everything.

But the business part has been discussed briefly with some of my Cabinet members.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton, I have quite a long list here of people waiting to speak. So I'll give you one more question and then I'll come back to you in the end.

**Mr. Hammarlund:** Okay.

I guess my next question was if you analyze what the needs are in terms of workers, and get back to our educational institutions like UPEI and Holland College with suggestions that they train people in those areas?

**Mr. MacKay:** That wouldn't be through me, but – yeah, it would be through skills, which would be Minister Trivers. That might be a question he might be able to answer when he gets to the floor.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Member from Summerside-South Drive.

**Mr. Howard:** The million dollars for trade and export development, is that for trade commissions and the like? I'm assuming?

**Jeremy MacEwen:** Yes.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Summerside-South Drive.

**Mr. Howard:** We spent a million dollars in 2018 or thought we would and then we did spend the million, and now we're only going to spend a million again – not that it's an

only. But have we looked at how effective that program is and whether we should be increasing or decreasing that amount?

**Mr. MacKay:** Yes, so that's been a discussion since I got in as well. You're going to see very little changes in this budget, and there's good reason for it, is we haven't had time, myself being the minister, to sit down with the department and really go through and understand where they're at and what's working and not working.

So I certainly think come another year you're going to see a lot of changes once we get in and really get in depth with what's going on through the department. So that's really why the number hasn't changed a bit.

Like I say, we're looking at other markets right now. This is once again, once I sit down with everyone in the department, some great ideas around there, and I think they need to be listened to. So that's kind of why that hasn't changed right now, until we do a complete evaluation of the whole thing and see how it's working.

**Jeremy MacEwen:** And just to add to this point there, I think either last year or two years ago, we did increase it from 600,000 to a million. So it increased 400,000 within the last two years.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Summerside-South Drive.

**Mr. Howard:** Very good, I think you may have answered this question just with your response there minister. Do we have any kind of metrics that show what kind of return we get for the dollars we invest in developing export?

**Mr. MacKay:** Yes, yes there is. I don't have anything with me here, but that was a question I asked the department today when we were going through the questions, and they do have ways of tracking it.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Summerside-South Drive. Good.

The hon. Member from O'Leary-Inverness.

**Mr. Henderson:** Minister, under the small business support quality improvement support, I see there's a company there, One

Tuna Inc. Can you tell me who that is and what they got \$400,000 for?

**Mr. MacKay:** Food safety, management training.

**Mr. Henderson:** One Tuna Inc., for safety management?

**Mr. MacKay:** Yes, that's what it says.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from O'Leary-Inverness.

**Mr. Henderson:** Did that company ever actually get operational and process any tuna?

**Mr. MacKay:** You would probably know better than I would, hon. member.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from O'Leary-Inverness.

**Mr. Henderson:** Well, I'm aware that it did. So I'm just wondering what did the \$400,000 actually go for and was it of any value.

**Mr. MacKay:** Yes, I can check into that and get back to you.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from O'Leary-Inverness.

**Mr. Henderson:** That's it.

Thanks.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Summerside-Wilmot.

**Ms. Lund:** Thank you, Chair.

I'm just trying to get my head around the business expansion and product development line. It looks like the budget estimate had us at 12.1 million. We spent, or expect to have spent, 14.3 million, but we're only budgeting 10.9 million for next year.

I'm just wondering how we arrived at that number.

**Jeremy MacEwen:** Do you want me to take this?

**Mr. MacKay:** Yes.

**Jeremy MacEwen:** So the difference from old budget is we decreased the small business investment grant down \$1 million. We didn't have as much uptake in that as we expected.

Last year as well, we thought we would – we knew we were coming under in the tax incentives, so we decided to put a few extras that could go in either 18/19 fiscal or 19/20, so we put a few extra dollars in last year. So that's why the forecast may be up a little higher, and because of that, we took the 19/20 budget down as well.

**Ms. Lund:** I see.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Summerside-Wilmot.

**Ms. Lund:** That's it.

Thank you, Chair.

**Chair:** You're welcome.

The hon. Member from Mermaid-Stratford.

**Ms. Beaton:** Thank you, Chair.

Do you mind if I go back to the section before?

**Chair:** Certainly, yes go ahead.

**Ms. Beaton:** It goes to when I say if there's an envelope, right like where there's a ceiling for an entire section, and so I just want to just touch on that development fund again.

My question would be, if there is – we're at 9 million right now, right? When I look at it, there's a significant – I'm just going to touch on what Charlottetown-Brighton said. Because when you look at how many Innovation PEI grants there are there, looks close to, you know, \$400,000.

So I guess what I'm saying about the pocket of money – or the envelope of money, if the innovation grants are eating up money that would be going to somebody else, because you're doing consulting and taking it out of the grant envelope, I just think where I'm coming from when I say about that envelope of money.

**Mr. MacKay:** That's a good question.

**Ms. Beaton:** So if we've maxed out or if there's a point in which we max out and say don't allow companies – you know we say we've exhausted that fund, I think that that needs to be looked at as something.

**Mr. MacKay:** Certainly, that's a fair comment.

Tomorrow, what I'll do I'll sit down with the department just to make sure that we're not turning anyone away. Like I think from my understanding, the grants are designed for everybody to be able to access them, which is why I think with Jed's last segment there, was some extra in one, so they moved it.

But I'll certainly go back and reevaluate.

**Ms. Beaton:** Perfect, that's good. I'm great.

Thank you.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Belvedere.

**Ms. Bell:** Thank you, Chair.

A couple of questions and one of them is on the Small Business Investment Grant.

Can you just qualify is this the return on capital expenditures through a tax incentive?

**Jeremy MacEwen:** No.

It's the capital expenditures up to \$15,000, and you get a 15% rebate on that.

**Ms. Bell:** Right, so that's why the cap is 3,750?

**Jeremy MacEwen:** Yes.

**Ms. Bell:** Right, okay.

I just wanted to qualify that because that was a new one this year, right?

**Jeremy MacEwen:** Yes, exactly.

**Ms. Bell:** Is that program going to continue?

**Jeremy MacEwen:** Yes.

**Ms. Bell:** Okay, interesting. Great.

The other question is on what is now a very, very small line, unfortunately, and that's the Craft Development Program. This is – Now what I'm seeing is only three applicants in this entire time.

I guess a couple of questions. One of them is: Why is the Craft Development Program not included under the cultural sector when the PEI Craft's Council and all those other sectors in that section are part of the cultural sector?

The second part is I am aware because having been involved more closely with this program in past professional experience that this is like a tiny percentage compared to what it used to be. I'd like to express my concern that this is effectively disappearing as a support that's available.

I wonder if the minister or his support has any comments as a result of it being rolled into the entrepreneur loan program that has more of a focus on export. That is because for a new startup in the craft development business, you don't start exporting, you start by developing with your product. That's what this was originally for.

**Mr. MacKay:** Was it ever in culture before, do you know?

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Belvedere.

**Ms. Bell:** There was very much a split of where all of these different things sat. It actually sat in business development and was seen as a really critical piece of the story. There's been a lot of changes in that department over the years, my concern is that it seems that it's off on its own and disappearing.

**Mr. MacKay:** Okay.

**Ms. Bell:** The focus on export is critical, as you've spoken out. But certainly for start-up and industries and culture in particular, you don't start by going straight to export. You start by developing your skill set and your experience and your business first.

I'd just like that to bring it to your attention, that that is an area of concern, and there is potentially opportunity there in the cultural sector file.

**Mr. MacKay:** I don't mind going back to the department and asking questions on that for you.

**Ms. Bell:** And obviously minister you have great supports that can assist with that.

**Mr. MacKay:** Yeah definitely, there's no doubt.

**Ms. Bell:** Thank you.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Victoria Park.

**Ms. Bernard:** Thank you, Chair.

On page 39 of the handouts, I note that Innovation PEI grants itself substantial grants and I'm wondering why that is.

**Mr. MacKay:** So that was what the hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton just talked about. So that would perhaps be 400,000 and that was for the consulting through the department itself not just consulting, but different strategic initiatives.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Victoria Park.

**Ms. Bernard:** And also, I noticed on page 39, there's an awful lot of Innovation PEI trade – or page 33. And there's a trade section. Why would it be under these – oh, that's trade and export?

Page 33?

**Ms. Bell:** Yeah, page 33.

**Mr. MacKay:** Just give us a second here; I'm trying to find it for you.

So can you repeat that again, hon. member?

**Ms. Bernard:** So on page 33, on the bottom there, all the Innovation PEI trade.

**Mr. MacKay:** Yes.

**Ms. Bernard:** But then there's a trade section so I'm just wondering why it's in there and not in the other section?

**Mr. MacKay:** So I think that we're on the right – what that is a trade marketing program.

Anytime – if we are in the right spot – anytime there's a trade mission to see different companies going across PEI, this is to help with them with the cost of that trip as well. I don't know how many they do a year, two or three, and you'll see 20-30 different companies from PEI going (Indistinct)

**Ms. Bernard:** Thank you, Chair.

**Chair:** You're welcome.

Total Programs: 35,270,400.

Shall it carry? Carried.

Total Business Development: 39,716,500.

Shall it carry? Carried.

#### BIOFOODTECH

General: "Appropriations provided for innovation and technical support to the food and bioscience industry, including the food and bioscience industry, including the BioFoodTech facility, equipment, operational and maintenance costs, and salaries. The facility enhances the level of services provided through fee-for-service, royalty and equity arrangements with private sector clients." Operations: 2,618,700.

Total General: 2,618,700.

**Ms. Altass:** Question.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Tyne Valley-Sherbrooke.

**Ms. Altass:** Thank you, Chair.

So BioFoodTech, who owns BioFoodTech?

**Jeremy MacEwen:** It's a subsidiary of Innovation PEI.

**Ms. Altass:** Oh, okay.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Tyne Valley-Sherbrooke.

**Ms. Altass:** Thank you.

So we're contributing 2.6 million to this organization – to this subsidiary. Is that the full operating cost or a percentage of the cost?

**Jeremy MacEwen:** No, actually our budget is for actually \$800,000 – Innovation PEI that would grant over. The 1.8 million with the BioFoodTech's direct operating cost.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Tyne Valley-Sherbrooke.

**Ms. Altass:** Thank you.

So do we receive any revenue streaming from the operation of BioFoodTech?

**Jeremy MacEwen:** We do, yeah.

**Ms. Altass:** Can you just explain that to me just a bit more, what does that look like then – the revenue streaming?

**Jeremy MacEwen:** So we operate BioFoodTech on a break-even basis –

**Ms. Altass:** Okay.

**Jeremy MacEwen:** So their revenue would be 1.8 that would be taken in and budgeted for and the 2.6 – so \$800,000 difference in the Innovation PEI grant.

**Ms. Altass:** So the \$800,000 difference comes directly from Innovation PEI?

**Jeremy MacEwen:** Correct.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Tyne Valley-Sherbrooke.

**Ms. Altass:** All right, would the PEI government access any food services operated by BioFoodTech?

**Mr. MacKay:** You mean our government itself?

**Ms. Altass:** Yes.

**Mr. MacKay:** Not that I'm aware of. I'm not 100% sure but I've never heard tell of it.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Tyne Valley-Sherbrooke.

**Ms. Altass:** Well, since I asked the question, can we add it to the list of things we'll find out?

**Mr. MacKay:** Sure, no problem.

**Ms. Altass:** Great, thank you. That's it.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Cornwall-Meadowbank.

**Mr. MacDonald:** The BioFoodTech, I've often heard, even when I was there, that there was more of an expense to do food commercialization and testing on Prince Edward Island. There were some operating going across the New Brunswick.

Has that ever been resolved?

**Mr. MacKay:** I had two, maybe three meetings so far, and that hasn't been something that's been brought up to me. That's something I could ask though.

**Mr. MacDonald:** So maybe it's been resolved.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Cornwall-Meadowbank.

**Mr. MacDonald:** There's been discussions of a new bio commons incubator – would the BioFoodTech be moved into that into that establishment if that ever come to materialization?

**Mr. MacKay:** I don't think there was any plan of that (Indistinct)

**Mr. MacDonald:** So it's a different –

**Mr. MacKay:** Yeah it's a different –

**Chair:** Total BioFoodTech: 2,618,700

Total Innovation PEI: 43,739,400.

Shall it carry? Carried.

**Mr. MacKay:** Thanks for taking it easy on me. I appreciate it.

[Laughter]

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

**Chair:** Okay members we will now move on to page 130, the Department of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy.

I'll give the minister a moment to get settle in.

**Mr. Myers:** You think I can do this alone?

**Chair:** Yeah.

**Mr. Myers:** I would probably be willing to try.

**Chair:** Permission request to bring a stranger onto the floor?

**Some Hon. Members:** Granted.

**Chair:** Thank you.

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

**Mr. Myers:** No, they shouldn't.

**Chair:** Can you state your name and title, please, for Hansard?

**Jordan McNally:** Jordan McNally, acting director of finance.

**Chair:** Thank you very much.

Minister, do you have an opening statement or do you just want to move right into the –

**Mr. Myers:** No, let's get right at it.

**Chair:** Corporate Services

Corporate Services: "Appropriations provided for operation of the Minister's and the Deputy Ministers offices, support staff, departmental centralized administrative and records management functions as well as appropriations provided for Island Waste Management Corporation." Administration: 51,900. Equipment: 3,000. Materials, Supplies and Service: 15,300. Professional Services: 1,500. Salaries: 745,300. Travel and Training: 19,800. Grants: 1,075,000.

Total Corporate Services: 1,911,800

Shall it carry?

**Mr. Howard:** Question.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Summerside-South Drive.

**Mr. Howard:** Can you explain the types of grants that corporate services provide?

**Mr. Myers:** It's all Island Waste Management.

**Mr. Howard:** Sorry?

**Mr. Myers:** It's Island Waste Management.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Summerside-South Drive.

**Mr. Howard:** Why the significant drop in grants?

**Mr. Myers:** So last year, you'll remember up in Huntley, there was the tire problem there, and we spent a significant amount of money getting rid of all the tires, it goes down this year because the tires are all gone.

**An Hon. Member:** That's where the ducks were.

**Mr. Myers:** That's where the ducks were, yeah.

So it went up because we had to get rid of all those tires, and now it's –

**An Hon. Member:** What's the duck say?

**Mr. Myers:** Now we should be running on (Indistinct) tires.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Summerside-South Drive, that's fine?

Total Corporate Services –

**Mr. Myers:** – tires, so it goes down this year because the tires are all gone.

**An Hon. Member:** Where the ducks were.

**Mr. Myers:** It's where the ducks were, yeah.

So it went up because –

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

**An Hon. Member:** The ducks, eh?

**Mr. Myers:** – we had to get rid of all those tires and now it's –

**An Hon. Member:** What does the duck say?

**Mr. Myers:** – now we should be running on a level with that.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Summerside-South Drive?

It's fine?

**Mr. Howard:** Yeah.

**Chair:** Total Corporate Services: 1,911,800.

Shall it carry? Carried.

Infrastructure, Policy and Planning

Infrastructure, Policy and Planning

“Appropriations provided for delivery of various Canada-Prince Edward Island Infrastructure Programs, as well as departmental policy and planning.” Administration: 92,600.

Equipment: 13,000. Materials, Supplies and Services: 13,200. Professional Services: 395,000. Salaries: 1,012,200. Travel and Training 28,500. Grants: 109,658,000.

Total Infrastructure, Policy and Planning: 111,212,500.

Shall it carry?

The hon. Member from O'Leary-Inverness.

**Mr. Henderson:** Just quite a sizeable increase in the grants there, so I'm assuming that's a fair bit of significant federal dollars that are coming into particular infrastructure projects. Maybe you could explain what some of those projects are?

**Mr. Myers:** Okay, I can. So this is the –

**Jordan McNally:** (Indistinct)

**Mr. Myers:** (Indistinct)

**Mr. Henderson:** I mean, it's pretty near \$70 million more.

**Mr. Myers:** Yeah.

**Mr. Henderson:** It's quite a bit.

**Mr. Myers:** So where are up here, the (Indistinct)

**Jordan McNally:** (Indistinct)

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

**Mr. Henderson:** Yeah, real good negotiators. Bring it on, keep it coming.

**Jordan McNally:** (Indistinct)

**Mr. Myers:** Okay.

**Mr. Henderson:** So I'm assuming this is a bridge or something?

**Mr. Myers:** Well, no, okay, so I'm just getting the (Indistinct) –

**Mr. Henderson:** A roundabout?

**Mr. Myers:** There's the one-time top-up that we got for gas tax. That's \$11,555,000. There's the clean water and wastewater fund, and there's the new \$49 million Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program.

**Mr. Henderson:** That's a significant amount of money coming into the budget. Will that be expected over another couple of years? Or is that just a one-time only or –

**Mr. Myers:** Well, the gas tax top-up was only this year, so we got double gas tax this year (Indistinct) –

**Mr. Henderson:** Right, so you got 11 million there extra?

**Mr. Myers:** Yeah.

**Mr. Henderson:** Wow, that's a significant amount of money; and is there specific projects that, that's going to go to? And that's in Municipalities? I think that's the way it works, is municipalities apply for that, right?

**Mr. Myers:** Yeah. There's a list that has gone up to Ottawa and some of the things have been approved and some are awaiting approval, so there would be a significant number of (Indistinct) programs.

**Mr. Henderson:** So I know there was one that was a fairly significant infrastructure program that's in my district, (Indistinct) the Hockeyville Project with the O'Leary Rink. Would that be where some of that money could come from? And I guess my other question would be, is that recommendation by your department to see that be funded?

**Mr. Myers:** So the – yeah, so we have this division. There's a group of people who sit down and they look at the applications when they come in and they kind of organize them and rank them and they send them up to Ottawa in that ranked order. I'm not sure where your project is but I know there has been some that have been approved.

**Mr. Henderson:** Well, I guess the rationale why I'm, they're kind of in a time crunch in respect that obviously winter comes, ice has to go back in and they would like to do a lot of their construction now and have it ready. My understanding is that because of the delays, they've been sort of looking at doing it over two phases, as far as this year and maybe next year but I guess I'd be curious to know where that is at and whether that community has the potential of getting it.

Because their issue is that they already, as you're aware, they got \$100,000 from Kraft Hockeyville. They have not spent that, and they want to lever that into getting – I think it was about a \$1.5 million project in total, to which they thought they'd be getting some money from the federal and provincial governments and then their Hockeyville money and then they'd have to do some fairly small fundraising and a small mortgage would allow that project to go forward.

Anyways, I'd ask the minister, maybe you could get more –

**Mr. Myers:** I will.

**Mr. Henderson:** – check up on that particular file and see where it's at and –

**Mr. Myers:** Yeah, I will and get back to you.

**Mr. Henderson:** – and timing is a little bit of the importance on that one, and if there's anything you can do to –

**Mr. Myers:** Absolutely, and we are kind of in a time crunch, too, because there's a blackout period before the federal election that we're kind of running into. So there's been a lot of rushing and scrambling to try to get things to Ottawa and get approvals done right away before everybody kind of disappears to work on the federal –

**Mr. Henderson:** Yeah. So my guess is if they don't get started by, say, August 1<sup>st</sup>, they're probably not going to –

**Mr. Myers:** Pretty much until after the election.

**Mr. Henderson:** They'll be into another year later.

**Mr. Myers:** Yeah, and that's kind of the issue that we're having right across the board.

**Mr. Henderson:** Okay. Thank you very much.

**Mr. Myers:** But I'll find out and get back to you.

**Mr. Henderson:** Yeah.

**Chair:** Thank you; and Minister, also, can you add to that list to find out what the project is for the Tignish cooperative health centre?

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

**Mr. Myers:** I definitely will.

**Chair:** Great, thank you.

The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Belvedere.

**Ms. Bell:** Thank you, Chair.

It's also a question regarding the gas tax funds, and just for clarification, I understand there's a permanent gas tax allocation which goes to municipalities and I can see on page

287, we've got the kind of direct allocation and notional allocation. Is that – that's the kind of regular, recurring gas tax funding, is it, Minister?

**Mr. Myers:** Yes.

**Chair:** Mermaid-Belvedere – sorry, Charlottetown-Belvedere.

**Ms. Bell:** I'm just going to be different.

**Chair:** (Indistinct) you guys together.

**Ms. Bell:** I know.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Belvedere.

**Ms. Bell:** Thank you, Chair.

Could you just explain the difference between a direct allocation and a notional allocation? Please?

**Mr. Myers:** Jordan can, for sure.

**Ms. Bell:** I just – I genuinely don't know.

**Mr. Myers:** Okay. Jordan, you go ahead.

**Jordan McNally:** So the direct allocation, they have to submit a five-year capital investment plan and it's largely based on whether they have water and sewer or not. If they don't have water and sewer, then it's done in a notional allocation based on population.

**Ms. Bell:** So, do those plans get approved provincially or federally for the allocation of those funds? Or is it a bit of both?

**Mr. Myers:** The gas tax?

**Jordan McNally:** (Indistinct)

**Mr. Myers:** (Indistinct)

**Jordan McNally:** Pretty sure it's provincially, but I'll have to double check on that.

**Ms. Bell:** Is there any involvement with the Department of Fisheries and Communities to – or is this entirely done within Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy?

**Jordan McNally:** Entirely within TIE.

**Ms. Bell:** So where we have this kind of extra bump of gas tax, one-time gas tax funding which is effectively doubling – which is also a significant amount of money we’re talking about it, is Charlottetown going to get another \$3.5 million on top of what they’re already getting?

How – and they have strategic plans in place, which I know they have to have long-term ISP’s in terms of infrastructure and strategic planning to show what they want to do with that gas tax money – how, then, is that additional 100% of money, who’s determining what those strategic priorities are, because would that not put pressure on your department, potentially?

**Mr. Myers:** My understanding from the conversations I’ve had is that the municipalities themselves have the – it’s the same as the regular gas tax fund, it’s just they’ve gotten twice as much. So however they prioritize their gas tax spend now, they’ll use the same prioritization that they’re choosing.

**Ms. Bell:** It’s been a while since I looked at the criteria for gas tax funding and I know it is around infrastructure with a focus on things like sewer and water. Is there any flexibility on what those funds can be used for – for example, green energy initiatives or even housing?

**Jordan McNally:** There’s kind of two streams. So the direct notional allocation portion of it is done based on the capital plan submitted to the province, but then there’s also a municipal strategic component which has to meet certain criteria such as environmental, economic, social or public safety issues, so that would be a separate stream that’s also under the gas tax fund as well.

**Ms. Bell:** Okay. I am cautiously optimistic that that could mean that there could be some creative projects occurring as a result of the flexibility that may come with that significant amount of investment that’s coming in. That’s a lot of money that’s coming in to some – like, it’s a lot of money that’s coming in, and if there is some flexibility in there, I know there are always many projects and priorities but I’m hopeful that that means that projects that otherwise

could only be a wish list may potentially be the case and I’m just wondering if there have been resources applied within the department to do whatever they can to ensure that those projects are successful.

**Mr. Myers:** (Indistinct)

**Jordan McNally:** (Indistinct)

**Mr. Myers:** So we do have four new staff in the department to deal with the uptake of the federal funding.

**Ms. Bell:** Okay. Thank you, Minister. That’s very helpful, thank you.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Mermaid-Stratford.

**Ms. Beaton:** Thank you, Chair.

So, wastewater, I’m going to talk about Stratford, if we could. So, Minister, are you aware at this point in time that there is no truly designed wastewater treatment plan for Stratford as they had their own plan, they wanted to build their own wastewater treatment plan within Stratford and it was determined through the previous government that it would have to go across to Charlottetown? Are you familiar with that?

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Mermaid-Stratford.

**Ms. Beaton:** Are you also familiar that now they’ve had problems with tendering and the first amount was approximately \$10 million? They’ve broken up those tenders now to try to understand – or, sorry, to try to lower it, but it actually doubled the amount of the tendering and now it’s approximately \$20 million.

Can you tell me what the amount that’s allocated in the budget right now, what that’s actually going to cover for the province if we’re not truly sure how we’re actually going to proceed?

**Mr. Myers:** Well, I’m not 100% sure that we don’t know. I mean, this file has never gone away and it’s continued to be worked on.

My understanding is that there’s a plan that’s going to move forward in the back and

have it funded at a higher level to – and I think there's a better understanding now of components needed to make this a successful, both tendering process and funding match for it.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Mermaid-Stratford.

**Ms. Beaton:** So what is this government's plan for the waste water treatment plant for Stratford?

Is the plan for it to remain taking the waste water over to Charlottetown, or are there any other potential ideas that Stratford would be able to explore?

**Mr. Myers:** I don't know how much of it is our plan at all. I mean, the whole – I know the previous government may have pushed in a direction to have it go that way, but the planning resides with Stratford and Charlottetown.

My understanding is that Charlottetown expanded this side of the bridge so they could accept the increase and that that the plan was to still try to make two ends meet.

**Chair:** I have an intervention from the hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

**Mr. Aylward:** Thank you very much, Chair.

Just to follow up on that line of questioning. Yes, at one time the town of Stratford did have plan A, B, C. One of the plans, I think A probably, was to build their own stand-alone enclosed plant on the waterfront in Stratford, which many thought it was a terrible waste of some of the most valuable real estate on Prince Edward Island, when there's a perfectly good treatment plant 2.4 kilometres on the other side of the Hillsborough Bridge; 11,000 in one community and 10,000 in the other.

There are lots of jurisdictions around Atlantic Canada that come together and are able to treat their waste in an efficient manner.

So what the desire was from the previous government, and I actually supported Premier MacLauchlan on that initiative, was to form a regional utility, and actually have

the level of cooperation so that we could move forward with this.

Charlottetown spent upwards of \$12 million upgrading their plant on Riverside Drive. Currently, they're planning on moving the affluent in from East Royalty.

Cornwall, the town of Cornwall now is very interested in potentially getting involved in this project as well, and decommissioning their lagoon system in North River.

So you're right, the estimates did come in quite a bit over budget. We actually met with the three mayors of Stratford, Charlottetown, and Cornwall, Premier King, myself, and the minister responsible for fisheries and municipalities earlier this week. We had a great discussion around regional utilities and working together collaboratively to make that happen.

There's still some concerns obviously over the level of funding, and there's active negotiations going on right now with regards to that plan.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Mermaid-Stratford.

**Ms. Beaton:** So at this point in time, because I'm new, I don't know who to direct my question to.

**Chair:** You can direct it to the Chair.

**Ms. Beaton:** Okay, I'll direct it to the Chair. Thank you.

So based on what was just stated, do we know a timeline in which this issue – because it's a serious issue right now – do we have a timeline or are we still in a planning stage with no true idea as to when we're going to find – be able to put in and finish a final solution for Stratford and surrounding areas?

**Mr. Myers:** So, you know, I know it appears that it keeps going off the table, but it always has been. I don't have the exact timeline, but I know it's talked about. Every week I get an update on it. So what I'll do is I'll get you a timeline and bring it back to you.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Mermaid-Stratford.

**Ms. Beaton:** I just want to stress – I mean when you visit business owners in my district that are in the Bunbury Mall, for instance, we have a grocery store there, we have a couple restaurants. I can't stress how detrimental this is to their business.

I do know that there was intervention from the previous government as to what the plan would be. I just think we just need to get down to it and get it resolved, because when I spoke to one of those business owners, she was being patient 10 years ago.

**Mr. Myers:** Yeah.

**Ms. Beaton:** So we knew that we were overcapacity, but I think its three levels of governments and that initiative between multiple municipalities if that's what it's going to be.

If we're going to grow it to Cornwall, as well, I'm worried about the timeline, because if Cornwall was never involved in the discussion in the first place, how can we say – because Stratford is trying to get it done before the end of the year. So if we don't even know where we're going to go and which municipalities are going to be involved in that. How can we actually get it finished before the end of the year?

So I just want to raise that this really truly needs to get done.

**Mr. Myers:** So just for clarification – and I don't disagree with you that it's an issue. I got gas there at the Esso the other day, so I'm fully aware of how terrible it is.

Our department, what we do is we manage the application process through Ottawa. So we don't decide who gets funding, we don't decide what projects looks like, and we don't make any of those decisions. These are municipalities' projects, so this project belongs to Stratford and Charlottetown. But I will get a timeline for you. We'll apply whenever they're ready.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Mermaid-Stratford.

**Ms. Beaton:** So you say that this belongs to Stratford. So how was the previous government able to come in and say, we're not giving any funding unless it comes to Charlottetown?

So if a provincial government isn't – I mean, you're a partner in this, right. We're a partner in this, because we are 25% of the funding. So if a provincial government is able to say, unless you do this, I'm not going to give you funding, we can't really say it's up to Stratford or up to the municipality if we're going to be kind of dictating that.

**Mr. Myers:** Yeah, but I didn't say that and our Premier didn't say that. That was the previous government.

I don't know what he said, but, I mean, we put the application into Ottawa, so I suppose he could say we wouldn't. Maybe that's the avenue he used, but from my understanding and the work the construction people in our department is we managed the relationship with Ottawa and we managed the relationship with the municipalities.

So we're kind of the go-between. We make sure that the paperwork is all there, we make sure that everything is the way it needs to be to get sent up to Ottawa.

So we know we're committed to this project. I can't say for 100% sure where it is with the timeline is, but I can commit 100% to find out and take it back to you.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Mermaid-Stratford.

**Ms. Beaton:** So this \$10 million or \$11 million that's in here, and then there's some other entries for it, are you saying that that's federal funds? Because I believe that the funding is 50% federal, 25% municipal, and 25% provincial, isn't that correct?

**Mr. Myers:** That's the total cost of the project.

So that's –

**Ms. Beaton:** This 10 million is the total cost?

**Mr. Myers:** Yes, of the project itself.

**Ms. Beaton:** Less what Stratford would be?

**Mr. Myers:** No. That's just the total cost.

**Jordan McNally:** Yes, I'm pretty sure that it represents the total cost of the project at the time that it was originally applied for. Not since –

**Ms. Beaton:** Okay, can I just – I know you're trying to cut me off.

I just need a flag that that's not going to be sufficient based on the tenders that we received. Right now, when I look at this number, I believe the tenders are twice this amount.

**Mr. Myers:** I've already addressed that, because I said –

**Ms. Beaton:** In here?

**Mr. Myers:** In answering the question. Previously, I said that we're prepared to go back and put a new application in, so we have to put in a new application now for more money because we agree that we can't get it done for that

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Evangeline-Miscouche.

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

Thank you very much, minister.

We all know when we see the heavy equipment and the pipes and everything going in the ground that something is happening, but then once it gets all covered over and grass starts to grow, and water starts running through the pipes, you tend to forget about it.

But, it's a big vital part of your department, and it's wonderful the work that you do to help communities to grow so they can have new businesses and new homes.

I'm just wondering about some of this notional allocation for municipalities without water and sewer. I see some municipalities that are entitled to it – do you have to meet a certain criteria to get money out of that? I know a couple of municipalities in my district that aren't listed here that don't have water and sewer?

**Jordan McNally:** They have to submit a capital plan to be eligible for it, so if they didn't submit their plan (Indistinct) –

**Mr. Gallant:** So they have to want to do something?

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Evangeline-Miscouche.

**Mr. Gallant:** They have to want to do a capital project?

**Jordan McNally:** Exactly.

**Mr. Gallant:** Okay.

When we go back to the gas tax, so the small municipalities that had a gas tax, they would get double this year automatically?

**Unidentified Voice:** (Indistinct)

**Mr. Gallant:** Everybody?

**Mr. Myers:** Yeah, everybody.

**Mr. Gallant:** Thanks for now.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton.

**Mr. Hammarlund:** I have a question that relates back to the sewer line.

I understand a lot of the (Indistinct) have difficulty getting (Indistinct) is for the sewer line running across the bridge.

Is the department considering incorporating the design and construction of a bike path or walk path across the bridge at the same time, which will clearly be cheaper than to do it as a separate project?

**Mr. Myers:** No, to answer simply.

But, I think the pipeline is the issue and the bridge and the spans and how much can be free hanging and that type of thing and additional weight and stuff. It's not really my expertise. I've heard conversations about it, but they are looking at a durable, light option that they can put there, and I understand that they found it, but I can get more information on that, specifically what that is because it was in a conversation that I

had in my office and it's not my area of expertise (Indistinct)

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton.

**Mr. Hammarlund:** When you say a durable, light option, are you talking about the pipeline or the bike path?

**Mr. Myers:** The pipeline.

**Mr. Hammarlund:** So there have been, I think even – but there certainly has been talk about connecting the two. Right now, both pedestrians and bicyclists fear for their life going across the bridge.

Why is it not a consideration of your department to look after that?

**Mr. Myers:** This isn't my department.

This is Stratford and Charlottetown – this is their project. This isn't my project.

**Mr. Hammarlund:** The bridge is not yours?

**Mr. Myers:** No, no.

What we're talking here with this infrastructure project that is (Indistinct) –

**Mr. Hammarlund:** I'm talking about your bridge that we're going to put the pipeline across at a great cost.

**Mr. Myers:** That's a capital project.

**Mr. Hammarlund:** I know. I think a bike path would be a capital project too.

**Mr. Myers:** This isn't the capital budget. The capital budget is in the fall.

**Mr. Hammarlund:** I'm sorry.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton.

**Mr. Hammarlund:** I'm sorry, I don't understand what you're saying.

**Mr. Myers:** We bring a capital budget in every fall.

**Mr. Hammarlund:** Yeah.

**Mr. Myers:** And that's where those priorities are laid out. This is our operating budget. We don't build bridges out of our – we wouldn't do that type of work out of our operating budget. We do that out of our capital budget.

**Mr. Hammarlund:** Okay, so it comes out of a different budget.

**Mr. Myers:** Yeah.

**Mr. Hammarlund:** But still, I know that without knowing really anything about bridge construction, the expensive part is to do all the stuff you have to do to actually install the pipe, where the pipe is, is a minor part of the cost. It's all the barges, scaffolding or whatever they have to do – should you not be considering doing the bridge walkway, bikeway, at the same time and save all that upfront money?

**Mr. Myers:** I'm not sure if any of the options I saw included adding anything to the structure of the bridge. The options that I think that may have been presented that I saw had to do with using the present footprint of the bridge and realign it to accommodate bike traffic.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton.

**Mr. Hammarlund:** Okay, but it is being considered? Is that what you're saying?

**Mr. Myers:** There are proposals out there, yeah, but I don't know – I couldn't say for sure exactly where it lies today. I think there's three different proposals.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton.

**Mr. Hammarlund:** Okay, I've just noted that the two extra lanes we have right now were strapped on to the existing bridge so it seems to me you could strap on an a bike path as well.

Anyway, thank you.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Summerside-South Drive.

**Mr. Howard:** Salaries are shown to increase significantly here.

Are these new hires for a particular need?

**Mr. Myers:** Yeah, those are the four that I talked about earlier.

We hired four people to help accommodate the extra work that's involved with administering the funds.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Summerside-South Drive.

**Mr. Howard:** Roughly what percentage of the projects is being funded through this division could be considered green infrastructure projects?

**Mr. Myers:** I would have to count them.

A lot of the ones that we would have here that's on the list that have been approved so far are clean water project, storm water enhancement, a well field upgrade, a sewer utility upgrade, a lagoon upgrade, a wastewater upgrade, a sewer main upgrade, a storm water upgrade, a sewer replacement, a sewer replacement, a sewer replacement, a storm system, a sewer replacement, sewage treatment upgrades.

So the majority of the ones that we've had so far are –

**Mr. Howard:** And those are considered green infrastructure dollars (Indistinct) –

**Mr. Myers:** No, I'm just saying these are the types of projects that have been funded so far.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Summerside-South Drive.

**Mr. Howard:** Okay, the reason I ask is because I just see a lot of dollars coming in for specifically green infrastructure projects.

So I was just wondering – is there any particular federal funding sources that we'd be drawing on to do green infrastructure projects?

**Jordan McNally:** Yeah, so under the new Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program, it's a 10-year agreement and there's

different streams under that funding agreement and one of them specifically is climate change mitigation, adaption, and resilience.

That would be green infrastructure which is \$228 million coming from the feds over a 10-year period.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Summerside-South Drive.

**Mr. Howard:** Thanks very much.

That's good.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Mermaid-Stratford.

**Ms. Beaton:** Thank you, Chair.

I never thought I would be talking about wastewater so much as I am now.

**Mr. Myers:** Me either.

**Unidentified Voice:** Just keep it clean.

**Ms. Beaton:** Okay, so I'm going to go back to talk about – there was discussion that they had – that Cornwall was brought into the discussion of the overall regional wastewater utility.

There is no funding in this list in order to bring Cornwall in. Is Cornwall dependent on this, like, on Stratford getting the work done? Is there any consideration that all three – that the upgrade to Charlottetown would be done and then both get those municipalities brought in?

Is that what we're now talking about?

**Chair:** An intervention from the Minister of Health and Wellness.

**Mr. Aylward:** Thank you very much.

The discussion that was had earlier this week between the three mayors, the Premier, myself and the minister of fisheries and municipalities and the CAOs, I should add, were there as well, there's no hard fact plans. There was just an expression of interest.

So if Cornwall does decide to come in as part of the regional utility, I can't imagine

that it would ever happen this year, anyway. That would be just out of the realm of possibility.

**Chair:** Minister, did you have a response to this also?

**Jordan McNally:** I just wanted to clarify one thing earlier, the 10 million total cost – so these are the 2018-2019 actuals.

So this doesn't reflect the future plan under the clean water/wastewater fund. It just was the approved project total back when it was originally approved.

Any of the new tendering or anything like that, any of the issues that happened, isn't reflected in this. This isn't like a plan into the future. These are just the actual grants paid out under this fund in 2018/2019.

**Chair:** We also have an intervention from the Minister of Fisheries and Communities.

**Mr. Fox:** Just so the hon. member knows, I actually started talking with the municipality of Stratford and Charlottetown back probably three weeks ago on that issue and how it pertains to the fishery. With that, I also had conversations with the Leader of the Opposition on that meeting and prior to on a path forward.

So I became actually involved very early into the mandate, so that you know that the Leader of the Opposition was involved, or was updated by myself, on what was going on.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Mermaid-Stratford.

**Ms. Beaton:** I appreciate that.

I've also been around the community for 44 years so I know that we've been waiting for this for a long time. It's actually been 10 years that people have been complaining about it. So I can appreciate, and I absolutely appreciate everybody being involved in it. Now it's just time that we get it actually completed.

So if I'm looking at 2018-2019 numbers, what are the 2019-2020 numbers that are being allocated for this? Because I thought we were approving a budget that's for 2019-2020.

**Jordan McNally:** The binder you're looking at there, those are handouts for actual expenditures for 2018-2019.

**Ms. Beaton:** Okay.

**Jordan McNally:** In terms of the plan and what fund it's being allocated to in the future, that's what Minister Myers was discussing, but I just wanted to clarify that we're talking about two different things.

**Ms. Beaton:** Okay.

**Jordan McNally:** What you're referring to, the 10 million and everything like that, that's just the 2018-2019 actual handout, whereas the breakdown between funds, that's what we'd be talking about in terms of the budget we're approving.

**Ms. Beaton:** Thank you, Chair.

So in the budget line item then, when we are looking – I believe it's – sorry, just let me get to it – the 109.6 million. Does that number include this current 10.9 million or is there some other funding for that?

**Jordan McNally:** (Indistinct)

**Mr. Myers:** Okay, yeah.

So we don't have a specific breakdown for that project, but the clean water/wastewater fund is there. It's 13,845,000.

**Ms. Beaton:** I'm sorry, what was that?

**Mr. Myers:** We don't have that particular project broken out.

**Ms. Beaton:** Okay.

**Mr. Myers:** But there's a clean water and wastewater fund allocation of 13,845,000.

**Ms. Beaton:** That 13 million, is that including all funding, like, total project costs?

**Mr. Myers:** So yes, okay, the clean water/wastewater fund, we're expecting it's going to run out soon. There's the new fund that we have, the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program. It's the one that we think we can put our new application in for

Stratford to get all the money we need to do the full project.

**Ms. Beaton:** So is it foreseeable that the amount that's in here, the 109.6 million, is it foreseeable that that amount's going to go up when we put in the new application?

**Mr. Myers:** Well, yeah, we're going to have to estimate it based on present-day costs and what we know about the project now.

**Ms. Beaton:** And so, are we saying that this number that's in the current estimates is not accurate and won't cover the cost of that project? Is that what I'm hearing?

**Mr. Myers:** There's all kinds of money there.

**Ms. Beaton:** Sorry, Mr. Chair, what do you mean – sorry, minister, what do you mean by there's all kinds of money there?

**Mr. Myers:** There's all kinds of money to fund projects. Like I've said numerous times, the project's being funded. I will get you an update of the timeline for it. We're committed to it. There's money for it.

**Ms. Beaton:** Okay.

**Mr. Myers:** But I'll bring that back to you, the exact timeline.

**Ms. Beaton:** Okay, thank you.

I'm going to go to the bike lane. I'm going to talk about the bike lane, because the previous government committed that when the work was being completed with the pipe going across that they would actually complete the bike lane at the same time because of efficiencies on doing two projects at the same time.

And I know that my colleague has just mentioned that – I think if I heard you correctly, you said there was not any applications put in or any project plans put in, but I do know that there was a petition that was actually put in by our colleague Josh Underhay lobbying for a bike lane to go across the Hillsborough Bridge and that Hillsborough Bridge project from the previous government was actually committed to.

So I just want to confirm: am I hearing that that won't be committed to until the fall budget, or is there any plans that it would be done in conjunction as the previous government had thought?

**Mr. Myers:** Okay, so there's two different things. One is, like I've already stated, the options that I've seen use the footprint of the bridge that we have. So there's nothing that needs to be built on or built along with it. It was never in the capital budget. The previous government didn't have it in the capital budget. So we don't have any money currently to use it unless we re-allocate it, and any capital ask would come forward in the fall.

**Ms. Beaton:** So this – I just want to know if I'm in the right section or if I have to wait for a different section. This road work – does road work go in underneath this or this is just infrastructure or wastewater, etc.?

**Mr. Myers:** The infrastructure dollars that we use for road work are for capital projects, so some of our road work (Indistinct)

**Ms. Beaton:** Is it in that next section? Sorry, Chair.

**Ms. Bell:** Highway maintenance operations?

**Mr. Myers:** The maintenance work would – our recap program would be there, but our capital spend is here but we do have capital projects. We have a capital projects section.

**Ms. Beaton:** In this –

**Mr. Myers:** In the book, yeah.

**Ms. Beaton:** Okay, all right. So I'll wait till we get there, then.

**Mr. Myers:** (Indistinct)

**Ms. Beaton:** Thank you very much, I appreciate it.

**Chair:** Total Infrastructure, Policy and Planning: 111,212,500.

Shall it carry? Carried.

Highway Safety

Registration, Safety and Scales

“Appropriations provided for administration and enforcement of the *Highway Traffic Act*, the highway weight regulations under the *Roads Act* and the promotion of safety on the highways.” Administration: 60,000. Equipment: 16,900. Materials, Supplies and Services: 370,100. Professional Services: 33,000. Salaries: 2,621,200. Travel and Training: 47,900. Grants: 50,000.

Total Registration, Safety and Scales:  
3,199,100.

Shall it carry?

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Victoria Park.

**Ms. Bernard:** The handouts list one grant for the PEI Snowmobile Association at \$13,000 and here it says 50,000. I’m just wondering where that extra \$37,000 will go.

**Jordan McNally:** That is all for the snowmobile association in 2019-2020. An agreement was signed that a certain portion of all snowmobile registrations would get granted to the snowmobile association. It just came into effect during the 2018-2019 year, so that’s the 13,000. The 50,000 is what we expect to grant to them in total next year.

**Ms. Bernard:** This section is responsible for promoting safety on highways. Could you give an idea of what sorts of safety initiatives would be included in here?

**Mr. Myers:** What safety initiatives? Well, all of our highway safety operations, any of our scaling or highway safety check stops that they do, any of the licensing systems that we do, the graduated licensing program would be done through here. I could get a list for you other than that, but those would be the general things that I’d have off the top of my head.

**Ms. Bernard:** I’m just wondering is there anything in here to help deal with the problem of people improperly passing school buses?

**Mr. Myers:** Yeah, I guess it would. I don’t exactly know where it would fall in here, but I know that there is a campaign started. I think they may have put it in places like

schools, public places. We have posters that they’ve been putting up – they’re in various languages – trying to raise that awareness.

We’ve started kind of an education campaign, but (Indistinct) that there’s a variety of reasons why it’s happening, too. There’s distracted drivers. I think that some people maybe – there’s a thought that there may be some people who come from different cultures that don’t understand that that’s – the things that we’re trying to do are more broad training when we do the licensing part of it; but I don’t think that anyone has a real – we know for sure why it’s happening. It seems to be happening in more – or the reports of it certainly are more than we’ve ever seen before, like, way more.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Victoria Park.

**Mr. Bernard:** That’s it.

Thank you, Chair.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from O’Leary-Inverness.

**Mr. Henderson:** Just a couple of questions, but just one that kind of stemmed out of the previous member’s comments.

Any statistics that have come back yet about any charges that have been laid based on cannabis consumption as far as – has it been any significant increase in that since cannabis has become legalized in October or could the minister give us any opinions or feedback or insight into that?

My guess is it hasn’t, but I’m just wondering.

**Mr. Myers:** I’m not sure if that’s me or that would fall under justice –

**Mr. Henderson:** Maybe more justice?

**Mr. Myers:** – that have that information, but I could find out for you. I know just from following along, I know there was initially some charges, but I haven’t heard a lot about it lately, but I’m sure that there is.

**Mr. Henderson:** I’m sure there was charges before it became legal too.

**Mr. Myers:** Probably was, yeah.

**Chair:** I have an intervention from the hon. Member from Cornwall-Meadowbank.

**Mr. MacDonald:** I'm not sure if there's any direct cannabis charges, but there has been drug impairment.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from O'Leary-Inverness.

**Mr. Henderson:** I already had a small conversation with the minister on this, and it comes back to the issues around ATVs.

I'm just wondering if there's something can be done, not necessarily on the whole issue of ATVs or whether it should be the Confederation Trail or on the roads or anything like that, but I have a constituent that has been collecting – getting the bottles and the cans and stuff out off the road or whatever.

Is there anything that can be done to issue some sort of a special permit, providing they register their vehicle and providing they have all the safety materials and things like that and maybe in a certain area on certain days or things of that nature?

Is there anything that you would think about or insight that you would feel that could be given to issue some sort of a special permit or a ministerial permit to allow that to happen?

One of the comments – I think you can go with a horse no problem, but yet if it's an ATV, he can't go picking up cans and I think he would be doing good community service by keeping their highways clean and that kind of thing as long as he does it in a safe manner.

**Mr. Myers:** Yes, okay. There are a couple of things. One, the short-term answer is probably not much we can do.

Anybody can drive on the inside part of the ditch. So if you're on the furthest away shoulder of the ditch, you can drive there. Not all of that Route 2 area would be suitable for that for sure.

I think there needs to be a larger conversation on just those things that you

talked about like what do we do with licensing some of these vehicles, and we talked about the trail system. There's been a lot of talk about the trail system lately, and we're looking at the option of allowing ATVs to go down the side of the road, if it's between sections of a trail that they're using.

**Mr. Henderson:** That would be another – a real good example of that discussion.

In PEI, we do have a lot of ATV clubs that have their own trails, but there's a few small spots – I think there may be five to seven across the Island that they're sort of bottlenecks, that they can't do that.

Once again, is there a possibility that a certain section of the shoulder could be designated for ATVs in that area and some proper signage that would include in that?

I think there's ways we can solve this issue a little bit more, but I just find it ironic, that like say, you could go with a horse and buggy to collect these things. Where you get out of the horse and buggy to get your cans or whatever, but you can't do it with an ATV where it would be much safer. You're still on the shoulder of the road, you're still – I'm just kind of wondering.

There seems to be some oddities in the way the legislation is read. I hope, as the minister, you would be open-minded and try to take a look at it. I wasn't so successful in getting the previous minister to think of it that way, but I'm sure you could be – you might be much better at that.

**Mr. Myers:** So we have a kind of review under way, and we are trying to open it up, and the first thing we're going to try is help connect some of those trails to allow ATVs to go on the road when they're going in between trails.

Questions arise about policing that, and one of the first questions that come up is what age group is allowed on the road. You have to be 16. You have to have your license, and you have to have a registered vehicle. Those would be the three things that would be a requirement to do that.

But I think, like I said, I think it's worthy of a larger discussion about – I've often said that some of those old dirt roads that we

have would be quite suitable for ATV use. Some of those are going to be in this pilot that we do.

Call it a pilot at this point, but as we connect some of these, we're going to keep – part of the pilot is going to be to keep track of the shape of the road over time and if there's more maintenance, if it's being hard on the road, it's been hard on the shoulders, and those types of things to make sure before we grow it any larger than that, that we're going to be capable of maintaining it.

**Chair:** I have an intervention from the hon. Minister of Agriculture and Land.

**Mr. Thompson:** Just want to follow up on the question on the cannabis, there's been no increase in the early days.

**Mr. Henderson:** Thank you very much for that.

I guess just to reiterate, if we can look at something that sort of says we're going to keep our highways cleaner and over certain areas when this conversation goes – if you could sort of look at the possibility of some sort of an arrangement for special permits for some ATVs providing they provide all the safety equipment for certain areas to try to do good public service by cleaning these ditches and roads up.

I know for myself, when the PEI Women's Institute Roadside Cleanup, I think you could make a wage picking up cans. I live on the Murray Road, so I'm not on the main highway at all, and between coffee cups and cans and bottles, it's amazing. It surprised me, anyway.

That's on an annual basis, and I try to do that on my property. I have quite a bit of land and it's amazing. So I just say, if that's the case, there's a lot of that's happening all over PEI and the roadside cleanup doesn't do it all – so if there's people willing to do it and get a little bit of income, supplement an income, I think it should be something to be considered anyways.

Anyway, that's all for me.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Mermaid-Stratford.

**Ms. Beaton:** Yes, that's right.

Thanks, Chair.

Oh, my goodness. Do you ever have that moment where you go blank? And I just did.

**An Hon. Member:** All the time.

**Mr. Myers:** Daily.

**Chair:** Come back to you?

**Ms. Beaton:** No, I got it. Yes, thank you.

So the revenues in this section, this includes driver's license registration and all that. So in 2018, registrations were – fees for car registrations were waived, correct?

**Mr. Myers:** Yes.

**Ms. Beaton:** Do you have any intent to start charging for that again, like to reinstate that?

**Mr. Myers:** So, there are a couple things.

One, that was part of an overall plan of government so that didn't cost us anything in TIE. We still show the same revenue line because the minister of environment, his department pays it out of the – so it comes out of the – what's the name of the fund?

**Mr. Trivers:** Low carbon fund.

**Mr. Myers:** That the licenses come out of? Is that what it comes out of?

**Mr. Trivers:** So the licenses, that's direct from the carbon tax.

**Mr. Myers:** Yes. So we still show revenue.

If there is a decision to start charging for them again and do something else for carbon tax. I'm not sure that it lies with us because it's not costing us anything as it is.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Mermaid-Stratford.

**Ms. Beaton:** Just to confirm, there's a carbon tax fund that is basically there's a shift in accounts where money comes out of that account and goes into revenue into TIE.

**Mr. Myers:** So we still show revenue that we sold a license or that we registered a car – but the carbon tax fund pays us basically.

**Ms. Beaton:** Okay, we can talk about that when the time comes (Indistinct)

**Chair:** I have an intervention from the hon. Minister of Environment, Water and Climate Change.

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

The minister of TIE is exactly correct. What's happened is a carbon tax of 4 cents per litre approximately depending on the fuel type, which is around 4 cents, has been brought in, and the excise tax was dropped by 3 cents a litre on those same fuels to give a net of approximately 1 cent per litre. That net – that revenue, that one cent per litre right now is being given back to Islanders through free licenses and either free or reduced registration, depending.

So that's what's going on there and that's where the money is going. It's actually being given to encourage people, to make it easier for them to drive – which is debatable as to whether that is actually having any great impact on reducing our carbon emissions.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Tyne Valley-Sherbrooke.

**Ms. Altass:** Thank you, Chair.

So I also have a question about ATV's. So just wondering, we're funding, giving funding grants to the snowmobile association, I think I might have gleamed the answer to this but I just wanted clarification about why there wasn't any funding allocated here for the ATV association?

**Mr. Myers:** Yeah, so we give a portion of the snowmobile registration back for maintenance for the Confederation Trail, which they lease from us. We don't give anything back to the ATV's because we don't offer them anything I guess at this point.

That may change down the road.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Tyne Valley-Sherbrooke.

**Ms. Altass:** Right, okay so that's sort of what I had understood I guess from the conversation, or sort of figured this was what was going on.

So, I would just sort of add on to the comments of the member over there, about the value of what the ATV association is bringing, so I think we might consider perhaps registering these vehicles in the future and coming up with a similar sort of model to the snowmobile association. I know that they, on their own right now, are raising a lot of money and contributing to charities in the area, they do a lot of advocacy work around promoting respectful use, in terms of where ATV's should and shouldn't go and when they should access certain areas. They do work in local schools, and do fund programs, I've heard, so they're really a great asset to our communities.

I think that if we were looking at sort of, fairness in terms of the snowmobile association it's fantastic, they have this opportunity with registrations that helps sort of maintain and control and keep that all flowing quite well. I wonder if we've ever considered a similar relationship to the ATV association.

**Mr. Myers:** I haven't but in my six-weeks I haven't had that much of a chance to think about it but I'll definitely take it under consideration.

I'm quite willing to work with the groups and like I said here earlier, we are trying to (Indistinct) we're going to open up more access points for them, so that we can get ATV's coast to coast on P.E.I. and I do think it's important and I do think it would bring a lot of money in.

Maybe we can get to the point where we have a formal arrangement with a singular group that oversees it all to offer some of that money back and put it towards specific projects that will help grow that industry and grow some of the infrastructure that's needed to join it all together.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Tyne Valley-Sherbrooke.

**Ms. Altass:** Thank you, Chair.

Yes, I think you sort of touched on it there, they bring a lot of money in and there are a lot of possibilities there in terms of tourism or different things that we might look at in terms of expanding that industry on the Island. I know that the people of the ATV association, of course, they would be the experts on sort of what's possible.

So I do encourage your department to reach out to them if you haven't already in your six-weeks and make those connections and see what's possible and what we could accomplish there.

Thank you.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton.

**Mr. Hammarlund:** I'd like to get back to the free driver's licenses and registrations.

Can you give any indication what roughly, the value of that is a year? You are the minister of energy, you save energy and so efficiency PEI for instance, what do you think – how much carbon emission reduction are we getting for the free drivers licenses and how are you going to increase it in the future?

**Mr. Myers:** That definitely falls under the scope of Highway Safety of how we're reducing the emissions and like I said, what we do is we, take your license photo, we give you a license, we register your car, we don't have the breakdown of what that's actually costing but I'm sure the minister of environment can get that, what it costs his department to do it?

We just have it rolled into one line item, so I don't have a breakdown of what the license component is actually worth and what the registration is worth.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton.

**Mr. Hammarlund:** Given that the transportation produces by far the biggest CO2 emissions and you are indeed in other sections making efforts to reduce that, should somehow you not be involved in that?

**Mr. Myers:** Well this is Highway Safety, what they're responsible for is the safety of the highways and licensing of vehicles and drivers, that kind of thing. But we would have weigh down at energy and minerals would be some of the things that we've already talked about in the House that would be initiatives that we would have that would contribute to our lowering of our carbon emissions, but this certainly wouldn't be covered in Highway Safety.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Charlottetown- West Royalty.

**Mr. McNeilly:** Just a couple things about, just points, round points in the area when we're talking about safety and everything. Round points are becoming, I think that our population has increased on PEI, we've got more cars on the road, people are going faster, I find that – is there anything that we can look at doing in the future, we have more round points? I'm not sure about safety going through those, people are at various times – is there anything we can look at in the future to strengthen our safety in our round points?

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

I can get the answer for you. I'm sure somebody has data and has answers to those questions, but I'm not sure that it's me, but I would certainly go back and find that out for you.

I know safety is really a big concern throughout the whole department and not just in Highway Safety and in our maintenance and our capital construction, safety is of utmost importance and it's not a daily conversation when I have people from capital in the office looking to move forward on projects and I can tell you about 80% of the time, its safety concerns that they're bringing forward.

A lot of the movement to the roundabouts is safety and when you talk to our engineers they would have data, a number of accidents at an intersection prior to and the number after and the severity of them.

They probably done a good job in some of the areas, addressing the safety issues that we did have in some intersections. Probably there's an argument that they don't belong

everywhere, but I know the one that is – it was the first rural roundabout that we've had on the – it was on the 48 Road, it certainly increased the safety there because there was someone dying there at least once a year, sometimes more and its down to zero in the last four years – near five years since it's been in there now.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Charlottetown- West Royalty.

**Mr. McNeilly:** It's just something to think about really into the future, even some areas where I look at, our counterparts in Nova Scotia where you go over the Cobequid Pass and all of a sudden you hit those rumble strips. You know, something as simple as the discussion about how that would impact and I think about the round point coming in from Cornwall into Charlottetown. Speeds can get up there pretty quick and they're coming, it makes it impossible for somebody to even think about crossing the road, on foot or on a bicycle or something along those lines. So, that's why I'm trying to bring that to your attention anyway.

**Mr. Myers:** I mean, if there's a particular place of interest and there's a good argument for it, then by all means, we'll have the staff sit down and discuss it and design it and price it and see if it's something that we can do so, it's definitely open to conversation.

**Mr. McNeilly:** Perfect, thank you, minister.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Mermaid-Stratford.

**Ms. Beaton:** Thank you, Chair.

So I just want to ask a question throughout here. There was an approval for – and I'll throw this out because I know my counter partner in Stratford knows about it as well, but the McKinnon Drive extension that would connect the two Stratford schools out to the Kinlock Road, would that be in this budget or is that a different budget?

**Mr. Myers:** We're funding that out of the capital budget but I'll answer your question if you want to ask it.

**Ms. Beaton:** Yeah, sure. So I did contact Mr. Yeo about it and I was just asking, if

there's bike lanes that are being baked into that design to ensure that – put them in now, not later and save the efficiencies of having to go back into Cabinet later. Is it being designed with bike lanes?

**Mr. Myers:** I can't answer that but I can't imagine that it wouldn't be. I know that we design everything to the national standard and that's become part of the national standard, so I'd be very surprised if it's not, but I'll find out for you. I'm not even 100% sure that it is designed –

**Mr. MacEwen:** They're all that way.

**Mr. Myers:** They are?

**Mr. MacEwen:** Yep.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Mermaid-Stratford.

**Ms. Beaton:** Can I just clarify national standards does have bike lanes?

**Mr. MacEwen:** No, all (Indistinct) –

**Chair:** The hon. Member of Morell-Donagh.

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

All provincial projects now do incorporate going through that lens of active transportation lanes.

**Ms. Beaton:** Oh that's fantastic to hear.

**Mr. MacEwen:** Just as a side, the number of standing committee meetings two years ago talked about all avenues into the urban centers of exactly those conversations and how we need to plan for that – starting with the new roundabout that's in your district as well.

**Ms. Beaton:** Thank you, Chair.

That's interesting because when I asked Mr. Yeo about it, he had – I think he said that there were pedestrian walkways but not sure about bike lanes. Would you mind confirming that for me?

I guess I look at it from the perspective, if we are building out new infrastructure, road infrastructure, it's way cheaper to do it when

we're building that new road infrastructure, rather than putting it in later.

So thank you.

Then for the bike lanes, I just reiterate, there is 1,100 students that go to those two schools and Stratford Elementary before it closed the other day had over 100 bikes sitting in the front yard. I think it's extremely important that that connector definitely have bike lanes on it just to make sure the kids are safe.

I do want to touch on the ATV again because a couple of my constituents brought this up, and one of their requests was that that they would be able to have access to the trails during the summer. I think the position that you guys had in your platform – I won't put words in your mouth.

What's your position on the ATV association using the trails as well during the summer months?

**Mr. Myers:** I can paraphrase because I don't have the exact. There was a major influx of money came at the beginning of the trails. It came from an endowment fund of some sort and I can't remember the exact name but I can get it for you.

Basically what it said was that it always had to be for bikes or pedestrians and not to deviate from it and that the funding was directly linked to it.

That said, we have sat down with the ATV federation and talked about crossings. So they're looking to go across the trail in several locations. We've sat down and that is an ongoing discussion through various ministers here and my deputy and the group that represents the ATVs through their federation about crossing.

At this point, there's no internal desire to grant direct access.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Mermaid-Stratford.

**Ms. Beaton:** I'll just say, the constituents that I was speaking to, are constituents that can't walk and can't ride the bikes but they still – their ability to get around is by using

their ATV to get out in to nature and to enjoy it.

So that was one of the reasons why they had been asking.

If that's the position, would you mind sending me that, just the position of the government on that piece? That would be great.

**Mr. Myers:** Just to follow up on that, it goes back to what I had said to the Member from O'Leary-Inverness earlier, we were looking at this pilot where we can link all the trail systems that the various ATV associations have with some of the roadways to make sure that we have a linking trail right across Prince Edward Island. We're going to try to be a partner in that.

While the decision at this point may be not on the Confederation Trail, it doesn't mean that we don't support a connected trail that's Island-wide and we're willing to use some Island roadways to make that happen.

Thank you very much.

**Chair:** Total Registration, Safety and Scales: 3,199,100.

Shall it carry? Carried.

Total Highway Safety: 3,199,100.

Shall it carry? Carried.

**Ms. Bell:** Question.

On highway safety is that the section you just got to?

**Chair:** Yes.

**Ms. Bell:** My apologies. I'm good.

Thank you.

**Chair:** Land and Environment

Land and Environment

“Appropriations provided for staff, environmental services to department operations, management of Provincial Crown Lands and survey operations of the department.” Administration: 144,700.

Equipment: 11,700. Material, Supplies and Services: 256,100. Professional Services: 39,500. Salaries: 2,040,000. Travel and Training: 99,400.

Total Land and Environment: 2,591,400.

**Ms. Lund:** Question.

**Chair:** Question from the hon. Member from Summerside-Wilmot.

**Ms. Lund:** Thank you, Chair.

The budget address has reiterated the commitment to plant a million trees which is a great initiative. Is there a section in the budget where that's covered?

**Mr. Myers:** I don't think it falls under my department. I think that's environment. Is that your department, Brad to plant a million trees?

**Mr. Trivers:** Yeah.

**Ms. Lund:** Thank you.

Then I have no further questions.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Belvedere.

**Ms. Bell:** It may also not be in your department, but I'll check.

**Mr. Myers:** I might not even know.

**Ms. Bell:** In terms of the Crown land, provincial Crown land, does that include lands which may be available for development, or is it only lands in terms of sort of access and road access?

**Mr. Myers:** It's a (Indistinct) that we would have one.

**Ms. Bell:** In that case, my question is there an inventory of potential land that's available for development, for example, for things like housing projects?

**Mr. Myers:** That's a really good question. It's one I asked Brian this morning to come up with for me, so he's actively working on some of those things. I would guess that there probably is.

We talked about the old hospital being torn down. That is in that parcel of land now and will remain to be unless somebody wants it or there is a project starts or we somehow move around. We'd have a variety of those throughout Charlottetown right across Prince Edward Island. But I can get a list if you like – it's a lot. We own a lot of land.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Belvedere.

**Ms. Bell:** It's not so much that we need the table (Indistinct) but just knowing that an inventory is happening is a really positive step.

Chair, if I ask sort of an extension to that, is there are also land and properties on lands that are currently under the management or ownership of something grey around CADC. Would those be considered also Crown lands? I'm always a bit confused about where that ownership actually lands.

**Mr. Myers:** We'll have to get back to you. I'm pretty sure CADC has full ownership but we will provide it.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Belvedere.

**Ms. Bell:** So there's potentially more than one list which is helpful too. I understand that one of the barriers – and I think this came up, not in your department but in the conversation around the land bank, for example, the duty to consult which obviously makes it not quite so straightforward when it comes to saying: let's just use that land.

Is that something that you see is going to be – I won't say a challenge but a consideration for your department going forward with development?

**Mr. Myers:** Yeah, I mean, it's a consideration. For us, we wouldn't do a whole lot of straight-up development.

If somebody came and wanted to develop a parcel of land and they were private, it's definitely going to be difficult to take the parcel of land and give it to (Indistinct)

If the housing corporation wanted to, then it's quite easy to do that, even if a

municipality wanted to, we still have to go through the duty to consult process. Just generally eye level speaking, I don't think that those are ones that are that tough to get through. For a housing project, I don't anticipate it.

If we were going to build a mall, maybe, we might have trouble there, but if we were going to build housing or social housing, it's one that I would think we could get through the (Indistinct) and stuff, but we would have to go through the process to find out.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Belvedere.

**Ms. Bell:** One more question and this is something that we know there have been situations with land and land appropriation that were perhaps not handled as well as it could have been in the past.

I don't know what your plans are for doing major road building projects. Where there is a need to expropriate land, would you or your department be open to sort of being – sort of more consultation around that, rather than just straight expropriation in the future?

**Mr. Myers:** Yeah, I think they have to look at it as a whole. I think it's something that probably could be reviewed. Maybe that's something that belongs to the committee to review and maybe that's a good place to get recommendations for how we would move forward.

I definitely understand the need for it sometimes from a government sense when you're trying to accomplish something and you just can't come to – where you're getting up in gridlock. But all acts that have been around for a long time deserve an opportunity to be modernized.

You know, I think some advice from the committee wouldn't go astray.

**Ms. Bell:** That's great, minister, thank you very much.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from O'Leary-Inverness.

**Mr. Henderson:** Back when I had asked some questions to the Minister of Agriculture and Land about the land bank

and acquiring land, you had answered some of the question that it's your department that acquires land.

So I'm just kind of curious, so is this section is really about the management of that land or what role does the agriculture and land have in any of these land acquisitions and managing it and then maybe the liquidation of those properties later on?

**Mr. Myers:** So any land that we acquire as Crown land goes through here.

**Mr. Henderson:** Okay, but there doesn't look like there's any budget or is there a budget that has anything to do with the amount of land you might be trying to acquire?

In other words, I would have thought there would have been land acquisitions, maybe a million dollars or whatever the number might be.

**Mr. Myers:** It's in the capital budget, but it's \$365,000 a year. (Indistinct)

That's currently what we would use to acquire land.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from O'Leary-Inverness.

**Mr. Henderson:** So does your department have any mandate on trying to acquire a certain amount of land for PEI and hold it in public ownership, and what would that amount be and how far are you from it?

**Mr. Myers:** There are targets. I can't remember what it is. I actually read it not that long ago. I could flip through this book for a month and probably not find it, but I'll find it tomorrow.

But, yes, there's targets. I think we're below them, so I think we're always actively working towards them.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from O'Leary-Inverness.

**Mr. Henderson:** This is something that I tried to pitch to previous ministers and didn't seem to get too far either. But the reality is that the province owns land. It has land that it could probably sell for

development. I've run into it a lot, and I'm sure the minister of fisheries over there would understand this.

People are trying to get access to oyster development processing plants near the water. Sometimes there's government land that they could acquire on that, and where they could buy that land at a pretty decent price, and then the province could turn around and buy more marginal land, less accessible from a development perspective and keep with their mandate of acquiring more land.

So I'm just wondering would you, as a minister, be receptive to that (Indistinct) – it seemed like it was always a bureaucratic decision that we can't drop down. Well I said we have to sell the land and then you turn around and buy the land another week later.

Their argument was that the bureaucracy was that you couldn't reduce that amount of land holdings, and then there was the duty to consult a number of other issues. I think we have to get beyond that and try to look at how we can develop our land for the best uses of that land, and then acquire other land that's better to be protected for perpetuity from ecological perspectives or whatever.

I'm curious to hear what your viewpoints would be around that.

**Mr. Myers:** I'd be quite willing to explore that. I can see the benefit in it.

One of the limiters that we have, we've talked about already is the duty to consult. It's not as simple as just disposing of the land and finding somebody who is willing to pay us five times what we paid for it and cash in. It can be a much slower process than that.

At the end of the day, we may not get – it may not go through the duty to consult positively so we can do it. That's a limit, but I am quite willing to explore the option.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from O'Leary-Inverness.

**Mr. Henderson:** And I get the duty to consult and how that works, but I think there is certainly land that the Mi'kmaq

Confederacy probably would see that there's benefits to see development in the area. Some of it might not even be far from Lennox Island and things of that nature in my district.

So I think it's just about trying to create a better process to say that, we as a government, are now looking forward to solving some of these problems, creating some development, but yet still keeping in mind the respectful duty to consult as well as acquiring more land.

Final question I would have: Would the minister have any input – when is the decision going to be made on the Mill River land issue that's in front of the courts now? Any idea?

**Mr. Myers:** I'm not sure. The minister of justice might know.

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

**Mr. Thompson:** It's still before the courts. We can't comment on that at all.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from O'Leary-Inverness.

**Mr. Henderson:** Is there a schedule to when the decision will be brought down?

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

**Mr. Thompson:** I'm sure there is, but I don't have that date in front of me.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton.

**Mr. Hammarlund:** I was a little bit astonished with how much it costs on a yearly basis to hold onto this land here, but maybe it's justified by a plan.

Is there a plan behind buying the land, holding the land, or is it just the land that happens to fall in to your hands one way or another?

**Mr. Myers:** I wouldn't have the exact information on that, but there's a variety of reasons why we would acquire land. Some of it would be for future highway

development. Some of it would be to reforest. Some of it's environmental reasons. Some of it would be for waterways to ensure that they remain clean, so there's a variety of reasons why we would acquire land, but I can bring back a proper note on it if you like.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton.

**Mr. Hammarlund:** Well it makes sense, and you mentioned that you're trying to make a network for ATVs, which seems like a reasonable thing to do.

Are you considering looking at your resources to do something equivalent for bikes that sort of does more than what we have already in the Confederation Trail?

**Mr. Myers:** So we're not acquiring any land for ATVs. They have their own trail system, so I don't know if they've negotiated with farmers and landowners, and what we're offering them is to use sections of the road to connect to it.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton.

**Mr. Hammarlund:** That's all.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Mermaid-Stratford.

**Ms. Beaton:** Thank you, Chair.

Just two really quick questions. So 2 million in salaries, can you kind of tell me if this is for the land and environment, environmental services to department operations, management of provincial Crown lands. Sorry, what do the employees in this area do?

**Mr. Myers:** So we'd have the chief surveyor is there. We'd have property agents there that would go out and assess properties that we were buying or selling. We have supervisors of all that. We'd have title searches. We'd have researchers, paralegals. We'd have the director. We would have officers – environmental officers in each of the counties.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Mermaid-Stratford.

**Ms. Beaton:** And then I'm just going to touch on the land bank.

In your election promise you said – I'm sorry your government said – I'm struggling with that wording. I'm just new to this, I'm sorry.

**Mr. Myers:** It's fine.

**Ms. Beaton:** In the election platform there was a million dollars for the land bank. Did I hear correctly you said that it was 360,000 in this year?

**Mr. Myers:** Well, in every year. It's in the capital budget, and it's currently used to try to meet those targets that we have for acquisition of crown land to get to the threshold that we're trying to get to.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Mermaid-Stratford.

**Ms. Beaton:** To get to the threshold of a million dollar price tag or to a certain percentage?

**Mr. Myers:** No, no. It's separate from the farm bank. This is just something that we've actively been working on as a government to try to acquire a certain percentage of land as Crown land for a number of reasons, as I talked to the member from Brighton.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Mermaid-Stratford.

**Ms. Beaton:** This area, will that include the farm land bank?

**Mr. Myers:** This is who we will use to acquire any land that we acquire, yes.

**Ms. Beaton:** Okay.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Mermaid-Stratford.

**Ms. Beaton:** I'm sorry.

And then in the capital budget we will see the purchase of the actual agriculture land bank, is that correct?

**Mr. Myers:** That would be my guess.

We're in the very, very early stages. We started some preliminary work on it. This is kind of a planning year for us to try to figure out how this is all going to work, and the duty to consult, and all the things that we have to take in to consideration on it.

I suspect, yes, that any of the money used to buy land will be in the capital budget. I can't confirm until we get a little further down the road.

**Ms. Beaton:** Okay and last question.

**An Hon. Member:** Call the hour.

**Chair:** The hour has been called.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, as Chair of a Committee of the Whole House, having under consideration the grant of supply to Her Majesty, I beg leave to report that the committee has made some progress and begs leave to sit again. I move that the report of the committee be adopted.

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

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

**Mr. MacEwen:** It's a new day, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** It's a new day.

**Mr. Myers:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Leader of the Third Party, that this House do adjourn until Friday, June 28<sup>th</sup>, at 10:00 in the a.m.

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

See you, everyone, tomorrow morning at 10:00 a.m.

The Legislature adjourned until Friday, June 28<sup>th</sup>, at 10:00 a.m.