

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY



Speaker: Hon. Colin LaVie

Hansard, Published by Order of the Legislature

First Session of the Sixty-sixth General Assembly

Friday, 28 June 2019

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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: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

It is certainly a great privilege to stand here on a Friday, to welcome everybody back to the Legislature and what is a packed house of guests in to see our new democracy in action. I want to welcome all of the guests that are here today.

I have a couple of things I wanted to make the House aware of, is that I will be proud to attend the opening of the new Riverview Manor this afternoon in Montague, and certainly tip my hat to the former government for putting that project in motion. I'll be joined by my colleague from Montague-Kilmuir and probably two-thirds of the eastern wing of our Cabinet in that announcement. I also would invite all other Members to be there.

It's a bit of a bittersweet day for my sister-in-law, Kathy King, who is the long term care manager at Riverview Manor. She will be participating in the cutting of the ribbon today and then will be retiring at 4 o'clock after a 32-year career in nursing. So I wanted to pass along my congratulations to her.

I want to welcome the Holland College student athletes and members from the recreation program here today under the leadership of Albert Roche, who has done an absolutely marvelous job of revolutionizing the student athlete program at Holland College.

It's a big few days for the Roche family from the Seven Mile Road. Albert and his brother Gordie were members of the 1984-'85 UPEI men's hockey team who won the very first then-AUAA championship in Charlottetown and that team will be inducted into the UPEI sports hall of fame this summer, along with Albert and Gordie's niece, Tessa (Roche) Casey, who was a UPEI hockey star. So congratulations to the Roche family, and I know (Indistinct) would

be pretty proud down in the Seven Mile Road today; also Vernon Paul will be going in, who is also the only UPEI athlete from football to play in the CFL.

There's also three special guests that I'd like to recognize, visiting here from Ottawa. Darren Goetze is the director general of conservation and protection with Fisheries and Oceans Canada; his wife Joanne Egan is the senior adviser in the climate change impacts and adaptation department of the natural resources division; and Karen Cumberland is the senior advisor to the director general of Health Canada in the food directorate.

They are visiting here from Ottawa, and Karen will be no stranger to these proceedings, hailing from Stanley Bridge and got her teeth cut in the bureaucracy here as a member of the public service in Prince Edward Island, and many who have followed this would know her as one of the former stars of Island Focus, one of the great government programs over the years.

So welcome to those three individuals here, and to all in the public gallery, I hope you enjoy the proceedings today.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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

I'd like to welcome everybody here for a Friday morning, particularly everybody in the gallery. I'd specifically like to welcome two of my friends from District 1, actually Mr. Speaker, up in your neck of the woods. In the House today are Alana Chaisson and Kyle MacDonald. Welcome to both of you. I'd also like to welcome the Holland College athletes and students and Albert Roche. Congratulations on all your endeavours and I look forward to hearing more about that.

There are a couple of birthdays coming up. I believe today is Mr. Kerry Campbell, who's just exiting stage right.

Some Hon. Members: [Laughter]

Leader of the Opposition: I believe it is Kerry Campbell's birthday, and on behalf of the caucus and I'm sure the whole House, I

would like to wish Kerry a very Happy Birthday.

On Monday, of course, it's our country's birthday, Canada Day, and I will be, as many people in this House no doubt, going around our districts and celebrating with the communities. In the South Shore region, there are many, many festivities there. In Victoria and Crapaud and Canoe Cove and Argyle Shore and Clyde River and Bonshaw and on and on and on, it's always a busy – but it's a beautiful day, so happy hot-dog-and-red-&-white-cake-eating, everybody. I will also be, in my member's statement actually, talking about another birthday, the 250th birthday of our province, and I'll explain a little bit more about that in the member's statement that I have, but I wish everybody a very happy Friday and a very Happy Canada Day.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Mr. Mitchell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As always it's a pleasure to rise and welcome all into our public gallery. It's especially nice to have the good folks from Holland College with us today and it's great to see large numbers, and the youngsters that are at your camp I'm sure will have a great summer there as well, so welcome into the House today. Also, Olive Bryanton, always a pleasure to have Olive as a member of the gallery, and I'd like to welcome her back today, as well as everybody else that is there as well.

I did a little earlier in the week, so I'll end my Friday with another thank-you to our teachers who are spending their last days at school getting things tidied up from the children that went home on Wednesday. So I want to thank our teachers and all of our staff and school staff for all of the great work they've done over the last year and I know they'll have a good deserving break this summer and then, you know, back at it again next fall.

I also want to say happy 90th birthday to a good friend and neighbor of mine, Finley Fraser over in the Sherwood area. Finley's birthday is on Saturday and I'm sure the

streets will be lined with cars, actually old cars, souped-up cars probably, when the family comes over to celebrate his 90th birthday. So I wish Finley all the best on that.

As well, I, too, would like to wish Happy Canada Day to all Islanders who will be celebrating this weekend in various and different ways. As part of Canada Day, tourism officially kind of starts on Prince Edward Island so I do ask all islanders to be careful on the roads and be aware of tourists that are in the area and perhaps unfamiliar with the roads. So hopefully that all the festivities go well this weekend and once again to all viewers who are watching in from home, I hope they have a great day, a great weekend and enjoy their Canada Day as well, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

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

It's certainly wonderful to see so many people in the gallery today, and I'd also like to recognize and welcome the athletes and the camp participants from Holland College, my alumni. It's great to see how much Holland College has done, not just in Charlottetown but in the various communities across all of Prince Edward Island with the various outreach campuses that they have, so welcome.

I will also be joining the Premier, and as he said, many of our Eastern caucus members today, on a great announcement with regards to the opening of the Riverview Manor in Montague. I'd be remiss too; if I didn't recognize Olive Bryanton and the tremendous work that she has done for the PEI seniors' federation over the years. She certainly is a wonderful individual and has committed greatly to the fabric of PEI.

Canada Day as well has been mentioned here, and certainly there's lots of activities all across Prince Edward Island, Stratford included. I know that we're starting off with a pancake breakfast at the town hall and then the festivities move down to Tea Hill Park for a BBQ hosted by the Lions Club. The

multicultural society through the newcomers also have a wonderful food fair set up, and live entertainment and lots of activities for the children as well.

Last but not least, I'd also like to recognize an individual. I was actually contacted two days ago by a national journalist that used to actually work here on the Island and she requested that I extend birthday greetings to Mr. Kerry Campbell, of course. I know the Leader of the Opposition mentioned that it's his birthday today but it's actually tomorrow, so you don't want to age him that quick, hon. Member; but Kerry, on behalf of everyone in this House, happy birthday. I hope you have a great weekend.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. member from Summerside-Wilmot.

Ms. Lund: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's a pleasure to rise in the House today. I, too, would like to extend greetings to our friends Alana and Kyle. I am pleased to see that Kyle is recovering as well as he is, and we hope they enjoy the day today.

Thank you for coming.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Land.

Mr. Thompson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's an honour and a privilege today to stand to represent my constituents from District 8, Stanhope-Marshfield. It's a beautiful rain out there today so I feel I should give a farming report.

Some Hon. Members: [Laughter]

Mr. Thompson: The crops are in. The seed is in the ground now. It's being watered. So let's hope for some sunshine on the weekend, and this Island is going to green up really fast.

On a special note, I want to mention the Shaw brothers in Stanhope. They are the seventh, eighth and ninth generation farming on the same property in Stanhope, and they are tremendous stewards of the land. Jack is the ninth generation, can't wait to get out of

school to be that ninth generation farmer, so it gives me great pride when people recognize how many generations of farming they have done. I've sat with the PEI potato board and as they introduced themselves to me, every farmer said what generation their farming was; and me being a third generation farmer, it gives me great pride.

I also want to wish everyone Happy Canada Day. My family, at 2 o'clock they're going to be sitting in the truck, in the camper waiting for me to get home and take off so I wish everyone a Happy Canada Day and enjoy it.

Thank you.

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

Ms. Bernard: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I don't like to repeat greetings but I'm going to: Hello to Alana Chaisson and Kyle MacDonald. They are a great source of support and a great sense of humor as well, so I really appreciate that.

Welcome to everyone else in the gallery, the Holland College crew. I, too, went to Holland College many years ago. I said I was going to rise and speak to the teachers. I know a couple of people already did, but to teachers, EA's, counselors, crossing guards, school bus drivers, administration assistants, thank you so much. I imagine there's a lot of tired heads this morning as traditionally staff celebrations are held on Thursday evening and then you walk into your classroom the next day and think: How in heck am I going to clean this mess?

To principals, vice principals and custodians, who will be transitioning our schools from one year to the next, thank you so much. The crucial role you play in the development of our children, keeping them safe, happy, healthy and engaged all year long, thank you so much. Have a wonderful, well-deserved, happy and healthy summer.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Evangeline-Miscouche.

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

It's always a pleasure to rise and welcome everyone to the gallery and a special welcome to all the members from Holland College and members from the seniors federation of PEI. I'd also like to welcome a very special friend from Evangeline-Miscouche area, Sister Norma Gallant. Welcome to the Legislative Assembly today.

I'd also like to congratulate all the graduates that graduated this past week. I wish them all the best in the future and I thank very much all the teachers and staff for their hard work during the year. I wish them all a good summer.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

It's always a pleasure to rise here in the Legislature. Welcome to all of the guests that are here in the gallery with us today. I certainly want to welcome the members from the senior's secretariat that are joining us. Great to see you here and I am going to be making a ministry statement a little later on with regards to the Senior Islanders of the Year awards, to give a little bit of detail, additional information on that.

Another individual person I'd like to give a special welcome here this morning is Kelly Ashley from up in District 27. I had the honour of working with Kelly for a number of years in the federal minister Gail Shea's office; great to see you here with us this morning, Kelly.

It is going to be a busy weekend in West Prince, a number of events going on. The official opening of St. Louis Bluegrass Festival takes place this evening. My good friend, the Member from Tignish-Palmer Road, not sure there is a rumour that he may be singing or playing there this evening.

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct) dancing.

Mr. Hudson: It's hard to say, but anyone who has heard of the Soggy Bottom Boys

and *Man of Constant Sorrow*. I've heard that that may take place, but that could just be a vicious rumour.

Then as well this evening, the Tignish Irish Moss Festival kicks off, and of course we've got Canada Day coming up right across the Island.

I just want to end by wishing everybody here in the gallery, all of my fellow MLAs, and all of the great people right across PEI: Happy Canada Day, and a safe one as well.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'd like to welcome everyone here in the gallery. It's great to see it packed up like this. Everyone from Holland College; especially Albert Roach who I've known for a very long time. Kelly, it's great to see you here.

I'd like to say hello to everyone out in District 4. It's going to be a very busy weekend. After 30 years, we're reinstating the Belfast Days. So it's going to be a very busy Saturday and Sunday: pancake breakfast, parade, lots of festivities at Pinette Park.

We're having harness racing on Sunday, and there's going to be the Brian MacKinnon Memorial Pace. We lost Brian in January at a very, very young age really. He was a huge harness racing fan, and owned and raced harness horse races together. Someone will ask me the lineage of one of our horses, and I'll say: I don't know Brian was the person who knew that.

It's the 90th birthday party for both Harry MacLeod at the Cambridge Hall on Sunday 2:00 to 4:00 p.m., and also for Doug Saunders at the Murray River Hall from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. on Sunday.

I would also like to extend my thanks and best wishes for all the students and teachers across PEI and hope they enjoy their summer. Most especially for Belfast Consolidated, Southern Kings, and Vernon River, which are all now in District 4.

I hope everyone has a wonderful Canada Day. I know we'll all be out having our hotdogs, and red and white cake, and I look forward to that as well.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. McNeilly: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It gives me great pleasure to rise and welcome everybody here to the audience. It was great to meet a lot of you before. Again, Albert Roach, we've done some work together, and it's nice to see you bring some young people in as well.

Today it's special, because I want to say hello to Chris, Chantal, and Abby Batchilder whose son and brother is here. Just a special note to Oliver, who is here today, not sure if you know, but he is an incredible public speaker and just recently, he's one of the top public speakers in all of Canada. And just recently he represented PEI at a national skills Canada competition.

I do believe it was in Newfoundland?

Unidentified Voice: It was in –

Mr. McNeilly: Halifax. I don't know if I'm allowed to talk outside the –

[Laughter]

Mr. McNeilly: So huge congratulations. Thanks for coming to the gallery today.

You know, it's a great Canada Day weekend. Somebody in my team asked me this morning, they said, do you ever get unhappy? And I said: No way. It's a great long weekend. We're all happy and healthy in PEI.

Let's bring on the tourism season. Let's have a great time this weekend. And celebrate in your districts, it's Canada day everybody.

Thank you.

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

Mr. Trivers: Thanks, Mr. Speaker.

And of course, I want to welcome everyone here to the gallery today, and everyone watching from District 18 Rustico-Emerald.

Of course, as several members have said, I just want to thank the teachers for all their hard work and I wish the students a great summer. It's a real milestone moment.

As the member just said, you know, that's kind of when the tourism industry kicks into high gear as well all across the Island. It's just great to see all those pictures of graduates and families across social media it really warms your heart.

And then speaking of social media, there are issues that people run into within their districts and they can be everything from potholes in the road to we've been getting them information into the department of environment talking about the proposed asphalt plant people have been talking about the holding ponds and the concerns they have with them.

I just want to encourage people to definitely report those problems in. You just call the main number on our website. Cindy Ferguson will look after you and make sure she routes your call, but if we don't know about the issue, we can't address it. Please don't just post a photo of your bent rim to Facebook.

Make sure you let us know where the pothole is so we can get it done.

Thank you.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Morell-Donagh.

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you Mr. Speaker.

I'd like to welcome my good friend, Kyle MacDonald, to the gallery. It's wonderful to have you here. Ignoring the fact that he's a pretty good campaigner too, he's a wonderful addition to our community.

A number of years ago he moved into Morell, and he started the Tear the Tab campaign. He's a great volunteer with the Lions Club. We see him at all our events. So welcome Kyle. We appreciate all your hard work and I hope the recovery is going well.

The official landing day is next Wednesday, but as you know there's a large number of fishermen that are landing here this weekend. The weather is going to be good and they've decided to land the gear tomorrow. Take your time and be safe, and I hope this season is well.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. MacKay: Thank you Mr. Speaker.

Not too often I get to rise in the House and give greetings to people from my own district. But today I think we broke a record, there's five in the House here today: Karen Cumberland welcome to the Legislature; George Hunter; Marlene Clark; Norma (Indistinct) and Ronnie Clark.

Thanks for coming in today, and hopefully everyone enjoys the proceedings.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Deagle: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'll be quick, because I know we're running a little long here.

I just want to welcome the Holland College student athletes to the gallery who I'll be doing my member statement on here probably as soon as I sit down, and Albert Roach who's a constituent of mine.

And thank you everyone for the birthday wishes yesterday; 28 feels really old.

An Hon. Member: Twenty-eight?

Mr. Deagle: I know the CBC article had myself and the Member of Charlottetown-Brighton write that we're 50 years apart and now we're only 49.

So thank you Mr. Speaker.

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct)

[Laughter]

Mr. Myers: That's not how math works.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Fisheries and Communities.

Mr. Fox: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Just want to welcome everybody to the gallery.

Canada day will be happening of course this weekend so I want everybody to enjoy that. But Borden-Carlton is having a long weekend of celebrations starting actually last night, tonight, and then tomorrow, which just makes me very nervous. Because going to roast me at the legion to support the Royal Canadian Legion, and I graciously decided I would.

I hope the members that are going to be attending in this House that are partaking in that will be kind. I've been told there's some surprises –

An Hon. Member: Good luck.

Mr. Fox: I've been told there's some surprises coming in from across country to speak.

I wish everybody a Happy Canada Day. I will be actually – I was invited to partake this weekend in the closing of the lobster fishery. I'll be out on the boats and enjoying that part of it.

Thank you.

Speaker: Well, I kind of feel out of place if I don't get up and say a few words.

But I'd like to welcome everyone into the gallery. It's always nice to see our students in the gallery, and especially kids. There's our future right there.

I also would like to recognize Alana Chase, and Alana is a good community person. She is from District 1. You can either see Alana running, biking, walking, and you're not sure what road you're going to see her on, but you'll see her every day.

Kyle is from District 1, and it's District 1's loss and the Member from Morell-Donagh's gain that he moved out of our district. But Kyle was a great community fellow, and it sounds like he is into his new community and is still a great community fellow.

The last time I seen Kyle it didn't go so well for us. It was a first responder's call, and Kyle had an accident. And he was on the—he was actually lying on his belly. So he didn't really get to see me, but he did hear me. I'm glad to see that he is recovering, and he is going back to work next month.

Thank you.

Statements by Members

Speaker: I'll call on the hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Holland College Athletics

Mr. Deagle: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Holland College has developed a strong athletics program over the last number of years, fielding teams in men's and women's soccer, cross-country running, volleyball, basketball, curling, men's baseball, men's football, women's hockey, cheerleading and dance.

The Holland College Hurricanes is a proud member of the Atlantic Collegiate Athletic Association ACAA and the Canadian Collegiate Athletic Association. They are an active member of our varsity, club, and intramural sports, and strive to promote the successful academic and athletic development of student athletes in a respected intercollegiate program.

Whatever the fitness level degree of competitiveness, available time or interest, students have an opportunity to participate in sport and recreation offerings. The Hurricanes are a source of pride for the college with the achievements of the players and teams and the academic success of the student athletes and the manner in which it conducts activities.

Since entering conference play in 2008, the Holland Hurricanes have had lots to celebrate including 48 Atlantic Championships, 14 national medals, hosting 23 Atlantic championships, hosting eight national championships, most academic All-Canadians in the country for five successive years from 2014 to 2019, 112 scholar athletes in 2018-2019.

Of note, in recent years and the tremendous growth of provincially licensed 'Canes Camps and Hurricanes Academy's which provide quality care and support development opportunities for Island children throughout the year.

For the last two years, the 'Canes Camp experience has taken place at the Belmont St. location where close to 40 children attend camp, thus enabling their parents to continue their English language instruction through the summer months.

On the Prince of Wales campus, the students have availability to a state-of-the-art fitness facility, the Centre for Community Engagement which is seven-day a week access. The CCE features fully equipped fitness centre that includes a separate weight room and cardio and assessment area, team locker room, change rooms as well as an indoor walking and running track and a full size gymnasium and fitness classes. As well, the Summerside water front campus offers a fitness gym that consists of cardio, strength, training equipment.

The hurricanes have just rolled out their booster program for the 2019/20 year and I would encourage all members to get behind our hurricanes as they push towards new achievements and continue to be a source of pride for Holland College and PEI.

In the gallery with us we have Aaron Pugh, (Indistinct), Bethany MacDougall, Lori-Beth Dwyer who works in athletics and runs the summer camps, Sam Gerbig, I hope I got that right, Nate Anderson, Cameron Walsh and of course their Athletic Director, Albert Roach.

This fall they will be hosting the ACAA men's and women's soccer championships which will take place probably at the Terry Fox Complex and I'll probably most likely be refereeing at it.

Congratulations to all on a successful program, thank you.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Evangeline-Miscouche.

Community of Wellington

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

The community of Wellington has a long and important history to the development of Prince Edward Island. It was portaged by the Mi'kmaq people as they travelled between the gulf and the straight. The first European to settle in the community was an Irishman by the name of John Kent.

Aujourd'hui, plus de quatre cents personnes vivent sans la communauté, et la vie quotidienne ainsi que les affaires se passent en anglais et en français.

Today, more than 400 people live without the community, and everyday life and business happen in English and French.

This year the community celebrates its 60th anniversary since incorporation as a municipality. Initially it was incorporated as village of Wellington and today it is the rural municipality of Wellington.

Wellington will be marking its anniversary of its incorporation on Sunday, August 11th at the Old Mill Park as part of the 2019 World Congress festivities and they will feature an official opening, historical exhibits, music, artisans and food trucks.

I would like to congratulate the community on reaching this milestone. I look forward to attending celebrations in August and meeting current and former residents as well as attendees of the World Acadian Congress.

Merci beaucoup, monsieur le président.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

250 Years of 'Islandness'

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

I still miss Stuart McLean and his brilliant CBC Radio show *The Vinyl Café*, the vinyl store which gave the series its name went by the tagline "we may not be big, but we're small."

There's a certain charm and allure to smallness and on a jurisdictional scale PEI

captures much of what "small is beautiful" means.

We almost didn't have the opportunity to be a separate and proudly independent political entity. 2019 marks the 250th anniversary of the creation of Prince Edward Island as a separate political unit.

At the beginning of our province's independence, it was on June 28th, 1769, 250 years ago to this very day, that King George III authorized the establishment of a separate government for St. John's Island as PEI was known back then. On August the 4th of that same year, he installed the Islands first governor Walter Patterson.

Would it not be for the somewhat low key events in Westminster in London, U.K., Prince Edward Island would still be governed from Halifax as an appendage of Nova Scotia. Since August 4th, 1769 the Island has been an independent jurisdiction with its own government; in the first 104 years as a colony of Great Britain and in the last 146 as a province with its own Legislature, as we all know, we sit in it right here today.

For us politicians, who often tend to think and act in short time spans, I think it's important to look back on the long arc of our province's rich political history, and appreciate anew the gift of jurisdiction that we enjoy as a result.

I want to thank Doug Sobey for bringing this notable anniversary to my attention, and for us to be encouraged to look back on those pivotal events of 250 years ago, when in a very literal way, our province was born.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Response to Questions taken as Notice

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

Mr. Hudson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

On Wednesday June 26th, the hon. Opposition House Leader asked me to clarify details of a secure income pilot program that was announced, in both the

Speech from the Throne and the budget address.

The secure income program is a recommendation of a Poverty Reduction Action Plan and will allow Islanders with barriers to entering the workforce, such as a disability to have their basic needs met. The program will aim to provide benefits above that of a short income or social assistance.

My department has established working groups to direct the roll out of a secure income program, which includes exploring best practices, determining eligibility criteria, developing policies and procedures, determining technological requirements and planning and delivering the necessary training to staff.

These working groups will report directly to the director of social programs, who will report progress to the deputy and myself.

We anticipate the program to begin in January of 2020 and have committed 225,000 this fiscal year to expected client support. The funding is not to support a commission or a chair person, this money will be going directly to our Islands most vulnerable.

I want to reintegrate that our government is still committed to a basic income guarantee pilot, but we do require financial support from the federal government to get this done. I have sent a letter to Minister Morneau to ask for that financial support.

As a government we did not want to wait. We wanted to ensure that the most vulnerable Islanders had their basic needs met. Our secure income program, well not a basic income guarantee for all Islanders, will support the Islands most vulnerable, those who have severe barriers to employment.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

So yesterday in the House I was asked about our renewable targets and our carbon emission targets are part of the climate action strategy plan and increasing our local

renewable energy does not directly impact our emission targets and that's because we buy electricity from New Brunswick. So, any decrease in use or any increase in renewable counts directly towards New Brunswick targets, not ours.

That said, we are committed to increasing local renewable energy generation, it's good for the environment and it's good for the economy. The provincial energy strategy has recommendations on this and this includes expanding wind generation capacity by adding 30 megawatts in the near future and 40 megawatts in 2025.

We are certainly willing to discuss any future targets for local renewable electricity generation.

Also, Mr. Speaker, I had a question yesterday about the federal funds for green initiatives and this is what I have: investing in Canada infrastructure, program includes federal funding for PEI public transit and green infrastructure; \$27 million towards public transit, \$228.1 million for green infrastructure and this does not include any additional matching funds from the province or applicant.

The agreement was signed in August 2018. The first round for applications closed two months ago. We are reviewing 110 projects that have been submitted with a total of \$365 million.

Once the projects are approved by the federal government, I'm happy to provide an update to the Legislature on how these funds will be used.

The Low Carbon Economy Fund is a joint federal/provincial investment of \$47.8 million to PEI over four years, spanning from 2018-2022 and I'll table a list of the efficiency programs my department has funded through the Low Carbon Economy Fund in the current budget.

It's in the handout but I'll name a few of them: our social initiative will be through there, we have business energy solutions are through there, Business Energy Rebates are through there, the Winter Warming program that I talked about in here before will be through there, instant energy savings is through there. The Energy Efficiency

Equipment Rebates are all through there, Home Insulation Rebates are all through there, but this is everybody's book but I will table it through Tabling of Documents.

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

Mr. Hudson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Yesterday, the hon. Member from Summerside-Wilmot asked me how many housing units are planned for Summerside this year. I have gone back to my department and confirmed that nine seniors units were completed and tenants moved in on June 1st, 2019 and that an additional 32 senior units are currently under construction.

We are also working with a developer to create 30 mixed units in the Summerside area. The project has multiple funding partners which require additional coordination for a public announcement, but we do expect to be able to make an announcement on these units at a future date.

The hon. member also asked me to confirm how many of these units will be affordable and accessible. All new publicly funded housing developments are affordable with a rent geared to income at 25%.

As well, we have a goal that a minimum of 20% of publicly funded housing units will be accessible. We would also consider client needs as per the registry and would add additional units as required.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Questions by Members

Speaker: The Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you.

Once again, I appreciate the prompt follow up of the questions taken as notice.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'd like to follow up on the series of questions yesterday concerning the Partnership for Growth.

The Premier was absolutely correct when he stated that all political parties were approached by the Partnership for Growth and they asked each of us to respond, in writing, to their request.

In the PC response to the partnership, the Premier stated this and I quote: My Progressive Conservative team is set to work with the partnership and all Islanders to create an economic development action plan for our province upon taking office. This will be a priority within the first six months of being in government.

PC party campaign promises (further)

It's now over two months since the election and a question to the Premier: Can you give the House an update on the progress you have made towards that commitment?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier King: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you hon. member for the question.

Obviously on the day that we were sworn in as the government, the first thing we did was appoint my colleague from Morell-Donagh the Government House Leader to serve as the head of that Partnership for Growth initiative to go about building the economic action plan that we talked about in cooperation with all of these individual groups across Prince Edward Island – chambers of commerce and tourism industry associations and so many others.

The hon. House Leader has already met a number of times, I believe with the group, we're formulating some terms of reference, we're going to put some supports in from government, things are well under way long before the six months that we had suggested.

Many of the commitments that people are questioning that aren't in the platform, this is certainly one from our platform that has been implemented and is in action.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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

During Question Period yesterday the Premier said that it would be a mistake to refer to the Partnership for Growth as a lobbyist group, but several members of the organizations there that are listed are on the government's own lobbyist registry and if you visit the partnerships website they clearly state, and again, I quote: the PEI Partnership for Growth is comprised of business organizations and industry associations who have come together with a shared vision for our economic future. We invite all political parties to support this unprecedented private sector alignment of our vision.

I find it troubling that our Premier cannot actually recognize a lobbyist group, even when he's being lobbied.

Business and private sectors re: lobbyist group

Question to the Premier: Why would you assert that an organization that represents 21 business and private sectors and organizations isn't a lobbyist group?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier King: Well I guess where I see the difference is that I see them as partners. We're sitting here as partners to develop an economic action plan in the best interest of Prince Edward Island to fund the economy, to make sure our economy continues to perform, our economy is shared with Islanders across Prince Edward Island, and our economy is shared throughout rural and urban Prince Edward Island.

I see them, as I'm sure individually as they're duty bound by the lobbyist act that we've put in place in this Legislature that they have to lobby individually. But I see them when they come together in this group for the strategic partnership, I see them as partners with the government, and I'm very happy to lead a government that wants to work with all Island groups to build a strong economy, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thanks, Mr. Speaker.

Yesterday the Premier described Partnership for Growth as 20 community groups, but the reality is that it represents the interests of the private business sector. Now don't get me wrong, I believe that government absolutely needs to listen to the private sector, but it should not let the priorities of a single sector dictate economic policy.

We have a partner there, there are many other potential partners across this Island who are contributing hugely to the economic success of our province. In addition to the private sector, government needs to engage with labour, with the non-profit sector, and with all citizens.

I'm profoundly concerned that the new government is taking a very narrow view of economic development that puts the interest of private profits over the public good.

Organizations and economic plan

Could the Premier tell us what other organizations beyond the Partnership for Growth he intends to consult with over the next four months to develop this province's economic plan?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier King: Well thank you, Mr. Speaker.

That is a great question.

From my understanding, the 21 groups that have worked to develop the strategic partnership group have worked with 50 community groups from all across Prince Edward Island. They are collaborating, they are working, and trying to bring more people involved.

But a very fair point being raised by the Leader of the Opposition, we can't just have one singular or individuals try to guide this plan. Many individuals should have access to this and should have input to it.

I would be encouraging the Government House Leader and all the members of the strategic growth partnership to make sure that all Islanders have a say in this because it's all Islanders that we're trying to serve. It's the economy we're trying to build for all Islanders.

I appreciate the encouragement from the Leader of the Opposition to get involved because to fund a lot of the programs that we want to fund in here, we need a strong economy, we need a strong tax base, and we need everybody working.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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

Nice words and I could not agree more. We need to involve everybody.

Since taking office, the Premier has publicly announced a very strong alliance with the Partnership for Growth. He has appointed a registered lobbyist with the Canadian Federation of Independent Business as the Deputy Minister for Economic Growth, Tourism, and Culture, and he apparently even failed to attend a scheduled meeting with the PEI Federation of Labour. The PC campaign slogan was: "It's about people."

Economic plan and Islanders

Could the Premier explain why so many people – workers, the third sector, the poor, Indigenous organizations, and seniors, to take a few – are being left out of his economic plan?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier King: Well I would take exception to someone suggesting that I didn't show up for a meeting. I have never turned away a meeting, and if someone is suggesting otherwise, I'd like to see what that is because that is inaccurate information. Anyone who sets up a meeting with the Premier of Prince Edward Island gets a meeting with the Premier. So I would like to have that corrected and (Indistinct)

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Premier King: Mr. Speaker, I'm very open to the concept that others should have input into this. Absolutely; I think that's what we're supposed to here in the Legislature.

Minority situation that we're in, the collaboration, the consultation, whatever 'c' word we want to use, that we're working

together to develop a strong Prince Edward Island for all.

It is about people, and if the Leader of the Opposition has groups or individuals that he suggests should be part of this or should have input into this, we would be very welcome to those suggestions. He can hand them off to me, and I can hand them off to the Government House Leader or he can do it individually himself.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Belvedere.

Ms. Bell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The government's throne speech made reference to social enterprise. Of course, the last time social enterprise was mentioned in a throne speech in 2016, one of your Cabinet colleagues asked what it was while another claimed it was made up.

Social enterprise

So a question to the Premier: Could you explain what you mean when you say social enterprise?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier King: Well thank you very much for the question.

I worked for many years with the Mi'kmaq Confederacy and one of the key components of the development component of the confederacy was working through social enterprise.

What I would describe social enterprise as, is working in partnership with a number of people, but ensuring that individuals from within the community have the ability to develop capacity, to have an ownership stake, and to eventually assume the ownership of these projects and that's what I see as a social enterprise.

I think there are many good opportunities that have been developed through our First Nations and other individuals. I can't be responsible for everything – my former members of my party said – but I believe that's what I see as a social enterprise and

I'm really excited to see what we can do working together to develop it further.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Belvedere.

Ms. Bell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Social enterprise is often used to refer to business ventures operated by non-profits, whether they are societies, charities or cooperatives, where profits are returned to the business and have a social purpose rather than just maximizing profits to shareholders. This is part of the social economy.

The throne speech says that we're seeing social enterprise take off, and that through social enterprise young people are helping to keep our communities strong while contributing to the overall quality of life in our province.

Government support for social economy

A question to the Premier: What is your government doing to support the community sector and the social economy of PEI?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier King: Well, Mr. Speaker, there are lots of initiatives that we've outlined in the budget that actually do exactly that.

The Reach Foundation is a classic example, but there are so many others.

But as I've been saying here for many days in this Legislature, what we've developed together, what we've presented as a budget is a first opportunity. This is the first opportunity to present it to get things going, building on the priorities from all parties and priorities that represent all Prince Edward Islanders.

I'm certainly open to the opposition. I know the Opposition House Leader is a passionate leader in this area. I would like to have much of her input to make sure we're on the right track and I would encourage the discussion to continue.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Belvedere.

Ms. Bell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Well, last year, to encourage innovative approaches to persistent and complex social challenges, the Government of Canada created a social finance fund of \$755 million on a cash basis over the next 10 years which will give charitable, non-profit, and social-purpose organizations access to new financing that will implement innovative ideas and connect them with non-government investors and these (Indistinct) support projects that drive positive social change.

There's also an additional \$50 million which starts this fall for social-purpose organizations to improve their ability to successfully participate in the social economy. But, unlike other jurisdictions, PEI does not have a legal or regulatory framework for social enterprise or social financing, and we will risk missing this opportunity.

Development of social finance strategy

A question to the Premier: Will this government commit to consulting with regional experts from the community sector who can provide recommendations on the development of a social enterprise and social finance strategy for the province?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

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

I think that is an absolutely wonderful recommendation. I think it's something that we really should look at and dive deeper into.

As we were talking about the other day when the minister for economic growth was doing his budget estimates, I think we need to start to change how we look at investments in businesses, small and large. We've been chasing a lot of big fish over the years and it's been helpful, but a lot of the new economy is in one and two and three-person jobs and it's in the social enterprise, as the hon. member suggested.

I would be very open to that recommendation and I would encourage one of the standing committees maybe, or maybe a group of us could work together, to actually build on that recommendation.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Mermaid-Stratford.

Ms. Beaton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

During discussions last week on climate change, both the opposition and the government raised concerns about the potentially high costs of measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. One way or another, Islanders will have to shoulder these costs, either directly or via government expenditures.

Cost of measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions

Question to the Minister of Finance: Do you agree that we need to take into consideration the costs of the measures we use to reduce greenhouse gas emissions?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

An Hon. Member: Good question.

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you very much for the question.

We most definitely have to look at all aspects of climate change and what we're going to do to change the way we act in this province.

It's something that came forward – we know it's an important part of how this province can mitigate their carbon footprint and we will work together to ensure that we do that. It's early days. We talked about it a number of times already in this Legislature and we'll continue to do that.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Mermaid-Stratford.

Ms. Beaton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

If we are going to find the least expensive ways of reducing emissions and to make fiscally-responsible decisions, we need to be able to compare our options.

Measuring cost of policies to lower carbon footprint

Question to the minister: Do you have any suggestions on how we might measure the costs of different policies so that we can choose the lowest-cost option?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and thank you for the question.

We definitely have to when we're looking at anyway of mitigating our carbon footprint, we need to look at the cost and that's something we've started to do, whether it's through solar programs, whether it's through the carbon levee that has been basically pushed upon us through the federal government. We have to look at the cost of each and every one of those programs to ensure that we remain fiscally responsible. It's very important economically that we do that, but it's very important environmentally that we can continue to work on our carbon footprint.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Mermaid-Stratford.

Ms. Beaton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Abatement measures for reducing carbon emissions

One of the key metrics we can use to evaluate the cost of different measures for reducing carbon emissions is to look at the abatement cost; basically the dollars per ton of CO2 avoided. Is the hon. Minister familiar with this sort of measure?

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

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I will have to admit, I'm aware of the measure but I can't really elaborate on it, so I will bring that back to you for sure.

Speaker: The hon. Member from mermaid-Stratford.

Ms. Beaton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

If we are going to make fiscally responsible decisions, we need to be fully informed about the full costs of what the different options available to us are.

Reduction of cost per ton

Will the hon. Minister commit to providing the cost per ton of reduced CO₂ so that we can make informed and fiscally responsible decisions?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Obviously, we will for sure. We do every day, I mean every decision we make in this House affects all Islanders. Whether it's about the environment, health or education, the impact is both, environmentally, but fiscally, something we need to look at for sure.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Mermaid-Stratford.

Ms. Beaton: So in order to make fully informed decisions, we also need to ensure that we know the abatement costs of all the measures available.

Providing of abatement cost re: carbon pricing

Will the minister commit to providing the abatement cost for all the available options, including ones the government may be less comfortable with, like carbon pricing?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We definitely will. Carbon pricing is just one part of this. We've got wind farms, we're talking solar, we're talking any type of renewable energy that we can. For sure, we'll bring back the cost of mitigating any one of those things.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Summerside-Wilmot.

Ms. Lund: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

When it comes to solving problems, I believe there are two equally important roles for government to play. We need to be reactive to acute needs as they arise and we also need to be proactive and anticipate problems that are coming in plan for the future.

This week, we heard that farm gate sales are down and that the budget will include an additional \$5.7 million investment into agriculture insurance rates and premiums.

This amount of money is more than we're budgeting for the housing crisis. I realize this is absolutely necessary this year, but if we genuinely want to protect farming into the future, we need a plan.

Sustainable farming future for PEI

Question to the minister of agriculture: Seeing the numbers on this, do you believe the steps we are currently taking are enough to be proactive in planning a sustainable farming future for PEI?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Land.

Mr. Thompson: Mr. Speaker, thank you hon. Member from Summerside-Wilmot.

It was a tough year last year and we did have to put some more money into the insurance program. But that money isn't cured money, that's insurance programs, so that's how insurance works. You have to put in when the premiums get higher and that's how that's working.

Our farmers are working hard to sustain their farms and they too, are worried about their future. This is something that is true to my heart, as well. Soil quality monitoring is something that we're doing now, alternative land use is another thing that we're doing. There's steps and were going to keep doing those steps, we're going to step that up a little more.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Summerside-Wilmot.

Ms. Lund: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Premier has committed to direct answers and I credit him and many ministers with having followed through on that to this point.

When I asked about following the climate labs recommendation on commissioning, a comprehensive study of crop opportunities

and challenges under warming conditions on P.E.I, the hon. Minister of Agriculture and land said, quote "... We take all considerations in and for the betterment of the soil, the farmer. We will be looking at different things as they come and we will continue to..."

Comprehensive study on crop opportunities

Question to the Premier: Do you feel that I've received a direct answer on my question on whether the minister is willing to commission a comprehensive study on crop opportunities?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

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

I would suggest as the hon. member has suggested in the preamble to the question that what we're seeing here in these early days is a complete difference of what we've seen in years past in terms of questioning, trying to provide the most accurate information we can; keeping in mind that we are a new government in transition trying to get up to speed on many of the files.

I believe the answer that you quoted there was an answer, was it as complete as maybe you would have appreciated or whether it could be? Perhaps, not, but I do think that the minister would be committal to making sure that answer is presented here in a way which is at least somewhat satisfactory to the opposition and to all those watching.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Summerside-Wilmot.

Ms. Lund: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Question to the minister of agriculture: Will you commission a comprehensive study to examine crop opportunities and challenges for PEI under warming conditions projected over the next 30 years so farmers can plan accordingly?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Land.

Mr. Thompson: That's something I'll have to discuss with my department, of course. So that's 30 years time.

I'd also like to – oh Mr. Speaker, sorry – I'd also like to have a discussion with my counterpart from Summerside-Wilmot on her future of the agriculture on PEI. How she sees the future down the road.

Thank you.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Summerside-Wilmot.

Ms. Lund: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Two points on that. I don't think I'm actually able to answer questions in this period, I think I'd have to be a minister for that to be the case.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Ms. Lund: To clarify, I also am not suggesting that we start a study in 30 years. I mean one that takes into account 30 years of warming opportunities.

I've spoken before on how climate change will impact a number of portfolios. I genuinely believe that the Premier understands we need to address climate change. To do that, we need to understand that climate change doesn't exist solely in a single portfolio. It's a lens in every portfolio.

Include climate change planning in decision-making and budgeting

Question to the Premier: Will you be proactive, anticipate the problems that are coming, and issue a clear directive to your departments to incorporate climate change planning in all decision-making and budgeting?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

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

That is a good question, and it's an important question.

I think as our climate changes, as we've been saying for many months now, Prince

Edward Island being an Island climate we have to be more aware than most about the change in climate and the impacts that it had.

I do believe the premise of the question is accurate as that it isn't just an issue that can be dealt with in climate change. I think as we continue to evolve with our operations of government that that is a very real expectation that will implemented over the course of time.

Just to follow-up on the comment from the minister – I believe input from individuals, like yourself, on these matters are very important. I don't think he was asking you the question here, but giving us the opportunity to elaborate on what your thought process are and what impacts it can have going forward.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

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

I was a little unsure who I was going to ask my question to today until I got in the House as the Premier advises yesterday that that's actually not the government on that side of the House. I do see his title still on his pocket there.

So my question today is for the Minister of Education and Lifelong Learning, and it's regarding the PC party's pledge to increase the George Coles Bursary to \$3,000. The throne speech and the budget is silent on this pledge.

Increase to George Coles Bursary in Budget

Minister: Is the bursary being increased to the \$3,000 for this upcoming school year?

An Hon. Member: Good question.

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

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'll have to get back to you on that.

An Hon. Member: What?

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

Mr. Henderson: Not ready.

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

It's good that we have students that are in the gallery today to hear that at least you're going to check into that.

The surplus in the budget was \$1.8 million. The bursary pledge, according to the PC platform, would cost \$1.4 million. This promise could have been more than covered by that surplus.

Minister: Why did your government choose not to honour the pledge in this year's budget?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Premier King: I think that question really is to be addressed probably to me, because as the Premier of the government, what I was trying to suggest yesterday in my answer was we're all the government.

We're a minority government. We didn't just have one person or one group running the whole show. We have to try to work together.

What I've been trying to say for a number of days is, a platform laid out by every party has to outlined things that aren't always going to get done in the first few days or the first year of a mandate.

I would like us to have a little bit of time to implement a number of these things, anything we can do to make it easier for students to get a quality education here on Prince Edward Island we have to be mindful of the fiscal restraints and that we can't give everything to everybody – we're trying to do the very best we can. 85 percent of this budget is yours hon. member and I think you should be proud of it as all members of the Legislature are.

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

Mr. Mitchell: It does appear unfortunate that a number of students will have graduated before this bursary is increased to your \$3,000 level.

Timeline for bursary increases

So to the Premier or the minister, whoever would like to answer it: Could you inform this House of when that platform pledge will indeed be honoured?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier King: Well like most pledges in our platform and most of the pledges in the opposition's platform and most of the pledges in your platform, I really, really hope that we are in a position to do that as soon as humanly possible.

We'd like to be able to develop a budget that treats all the priorities of Prince Edward Islanders equally and fairly – keeping in mind that we wanted to remain in a surplus situation and to do the very best that we can.

I sincerely hope that sometime very soon we are in a good position to be able to do that and when we do that I hope we can get buy-in from all members of this House to make sure it's good policy.

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

Mr. Perry: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It was reported that a deceased right whale that was found off the coast off the Magdalene Islands was brought into (Indistinct) shore in Norway this morning around 3:00 a.m. for a post-mortem and an onsite burial.

Cost of disposal to marine carcasses

Question to the Minister of Fisheries and Communities: Could you inform the House as to what approvals are required by government for this and if the taxpayers of PEI are paying for this and if it's in your budget, what is the disposal for marine carcass?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Fisheries and Communities.

Mr. Fox: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The events in the last 21 days have actually been tragic and it's something that I've been dealing with on a daily basis with the briefing from DFO, from our department and from different agencies and I will confirm there was a whale that is being brought in this morning. I am being briefed on it this morning.

It will not be a cost to the taxpayers of PEI and the hope is to have the scientists on site as soon as possible to try and determine what the cause of these fatalities are.

Thank you.

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

Mr. Perry: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Local residents have voiced a number of concerns to me such as the order that can come from this, not having access to the beach, environmental impacts it may have to the wildlife, to the habitat, to the sand dunes.

Environmental impacts of diseased marine carcasses burials

Minister, what steps will your department be taking to address these concerns?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Fisheries and Communities.

Mr. Fox: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Over the last two weeks I've had several conversations with the federal minister, also the ministers of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick on this. We know of the concerns and I was brought up to speed on the concerns on the last burials that were taken place and mediation factors have been put in place to make sure that these are limited to the best of our ability.

Thank you.

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

Mr. Perry: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Whenever events like this happen, it's very important that community residents are informed; kept abreast of what's happening.

Yesterday I received a phone call from residents that a Himac had landed in the area and they went down to question it and it was a contractor from Kinkora that they were burying a whale this morning. So they phoned the department of environment, they phoned the department of fisheries, they were told by their departments to call their local MLA, that's how I found out about it.

I'm not even sure why they went to Kinkora to get a contractor when there was one less than a kilometer away that has a Himac that's quite able to do it.

So what efforts have your department or will your department to engage community residents on this matter?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Fisheries and Communities.

Mr. Fox: I don't know who was contracted to be honest, what you're telling me is the first I'm hearing about it. I will take your concerns back the department and we will make sure that we will do the best to inform the public to the best of our ability. I will also pass that on to the department of fisheries and oceans.

Thank you.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Deagle: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Delay of replacement to Montague Intermediate School

Question to the hon. Minister of Education and Lifelong Learning: Can you explain why the gym floor replacement at Montague Intermediate was delayed when it was ready for tender only two months ago?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Education and Lifelong Learning

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

That's something we're still looking at within the department. The construction

season is far from over. You know it's really difficult when you have \$2 million in an infrastructure budget to address all of the maintenance and repairs for schools and so I'll commit to you here today as the Minister of Education and Lifelong Learning, I will be lobbying for increasing that funding for infrastructure projects so we can address even more of the small school repairs across the province.

Thank you.

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

Mr. Deagle: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The problem is, is that it was ready to go. It was ready to be done this summer and then all of a sudden it was just gone, no where's to be seen. The work was estimated to cost about \$100,000, so we're not talking about a multi-million dollar project.

A question to the Minister of Education and Lifelong Learning: When will the gym floor at Montague Intermediate be replaced?

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

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would love to stand here today and say that would be replaced next week. I need to go back and check with my department, I need to work with the rest of Cabinet; it has to go through Treasury Board. It's a lot of fun as a minister learning about the different government processes. I do commit to the member that I'll have that information back to him as soon as possible.

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

Mr. Deagle: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

That sounds a lot like the old hon. minister of education. This project was set to go and ready for tender only two months ago and then all of a sudden it was gone. Replacing a gym floor is the kind of project that can be done over the summer while school is out and won't interfere with classes.

A question to the education minister:
Minister, will you take action and get the gym floor replaced at Montague Intermediate this summer?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Education and Lifelong Learning

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Aren't we having a lot of fun here today?

I mean, the member that looks after Westisle wants to have the roof replaced. We had questions earlier in the week from the Member from Evangeline-Miscouche that wants us to look at École Evangeline and I bet we can go around to every single member here and almost every one of them has a school in their district that has a repair that needs to be made.

I will tell you that I know the Premier well, and I can say that your school in Montague will be one of our priorities.

Thank you.

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

Mr. Howard: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Recently the minister commented that he'd be willing to intervene on behalf of farmers to ensure the rate structure would not unfairly punish them. Our current electrical rate structure has power costing more units the less you use. Kilowatt hour for a residential customer costs 14.37 cents until you get over 2000 kilowatt hours per month and then it becomes 11.42 cents. This in effect rewards those who use more and punishes those who use less.

Electricity rate structures for farmers

Does the hon. minister intend to work to rectify this issue?

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

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

No I actually I don't because we don't set the price of electricity, it's done through IRAC. That's a process that's going on now.

The part that is said I was going to intervene on was the part where they were taking the second block away in the middle of the night, without warning farmers, putting their bottom line at risk, putting farmers at risk, putting the economy here on Prince Edward Island at risk.

So I will defend rural farmers here on Prince Edward Island. I'll defend them through intervening against electricity prices and I commit to that to all Islanders. We're here to protect you, we're here to protect this economy and we're here to protect farming community

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

Mr. Howard: It's a step in the right direction to make sure that efficiency behavior is not steered in the wrong direction. Steering it in the right direction is what we really need however. A flat rate for all power is a half measure in this regard providing no market incentive to use less. Removing a second block and making all power at the higher rate is punishing to all.

Usage of less electricity for Islanders

Does the minister feel we should encourage all Islanders to try and use less energy?

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

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

So, first of all we do have programs through efficiency and we do just those vey things. We're not going to suggest to Maritime Electric or to IRAC how their rates should be structured. We're going to intervene through the process as everyone's legally allowed to do. This is the legal process for how rates get set here on Prince Edward Island. I'm not going to interfere with the process; I'm not going to interfere with how the business of Maritime Electric happens. We're going to intervene on behalf of Islanders.

We believe in protecting business here on Prince Edward Island, we believe in keeping farmers farming here on Prince Edward Island, we believe in keeping the manufacture sector here on Prince Edward

Island open. I don't understand why the Green Party is against business here on Prince Edward Island.

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

Mr. Howard: Certainly not against business, I'm a businessman myself.

It's the high-energy users that end up pushing the grid infrastructure to the limit, and require expensive upgrades. Maritime Electric asked to spend \$70 million, and Summerside's utility wanted to spend \$23 million on new diesel generators.

Currently, our two options for more generation capacity is to purchase more from NB Power or to install our own here, traditionally diesel fired peaker plants. Both options send money off-Island every year either to NB Power or to the diesel suppliers.

Incentives for rate payers to use less energy

Will the minister commit to encourage the behaviour we want to see by pursuing an inclining rate structure that incentivizes rate payers to use less by making energy cost less for a unit if you use less?

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

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

So I know that the Green Party that was here during the last assembly would have admonished government for trying to interfere in something that they were legislatively not allowed to interfere in.

I won't interfere at all with the way that rates are set on Prince Edward Island. I won't interfere with Maritime Electric. I will intervene on behalf of Islanders, as we're legally allowed to when the time comes, and the time is now. The time is now to protect Islanders.

What we are doing here on Prince Edward Island to help bring greener electricity here to Prince Edward Island: we have a wind farm, we're adding wind energy to it, we already provide 24% of the total electricity

through wind. We're going to increase that capacity this year. We're going to increase that capacity again in 2025.

We are doing great things here in Prince Edward Island. We are helping green the economy here in Prince Edward Island. This is something that the PC party has shown leadership on in the past, and will continue to show leadership on.

All the while protecting our industry here on Prince Edward Island, all the while protecting farmers here on Prince Edward Island, all the while manufacturing here on Prince Edward Island, because I believe that's the right thing to do.

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

Mr. Howard: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I think the minister is confusing intervene with interfere, but carrying on here.

An inclining rate structure would create less expensive first block of power. Everyone uses the first block of power, farmers included. In most of Canada, and indeed the world, there's not a declining rate structure as we have here on PEI for obvious reasons. Those who have less ability to pay power bills tend to use less power, and therefore pay for power only in the first rate block.

Developing a new rate structure for residential rate payers

Will the minister commit to pursuing a rate structure that works to relieve the burden on our most vulnerable, specifically an inclining rate structure for our residential rate payers?

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

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

So, again, for the fourth time: No.

I'm not interfering with the way the rates are set here on Prince Edward Island. I refuse to. I'm not even sure that it's legal for me to.

We're going to intervene with the proposed rate structure, which is how it works. They

propose their own rate structure, then it's up to the public. They can decide whether or not they want to intervene on their behalf and present to IRAC or in this case the department is going to act as an intervener and intervene on behalf of Islanders because we believe in business.

We don't believe that we should hurt farmers. In the middle of the night go to a dairy farm and say guess what? We're taking away the second block, we know you use a lot, but we don't care we're going to hurt you. We don't believe in that.

We believe that those businesses are the backbone. It's the backbone of the district I live in. I believe that those farmers deserve to be treated fairly, and that's exactly what we intend to do by intervening on their behalf.

We're not going to ask to set rate structures. We're going to intervene against the rate structure that is currently being proposed.

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

Mr. Howard: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Currently the rate structure costs those vulnerable Islanders more per unit of energy than someone with a 5,000 square foot electrically heated home. An inclining rate structure alleviates some burden on our most vulnerable, and it would encourage high-power users who tend to have the ability to invest in efficiency and self-generation measures to modify their behaviour.

Furthermore, in our *Electric Power Act* it states in the preamble that, and I quote, "WHEREAS public utilities should utilize energy efficiency and demand-side resource measures whenever it is cost-effective to do so." The rest of the act falls after this statement.

No-cost solution to rate structures

Does the minister agree that a no-cost solution like using rate structures to reward lower energy use is a cost effective measure to encourage efficiency in demand side management?

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

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

So what we do through the office of efficiency is we offer people the opportunity to bring efficiencies into their own home. Some of those efficiencies will help reduce the amount of electricity that people use.

We helped people move into heat pumps in their homes, electric heat in their homes. We're going to help people get solar energy into their homes. All of those things together we're going to help bring down our carbon footprint when it comes to how we produce electricity here on Prince Edward Island and we use electricity here on Prince Edward Island.

The part of the rate structure that bothers me that's currently proposed is immediately getting rid of the second block.

I believe that's going to hurt business. I believe that's going to hurt farming. I believe that that's an anti-business movement. I believe that it's an anti-farming movement.

Proposing that we do anything but intervene on this behalf will only hurt farmers, will only hurt manufacturing here in Prince Edward Island. In order to have the money that we need to offer things like solar programming, to offer things like our housing programming, to help vulnerable Islanders, we need money and we need people to make money here in Prince Edward Island.

We need to support our farming community. We need to support manufacturing and together, we can all do this. We can't do it if we make moves that are going to negatively impact the people that are making money here for this province every single day.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton.

Mr. Hammarlund: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As you may be aware, the community-run Lower Bedeque Schoolhouse Museum will

not be open to the public this summer due to a lack of resources and volunteers.

The schoolhouse not only offered a fascinating and educational look at an important part of Island life in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, it also attracted hundreds of tourists each year looking for places connected to the great Island author Lucy Maud Montgomery who taught at the schoolhouse in the 1890s.

According to the museum chair, the volunteer operators of the museum approached the government to see if there was any interest in taking over the museum. The province supposedly expressed interest, but no action was taken to keep the museum open.

Support for Lower Bedeque Schoolhouse Museum

Question to the Minister of Economic Growth, Tourism and Culture: Does the province intend to take steps to ensure that the Lower Bedeque Schoolhouse Museum remains open to the public for the 2019 tourist season?

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

Mr. MacKay: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you, hon. member.

The first I had actually heard about that was in the paper here a couple of days ago when I read the article. So, since I took over the department nobody has come to me with any ask but I'll certainly sit down with them and do my very best.

I know there's a schoolhouse in my own district, Fanningbrook Schoolhouse, that I met with last Saturday that are experiencing the same issues as well and we're working to an end goal with that as well, so I'd be more than happy to meet with the people in Bedeque.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton, your final question.

Mr. Hammarlund: Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, the challenges faced by the Lower

Bedeque Schoolhouse Museum are all too familiar to community heritage groups.

Indeed, the operators of the museum also approached the Bedeque Historic Society about potentially taking over the museum but they, too, have insufficient resources and volunteers for such an undertaking.

The preservation and support of Island culture was an important part of this new government's election platform. However, the level of overall funding for heritage preservation and museums in the 19/20 budget remains unchanged from last year.

Increase of support to museums and heritage

Question to the Minister of Economic Growth, Tourism and Culture: Does the government intend to increase its financial support of community museums and heritage institutions?

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

Mr. MacKay: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you, hon. member.

As you're going through department and you see things like this, it definitely needs to be looked at.

This is our history and our heritage of Prince Edward Island. They need to be preserved. We need to work with the groups to see what we can do. The big thing when I came in here six weeks ago was to go through the department completely to see where the wasteful spending was happening, to do a complete review.

I think we're going to look at that in the future because there's a demand for it. We need to preserve our history and we'll do whatever we can to work with these groups to help to do.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

[End of Question Period]

Point of Order

Mr. MacEwen: Can I have a point of order?

Speaker: The hon. Member from Morell-Donagh.

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm usually pretty quiet in this Legislature, but I've been the discussion of two Question Period topics in a row, so I feel I need to speak out on the Partnership for Growth.

If we've got 21 community groups, organizations, lobbyists, people that represent really important people in PEI and they come together and form this group and want all three parties to work together on something, I think it is very incumbent on any government – and I know whichever party had formed government would have met with them and would have committed all to them to doing this. I think it's a very important thing that we recognize and support them.

Yes, there are lobbyists involved in this group, a registered lobbyist as part of that group. When they come together and form a group and then there's a commitment from government to partner with them, that entire group is not a lobbyist anymore. They are partners with government in the act.

The partnership has identified a large number of supporter organizations, so they recognized that when they got together they formed this they stopped at 21. They had to do a cut-off. I recognize the concerns that there's all kinds of groups out there, now wondering now that it's gotten more publicity and the government wants to partner with them, maybe we should be involved, maybe we should have been consulted, that kind of thing.

The house leader and I talked about groups that said no that probably should be there with them even though they said no. I know that the partnership growth is meeting with Indigenous groups. They're meeting with women in government groups. They're trying to do that reach-out. In fact, I spoke to them and we encouraged them to do exactly this.

They have what's called a supporter designate group, and I think there's over 50 different groups (Indistinct). We were at the Speaker's tea and there was two different organizations that came up to me: How do I

get involved, I know you're a part of it. That's fantastic news.

The Leader of the Opposition talked today about the six-month time frame, and is it going to be done, and all that kind of thing. You yourself called to take more time with this, reach out to more people, in your letter of support. You said we need to meet with these other groups. That's what the partnership for growth is doing; they're reaching out to those groups. So I don't think it's fair to say you've got to get it done in six months when you yourself are calling for – (Indistinct) certainly was the tone in question period today.

You asked questions yesterday. I honestly think you were taking – I know you're going by the actual wording of what the minister said yesterday. You know darn well that the government is not just going to hand an economic action plan –

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Some Hon. Members: Keep going. Keep going.

An Hon. Member: What's the point of order in this, member?

Mr. MacEwen: You know darn well that the government is not just going to come up with, let this group of 21 people come up with the economic action plan for PEI. So when you were asking those questions yesterday, you knew darn well that that's not what's going to happen.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

An Hon. Member: I'd like to respond to that.

Speaker: Hon. –

Mr. MacEwen: Mr. Speaker, I have a FOIPPable address. It's smacewenpfg@gov.pe.ca. Use it anytime. It's absolutely – it's there.

I want to be open and clear about what I've done so far. I met with the spokesperson. (Indistinct) –

Speaker: Member, what's your point of order?

Statements by Ministers

Mr. MacEwen: I'm getting to it, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Mr. MacEwen: I met with the spokesperson on the first steps. I spoke at their very first planning meeting. They're incredibly excited. They talked about the opposition, they talked about the third party, they talked about your priorities and your letters. They talked about the excitement from government committing to it.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct) point of order.

Mr. MacEwen: They are meeting together to come up with a plan.

And finally, honest to God, I'm 20 feet away; I'm one flight of stairs away. Come talk to me anytime for this. You don't need to grandstand in Question Period to talk about my role in the party.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Mr. MacEwen: I've had good conversations with many of the members across the floor about the partnership for growth –

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Mr. MacEwen: – legitimate concerns about is it a lobbyist, is it not. Come talk to me, I'm right here.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: Member, I will take that point of order under advisement.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct) minister wannabe.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Opening of Riverview Manor

Mr. Aylward: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

I'm pleased to rise in the House today and invite all members of this Legislative Assembly to Montague this afternoon, where we'll be hosting the official opening of the new Riverview Manor.

This multimillion-dollar manor has 40 long-term care beds and one respite care bed. The building is designed using a home-like approach where residents live in small households that include a common living area, a dining area, as well as private rooms for each resident.

Seniors are the foundation of our communities, and we are thrilled to be officially opening this beautiful new home in Kings County. Residents and staff moved into the new manor last week. I'm told that they are very excited to be in this beautiful new space.

I am so pleased for the people of Kings County. It's been a long time coming, but this new home will be a tremendous support to Montague and the surrounding communities. I know that many seniors want to stay in their home for as long as possible, but if your health does deteriorate and you require the supports of long-term care, the next best option is having a facility available right in your own community where you are still close to family and friends; and this is what the Riverview Manor provides for the people of Kings County, and that's what we are going to be celebrating this afternoon.

When it comes to seniors' care, there are many areas of assistance that our government is committed to enhancing, as well as exploring new and innovative ways to support our aging population. I hope all Members of this house will join me in Montague this afternoon at 2:30 p.m. to see firsthand the positive impact the new Riverview Manor is having on Island seniors.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Altass: Thank you, Mr. Speaker

I think it is wonderful news to see a facility like this opening up in Montague. I agree it is so important for seniors to be able to age in place at every stage of their care needs.

So, yes, seniors do want to stay often in their homes as long as possible, and I think we need to make sure that our programs are effective at doing that, and supporting them in staying in their homes as long as possible; however, when they do need some additional care, to have long-term care facilities, as well as community care facilities accessible within local communities so that seniors are able to age in place and stay close by their families and support systems is a wonderful thing.

I will be attending this event today, and I look forward to taking a tour of this facility and meeting with the staff and residents and hearing about their experiences. I wish them all the best in this transition, and look forward to seeing it this afternoon.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. McNeilly: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the minister for his statement.

The opening of the Riverview Manor is good news for Montague and surrounding areas. It is a testament to the legacy of the previous government and the commitment to senior care.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Mr. Myers: In 2006 it was promised.

Mr. McNeilly: Because of Prince Edward Island's aging population, there will be

continuing needs in this province for long-term care beds. In fact, Mr. Speaker, the provincial projections are pretty clear for seniors. In 2017, there are about 29,000 Islanders over the age of 65. By 2037, in just 18 years, that number will grow to 44,000 people.

These are challenging realities, and the addition to providing long-term care supports, we need to recognize that senior population is changing rapidly. Increasingly, seniors are living very healthy and active lives, and in my opinion there is more government can do to support that reality, as well as provide much needed care in the facilities like Riverview Manor. As well, there will be other supports required for senior's population, including home care.

I look forward to future dialogue with my fellow colleagues as we discuss the needs for senior's populations. Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

PEI Seniors' Secretariat

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

Each year, the Prince Edward Island Seniors' Secretariat honours the contributions of Island seniors by presenting the Senior Islanders of the Year awards. I'd like to recognize members of the secretariat who are here with us today and thank them for coming out for my ministerial statement; and also my department's senior policy advisor, Mary Driscoll. Thank you for being here.

The annual awards recognize the significant contribution of Island seniors in community life. This includes volunteerism, artistic achievement, fundraising, community participation, fitness and recreation, and other activities. To be eligible for the award, nominees must be a current resident of Prince Edward Island, 65 years of age or older, and willing to be nominated.

Island seniors have helped shape our communities in the province that we know

and love today. This distinguished award serves as thanks in recognition for the valuable knowledge, skill and experience Island seniors contribute in their daily lives.

The 2018 recipients were Ann Sherman, Evelyn Jenkins, Fairley Yeo, Grace Blackette and Kaye Larkin. Nominations for the 2019 award are now open, and can be found on the Department of Social Development and Housing website, or by emailing seniors@gov.pe.ca, as well as by calling 1-866-770-0588. Deadline for nominations is August 9th. I look forward to celebrating the winners later this fall.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Belvedere.

Ms. Bell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

This is a great annual event and it's something that's really important to recognize the impact of – you know, there are so many seniors who have such a huge impact in our community. After all, I live with one, so I can speak about the impact that she's had on my life on an ongoing basis, and she'd probably be really angry with me for saying so.

It's great to recognize particularly Ann Sherman who is a longtime family friend, and previous seniors who have been recognized through this award. It would be great, minister, to see some additional support going to the senior secretariat, because not only do they do the seniors awards, but they do some significant community grants that actually really have an impact on our community; but that budget remains static, and is one that could be reviewed and increased, because as our population increases and we hear over and over again about the seniors being the backbone of our community, it'd be really great to recognize that by increasing the funding and the supports available for this great organization to expand the work it does in the community.

After all, it's that kind of work that can really demonstrate that we mean it when we say that we value and recognize the

work and the contributions of this massive and important part of our communities.

Thank you so much.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Cornwall-Meadowbank.

Mr. MacDonald: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Congratulations to the seniors secretariat on this and even further congratulations: I don't think I ever had the opportunity to congratulate Olive Bryanton on her PhD at 81 years of age –

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. MacDonald: Just goes to show you never stop learning. I don't know what's left Olive, because I don't think there's anything much higher in the university or you to achieve.

I'd also like to congratulate this year's winners when they're announced. Kaye Larkin is a constituent of mine and I know Kaye does so much for our community but there's so many more that do so much for your community, too, as seniors, and some of them are very, very humbled.

Seniors volunteering prevents senior isolation and depression, and can be extremely healthy for their psychological health too, and not only that, but having seniors working alongside youth gives our youth of the day a real appreciation of what these forefathers have done for our society as a whole.

It's extremely important that we continue this tradition to respect our seniors, try to get our seniors involved as much as possible. We do have an aging demographic, and it's so important for us to see what they've done, and where they've come from.

So congratulations to the minister on continuing to uphold this and the Seniors' Secretariat, who I would not want to be, picking the winners of this, because there are so many people across the province that deserve an award.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Presenting and Receiving Petitions

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Point of Order

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

I have a document to table, but I'd also like to rise on a point of order, and I'd appreciate a ruling on the supposed alleged point of order brought by the Member from Morell-Donagh.

A point of order is where somehow during House proceedings there's a departure from one or more of the rules of this House, and I would appreciate a ruling from you, Mr. Speaker, as to whether indeed there was a departure from any rules in the House and therefore whether his point of order was justified or not.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Tabling of Documents

Leader of the Opposition: Can I present my document now?

Mr. Speaker, by leave of the House, I beg leave to table a screenshot from the PEI Federation of Labour regarding an alleged meeting that they had with the Premier and I move, seconded by the hon. Member from Charlottetown-Victoria Park, that the said document be now received and do lie on the Table.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Hon. member, I will take that under advisement and come back with the ruling.

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

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Recognition of Guests II

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

If I could just have a recognition of guests before I do my – I got a text from a longtime friend of mine from down in Cape Cod, Melissa Batchilder, who is a very close friend of mine, who told me that my passport to Georgetown will be revoked if I don't recognize her nephew Oliver in the gallery, who is a very good friend of mine and has wonderful Georgetown roots.

I didn't see him initially in behind the hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton in my initial recognition, so with that I hope I'm free to travel down to see my mother on Sunday.

Mr. Speaker, by Command of Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor, I beg leave to table Order-in-Council EC2019-306 informing the Legislative Assembly of the reorganization and renaming of government departments pursuant to Section 5 of the *Public Departments Act* 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.

The hon. Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy.

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, by leave of the House, I beg leave to table the Low Carbon Economy Fund document I spoke about prior to Question Period, and I move, seconded by the hon. Minister of Health and Wellness, that the said document be now received and do lie on the Table.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Reports by Committees

Speaker: The hon. Member from Morell-Donagh.

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As Chair of the Special Committee on Committees, I beg leave to introduce the second report of said committee and I move, seconded by the hon. Minister of Finance, that the same be now received and do lie on the Table.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Member from Morell-Donagh.

Mr. MacEwen: Mr. Speaker, I would request unanimous consent to proceed to moving the motion of adoption for this report as well.

Speaker: Do we have unanimous consent?

Some Hon. Members: Granted.

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Morell-Donagh.

Mr. MacEwen: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. Member from Charlottetown-Belvedere, that the report of the committee be adopted.

Your committee presented its first report on June 18th of 2019 recommending the Standing Committee on Rules, Regulations, Private Bills and Privileges meet to consider the advisability of realigning the committee structure.

As a result of the report of the Standing Committee on Rules, Regulations, Private Bills and Privileges being adopted on June 26th 2019, your committee met again on June 27th 2019 to finalize its recommendations to the Legislative Assembly.

In accordance with Rule 90, your committee has recommended two hon. members from each of the recognized political parties in the House to serve on Standing Committees. Further, your committee advises this House that the nominations for membership put forward by the Government House Leader, the Opposition House Leader and the Third Party House Leader have been agreed to by all members of your committee.

I think this is a success for all parties on PEI, and especially for good government in the long-term. I'd like to give a lot of credit to all members of this assembly, members of the Committee on Committees, but especially to the Member from Charlottetown-Belvedere and the Member from Evangeline-Miscouche,

the House leaders, for working together long-term on this. It's been very good.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Is there anyone else wanting to speak? No one else wanting to speak?

Shall it carry? Carried.

Introduction of Government Bills

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

Mr. Hudson: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce a bill to be intitled *Supports for Persons with Disabilities Act*, and I move, seconded by the hon. Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy, that the same be now received and read a first time.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk: Bill No.4, *Supports for Persons with Disabilities Act*, read a first time.

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

Mr. Hudson: This bill replaces the previous disability supports act and introduces new supports for persons with disabilities. These include the introduction of supports for persons with mental health disabilities and ensure income for persons with disabilities who require assistance to meet their basic needs, and a new Social Programs Appeal Board that will hear appeals for all social programs including accessibility supports.

Orders of the Day (Government)

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I move, seconded by the Member from Morell-Donagh, that the 1st order of the day be now read.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

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

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I move, seconded by the hon. Member from Morell-Donagh, 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: The hon. Member from Tignish-Palmer Road, chair please.

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

There's a request for a stranger to come onto the floor. Permitted?

Some Hon. Members: Granted.

Chair: Thank you.

Could you please state your name and title for the record?

Jordan McNally: Jordan McNally, acting Director of Finance.

Chair: Thank you very much.

Hon. Members, we are on page 131 at the bottom, Land and Environment. That section was read. Before we get into this, the minister has a response he'd like to make from questions from yesterday.

Mr. Myers: Yeah, so just to answer some of the questions that I didn't have answers for last night: The status of infrastructure applications – that came from the hon. Member from O'Leary-Inverness and the hon. Member from Tignish-Palmer Road – the Investing in Canada Infrastructure agreement was signed in August 2018, the call for the first round of applications closed two months ago and we're reviewing 110 submitted projects and they total \$365 million and once the projects are approved by the Federal Government, I will bring the list to what they were.

Who approves the gas tax applications? The province and the Federation of Municipalities jointly approve gas tax applications based on the criteria that's laid out by the Federal Government. The

timeline on the Stratford sewer connection, we're working with Infrastructure Canada and the Town of Stratford on options to connect to Charlottetown. The discussions are ongoing on the cost of the project but we are still hoping that it will start this summer. The active transportation link and the MacKinnon Drive extension, we're working with the Town of Stratford on a design but there will be a bike lane.

The Confederation Trail, it was completed through the Trans Canada Trails and the Weston Foundation – I couldn't remember the name of the foundation, the Weston Foundation – and the funding was contingent on designating the Confederation Trail as a motor-free greenway. That means ATV's are not allowed on the trail due to these funding agreements, but like I said last night, we have other options and we're working towards that. Okay?

Chair: Thank you, Minister.

Total Land and Environment: 2,591,400.

Shall it carry? Carried.

Highway Maintenance Operations

Highway Maintenance Administration

“Appropriations provided for administration and supervision of the highway maintenance functions.” Administration: 19,800. Equipment: nil. Materials, Supplies and Services: 2,328,900. Professional Services: 66,000. Salaries: 799,000. Travel and Training: 17,900.

Total Highway Maintenance Administration: 3,231,600.

Any questions?

The hon. Member from Summerside-South Drive.

Mr. Howard: The forecast spending under Materials, Supplies and Services is substantially higher than budgeted. Looking back through the last –

Unidentified Voices: (Indistinct)

Mr. Howard: Oh, sorry.

Unidentified Voices: (Indistinct)

Mr. Howard: Which – pardon me? Highway Maintenance?

Chair: We are now on 132, Highway Maintenance operations.

Mr. Howard: Oh, I'm sorry, you can carry on.

Chair: Shall this section carry? Carried.

Provincial Highway Maintenance Operations

“Appropriations provided for staffing, materials, equipment and services for the repair, maintenance, contracted snow removal and sanding of Provincial roads.” Administration: 164,400. Equipment: 7,500. Materials, Supplies and Services: 18,717,500. Professional Services: nil. Salaries: 14,407,600. Travel and Training: 270,400.

Total Provincial Highway Maintenance Operation: 33,567,400.

Shall it carry?

Mr. Henderson: Question?

Chair: The hon. Member from O'Leary-Inverness.

Mr. Henderson: Minister, I know you and I have talked about this a little bit, about some of the highway maintenance issues, but I guess I have one question regarding our work force and I know it's sometimes very difficult to find workers, but will all our workers be returning that were working on highway maintenance in the past year, returning this coming year, providing they didn't have any criminal offences or health issues?

Mr. Myers: Yep.

Mr. Henderson: Okay, thank you.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Official Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Chair.

I see that the budget estimate has gone up about \$3 million and I remember a statement that the Minister made earlier during this session that the roads are in the worst shape they've ever been this year. I see last year we spent over 20 million. If this is the worst year ever, how do you imagine that we're going to carry out all the repairs and maintenance that are required on the roads with less money than we spent last year?

Mr. Myers: Okay, so the increase in our forecast, that was due to the winter cycle. We had a big freezing and thawing cycle so we used more salt and sand than we had anticipated. That wasn't due to fixing those roads. That was largely due to salting and sanding.

But to answer your question, yes, it is difficult. It's going to be very difficult, and as you move across Prince Edward Island, everywhere you go they're in bad shape. We talked about last night with the infrastructure part of my department, we do have a couple programs that we're able to use for paving that would be in our capital budget, but we kind of have a five year capital plan.

We're looking at what we can do to fund more of it this year to expedite the capital projects and we also have extra gas tax because everybody got extra gas tax so we're trying to put that into the road construction. The regular maintenance increase, there is an increase for patching but it's because the liquid asphalt prices have increased by 32% –

Leader of the Opposition: Yeah.

Mr. Myers: – which is really going to eat into our budget, but – it's not going to be easy to get them back to – we're going to try patching them the best that we can for this year, but we need to have kind of a concerted effort on how we're going to get the roads back in shape and hope we don't have another winter like we had again, which will just deteriorate them even further.

Leader of the Opposition: If you look back through the budgets of the last few years, you see that typically the estimate will be for 15 million or so, but every year we overspend on this and I'm glad to see that the estimate has actually gone up this year.

Maybe it's a more realistic amount; but why do we consistently annually overspend on this line by as much as we do, like 20% typically?

Mr. Myers: Well, I've asked that question myself and I believe that we should budget for how we're spending.

Leader of the Opposition: Exactly.

Mr. Myers: So if we know we're going to over – and we have increased it in spaces. I'm not sure what the exact reason was in the past, if it was to bring in a budget that showed balance or if it was more of an optics measure; but what I have said in the department is I'd like to forecast accurately. So there's an increase here, but the next budget cycle, I should be more fully involved and I basically came in at the tail end of –

Leader of the Opposition: Sure.

Mr. Myers: – of this one.

When we start in the fall to do the status quo budget and a moving forward budget, I'm going to ask that our budget reflects the accuracy of what we spend and we can trend that, or Jordan can anyway.

Leader of the Opposition: Sorry, Jordan, were you going to say something?

Jordan McNally: No, (Indistinct) –

Mr. Myers: No, I just said he can track it.

Leader of the Opposition: Okay, sorry.

I really appreciate that comment Minister, and I hope going forward that all departments give us realistic – and generally they are, we're usually pretty close; but this was one that really stood out, because every year it's consistently underfunded or at least underestimated.

Mr. Myers: Yeah.

Leader of the Opposition: In my own district, minister, District 17 on Highway 19, if I receive calls on any issue more than this, I don't think I do, but it's on the maintenance of Highway 19 on the loop that goes round from Fairview all the way

around Cumberland and Rocky Point all the way back to New Cove and Bryce Point.

Every year there are complaints about the maintenance of that particular stretch of highway, and I know that the current contract has run out. Improvements were made; I have to say, in the department this year. They actually moved some of the salt and sand to New Haven, so it was closer to the site, which meant that the sanding and the plowing were sort of better coordinated than they had been in the past.

But I'm wondering whether or not a combination truck could be expected to – rather than two trips being made, we have a plow and then we have a salt – a sander, excuse me, whether there's any plans to put a combination truck on that particular stretch of highway?

Mr. Myers: That one must be private. That must be one of our private contractors.

Leader of the Opposition: It is.

Mr. Myers: Okay. I can go back and have a discussion on that. I haven't been overly involved thus far on snow removal, because we've been so busy trying to get this part of the project life cycle, which is fixing the roads back up; but I will go back and talk to them about it.

It's a fair point to make; and I know in the past it's come – we don't see it so much in the area that I live in anymore, but at one point we did, where we'd have the sand truck coming down the road and an hour later the plow would come and plow the road and everything would just be winged into the ditch and the road would still be – so I definitely understand the issue there and I'll get an answer for you.

Leader of the Opposition: Great. I'd appreciate that, minister.

I'm good. Thank you, Chair.

Chair: The hon. Member from Summerside-South Drive.

Mr. Howard: So related to what the Leader of the Opposition mentioned there, in this year's nearly 19 million, is that an attempt to better plan where our exact expenses or

actual expenses are going to be, or can we expect the actual expenses to be even higher like they were last –

Mr. Myers: We are funding it better, basically. So we are funding it better based on past experience when we came forward, and like I said, the price of liquid asphalt has gone up, so we know that that – we already know that's going to be an increase for us.

So it's to better reflect how we are spending.

Mr. Howard: So we expect that to be a good estimate this time around without going over?

Mr. Myers: Well, we hope. The problem with this is we don't know if we're going to get freezing rain for 25 days this winter. Then yeah, we're going to blow that budget away. If we get 25 days of snow we're going to blow that budget away.

A lot of it's based on averages and it's hard to plan for some of the winters that we would have nowadays. So we certainly hope it is, but if we have a bad winter, then we're going to overspend again.

Mr. Howard: That leads right into my next question, actually. We're having lots of different weather events happening because of climate change having more and more effect on our weather patterns and the like.

So what effect do you expect climate change is having and will continue to have on these expenditures?

Mr. Myers: Well, I think last winter we saw the effects on this budget in particular. We had more freezing and thawing, so it was warm, cold, warm, cold all winter long, which affected our salting and sanding. We had to salt more. We had to sand more because the roads would thaw and then freeze again and then they'd be ice and we had to go back out.

The other thing is that it had a negative effect on the road structure, so we ended up with a lot of roads that are in really bad condition, because of that exact same freezing and thawing cycle.

So I would expect, and it's not my expert area, but based on what we see in this

budget, that it's going to have a negative impact on our budget. It's probably going to cost us more money.

Mr. Howard: So moving into the future that we can expect this to grow as we see more and more extreme weather events as one of those indirect costs of climate change that we're talking about.

Mr. Myers: Probably, yeah. I would suspect it probably will unless we can come up with new materials for de-icing the roads, unless we can come up with new road-building practices or road-building materials that aren't as affected by that cycle of freezing and thawing; but I'm not sure that anybody else in the world has found that yet, so we are kind of stuck with what we have until somebody comes up with a better solution for it.

Mr. Howard: Have you been looking for any solutions that might be able to mitigate the freeze-thaw cycles in (Indistinct)

Mr. Myers: In my six weeks, no, I haven't; but because it is an issue that affects us all, not just from a budget perspective, but we all travel the roads. We all have the same kind of concerns with the condition of the roads, both in this time of year where they're rough, but in the wintertime when there's an expectation out there that they're not going to be covered with ice or slippery.

So it is something that I will be working on, but to date I haven't – and to be honest with you, I have a lot of things in this book that I know just a little bit about. I hope by this time next year, I'll know a lot more and by then I should have better answers for what's out there, what we're doing, what we're trying to do, and any projects that we're kind of testing.

But I know that in the department, the engineers in the department are very, very good to be up on the new trends, know what's going on. We attend the TAC meetings, we know what other jurisdictions are trying, and they take those ideas back and the department sees if they can fund them and put them to good use.

There are experts that hopefully have better answers than I just gave you, but I will have a discussion with them and see what

initiatives we can start bringing forward on that front.

Mr. Howard: Last question for you on this: So it seems like we'd have some identifiable expenses that we contribute to climate change here. Is it something you'd be tracking moving forward about how much this budget's been affected by –

Mr. Myers: Yeah, I think it's something that's been tracked all along. Like the Leader of the Opposition said, for a number of years the actual spend was out of whack with what we were estimating at the budget time. So we do know that we're constantly overspending, but we do track all of the expenditures.

I know the other day we had a discussion about ice on the roads and within five minutes I had a chart on my desk of what it's cost us since 2007. So it's kind of – they do know, the department tracks all that stuff really closely. What the cost of – what the material is, and to be able to kind of create a variance to say here is what is increasing or decreasing as far as what we're using.

And there hasn't been – probably not as many discussions as I've been involved on as to the cause of it, but for us it's more of a – we have to create a solution; but for long-term thinking, we have to start thinking about what will the impacts be and how that's going to affect us and what do we need to do to keep our budget in line while providing the services that Islanders have come to expect.

Mr. Howard: Yeah. Keeping track of everything is great, but specifically to do with climate change mitigation, I think that would be a really important metric for you to keep track of. I'd encourage you to do that.

Mr. Myers: Okay. Thank you.

Chair: The hon. Member from Mermaid-Stratford.

Ms. Beaton: Thank you, Chair.

Just a couple of questions: Does this section cover off painting the lines on the roads?

Mr. Myers: No. That is traffic operations.

Ms. Beaton: Did we miss that? Did I miss that?

Mr. Myers: It's coming up.

Ms. Beaton: Perfect.

Mr. Myers: It's 5 or 6 away.

Ms. Beaton: All right. That's good.

So I have a road in my district, called MacEachern Road. It has – a large section of it's paved, and then the paving ends, and then there's a gravel section. And there's a grader that goes on it every year and fixes it up, and year over year this has been happening.

In the fall, when we had that heavy, heavy rains, the storm water kind of pulled a lot of the material off the road into the ditches. So I've been in touch with the department. I just want to know, would – does the department have a regular schedule in which they would, when we know that when we they go out and they drag material off the road that we actually go replace that material back at some point in time on some sort of schedule?

Because this MacEachern Road has not had upgrades with actual material being added back to it in a number of years, and it's in bad shape right now. So I'm just wondering if we have some sort of schedule?

Mr. Myers: I'm not sure that there's a schedule, but basically the way it works is we would have a director that's responsible for this division, and under him he would have several supervisors that would look after areas of – so there would be a road supervisor for that area that you're talking about.

They kind of would have the responsibility of all things regarding roads there, the priority list of what needs to be paved, issues like this one, what needs to have material added, the road rebuilt or built back up, and what would be any cross pieces for culverts and guard rails and – it's kind of a broad road-related responsibility.

But they'd kind of be the direct link to that. So your road supervisors usually would be the one to kind of manages those asks and

they would get calls directly from residents or MLAs or whatever saying, do you know what the story of this road is and generally, they would push their issues up there and kind of get them funded and get the money back down.

If that road is an issue and you want to talk to your road supervisor, they'd definitely be the one who would say, yeah, you know, we really should do that, then – but I would be supportive of – I'm a very big proponent of some of these more rural roads to be properly taken care of.

I live in an extreme rural area and I have lots of them that haven't been upgraded in a long time, and I'm concerned about them, to say the least. I know that some of them usually to be all-year roads and they're not anymore for a variety of reasons.

But when we come through the spring season, they become really impassable, and I think there are programs and materials that are newer that we can start using to make these roads a little better all year round. A little more able to accept water when we talk about these weather events that we're having and materials being washed away – or roads become really muddy because of it.

One of the projects that we now have is we have a chip tire program where we're able to use chip tire as the base material for building some of these roads and then we cover it up with the gravel. What it does, it creates a layer about that big that is 100% drainage and won't break down like a rock material will.

The idea is the material won't wash off the road because it's able to accept a whole lot of water, and then it doesn't really matter what time of the year it is you don't get that muddy road in the spring that you would in some of these other roads.

We kind of have had some exploratory projects that we're working on that will help some of these roads, but by all means, if this road needs work and there's a call out there for it, talk to your road supervisor and they'll push it up the chain and make sure that something's done.

Ms. Beaton: Great. Appreciate that.

I'm good, thank you.

Chair: The hon. Member from O'Leary-Inverness.

Mr. Henderson: Just a few questions to ask, but before I'll weigh in just on the Leader of the Opposition, he mentioned about the snowplow and sand at the same time.

Now in my district, I have three private contractors that do sections of the road and they do it in different ways. Some of them do it plow and sand, but here's what happens with that, is that in my experience on it anyway, is they can't plow the roads fast enough because they have to go back and get sand.

I find the ones that – the contractors that do plowing and sanding separately, it seems to do a better job. You obviously don't want the sander in front of the plow, but if they coordinate that well, which usually the private contractor is able to do, it seems to be you do a far better job.

I think in the end it gets the roads open first and then gets them sanded just about at the same time if they time it right. So it's just – there's pros and cons to it, I guess, and I just wanted to weigh into that comment.

Just on the snow removal contracts, my understanding is that the contracts for snow removal with private contractors, anyway, are for both sanding and snow. That is the case, and for how long is that contract issued for in the coming future?

Mr. Myers: Seven years.

Mr. Henderson: Seven years.

Chair: The hon. Member from O'Leary-Inverness.

Mr. Henderson: And the next question I have was on gravel. Something I find for some of the seasonal roads, which you'd mentioned there earlier, we can't seem to get good gravel in West Prince right now. The quality is questionable or whatever.

I'm wondering is there any kind of a thought in the cost proposals for imported gravel and bringing that in? What I'm tempted to find is

they bring that in to either Summerside or Charlottetown, and they don't want to truck it too far.

So when you're riding that's a little farther removed from a port where it's coming in – but I think in the end it's way better material, it lasts way longer, and I'm just wondering in the long-term whether it would be cheaper.

I'll ask the question: What are your thoughts on that, and will they be doing more imported gravel in future for the West?

Mr. Myers: Well, I have a tendency to agree with you that it's better material, and I wasn't aware that it wasn't making its way up west. So if that's the case, that's something I'll go back to the department and talk about. We want our practices to be right across Prince Edward Island, so if that's the practice that we're using in Souris, we want the same in O'Leary, as we would have in Charlottetown, Cornwall, Tignish –

Mr. Henderson: It seemed to get to District 23, but I don't know.

Mr. Myers: Right, but I'll look into that and make sure that if we're not using best practices that we are.

Chair: The hon. Member from O'Leary-Inverness.

Mr. Henderson: And my other question, it'll be interesting just to – maybe the minister of health can weigh in on this and I found this when I was minister of health, when we come to some of our public building parking lots, so hospitals and schools, the issues tend to be a bit of a – they're very difficult for the minister of health within their budget to have the expertise to deal with patching parking lots or even recapping and paving parking lots.

I know from my own experience, just we paved the road into the O'Leary Hospital and once we stopped then we couldn't – then the department of transportation couldn't be involved with any of the patching or whatever, then it had to come from within the department of health.

Where they have really no expertise in that, and I think as the minister of health – I know

the West Isle School parking lot would be another one for the minister of education.

Would it logically make more sense for that money to be transferred over to your department to maintain and look after those parking lots for public buildings? I'm not talking rinks or things of that nature. I run into the same with wharves. It's the same thing, they'll patch down to the property boundary of the wharf, and then it's the port authority's responsibility.

I just wonder if there's an expertise there that could be done by your department. I'm not trying to give you more work, but just to try to see – maybe you could do it more efficiently and cheaper for everybody.

Mr. Myers: And you know, I would have a tendency to agree with you, and it's something that we've kind of had in minor discussions on is – the minister of education kind of has a similar issue with. He's got all these schools to take care of, and part of my department also looks after building –

[Audio clip was played]

Ms. Beaton: That's me sorry.

Mr. Henderson: Sounded like me though.

Mr. Myers: We take care of road construction and we take care of building construction as well. So we would have like a whole department full of experts in some of those areas, and sometimes I wonder if maybe they are better off if they were all together, but I'm certainly not looking for more work at this point either, but I do think that it's worthy of a bigger discussion on how we would best deliver common services through subject matter experts, I guess.

Mr. Henderson: Well I'd certainly encourage you to have that discussion with all those public building departments.

Mr. Myers: I definitely will, and there has been some discussion – I wouldn't say official discussions – but definitely there have been discussions about who looks after what and why.

Mr. Aylward: Chair?

Chair: Yes.

Mr. Henderson: I think you have an intervention,

Chair: Are (Indistinct) on the list? Did you want to get on the list, minister?

Mr. Aylward: I just want to sort of –

Chair: Intervention from the hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Aylward: Thanks very much.

And the hon. member over there brings up a great topic, because obviously when I was up in O'Leary and saw the condition of the road leading in, there was lots of discussion around it.

For a single entity such as the facility in O'Leary or even for the department of health to go out and get a quote on just one little section, it is quite expensive, versus if the department of education is working with a major contractor in an area, perhaps we can work with the department of TIE to get that done at a cheaper rate.

The department could still look after paying for it, but we can get it at a much cheaper rate than we could if it went out and (Indistinct) just for a 500 foot section was required there.

I'm going to continue to have that conversation with the minister of TIE. Do you want to report to Eva?

Chair: The hon. Member from O'Leary-Inverness.

Mr. Henderson: Intervene a second time, I guess.

That was the issue; we paved MacKinnon Drive right to the parking lot. If I could have went another 500 feet, I would have probably got it all done through ReCAP which would have made a lot of sense and it would be done at the time but we couldn't do it. We had to stop right at the property boundary and then from there on, the department had to be involved with it and it was just different dynamics.

I think that's a good conversation. I appreciate that, ministers.

Chair: The hon. Member from Evangeline-Miscouche.

Mr. Gallant: Thank you very much, Chair.

It's great to hear the minister say he has quite an interest in rural roads because I have some rural roads in a little part of my district.

I just want to kind of reiterate what the Member from O'Leary-Inverness said, like I have a road where there's really good gravel on one part of it and the rest it just goes to mush. When you get five, six days of rain like we do in the fall or in the spring, and it's quite impassable and you can't repair the road because you can't put a piece of machinery on it.

If it dries up for a couple of days and they kind of drive on top of the wheel ruts, and it rains again, then the road doesn't get fixed for weeks on end.

So I'm glad to hear you are considering looking at more of these roads, I really would appreciate, like you said, you'd look at the Nova Scotia gravel or better graded gravel.

I wondered, is there any thought in your department, recap? I think most of us have a fairly heavy traffic road in their District. I have Route 11, which is part of the North Cape Coastal Drive, or it used to be called that. To pick at it a kilometer a year, you can't seem to get ahead because other roads break up in different areas.

Is there any indication or have you given any thought to increasing the recap to each area?

Mr. Myers: Yeah, I'd love to and I'd be like you.

I live in a district much like yours, where it's rural based and you do a kilometer and five goes bad that same year and you do another kilometer and five more goes bad, so you have a whole mess of kilometers of road that's a mess and you just can't keep up with it. One of the problems that we have is the price of liquid asphalt went up so high this year that it's a major impact.

The other thing that we did have, which we were fortunate is, that one time influx of gas tax dollars so we can put money towards roads if they're inside a municipal boundary, in some more rural municipalities, like mine for example. It's very rural municipality so a lot of the three rivers area would be rural, but eligible for us to put gas tax dollars in.

I'll ask. I'm not sure if the hon. Minister of Finance would agree but I'd love to pave the whole Island this summer. Nothing would make me happier and I know exactly where you're coming from, I'll ask about how we can increase it.

We do have a better program that was actually negotiated through Rob Vessey, when he was minister of transportation with the Harper government, where they were able to bring more roads online through a collective series of work. They could get matched funds with the federal government, so now our recap program, everything goes out to tender. As you remember before, at one point you just put in your list and everything just got paved off of it and that was the end of it.

Now, when any lists go in for paving, it goes out to tender and we get matched dollars. So it currently only costs us half as much as it used to because the federal government is pitching in the other half. So I'd be a big fan of increasing it.

Chair: The hon. Member from Evangeline-Miscouche.

Mr. Gallant: Thank you.

I know it's hard to commit but like going back, I'll give you one road just for example. Its good at both ends, but it just happens where this one gentleman lives, it just goes all to bits right at his driveway.

So he's almost got to go into the ditch every spring to get into his driveway because the road is gone, and like you said, you can't fix it in the spring or in the fall when it's soaking wet. We need more material on it, it needs to be grated and I find when the grater goes out they tend not to want to put everything in the middle, like they used to ground them a number of years ago because that drags up the little stuff then it doesn't pack right.

So, they just drag the road and then there's this much before the ditch, so the water can't go anywhere. So when it rains, they got a puddle 40 feet long that everybody drives through, so you know what happens when you drive through a puddle on a clay road. It's rough on the vehicle, so like that's real concern in a lot of these roads that are not paved.

Mr. Myers: Maybe in this gentleman's case, this might be a good option to use the chip-tire because it's meant for small areas that are constant problems that are always wet. It'll provide better drainage too, so if that's something you'd want to explore, we can have somebody go up and have a look at it.

Mr. Gallant: I'm glad you mentioned the chip-tire because that was my next and I thank your department, they did an experiment on one of my roads and it works good, we just need to try and get it at the other end, where it's bad as well. But I commend you for that, so it seems to be working good.

Thank you.

Mr. Myers: For us, being able to use the tires is really good. So we're able to recycle our own tires. I think the issue that we're going to start running into, is if this pilot becomes successful which it looks like it's starting to become successful is, we will only ever have a limited number of chip-tires to ever use in any given year because there's only so many, unless we start to import them which is what we were trying to get away from to begin with, because nobody would take our tires and we have a really good program for it.

Remember when they used to give away the millings and nobody would take them? There used to be truck loads of millings going everywhere because government didn't know what to do with them and didn't use them. Now, government uses them on their own roads to build them up before they pave them. I see this program, as it catches on, being like that where it's going to become popular.

But I think we should do it because I think that it would elevate pressures on the department in areas like you're talking about.

Mr. Gallant: Thank you very much.

Chair: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-West Royalty.

Mr. McNeilly: Thanks, minister.

Just a couple of areas, you know, when I look at and when I think about Charlottetown and Prince Edward Island and the structure of roads that we're using to get in and out of Charlottetown, the Hillsborough Bridge is the same thing, there's so much traffic on these roads.

If I can, I'm going to be as quick as I can, but just this morning I got an email from somebody, if I could just read it to you.

They may have had an important thing and then it might have even solved the question: I work in the West Royalty business park and I noticed recently that people are trying to cross Upton Road from Four Street to Regis Duffy Drive – that's in between those two round points on the bypass, peak times around 8:00 AM. So everybody is trying to go to work at 8:00 AM – there are three lanes of traffic here and it's very busy in the morning. I saw a car have to swerve and miss a young man crossing the road this morning. There are several people who try to walk across the road here in the morning, I am not one of them, and I believe they are getting off city transit bus on Four Street and then try and cross into the bioscience park.

So what we've got is we've got two separate areas, one an older business park and one a newer one. People are getting dropped off, they're trying to commute and walk, where these roads are, there set up and they've done a great job, compliments to them, but the speeds are too fast and there's too much traffic.

I just wanted to bring that to your attention and see what your thoughts are on it.

Mr. Myers: Yeah, well that's a really good issue to bring forward and I don't have the answer but we'll get somebody from the department to go out and look at the situation and come up with an option that's going to be suitable.

We want people to be safe and we want people to use transit, so there are two key

things we try to do. So if we need to take extra measures to make it safer there, then we definitely will.

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

Mr. McNeilly: That's the one issue I kind of wanted to bring up because it's a safety concern and we see the reality of it. I think you guys want this information too when it comes up regularly, we're all in this, working together to keep people safe and there needs to be walking lanes and trails in that kind of area.

It's a very up and coming area, a lot of people working and trying to live on one side of the highway, and working on another, so I look forward to working with you on that.

Mr. Myers: We do have a sustainable transportation committee, and I talked about this before, and one of the things in it is our active transportation links and we are going to come forward with that strategy.

I can't give you a timeline, but it's going to be meant for a further discussion and drill down into the topic of our active transportation and make sure that we are doing projects that are going to work, that are going to do the things that you're talking about and allow people to link through, where there's highways to cross or major thoroughways that you have to get by to do it.

I'd love to be able to do that and I think the cities are the obvious first choice where they have that critical mass of people to use them.

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

Mr. McNeilly: No, I'd just like to say, I've lived in the area for a long time. I want to compliment the hardworking staff you have, they do a great job there, if you're out on a Sunday they're working hard and I want to acknowledge all your staff who get out there and keep our road safe.

Mr. Myers: Thank you; it's a great staff there.

Chair: The hon. member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Deagle: Thanks, Chair.

I just have one quick question and that will be it.

Fraser Street in Montague, the intermediate school is on that street and where the new manor is. I've had a couple of requests about not wanting to turn that into a school zone, that street. I don't think there's currently any signage up, I know they did the construction; they redid that whole street last year so perhaps it just never got put back up.

Is that something you could look into?

Mr. Myers: Yeah, I will.

I'm not sure how the request for a school zone is – if it has to come through the public schools branch and up or ill find out and make sure it gets dealt with.

Mr. Deagle: Ok, thanks.

Chair: Shall this section carry? Carried.

Mr. Trivers: Chair? Question.

Chair: The hon. Minister of Education and Lifelong Learning.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Chair.

Just a couple of quick questions, just for the record.

We had some really close calls this spring in New Glasgow, and it's been an ongoing issue really in all small communities where there's – the speed limit decreases, and of course I was advocating with the last minister of transportation for that.

Chair: Hon. member, that will probably come up. That's not in this section. It will probably come up in the capital project division under traffic operations, want to hold your question until then?

Mr. Trivers: I can wait if you like.

Sure.

Chair: The hon. Minister of Fisheries and Communities.

Mr. Fox: We're still on provincial highway maintenance, are we not?

Chair: We are now, yes.

Mr. Fox: Just a quick question.

Has the department ever thought about going back to owning its own paver?

Mr. Myers: I've asked that question. The answer I got was basically it would cost us a million and a half dollars to go into, when if we were going to in that direction we would have to buy hot mix from somebody and a somebody would be a private contractor and the experience in the past is we paid more money for our hot mix than we were paying – so the total cost ended up being more.

Mr. Fox: Per kilometer?

Mr. Myers: Yeah, per kilometer – than it was when we just go out. Now because we do our paving through the competitive model, everything goes to RFP, everybody bids on it, we find we're getting really good prices on our roads right now.

This new program has really been beneficial to the Island. We're trying to stretch our budget as far as we can, and I think the competitiveness is there. I think one of the concerns on having our own was we wanted at one point to keep everybody competitive and keep them kind of honest on the price, and that was before recap was done through tendering.

Now with it all being tendered, there are some really hungry companies out there who want to pave and they're really coming in with sharp pencils and making sure that we get good prices on it.

Mr. Fox: Thank you.

Chair: Shall this section carry? Carried.

Thank you.

Mechanical Operations: "Appropriations provided for operational costs of the costs government garages to supply equipment support to the highway highway maintenance operations."
Administration: 133,700. Equipment:

49,200. Materials, Supplies, and Services: 5,571,600. Professional Services: 59,100. Salaries: 6,841,000. Travel and Training: 346,800.

Total Mechanical Operations: 13,001,400.

Shall the section carry?

The hon. Member from O'Leary-Inverness.

Mr. Henderson: Is this the section you're purchasing machinery and equipment for the roads and things of that nature? I'm assuming.

Mr. Myers: That's under capital.

Mr. Henderson: Okay well I'll ask the question then.

Chair: The hon. Member from O'Leary-Inverness.

Mr. Henderson: Question just around services, then, for say the bush cutting on the roads.

Do we do any private contractors that cut bushes on the side of the roads – in the ditches, I should say?

Mr. Myers: Yeah, there would be some.

Chair: The hon. Member from O'Leary-Inverness.

Mr. Henderson: How many bush cutters are in prince county, both government and private? Do you know that?

Mr. Myers: I'm not sure.

Mr. Henderson: I'll maybe add on to the question. How many of them were broke down last year? I think it might be.

Anyway, my understanding is that there are three bush cutters operate in I think Summerside west and I think last year, two of them were broke down for the vast period of the time and one of the comments I would say is it's a really good service because it minimizes water problems in the spring, if you can keep those bushes trimmed down pretty good.

In my district, it seems like they go by once every three to five years and at the rate that some of these bushes grow, it seems like it's not enough, I'm sort of arguing, I've argued with the previous minister there needs to be more bush cutters into the system. I'm of the understanding they brought one my bush cutter for the coming year, for Prince County, hopefully that one will keep working for most of the season, but because the fact that they're letting the bushes get taller, bigger, rounder, they got to go slower which also means it's hard on equipment which means they're broke down more.

Once again I think in the scheme of things you're probably not necessarily saving money by trying to keep some of these old operators still going, or if you could have some private contractors – I think there's a lot of farmers that have pretty big equipment today now, there may be ways you can incorporate them and should one go down, we'll try to get those bushes cut more frequently and keep water flowing better and not have the problems.

Plus, from a snow removal perspective, especially from the government routes, it doesn't catch snow as quickly and things like that.

I guess I would urge you to try to take a look at that and see if there are enough bush cutters to meet the needs and if you have a backstop should the government bush cutters break down. You really can't start them any earlier than now and you usually get right to the snow flies and if you take last year, the snow came way sooner than expected, so once again that puts you further behind.

Whether it's climate change or whatever the factors are, I would say that my observation for my district, which is quite a large district, and I'm sure it's no different than yours, minister, we don't have enough bush cutters to go around frequently enough to keep it up and I think that would be a worthy thing to consider and save maybe in the long term.

Mr. Myers: I'll definitely go back and have that discussion. I would have the same feeling where I live and I frequently hear complaints from farmers who use some of

the roads clay roads that they would use them to contact, to drag farm machinery across country where they are in traffic and the complaints that they've had to me is that over the years those bushes haven't been pushed back.

They're getting narrower and narrower trying to pull machinery down those roads, and they feel like they're better off going out on the main roads, which is fine. They're allowed to do that. Certainly if we can keep those roads wider for them and they would use them, and it would be better for us all.

I'll look into that because I think that probably do a more thorough job.

Chair: The hon. Member from O'Leary-Inverness.

Mr. Henderson: I appreciate that.

I think you coming from a rural riding and a large riding, it's comparable to how much road you have to maintain. Sometimes you have to make sure that the equipment is there and I just think the longer you leave it, the bigger the stuff is, the slower it goes, the more equipment gets damaged and broke and it's just hard.

I really appreciate your interest in that particular issue, minister.

Mr. Myers: Yeah.

Chair: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Victoria Park.

Ms. Bernard: I'm just noticing the materials, supplies, and services under the budget estimate is up over a million from the 2018-2019 budget estimate. I'm looking also at the salaries and the difference there being about three quarters of a million.

I'm just wondering if there's a link between these two lines.

Mr. Myers: I'm not sure there's a link between those two lines, but the materials, supplies, and services, that goes back to the conversation I had with the Leader of the Opposition earlier.

That's parts. We always spend that almost million dollars more than what we

budget for in parts so we're making our budget reflect the reality that parts cost more and go we look at the budget estimate, we're 1.1 million over on our forecast, so that's to bring it more in line with what our reality is.

The salaries, those were vacancies that we were trying to fill. We have had a shortage of trades' workers and in Summerside I think they were down two or three welders. We're having trouble getting mechanics. So this year we've started a program, it's like an internship program where we can take students out of college and kind of run them through our internal program, get them to work while they're young and keep them.

It's an effort to try to properly staff some of the vacancies that we've had over the years.

Chair: Shall this section carry?

The hon. Member from Mermaid-Stratford.

Ms. Beaton: Just a quick a question to what you just said.

Does that mean you're taking full-time equivalent out of the budget in order to supplement that with students?

Mr. Myers: No, these would be full-time. They are full-time.

Ms. Beaton: The students will be the new full-time equivalents, just at a lower salary.

Mr. Myers: We've created a program with the public service commission, to bring people in. I don't know if interns is the right word. They're apprentices. We're using them as an apprenticeship program with the idea that they'll stay with us.

We're hopeful they'll stay with us. This is more of us trying to do something that's good for government.

We're having trouble trying to attract experienced people in some cases for a variety of reasons. It might (Indistinct) working out west and in some cases I think the private sector is paying more for some of these tradesmen than we are.

So we're going to try to get people in right out of school, put them with some of our experienced trades people and mechanics with the hopes they're going to stay with us.

Chair: The hon. Member from Mermaid-Stratford.

Ms. Beaton: So the decrease in the salaries line then is that because it's just –

Mr. Myers: Increase.

Ms. Beaton: – a less expensive way or is the funding coming out of somewhere else and it's still going to be in line but it's just not reflective of salaries?

Mr. Myers: We have an increase. It's a \$200,000 increase. –

Ms. Beaton: Oh, it's an increase. I'm looking the wrong way. Okay, sorry.

Mr. Myers: But if you look at the forecast, we under spent by a million dollars, so this is us trying to hire those people. Not quite a million dollars, but –

Ms. Beaton: Sorry about that.

Thank you.

Chair: Shall this section carry? Carried.

Confederation Trail Maintenance

“Appropriations provided for staffing, materials and services to maintain the Confederation Trail System.”
Administration: 3,400. Materials, Supplies and Services: 426,900. Salaries: 1,019,700. Travel and Training: 23,000. Total Confederation Trail Maintenance: 1,473,000.

Shall the section –

The hon. Member from Mermaid-Stratford.

Ms. Beaton: Can you let me know, there's a section of trail in Stratford that's yet to be finished. Do you have a status on when that will be complete?

Mr. Myers: Yes. We're actively working on it. We're hoping to do it this summer. You mean the one, the Fullerton's Marsh one?

It's on the docket now, and I think they're trying – I don't know if the tender's ready, but there's been talk about it three different times in my office about wanting to get this component finished, and I think it will be a beautiful piece of trail, it goes right across the marsh there.

So it's now, we're hoping that this year, my understanding is the plan.

Chair: The hon. Member from Mermaid-Stratford.

Ms. Beaton: I'm glad to hear that.

Is there any funding going forward in the – other than that this year on the trail or?

Mr. Myers: I wouldn't have that with me because that's all out of the capital budget.

The only one that I can recall being briefed about it during briefings is that particular one in your district. But we would do wide maintenance along the way and sometimes structures along the way too. We're kind of always upgrading what we do have, but I think the only expansion is the expansion we're doing in your area.

Ms. Beaton: Okay, I'm good.

Thank you.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you.

I think we all know what an incredible asset the Confederation Trail is, you know, in all kinds of ways here. There are many people who feel that with the Confederation Trail, it's a sort of centerpiece that PEI could become a biking destination, but that would require expansion of the infrastructure beyond just the Confederation Trail.

So I'm just wondering a general question first of all, is there sort of a coordinated plan in that – moving in that direction, or is this something the department is even thinking about?

Mr. Myers: Well we are, as I talked about earlier through our transportation strategy, we are hoping to be implementing our active

transportation links. So it is in – it's always kind of front of mind.

Some of the roads as we're rebuilding them, we're trying to widen them so there's a paved shoulder and particularly the main links. I think everybody knows the ones that take you to Cavendish or take you to the main places that we kind of promote, and we would expect the bikers would go just because of the research that they've done to come here.

So it's definitely in the spirit of thinking, but I'm not sure that there's any active plans to just do road work for that purpose. I think it's more as we do the road work we have that in mind going forward.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thanks.

Obviously adding or widening the shoulders on the roads as you pave them and expand them is great, but much preferable to cyclists are dedicated trails.

The Confederation Trail is obviously the Crown jewel here on PEI, but we have other places, Gairloch has fantastic – in my own district through the Bonshaw Hills really wonderful trail system that's been expanded there.

The Brookvale Ski Park, there are a lot of ski parks that are utilizing the facility and the investment they've made in the ski lifts and stuff to make them year-round attractions for crazy cyclists who go down these hills at goodness knows what speed.

I'm wondering, again, whether there's any sort of coordinated plan to look at all those assets and put them together and make PEI a biking destination.

Mr. Myers: I'll have to get back to you with the answer to that. I know I did have a briefing on our strategy. But I – not enough that I can give you that detailed information but I definitely will bring it back to you.

Leader of the Opposition: Okay.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thanks.

I really think there's a huge economic opportunity here, how we already have a number of people who come here specifically to cycle on Prince Edward Island, principally because of the Confederation Trail. But I do think we're missing out on a real potential economic boost here, particularly to rural areas.

In terms of the bike trails, one of the suggestions that's been made, rather than – we had a fatality on Highway 13 a few years ago somebody who was here for a cycle trip along the Confederation Trail, but of course there's no – well, it was – I think they were going to a bed and breakfast just outside Hunter River and they were hit and killed in that very short distance between the Confederation Trail and the destination they were trying to get to.

Rather than, again, move people onto the shoulders of what are busy roads, and Highway 13 as the minister of education and everything else would know, is a very twisty and potentially dangerous road. I've cycled it many times.

I'm wondering whether there's been any thought been given to sort of branches off the Confederation Trail dedicated to cyclists so that they can connect with those communities where the restaurants are, where the facilities that they would like to use when they come here for a cycle trip?

Mr. Myers: Yes. I'm not sure that there's any project that's off the ground but I definitely think it's a good idea, and it's, you know, partly what some of the other organizations do, the snowmobile association does it, the ATV federation does it, they kind of came up with an arrangement with landowners to pass across the land and they maintain a trail and make it passable. That might be something we can look at.

I wouldn't say that we wouldn't do it because I think it's a good idea. Identifying all the links would probably take some time and kind of a concerted effort, you know, where should we be doing this, and who is – where are the places that we're trying to get people to and where do they want to go.

I'm not sure how you get that information quickly, if you do it maybe through surveying or just a wing and a prayer and

hope that we're right. I would definitely support it moving forward. I'm just not sure how we could start to get it off the ground.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Chair.

I'm glad to hear personally you're interested in this, minister, and I think it would take somebody within the department to recognize this opportunity and bring together the various groups, and we have Cycle PEI, a fantastic organization here on PEI.

We have now some tour operators dedicated to cycle tours here on Prince Edward Island who have identified the places related to the existing infrastructure that we have and I'm sure that they would be delighted to sit down with a point person in the department and produce exactly those maps you're talking about. Or, you could link up the existing trails to the facilities that these cyclists want to use and go ahead and do this.

Mr. Myers: Okay. Well, let's do that and see how we can fund it or if we can just make landowner agreements to do it. I mean, it may not be this time next year completed, but if it's something that we could work towards, like the Member from Mermaid-Stratford, the new portion of the trail that's going in her area.

If we can find money every year to make additions that's going to upgrade the trail – because I do think it's an important part to our tourism product here in Prince Edward Island.

We talked about it last night about the ATVs and how to best support that industry without impacting the trail system because there's – I think inside the department they're pretty protective of the trails that they've created over the past 20 years and they're proud of the work they've done, and we get much credit for them as people come here and use them.

There's some really beautiful stretches of trail here, and you can jump on a trail in the morning and pretty near be halfway across Prince Edward Island for the next night.

So they're really looking at what do we do to help protect the people that are on the trails, that use the trails, and aren't impacted by motorized vehicles. That's why we're working with that group separately to help them attain some of their goals without impacting the trails that we have for walking and biking.

So I'd be supportive of sitting down with anybody and having a look at this from a large view and then kind of break it down to what are the components that need to happen first to make this successful and what kind of a timeline can we work towards to full completion. I see it as one of those things once you started it, you'd probably never complete it because, once you started adding links in, there would always be somebody who would want to be linked in, which would make a fantastic web of trails right across Prince Edward Island, so yeah.

Chair: Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, again.

I'm really delighted, minister, and you've just described I think exactly what a number of biking enthusiasts here have in mind when they think about creating that destination sight that PEI could become.

You've mentioned a couple times in your responses of that as I've asked you questions about this, about ATVs and I know that they have struck some really respectful and mutually agreeable agreements with land owners, and that seems to be working fairly well. I know it's a sort of – it's not an entirely coordinated trail system yet, but they're working on that. They've done really well.

One of the things that is an impediment to them making all of these trails join up is the fact that they're not allowed to cross the Confederation Trail. I use the trail a lot on my bike, and running, walking, whatever, and of course there are a number of motorized vehicles that do cross the trail, farm vehicles or main roads across the trail, all along, and I'm wondering whether there's any – if you got any update on the request for the ATV federation to allow

them to perpendicular, not to go on the trail, but to actually cross the trail.

We're going to work with them. I think there's a proposal going forward to them, they're going to sit down with my deputy and have that discussion, so we're going to put an offer to allow them to cross, in selected areas. We want to work with them. Like I talked about last night, we talked about ATVs extensively here last night that the – one of the things that we're trying to open up is the linkage where we're going to – where they're in between trails, because there's numerous private trails here for ATVs that have land owner agreements with them.

We're going to start a pilot where we allow them to travel down portions of our road system to link up to the next trail, provided that you're 16 and have a registered ATV and a driver's license. If you meet those requirements we're going to – we'll have specific marked areas for where ATVs are going to be on.

We're going to do it as a, pilot project for the lack of a better word, but it's meant to be permanent, provided that nothing happens that we haven't planned for or haven't thought of prior to – which I don't anticipate there would be.

Chair: The hon. Member from Evangeline-Miscouche.

Mr. Gallant: Thank you very much, Chair.

I thank the Leader of the Opposition for that question about the ATVs. As everyone is probably aware, there's a big ATV club in my district and they've done some great work getting land agreements and going across properties – but that was a concern getting across the trails for them to go to different clubs. I'm glad to hear that the department is prepared to work on that. That's great news.

I have a question, and please bear with me, if it was asked or if I missed the section but I don't see it going forward – a street light that the department is responsible for. I got intersections, stop and go lights. What does that fall under?

Mr. Myers: It's under traffic operations.

Mr. Gallant: Traffic operations?

Mr. Myers: Yeah.

Mr. Gallant: That was it I just wanted (Indistinct) about some lighting in a particular part of my district.

Chair: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton.

Mr. Hammarlund: Thank you.

One of the – almost only example that I've seen of a good bike lane, is on the Brackley Road, I think Route 15 it's called, and it cuts through the city and then it just stops.

Does that fall under highway, and are there any plans to connect this really important road for bikes leading from the city to Brackley Beach?

Mr. Myers: I'm not sure that we – I'm not sure that we built that.

There's no plan for us to do any work there, but I don't think we did any of the prior work. But I'll get any information related to what's done there to date for you.

Chair: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton.

Mr. Hammarlund: I would think that would be really important. Along those same lines, you speak a lot of your planning these bicycles paths and other types of transportation.

I have a really high regard for the engineering staff that you have doing a wonderful engineering job but I would like to suggest what's needed. Some other professionals that is more friendly to pedestrians and bicyclists.

I'm thinking specifically that you should have on staff, a landscape architect that can soften the impact of how all these wonderful engineered installations so they fit people better and fit better into the landscape and fit better into the communities that they travel through. It seems like an essential thing that it should be on your staff.

Mr. Myers: I'll take that under consideration but we do hire outside experts

when necessary, when we're designing things, so we would rely on any, you know if we're designing a highway and we had outside help, we'd expect that they would bring that type of expertise to the table but I will take that back to the department.

Chair: I'd like to remind members, please keep your questions pertaining to the section that we're on.

The hon. Member from Charlottetown- West Royalty.

Mr. McNeilly: Thank you.

The time of the Confederation Trail and the maintenance and stuff, that's great and I just want to bring it to the ministers attention that I've been working on a project that all I'm asking for is pretty much to kind of maybe set up a meeting about this so we can kind of speed this thing along.

The Confederation Trail has the little outlets and different things and one of the big projects that I'm working on and we've gotten various people on board, there's the City of Charlottetown, the CADC, we've had the meetings so I want to sit down with you and I have the engineering plans all done up, so all you have to do is maybe just looking at setting up a meeting with you and your department to talk about the Western Gateway Trail or we can call it Myers Way.

[Laughter]

Mr. Myers: I'd be more than happy to sit down with that and it falls back with the discussion I had here with the hon. Leader of the Official Opposition and how do we kind of create those linkages off the trail and into our main areas of Charlottetown.

Chair: The hon. Member from Charlottetown- West Royalty.

Mr. McNeilly: I'd like to show you that because I have the plans are all there, it was done by Bernie Morrell who does a lot of work in this field and he's just an amazing person for these types of designs.

Mr. Myers: Fantastic, let's set it up.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Official Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: I see on the salaries line here, we pay about a million in salaries for folks to maintain the trail but as I understand it, there is a fairly large number of volunteers involved in that as well.

Do you have any sense of how many volunteers or how many volunteer hours go into maintenance of the trail?

Mr. Myers: No, I couldn't tell you that. Only what we kind of contribute from our end.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Official Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: I'd just like to give a shout out to them, you meet them all the time when you're on the trail; folks on their bikes or walking, making sure the trail is being used appropriately and just looking after it.

They are all over the Island and they do a great job, so just wanted to give a little shout out to the volunteers who help out.

Chair: Shall this section carry? Carried.

Total Highways Maintenance Operations
51,273,400

Shall it carry? Carried.

Public Works and Planning

Public Working Operations

Administration: "Appropriations provided for division staffing, materials and travel for administrative, supervisory, trades staff in building maintenance and accommodations." Administration: 21,100. Equipment: 3,000. Materials, Supplies and Services: 1,786,900. Salaries: 1,005,700. Travel and Training: 33,500

Total Public Works Operations –
Administration: 2,850,200.

Shall it carry?

Mr. Howard: Question.

Chair: The hon. Member from Summerside-South Drive.

Mr. Howard: So I notice that a lot of the columns here, line items are exactly budgeted which is impressive, and it carries on in several sections after and what not, so there's almost always a deviation either too little or too much from budgeted to forecast here.

Can you just explain why there are no deviations?

Mr. Myers: I think it's good budget management by the staff.

[Laughter]

Mr. Myers: It's good budget management.

Chair: The hon. Member from Summerside-South Drive.

Mr. Howard: So might it be an indication that if we're burning through exactly which budget should we be looking at perhaps providing more funding or it just really strikes me as odd that it's to the dollar, everything is precisely budgeted?

Mr. Myers: Well there not asking for more money to operate what they are doing so generally when these budgets get created they would start at the division level and they would come with their asks and this is just it.

Chair: The hon. Member from Summerside-South Drive.

Mr. Howard: So just doing exactly the same thing with no deviations every year?

Jordan McNally: Well they have different projects on the go every year and this is a forecast. So this isn't actual so it's not exactly as budgeted but basically they work within their budget and what's allocated for the buildings they maintain and the projects they have on the go.

But they seem to manage their budget quite well with what they have and any projects that's been added to them, they've taken on. You will see in the Planning and Building Construction Section down further they did hire new staff because there's a lot of infrastructure projects on the go, new schools and all that. So that would be where

new staff were kind of sent to work on those types of projects.

Chair: The hon. Member from Summerside-South Drive.

Mr. Howard: Yeah, I mean but professional services for instance, I don't know how you can forecast that exactly year after year to be exactly the same.

Chair: What section are you on? Sorry hon. Member, we're on Public Works Operations – Administration on the top of 133.

Mr. Howard: Sure, so equipment, even. Any of these line items, there's going to be differences every year it's the requirement of the department so why isn't there any difference in what's budgeted?

Mr. Myers: Well I don't know, in equipment they spend \$2,000 on hardware and \$1,000 on software. I can't answer your question any better than I have.

Chair: The hon. member from Summerside-South Drive.

Mr. Howard: No, that's good.

Chair: The hon. Member from Mermaid-Stratford.

Ms. Beaton: Is there a monthly operating budget that you would see throughout the year under these sections?

Mr. Myers: We don't do monthly budgets.

Jordan McNally: We do quarterly forecasts.

Chair: The hon. Member from Mermaid-Stratford.

Ms. Beaton: So when you see actuals, do you see the monthly actuals as you go through, or at what point of time do you look at whether you're running a surplus in a department or not?

Jordan McNally: Yeah, they have real time actuals so we have a program that shows every budget line down to the object total which would be the most detailed you can get and they can see what the budget was for

that line item and the actuals on a daily basis if they wanted to.

Chair: The hon. Member from Mermaid-Stratford.

Ms. Beaton: So if you're running a surplus in a certain department, does that get flagged anywhere or is it the department's discretion as to where that surplus gets used before the end of March?

Jordan McNally: Depends what it is, a lot of them are managed by the directors of each division. Sometimes there's money savings that are more significant than others, for instance infrastructure, there would be a lot of fluctuation there about what projects are approved throughout the year.

So that money might not be allocated anywhere else because the money is meant for infrastructure projects, where as within Highway Maintenance, they may be saving money in culvert installations and using more of it for patching or something like that but it's managed by the directors of that division.

Chair: The hon. Member from Mermaid-Stratford.

Ms. Beaton: Thank you, Chair.

So when we're looking at materials, supplies and services and we're running right on forecast and we're the same every single year, which I will credit my colleague behind me from Summerside-South Drive, it does seem odd that materials, supplies and services would be bang on your budget. Usually you would run over or you would run under.

Is there any, recognition to departments that run under budget and actually return a surplus at the end of the year?

Mr. Myers: I know what you're talking about but that's not the case here.

Materials, supplies and services here is the district heating supplies for buildings in government, so it's a fixed cost, we know what it is and that's why we come in bang on because of that –

An Hon. Member: Call the hour.

Ms. Beaton: Okay, thank you.

Chair: The hour has been called.

Mr. Myers: Mr. 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 the grant of supply to Her Majesty, I beg leave to report that the committee has made some progress and begs leave to sit again. I move that the report of the committee be adopted.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Member from Morell-Donagh.

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I move, seconded by the hon. Member from Summerside-Wilmot, that this House do adjourn until July 2nd at 2:00 p.m.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Happy Canada Day everyone, have a safe weekend, and make sure you make time for family this weekend.

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