

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY



Speaker: Hon. Colin LaVie

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The Legislature sat at 2:00 p.m.

Speaker's Ruling

Speaker: Hon. members, I've reviewed the points the points of order raised last Friday, June 28th.

First, the hon. Member from Morell-Donagh rose on a point of order and sought to clarify comments made during recent Oral Question Period. The hon. Leader of the Opposition rose on a Point of Order and sought a ruling on the point order raised by the hon. Member from Morell-Donagh.

Hon. members, it is my intention to rule on both of these matters here today. I reviewed the matter raised by the Member from Morell-Donagh and I do not find it to be true point of order.

I will refer members to the *House of Commons Procedure and Practice, Second Edition* page 632 which states: "Although Members frequently rise claiming a point of order, genuine points of order rarely occur. Indeed, points of order are often used by Members in attempts to gain the floor to participate in debate."

The matter raised by the hon. Member from Morell-Donagh was related to statements made during Oral Question Period. I will remind hon. members of the following from the *House of Commons Procedure and Practice, Second Edition* page 510 which states: "In most instances when a point of order or a question of privilege has been raised in regard to the response to an oral question, the Speaker has ruled that the matter is a disagreement among Members over the facts surrounding the issue. As such, these matters are more a question of debate and do not constitute a breach of the rules or of privilege."

This shall serve as a response to the hon. Leader of the Opposition point of order raised.

For future reference, when hon. members rise in the House on a point of order, the member should state the rule or practice they believe as being breached and such interventions should be brief.

For further clarity on our points of order procedure, I will direct hon. members to Rule 36 of the *Rules of the Legislative Assembly of Prince Edward Island*.

Thank you, hon. members.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Matters of Privilege and Recognition of Guests

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

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

It's a great honour to stand in the Legislature again today and welcome everyone back for our fourth week, I believe, of proceedings here. Thank you very much for your wise ruling, of course, and I want to welcome all those into the public gallery. There's a good crowd again here today which shows democracy is alive and well on Prince Edward Island.

I'd like to say a special hello to one of my longest friends Melissa Batchilder who's here visiting from the Cape, from Cape Cod not Cape Tormentine and she is home for a few days to celebrate Canada Day, joined by her nephew from – I forget his first name, Haley's son –

Unidentified Voice: (Indistinct)

Premier King: Yes.

It's great to have them here, Melissa I've known for pretty near as long as I've been alive, so she's certainly a dear friend of mine and I'm glad she's here and I hope she enjoys the proceedings.

I want to make special recognition to the group Paper Lions, who, 15 years ago today actually formed as The Chucky Danger Band and have gone on to tour the world and been multiple award winners at the PEI and the regional and national level – David Cyrus MacDonald, John MacPhee, Rob MacPhee and Colin Buchanan were the founding members. Of course Colin, I got to know very well as the producer of The Four Tellers when we were getting started.

I want to make special recognition also to the individuals, the lifeguards who helped in Red Point on the weekend that avoided a very potentially disastrous situation on the weekend in Red Point; Emma Dixon, Jay Fogarty, Calleigh Matheson, Naomi Henry, Skylar Matheson, Abby Cameron and under the watchful eye of their program coordinator Matthew Smith, who's in the audience here today along with his dad Harold, of course, very glad to have them here.

Special recognition to D. Alex MacDonald who's named the Citizen of the Year for the City of Summerside, a very worthy recipient of that award for his long-time career as a volunteer.

Just a special hi to Mr. Matheson who's watching out on the Portage Road in the district that I represent, District 15 Brackley-Hunter River who called me to tell me that he's very gracious to see the road paved in Portage for the first time in decades he said that he has seen the highways crew out there. He didn't have any idea they changed the colours from black and orange to white and orange that's how long it's been.

Anyone who knows me, knows how much I like that Island turn of phrase and the sharing of a good story so what he told me was: seeing the highways truck on the Portage Road was kind of like seeing the Sasquatch, you hear a lot of talk about it but until you see it for your own eyes, you never know what it's like.

Thank you very much and I hope everyone enjoys the proceedings.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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

I, too, would like to welcome Melissa Batchilder to the gallery today. I can't claim to have known her as long as the Premier, but we did cross paths about 30 years ago when we both lived in a little town called Prescott in eastern Ontario, where I used to stick needles in her face. So it's lovely to see you again, you're probably happy to be on the other side.

I also want to welcome Bethany Collicutt-McNab who's here with her son Peter. School is out and so they were both able to join us here during regular hours, it's lovely to see you both.

It was a large weekend, of course all the Canada Day celebrations across the Island. I know many members of this House attended events from tip to tip, and it was cold and it was damp and it certainly felt a little bit different to be at those events but the warmth of the greeting and the brightness of the spirit of everybody present was definitely still there. It was a great Canada Day despite the weather.

It also of course, July 1st marked the beginning of the BYOB era here on Prince Edward Island; bring your own bag to grocery stores when you're shopping. I know so many Islanders are already doing that and I don't think it will take very long at all for us all to get into the habit of bringing our bags with us to the grocery store. Once again, PEI is leading the way in the country in terms of environmental responsibility. I want to thank the previous member of this house, Allen Roach for bringing forward that private members bill in the last sitting.

Also, over the weekend was a really successful jazz and blues festival here on Prince Edward Island and I want to congratulate Jim Power and all the members of the committee who brought that festival forward, I think it was the fifteenth year. Although I didn't make it, I hear that Catherine MacLellan's Aretha Franklin tribute was a really, really excellent, special evening. I wish I'd been able to make it, but that was just one of many concerts for the jazz and blues festival, so again congratulations to Jim and all the team and put that together.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Mr. Mitchell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'd certainly like to rise again today and welcome everybody into the public gallery; it's particularly nice to see some very young

faces in the gallery today, so I hope you will enjoy yourselves today.

I, as many, and as mentioned by the hon. Leader of the Opposition, I had the privilege of attending the Canada Day opening event yesterday at Victoria Park. The Premier was on the stage, as were other dignitaries.

On the way down, I should mention the rain was bouncing about a foot off the pavement as I was driving into the parking lot. I said I'm not sure how this is going to turn out but low and behold, the rain stopped; they got a couple of nice hours at Victoria Park. So I think that all those who were there certainly did enjoy themselves.

I might also remind Islanders, I'm not sure if there will be any fireworks on the floor of the Legislature today, but there will be fireworks tonight in Charlottetown, weather permitting. It looks like it's turning into a pretty nice afternoon, so hopefully that will occur so all Islanders can get down and watch the fireworks that will take place down towards the waterfront tonight. Also, that call last night, was definitely the right one. It was raining early, and to switch it to tonight, I think, was certainly the right move.

I'd also like to draw a little bit of attention to my colleague, the Member from Tignish-Palmer Road, who received the designation of Citizen of the Year for Tignish.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mitchell: Obviously, we all know in the floor of the Legislature, the great work that the hon. member does for that area on a day-to-day basis, but always stepping out of the box and doing extra parts like he does on New Year's Eve and as he did all weekend at the Irish Moss festival. I don't think he slept since Thursday. So he worked every part of the weekend in regards to the Irish Moss Festival, so really good to see him receive that designation of citizen of the year and of course to all that are viewing from home, I hope they do enjoy the proceedings today.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise today and welcome all my colleagues back. Lots of familiar faces in the gallery; but I'd like to especially recognize Janet O'Brien as she's a friend and a constituent and she's never been here before so first time for her. Rachel and Norman Panton are here. Rachel is my cousin and Norman has never been in the Legislature before. My husband is here, he's been here a few times, but our daughter Katie Compton is here from Vancouver, she's never sat in the Legislature since I was elected. So she's home for a week from Vancouver and we're thrilled to have her here. It's one of those small blessings of being here so late into the season.

Yesterday the liquor commission and the Canadian Red Cross partnered in a new donation campaign. We're all able to give a Loonie or a Toonie or whatever you'd like to give when you make your stop there at the liquor store, it's a great opportunity to partner with them. A wonderful humanitarian cause, you know, they're involved with everything from disaster relief, to summer camps for kids and swimming lessons. So I encourage everyone when you make your stop at the liquor store, make sure you make your donation.

Lastly, Belfast Days happened this weekend. It was a resounding success. The weather really didn't deter anybody from coming out. There were a number of events that kept us really busy in the community; lots of young families out.

I just want to send out a big shout out and big thank you to Lynn Docherty and Rebecca Gerritsen who basically ran the show for the whole weekend, and them with all the other volunteers, it turned out to be a great revival of the Belfast Days. I look forward to next year.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Summerside-Wilmot.

Ms. Lund: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's a pleasure today to rise and welcome everyone to the gallery, but I would particularly like to say 'hello' to someone at home today. Which I don't often do, but if

you will indulge me it is my son, Maddix's ninth birthday and I would like to say 'Happy Birthday to Maddix.'

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The Minister of Agriculture and Land.

Mr. Thompson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I stand here today proud to represent District 8: Stanhope-Marshfield, as I do every day.

I'd like to send greetings to my longtime friend, Gordie MacEachern who is also here from Vancouver. Him and his daughter, Lexie, and his mom, Jennie and her sister, Alinda, I'd like to welcome them to the proceedings today.

I also like to give the condolences to my neighbours, Paul Stewart's family. Paul passed away from Dunstaffnage recently. A fellow farmer, and a fellow animal breeder, him and his dad were great cattle breeders and sheep breeders. So I'd just like to send my condolences to that family.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Cornwall-Meadowbank.

Mr. MacDonald: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Welcome everyone to the gallery, and especially the younger people that are hopefully going to enjoy some of their summer if it ever starts. We'll get with that.

Saturday I had the opportunity to attend some presentations by Lieutenant Governor Joyriders. I'll tell you, if you don't know what Joyriders is, it's a pretty touching atmosphere that was created 40 years ago and to some of these people it was pretty resounding to watch what they've learnt.

Also a shout out today too, to UPEI Student Union who I had an opportunity to speak with this morning on some of their visions going forward.

Most recently the bio-community here on Prince Edward Island continues to expand and there's a company called MicroSintesis with Hannah McIver at the helm and they

just received 16.4 million minority share investment from John Risley and it's just a part of our bioscience cluster here that keeps continuously growing.

Just a quick shout out to Rollwithitharry who qualified on the weekend in 1:58:4, I think it was. So we're good to go.

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

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

So it's great to be back here for another Tuesday in the Legislature. Looking forward to the day ahead, and the week ahead, and maybe the weeks ahead, I don't know.

I just want to say a special shout out to everybody around my area from Canada Day.

I went down to Cardigan yesterday for the parade. The Cardigan parade is kind of like the centerpiece of the start of summer on Prince Edward Island.

We were a little bit worried yesterday morning that the parade wasn't going to happen. Even when I left my house, I – only like three minutes from the parade route, as I was driving down the road it was sprinkling and I thought, well I'll be able to park close this year at least. No, when I got down there, it was miles and miles and miles to walk in. The crowd was enormous again.

It was great to see some of my old friends who come home specifically for that, some of my rugby friends were all there yesterday cheering on the parade. I usually only see them on Canada Day, so it was great to see everyone out.

I did a little tour around and ended up in Lorne Valley. There was a great event in Lorne Valley by the Three Rivers 50 Plus Club. They put on a great event. The Lorne Valley School was packed. There was great music and great entertainment. It was good catching up with some of those people.

Also, I just want to give a shout out to my son. I seldom talk about any of my family in the Legislature, but I am proud of them of course. Luke, who's 19, I dropped him off at the airport at 5:00 a.m.

He's making a trek across the country. He's going to spend the rest of the summer and the early part of the fall working on the federal election for the good guys, of course. I look forward to the opportunity that he's presented for himself.

He was pretty nervous when he was getting out of my rig this morning, but I just tapped him on the shoulder and said 'good luck, we need this.'

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Mermaid-Stratford.

Ms. Beaton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's an honour to rise this morning – or this afternoon. I always think Tuesdays are the morning sessions, I don't know why that is.

I just wanted to first of all, say good morning to Janet O'Brien. We have a mutual relative, so it's nice to see you here, as well as Rachel and Norman, who are from my district and had a lovely chat throughout the election and made the connection to the Minister of Finance and it's just nice to make those family connections as you're going door to door.

I'd also like to recognize Kate Lauren, who is a young constituent of mine. Her team went and participated in the Acadian Games and they brought home a gold medal with their improv team, so I'd just like to say congratulations to Sarah and her mom Lauren – or sorry, father, Andre, and Kate were super proud of that.

Then I just want to do a shout out to Constable Kristi MacKay who is here looking after us all today. I've known Kristi for a very long time. I'd say we both grew up together, but I'm a little bit older than she is so anyway. Kristi is an excellent ambassador for the Special Olympics PEI and she is always participating in fundraising events. She's always there to advocate for them and to participate and I just want to recognize your efforts with them, because I think that what you do is incredible.

Thank you.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Education and Lifelong Learning, Environment, Water and Climate Change.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's a pleasure to rise today and of course welcome all constituents of District 18 Rustico-Emerald maybe watching today, and everyone in the House. It's great. I'm looking forward to another fantastic week – and everyone in the gallery.

Of course, we had some wonderful celebrations for Canada Day out in District 18. I was at the main run out in North Rustico. The parade was cancelled, but there was a ton of people out and it included, cadets that were raising awareness there; a great free program that youth can get involved in. The watershed groups were there. There was even a company that's been promoting environmental education since 1982 that had a booth. It was fantastic.

This morning when I was at UPEI for the federal announcement on climate sense, I tried to plug in the government electric vehicle, but not only was the spot taken, there were three electric vehicles waiting in line to use it at some point. So, it's obvious that electric vehicles are coming of age and that people on the Island want to buy them. They may be a little pricey right now, but they're coming down and so I look forward to seeing more electric vehicle chargers across this Island.

Thank you.

Speaker: Well, I think it's only appropriate for me to stand and say a few words.

I had a great weekend. My highlight of my long weekend was the PEI Lobster Festival that was held up in Souris and I was asked to judge the lobster-making roll competition so I had to judge it –

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct) expert.

Speaker: As you can tell, I did very well. We had chefs from right across PEI that were making these lobster rolls and every one of them did an excellent job. Actually, there were six and when I did up my points there were only three points from my bottom

mark to my top mark, that's how close it was.

But, I want to congratulate Johnny and Mary Flynn – were the judge's choice and Clamdiggers in Cardigan was the people's choice, so it was very good.

Also, I want to recognize Matthew Smith. I know when my young fellow was a lifeguard at Basin Head, they had to do a rescue off of Basin Head and those lifeguards – what they do for people is astonishing. They gave up their boards for people so the people could make it to shore and they treaded water.

Now, I'm a coastguard auxiliary, so I got a call to go and pick up the lifeguards as the lifeguards gave their boards up, right? So they were treading water when I got there and then this weekend, the lifeguards at Red Point went way out of their way – heroes, to go out of their way to help those fishermen that hit the rocks at Red Point. My hat goes off to them.

Again, in my busy weekend, as I'm a coastguard auxiliary, as they were taking the gentleman off of the boat, I was on the other end putting a pump aboard the boat because the coastguard was tied up and I was coastguard auxiliary. So, just to your lifeguards, you just let them know how much we do appreciate them right here from the Legislative Assembly.

Thank you.

Royal Assent

Speaker: Now members, we have a Royal Assent.

I will ask members to stand.

Hon. Members, Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor was pleased to meet with the representatives of the House on Friday, June 28th at 1:30 p.m. and granted Royal Assent to the *Government Reorganization Act*, Bill No. 2 as passed by the Legislative Assembly.

Thank you, you may have your seat.

Statements by Members

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

PEI Potato Blossom Festival

Mr. Henderson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I know you believe in Santa Clause, Mr. Speaker, but did you know Santa's coming to O'Leary this month to celebrate the 51st Annual Potato Blossom Festival. The festival will take place from July 15th-21st.

Santa and his reindeer will be celebrating the annual arrival of the potato blossom which will soon bloom on the approximately 100,000 acres of potatoes planted this spring. Potato is PEI's No 1 cash-crop. Festival chairperson Faye MacWilliams and her elves have organized numerous events, including one of PEI's larger community parades, the Canadian potato peeling championships and the PEI washer toss championships.

There will be numerous titles determined, including Miss PEI Potato Blossom Festival, which, one of our Pages here, Emily Maxfield will be a contestant and the selection of a young student to serve as the PEI potato ambassador to represent the PEI potato industry at various functions throughout the province and Canada, and Prince Edward Island's top potato producer.

Other events include talent competitions, trivia, a car show, farmer's banquet and potato cooking events. I encourage all Islanders to come to O'Leary and celebrate the important of the potato to our province and find out what Santa brought to O'Leary for Christmas.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Housing Crisis

Mr. Howard: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

When I went around door to door, I heard about all sorts of housing issues in my district. Everything from: we need more and more suitable seniors housing, to there simply no place available for a family to find. There is some exciting projects

underway that will help but will not be ready until at least next year. The sharing economy is something I do support, however, but it seems to be an increasing separation between sharing your living space and how businesses involved in Airbnb are operating.

More and more we're seeing housing being purchased with the sole intent of using it for short-term rentals which, by their very nature and not set up to be accommodating to locals needing a place to live. In light of the crisis we find ourselves in, I believe it would be in the best interest of Islanders to have some immediate temporary regulations put in place until our housing stock catches up to where it needs to be, to ensure no family is being forced to move away from their support networks and loved ones.

Just in this last week I've been dealing with families who, because they can simply not find suitable housing or any housing at all, they're left with no choice but to move to Charlottetown for temporary shelter. We can do better and we need to do better.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Summerside-Wilmot.

College of Piping's Highland Storm

Ms. Lund: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's now less than a week away from the opening night for the College of Piping's Highland Storm in Summerside. I've had a distinct pleasure of being part of the community of the College of Piping for the last few years and it really has been a pleasure. My oldest son takes lessons there, I've been pleased to attend many events held by the college and I've been known to volunteer there from time to time as well. Community is the right word for the college. The administrators and the teaching staff are incredible, their commitment to their students is abundantly clear, and their countless awards speak for themselves.

Their commitment to making artistic and creative endeavors accessible to families across the income spectrum, thanks to their scholarship program, may well be the crowning jewel in their story.

On July 8th, the current goes up on this year's Highland Storm, directed by Peter

Gallant and having been lucky enough to see the caliber of shows put on in the past, I'm entirely comfortable saying it's going to be brilliant. When making your list of performances to attend this summer, I'd encourage everyone to add Summerside's own Highland Storm to that list.

We're proud of what they are doing in our city, and if you make it to the show, you won't wonder why. To all the people working endless hours to get ready for opening night, I wish you all the best on Monday. I wish you sleep in the meantime and a sincere thank you for your dedication and passion. I can hardly wait to see the show on Monday.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Responses to Questions Taken as Notice

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

During Question Period of Friday, the hon. Member from Mermaid-Stratford asked a question on abatement costs on carbon pricing. Further, there were questions on the costs and impacts associated with different approaches to reducing CO₂, specifically whether we would be willing to share and consider the information on different options available.

It was noted by the Minister of Environment, Water and Climate Change in the debate surrounding the debate surrounding the proposed the amendment to the *Climate Leadership Act*, we feel a thorough examination is warranted.

In that debate, the idea of exploring and sending this to standing committee was suggested, this would present a great platform, to not only explore the costs, but to also to fully understand the impact on Islanders.

Lastly, I want to reiterate that we are open to sharing any information we have that we are allowed to share.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Chair: The hon. Minister of Education and Lifelong Learning, Environment, Water and Climate Change.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

In Question Period on Friday, the member asked if George Coles bursary is being increased to \$3,000 for this upcoming school year and the answer is no. No, it's not.

The George Coles bursary will remain at \$2,200 per year for the 2019-2022 school year. But we are, of course, looking to increase this to \$3,000 as was in our platform and part of our mandate which is exactly what the platform covers.

I'd like to remind the member again, this is our first budget, we have a minority government, we are trying to attempt to accommodate everyone's needs and I did want to remind the member as well, that we did have 32 new teaching positions, 42 new EA positions, 1.6 new psychologist positions.

This is a sort of thing that a government has to do, we have to make tough decisions, we have to decide are we going to increase the George Coles Bursary this year, or are we going to put more teachers back on the frontline in the classroom? That's the decision we made and we took your priorities in account while doing it.

I think it's a win all the way around.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Questions by Members

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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

Again, I want to start by acknowledging the timely response to the questions, even though they may sometimes be wandering into a ministers statement themselves, I do appreciate getting the information back.

I want to start by asking a question to the Premier.

Roles of Three Branches of Government

Premier: Can you describe the Three Branches of Government and their respective roles and responsibilities?

Premier King: I didn't realize I was going to get a civics lessons this early in the mandate.

But look, I understand how government functions; I've been around it for a long time. I understand that we have some differences sometimes of how we go about making this work. But I can reassure the Leader of the Opposition that I understand the function of government and how it works every day.

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

I have no doubt about that Premier. We have Three Branches of Government, the Executive, the Legislative and the Judicial.

The Executive branch, of course, is made up of the monarch's representative here, Lieutenant Governor, the Premier himself and Cabinet.

The Legislative branch is made up of all of the other elected representatives of this House and one of the roles of the legislative branch is to hold executive branch accountable to the public.

The Judicial branch, of course, is a series of independent courts that interpret the laws that we pass here in this Legislature.

Executive branch of government

Again to the Premier: Do you think that it's appropriate for the Executive branch to interfere with the function of either of the other two branches?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier King: Thank you very much for the question.

I think it's always a very delicate balance of how we go about governing, especially in a small place like Prince Edward Island. We're obviously very mindful not to try to weigh into areas where we're not supposed

to weigh into. But as members of the Legislative Assembly, we do have an obligation to get involved in some of the discussions that take place in here. We're obviously MLA's first, along with being members of Cabinet. Certainly wouldn't want to get involved in interfering at the judicial level in any of the decisions that go forward.

We do try to do the very best we can here every day to make the people of Prince Edward Island happy and proud.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: That's a slightly worrisome answer from my perspective. There's nothing about delicate balance here when we're talking about the division of the branches of government. It's absolutely mandatory for the Westminster style of government to function effectively and properly for there to be very strict division.

I'm concerned about the Premier's understanding of that independence of the legislative branch of government and I offer as an example, the fact that he publicly announced he was considering a multi-party Cabinet, this is soon after the election, without actually addressing the issue of Cabinet solidarity, or the role of opposition to hold government to account – or for that matter – even speaking with the leaders of the other parties before making that suggestion, or in the throne speech recently we heard that he would like to restructure legislative committees even though he does not have any authority to meddle in the independence of those legislative committees.

Restructuring of legislative committees

A question to the Premier: Can you explain, Premier, why these actions appear to show a poor understanding of that separation and of the Westminster system?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier King: I would argue just the complete opposite actually. I think that we're in a minority situation and what I was

trying to do when we talked about having a multi-party Cabinet was to try to look at things much differently and to kind of give Islanders a style of governing that they wanted to.

Obviously, when I consulted both the leaders, I talked about some of the questions that might be around with a multi-party Cabinet, how we would go about Cabinet confidentiality and at that time the Leader of the Opposition suggested there was a way to do it.

So I wouldn't want to suggest he was meddling in the discussion either. I think that's his job as the leader of a party, as the Leader of the Opposition to make sure this government functions the way it's supposed to function.

I love the idea of having a multi-party Cabinet. I think Islanders will be very proud to have something like that.

In terms of how we strike the Cabinet committees, I wanted to make the suggestion because Islanders are telling me what they want from government, and they want a collaborative government and for the first time in the history of our government we have equal membership from all three parties in the Legislature.

I think that's something we should be very, very proud of.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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

Whether we have a minority or majority, a coalition or a loose agreement, as we have here in our Legislature, that does not change the fundamentals of the separation of the Three Branches of Government.

I'd like to follow-up my questions from last week concerning the role of the Government House Leader in working with the members of Partnership for Growth.

First, I want to make it absolutely clear that I did not intend in my comments at all last week to imply there was something sinister about the House Leader working on this

project, or that government was somehow attempting to intentionally avoid FOIPP Legislation. Not at all; that was not the intention of my comments.

My concern is that in not respecting the strict divisions that we have been talking about for the last five minutes between the Executive and Legislative Branches, that there will be unintended consequences such as the one I described last week. Perhaps the Premier could put my mind to rest by providing a description of the role that the House Leader will play.

Last week when I asked this question, this very question, the Premier focused on the skills and the qualities of the Member from Morell-Donagh, which of course are indisputable, but the Premier did not actually explain how those indisputably wonderful skills will be used.

Role of Government House Leader

Again, same question to the Premier: Can you provide the House with more details on the House Leader's role?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier King: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would be very happy to expand upon that. What we expect the Government House Leader to do is to meet with the group to try to champion ideas, to try to listen to input, to try to gather input from others to make sure our economy is on the right path, and our economy is moving forward.

The member doesn't come to Cabinet. We sit around as he's doing with the House leaders from other parties and we talk about collaboration, we talk about working together.

I'm sorry this is offensive to some people that we really want to work together, but it really is a genuine desire we have because Islanders want us to work together.

This gentleman sitting to my left has indisputable skills, absolutely, and they're fantastic. He does a wonderful job, and he's sitting down and he's listening to people, he's encouraging discussion, he's seeking input, and he's going to bring forward a

report and a plan that we can build on, debate in this Legislature, and try to move forward on to make our economy strong.

The Leader of the Opposition's party had many demands that they wanted in the budget that cost money, and for that to be effective and for that to be doable, we need a strong working functioning economy to deliver tax dollars so we can spend. That's what we're trying to do.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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

Reporting of Government House Leader

In the Premier's last response, he talked about the member reporting and I have a question for the Premier: To whom does the member report?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier King: I would assume that the House Leader will bring his report here whenever it's finalized. He will table it in the Legislature, and I hope there's a spirited debate. I hope all parties can use it as a guiding light going forward to build a strong economy in Prince Edward Island to make Islanders proud and strong.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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

Additional pay to Government House Leader

Again to the Premier: Members of the Executive Council are handsomely rewarded for the large responsibilities that they carry as Cabinet ministers. Is there any additional pay or other privileges being offered to compensate the Member from Morell-Donagh.

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier King: The Leader of the Opposition enjoys the very same remuneration as the Cabinet ministers here,

which he failed to avoid. As for the remuneration going to my colleague next door here, absolutely not, its zero.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Role of Government House Leader (further)

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you.

To the Premier again: Can you cite any other precedence where a private member of this House has assumed a similar role as the Member from Morrell-Donagh has in government?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier King: Mr. Speaker I would probably need a little while, to research to go back to double check, but I would again put forward that we are in a minority situation; we are trying to do things differently. Prince Edward Islander's voted in the election of April, 23rd and they sent three parties to the Legislature and they said we don't want one party to run everything. We want you to work together; we want you to work in the spirit of collaboration.

I would argue what we put forward in a short time here has been nothing short of impressive and nothing short of pride for Prince Edward Island and how we've been able to work together moving forward.

As I said, the hon. House Leader, fantastic individual, community right to the core, focused only on trying to do the very best he can do every day for the people of his district and the people of Prince Edward Island.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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

The Premier would seem to imagine the reality of a minority government is responsible for everything that's happening these days and that's not the case. You'd have to look a long while to find the precedent for the situation you have created here, Mr. Premier. As far as I'm aware, there

is no – there has never been a role such as the one as you've created for the Member of Morrell-Donagh.

Again to the Premier: Have you asked the conflict of interest commissioner if he has any concerns about a private member, taking up a role such as this in government?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier King: Mr. Speaker, I have not.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Structure of government commission

Leader of the Opposition: In the press release sent out the day that Cabinet was sworn in, the Premier stated that there would be a commission. Could he describe how this commission will be structured and again, to whom it will report. Is it a commission of the Legislative Assembly or is it a commission that will report to Executive Council.

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier King: Mr. Speaker, just for clarification, you're talking about the partnership for growth?

Leader of the Opposition: Yes.

Premier King: Okay, thank you Mr. Speaker.

What I have tasked the House Leader to take on is to work with the partnership with growth. A group of now 21 groups across Prince Edward Island, who are focused only on trying to develop and keep a strong economy here on Prince Edward Island. That's all they're trying to do. They're trying to give government some advice and some input of how we move together.

So I'm assuming when the member has these meetings when we move forward, I would see a commissioner or a group being put forward that could report back to the Legislature. We could have a spirited debate; we're absolutely not going to move forward on anything without the full buy-in from the Legislative Assembly. There's nothing sinister going on here, this is a good

faith, good move by government, something all parties supported when they were asked by the partnership for growth initiative during the election. We're all on the same page here and we're all trying to do the very best we can.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: I heard in that answer, two contradictory things. I said that the commission will provide government with advice, the executive branch and I heard that the commission will report back to this Legislature so I'd really like to know which it is.

Openness and transparency of government

On Friday the Member from Morell-Donagh stood on a Point of Order that you gave a ruling on earlier, Mr. Speaker, and defended his role and said that if we have any questions on this side of the House, I'm only 20 feet away, come and ask me directly. We should be more than happy to meet with any member, but such a meeting, Mr. Premier, is going to occur behind closed doors. A question to the hon. Premier: Is that consistent with your commitment to a full open and transparent government?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier King: Mr. Speaker, I don't know what the impotence of the questions are and why the indication would be that something sinister is happening. Absolutely nothing could be further from the truth. You could have the meeting on Compass with the hon. House Leader, it wouldn't bother me one bit. I'm not trying to hide anything here. I'm a Member of this Legislative Assembly just like you are. I have an input and a vote into what we do going forward, that's my job. That's what the people from Brackley-Hunter River put me here to do. So we're moving forward, we're trying to do the best we can to collect information and I don't know why the Leader of the Opposition is being so opposed to this process, when you committed to the partnership for growth during the election that you would do the very same thing.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Mr. Speaker, I'll try and explain clearly.

I am opposed to the process. I am absolutely not opposed to government or anybody else meeting with the Partners for Growth discussing this as part of a strategy towards producing an economic development plan for this province.

But, the whole purpose of Question Period is that private members can ask questions that hold government to account openly and in public. That's what we're doing right here. But, because the member is not part of government I cannot ask him questions directly.

A question to the Premier: Can you not see how this arrangement is completely unfair to the member and it undermines our ability to hold your government to account?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier King: Mr. Speaker, I completely disagree.

I don't see where the problem is whatsoever. The hon. member told you in his point you're free to ask him anything you want. You can write down everything you want. You can table it in here if that's your preference.

What he's doing is gathering information. He's got no legislative authority to implement anything here. He's listening. He's encouraging. He's working with, in partnership with. Isn't that what we're supposed to do? Isn't that what collaboration is? It's listening and it's hearing. Isn't that what it's all about?

I don't see any problem with it whatsoever and I encourage him to keep up the great work.

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

Mr. Howard: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The current electricity rate structure in PEI, particularly the lower-rate second block for higher users, creates a situation where ordinary Islanders, small farmers and small businesses effectively subsidize larger and more industrial customers.

Last week, the Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy correctly pointed out that we have a process on PEI for setting electricity rates through IRAC. The minister also stated that his department would be intervening in the IRAC process to argue against changes to the second block rate structure.

Large consumers and electricity rates for Islanders

A question to the minister: Why is government willing to intervene in favour of large consumers, but not in favour of better electricity rates for ordinary Islanders?

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

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm happy to answer this question.

What I have said numerous times in this House is that we're going to intervene on the behalf of agriculture, which we believe in. To call them big consumers or to point out in this House over and over again that they're doing something that's untoward; that they're being – I don't know what you have against farmers. I don't know what you have against big business here in Prince Edward Island, or I don't know what you have against – you know, intervening to help save farms here on Prince Edward Island.

What we're doing and what we have stated over and over again, is what we don't want is for IRAC to rule and get rid of the second block overnight. We want an opportunity to phase in. That's exactly what we're going to ask for, an opportunity to phase in, because we're bringing in the solar plan and we're going to include farmers in it, because we have wind farms here on Prince Edward Island and we're able to lower our electricity rates using our own wind.

We're looking at battery – we're looking at a pilot for battery storage here in Prince Edward Island so we can store our own

energy so that we can get off the peak times and put back onto the grid and Islanders can benefit from the work that we're doing.

Those are the things that we're doing. I just don't want it to happen overnight. I don't want to say to a dairy farmer overnight: You're electric bill is going to go through the roof and we didn't do anything about it.

We are going to do something about it. I wish you'd get on board. It's good for farming here in Prince Edward Island and we're going to offer them subsidies for solar. We're going to help farmers get into a renewable source of energy so they can lower their consumption off the grid and I think that's good for Islanders.

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

Mr. Howard: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Two years is a long night.

In 2015, Maritime Electric applied to IRAC to phase out the second block but government stepped in and negotiated a new rate agreement with a company that preserved the second block. When the deal was approved in 2016, IRAC noted that the continued use of second-block policy is contrary to the principles of the *Electric Power Act*, specifically, that it's unfair and discriminates against certain ratepayers.

Question to the minister: Why is government still defending a policy that the independent regulator described as unfair and discriminatory?

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

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I didn't sit in this chair in 2016. I only started here six weeks ago, and when I started here I told my whole department I wanted to be aggressive with our solar rebates; I wanted to make our solar rebates good so that people would take us up on it. I wanted to open it up so that farmers could benefit from it. I wanted to open up the net metering so that they could have more than one opportunity to pump back out on the grid through different metres.

That's what I've done here in six weeks, and that's what our government here has done in six weeks. All I'm asking at this point is to let us follow through on our plan because we're not going to ignore it.

What happened in 2016 is the government asked them not to do anything and then ignored it. What we're asking for them to do is to implement it in stages, and during those stages we're going to help farmers get into renewable energy. We're going to help some of these bigger users get into renewable energy so that's it's not as big of an impact to their bottom line, and that we can do it all the while preserving the economy here on Prince Edward Island because I think that's important.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Summerside-South Drive

Mr. Howard: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The minister said last week that this change in rate structure was being done in the middle of the night, without warning to farmers. However, Maritime Electric has been publicly trying to change the rate structure for over a decade in success of application. Furthermore, the current proposal submitted last November is to phase out the second block between now and 2021, providing about two years notice.

Phasing out timeline of second block

Could the minister clarify what would be an appropriate notice period for ending this unfair policy?

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

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

So like I said, over here we're trying to work with everybody when it comes to helping them get into a greener energy source, that's why we're being aggressive with our program. We want an opportunity for people to take us up on this. We want an opportunity for farmers to get into these programs. When we intervene and you can follow along and go here yourself, we will set a structure that we think is fair to everybody, that will help reach the goals that Maritime Electric has been asking for, that will help get rid of the second block but it

won't happen in the stages that they're proposing. We're looking for a longer period, we're looking to implement with some of the things that we're doing are going to be part of our intervening. We're going to talk about the things that we're bringing forward, we're going to talk about the ways we're helping agriculture here on Prince Edward Island.

We're going to talk about the way that we are making steps that are going to help people get to the states that you're asking for. All I ask is that you work with us, all I ask is that you care about farming here on Prince Edward Island as much as the rest of us do over here and that you give us a chance to get there because we're going to get there, because we have programs in place that are going to help people get there and I think it's important. I think it's really important to the farming community, I suggest you go out and talk to a farmer.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Summerside-South Drive

Mr. Howard: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Actually on Saturday at the Farmers Market I talked to a bunch of farmers and they were all for having a rate structure that appropriately assigns costs. I absolutely agree that we need to support our famers and other small businesses on PEI, but we need to look at the full effects of policies.

The current rate structure disincentives energy efficiency whole making vulnerable Islanders pay higher rates. In other words, our electricity rate structure works against our other goals of fighting poverty and climate change and government has been intervening to keep it that way for years.

Rate structure for farmers and small businesses

Would the minister look at other ways to support farmers and other small businesses that don't involve this unfair and out of date rate structure?

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

Mr. Myers: Well I don't know if I have to answer this again because I think I said it four times in a row now, I do. I actually do

and that's what we're doing and that's all I'm asking for, I'm asking for time for us to do this, I'm asking for you to – you've been involved with what I'm doing with solar from the start so you should support it wholly because you should understand that I'm trying to get there, you should understand that what I'm trying to do is make a positive impact right away in solar here in Prince Edward Island. I think it's important that we just take a deep breath here and let this program work.

We're going to have a really good program when we announce it, you know it and that's going to drive the uptake and that's going to help us all and once we're there, great, take away the second block but give us an opportunity to get there. Give us an opportunity to start taking us up on this so that they don't have to pay the price on their bottom line, especially some of these farms that are just having raised within margins right now. Some of these farmers don't deserve to have this taken away.

You can talk to farmers; they're supportive. I should take you to all kinds of farmers who aren't supportive of it. They run big operations and they run big operations because they got there over a period of time to help them stay competitive in a great big marketplace. We are competing world-wide here now. This is something that a plight of our farmers is that they have to get up every day and compete with somebody that's 10 times the size of them in Ontario and the least that we can do is help them along. The least we can do is not have them get the second block snatched away from them overnight and give them a chance to move into some of these programs that I'm proposing that we're going to fund, that are important to Prince Edward Island, that are going to make us a lot greener, that are going to make us a lot more self sustainable, that are going to put a lot more green energy out on the grid. I think that's a great thing and I want people to support that and I think you should support that.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Mr. Mitchell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Today my question is for the Minister of Health and Wellness.

The PC party in the recent election, and I quote: "Make shingles vaccination free for seniors."

This was characterized in the Conservative platform as a first year commitment.

Free shingles vaccination to Island seniors

Minister, will the shingles vaccination be free to Island seniors this year?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

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

The hon. member that just asked the question across the floor would be very well versed in this as well because he was the previous health minister. What he would know, obviously, is that I'm currently working very closely with our Chief Public Health Officer, Dr. Heather Morrison, and her cohorts to ensure that when we do put the program forward, it's the best program it possibly can be.

Right now there are several drugs, vaccines that are out there on the market and the research is being done as we speak and slightly into the future to determine which of the two vaccines is the best to use to vaccinate Island seniors.

When that research is completed, we will certainly be announcing our intentions to put this forward.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Mitchell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The hon. member does realize that I did not write the PC Party's platform.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Chief Public Health Officer recommends persons over the age of 60 – over the age of 60, receive the shingles vaccine. The PEI Seniors Federation has asked that it be covered, and the PC Party

platform promised to spend \$2.75 million so that it would be covered.

Priority of shingles vaccine

Minister, why did your government decide it was not a priority for this year's budget?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

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

Again, we're working very closely with the professionals, with the clinicians that know and that work in this field. Dr. Heather Morrison, I hold her in a very, very high esteem and I take her word and her recommendation very seriously.

Again, until the research is in and we know what the best, absolutely the best vaccine is to provide to Islanders, that is when we will move forward with this commitment.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

Certainly there is significant fear in our senior population about contracting shingles. It can be quite debilitating if you do get it.

The cost of the newest vaccine, Shingrix, is approximately \$240, which many low-income seniors just simply cannot afford.

Minister, when can all Island seniors expect the Shingrix vaccination to be available at no cost to themselves?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

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

Currently there is no province in Canada that is currently providing Shingrix as the vaccine on a vaccination program free to their residents.

Again, I go back to the fact that we're working with the professionals, we're

listening, and we're waiting for that actual hard evidence to come back, and the research to come back, so that when we do unroll this commitment to provide a shingles vaccination to seniors, we will have the best program in all of Canada to do so.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Henderson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

My question today is for the Minister of Agriculture and Land. Farmers are working hard to meet the many new challenges in regards to climate change impacts while growing crops, and being as energy efficient as they possibly can be.

Premier keeps saying that he's going to commit to all these campaign promises, and the PC platform has also stated over 120 promises of which one is to quote: "Expand the marked diesel program to allow farmers to access marked diesel for more farm-plated vehicle" usage.

Expanding of marked diesel program to farmers

Question to the minister: Has the minister advocated to his colleagues on this particular promise and does he have any sense of when this particular platform commitment will be implemented by his government?

An Hon. Member: Good question.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Land.

Mr. Thompson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

That's a great question from the Member from O'Leary-Inverness, but our government is committed to expanding the marked diesel for all vehicles and we're going to do it soon. We're consulting with the finance department now and seeing when we can do it and there's Legislation of course that has to be changed, and we're working on it as we speak.

Thank you.

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

Mr. Henderson: Maybe the minister might want to correct just this, all vehicles or all farm-plated vehicles, but I'll continue on here a little bit on that.

Numerous provinces have implemented and expanded fuel tax exemptions for their farmers over what PEI has. This does not have to be studied; it does not have to be researched for such an exemption to be implemented.

It can be implemented by the stroke of a pen, an allocation in the PEI budget, and members of this caucus would certainly support you, so the issues of minority don't seem to be any particular issue in this.

Implementation of platform promise

So minister, what would it take for the minister of agriculture to implement this platform promise?

Some Hon. Members: Oh.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's a pleasure to get up regarding this, definitely a campaign commitment we made and we're going to follow through on that.

It was brought to my department and we're working on legislative changes that need to make that there are implications on doing that so we're working on that right now.

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

Mr. Henderson: This might go to the Minister of Finance, the second supplementary on this based on that part of it but in provinces where the Carbon Tax is imposed by the Government of Canada, farmers can apply for a rebate, .537 cents per litre, including for on-road vehicles.

Prince Edward Island has entered into an agreement with the federal government thus avoiding the federal tax being imposed and is not eligible for the rebate federally.

Marked fuel exemption program and carbon levy

Minister, instead of the province does collect a 1 cent carbon levy from farmers which contributes to provincial revenues as stated in the budget recently: Minister, how do PEI farmers with on-road vehicles get the 1 cent carbon levy back given you have not expanded the marked fuel exemption?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Premier King: (Indistinct)

Ms. Compton: Well yes, thank you very much –

Premier King: It's your (Indistinct)

Ms. Compton: Yeah I believe it was the hon. members third part there that put that in place, so maybe you can share your information with us but we are working to work together to make sure that the legislation that we need is in case. If there's probable cause, that we can actually dip tanks and ensure the regulations are being followed, we want to be as carbon neutral as we possibly can and we are going to ensure that compliance is there, we want to make sure the legislation is there before we implement it.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Deagle: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Last week I asked about a deferred maintenance project to replace the gym floor at Montague Intermediate School, which is in my district.

Process for determination of projects

Question to the Minister of Education and Lifelong Learning: Can you explain what the process is to determine which projects go ahead and don't go ahead?

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you for that question member.

It's really the public school branch as well as the CFLF, *La Commission scolaire de langue française*, the two boards that do determine the priorities and believe me, there are a long list of priorities and the \$2 million runs out very quickly.

What they did in the case of the Montague floor, in fact, was they looked at tendering the design and that was the tender the member referred to yesterday and then by the time it got to time to implement it, all the money was gone and that's why it didn't happen.

But, it is on the priority list and it is near the top and if we can get a little bit more money maybe we can get it in next year.

Mr. Deagle: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We want it done this summer not next year. I appreciate that you did clarify who sets these priorities.

According to the infrastructure priorities submitted to the government from the Public Schools Branch, the gym floor replacement at Montague Intermediate School was assessed as the 11th top priority, according to the project list funded by the department, the Montague Intermediate School's gym floor all of a sudden became number 18 on the priority list.

Question to the Minister of Education and Lifelong Learning: What caused this project to go from 11 to 18 and put on hold this year?

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

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Of course, all of these priority settings, all of the budget allocations, all of those decisions were inherited by me in my position here but what I will do is I will get that document for the member and for the House and I will table the document so everyone can see what all the priorities are that are being talked about and lift this veil of secrecy that the former administration has put in place.

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

Mr. Deagle: I wasn't looking to play the blame game; I just wanted to get a new gym floor in Montague.

It was on the list to get done, and now it's not. The gym floor is too hard, it's over 20 years old, and it needs to be done.

The scope of the project to me didn't change so I guess I'm scratching my head as to why this work got bumped so far down the priority list, it doesn't make sense it was at 11 and now it's at 18. You said the Public Schools Branch sets the priorities list so why the change?

Replacement of Montague gym floor

Question to the Minister of Education and Lifelong Learning: Can the minister assure that this gym floor will get replaced this summer like it should have been?

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

An Hon. Member: Good question!

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Thanks for the question.

So first of all, what I want to do is, I want to find out if indeed, as the member alleges, it has dropped to 18.

In the document that I have in front of me on my laptop right now it says it's still at number 11 and when I talked to my department – because I take this issue very seriously – I think that our school infrastructure is so important for the education of our youth and what I was told was simply, they ran out of budget when they to priority number 11 but they did tender the design.

So, I said this last week and I said it now: I'm going to go to my Cabinet colleagues and I'm going to ask them if we can find this in the budget, and it's the 11th priority so we're going to do that; simple as that.

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

Mr. Howard: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The minister seems to think that in order to help farmers we have to do it in a way that's punishing to the rest of Islanders, so I would just like to – and he knows I'm fully in support of helping farmers to do to the transition, and all other Islanders, but IRAC states that: The commission fully expects that Maritime Electric and the government will work together over the next two years to develop a proposed rate structure that is fair and non-discriminatory for all ratepayers.

This indicates that the commission feels that indeed, government should be involved in deciding how our rate structures are arranged here in PEI. A fair rate structure would be one where the cost of expenses are absorbed by those who drive the expense. Currently, it is not a rate structure that is designed to be fair.

I quote IRAC again: The residential second block is not based on cost of service. In effect, it is a method to subsidize electricity costs for certain classes of consumers.

Subsidization of electricity rates to high-end users

Does the minister feel that subsidizing the cost of electricity to high-energy users on the shoulders of our most vulnerable is a fair rate structure?

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

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

There's a lot of political rhetoric in what the member is saying over there about 'on the shoulders of' – I'm not trying to put it on the shoulders of anybody. What I'm trying to do is slow this process down.

What I've said five or six times here today, five or six times last week, and I think five or six times the week before, is that I'm trying to work with farmers through our programs that we're offering and we're about to announce publicly here shortly.

When we put that program out, the expectation is that farmers are going to take us up on it because they should see how important it is to help themselves produce some of their own energy, become greener

and lower some of their own costs. We're going to help them do that.

We're also going to bring in some legislative changes that are going to change net metering, that are going to also help farmers and because of that, all of those things that I talked about, I want them to slow it down.

I'm not here to talk about the political rhetoric of whose shoulders you think I'm trying to put it on. I already said in this House, three times probably now, that we're fully in favour of moving out of the second block, but we want an opportunity to implement some of the things that I've talked about, some of the things that we're currently working on, some of the things that we have budget for, some of the things that we have planned, some of the things that we are just about to announce here in this House, because it's common sense.

I think it's common sense and I think we need to work with anybody, regardless if you want to call them – elude that they're energy pigs or whatever it is you're trying to elude to over there. We still need to work with them. They are the people in the province who are employing people, who are creating wealth in our economy, who are making sure that we have the tax base that we need to do to fund the other things that we're all talking about in here, fund the important things like the gym floor in Montague that needs to be done. That all comes from money and it all has to come from somewhere.

So, in order to have any amount of money in the coffers of the province, we need to have some sort of success out there. We can't take the success away by being shortsighted to the fact that I'm asking them to move slowly while we implement some of these great ideas that we have that are going to help everybody here on Prince Edward Island; every single Islander will benefit from the program that I'm putting forward.

But while I'm talking about the most vulnerable, we have a winter warming program where we pay for all of the upgrades to a house. We will do it –

Speaker: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Belvedere.

Ms. Bell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I was pleased to hear about the government's commitment to follow through on the secure income program as announced in the Poverty Reduction Action Plan last year. We had also committed to this in our platform and it could be an important program to help more Islanders live in dignity.

However, I want to focus on this government's lackluster support for a wider-ranging basic income pilot as discussed during multi-party negotiations.

The Minister of Social Development and Housing confirmed last week, that despite continued unanimous support from all parties, all this government is willing to do is to write another letter to Ottawa asking for help. This does not speak to a firm commitment to basic income.

Support to development of basic income

A question to the Minister of Social Development and Housing: Why are you not willing to do more to support the development of a basic income in PEI?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier King: Mr. Speaker, I, too, was disappointed to read some of the comments last week about this situation because our government is very committed to working on a basic income guarantee.

What the minister was explaining to the House was for this to work; we need to have the federal government as a partner, not just as a supporter, but as a financial supporter.

When you talk about a basic income guarantee, you're talking about an overhaul of the social delivery system, which could include Old Age Pension, it could include EI, it could include so many things that we need to have the federal government partner with.

When I spoke to both leaders in my office when we had a meeting, I think this is a great idea for a standing committee to take this on and give us some direction going forward. I have talked at length with Dr. Hugh Siegil who is one of the visionaries on

this. I've listened to Dr. Evelyn Forget. I believe very much that this is a good idea and I believe very much that Prince Edward Island is the perfect spot to start this but we need the federal government to partner with us.

So as a positive first step, we put in place the secure income pilot to help some of the most vulnerable on Prince Edward Island. I assure the member from Charlottetown-Belvedere, we're not at opposite on this at all, we would like to move forward on this and I think we can continue to move forward together, but we need the federal government to buy in.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Belvedere.

Ms. Bell: In the budget address the finance minister stated that: we are not going to wait for our federal partner, but rather propose that we undertake to do what we can here on PEI. There is indeed much work we can do now, which is why we have proposed a two-to-three-year commission to do the ground work of engaging local experts and stakeholders, gathering research and doing the necessary policy development.

Development of a basic income pilot program

A commission to develop the basic income pilot would cost about \$500,000 spread over three years, which is a pretty modest cost to provincial government and until this work is carried out, the provincial government has no idea of the scope of a basic income pilot, nor the potential investment required provincially or federally. Why is this government not interested in doing the ground work and its homework to develop the basic income pilot program that will work for PEI?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier King: Mr. Speaker, I would reiterate what I just said to the previous question, that is: we actually want to do exactly what the member from Charlottetown-Belvedere is suggesting. That's why I think that's a perfect location in a standing committee to bring this together to start the bones of this to build it,

to figure out what we can be doing to move forward.

We're in support of this but we need a federal partner to make this work. Prince Edward Island is the ideal location to launch a pilot on this, we have a perfect size to do this and what was in the budget was a very positive first step, putting hands into the Islanders who are the most vulnerable who need it the most. It's certainly not enough and I really believe truly in my heart that this is going to only go forward, we want to work together on this, and we are not at opposites on this at all Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Bell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

To be clear, as I clarified last week, a secure income pilot has nothing to do with a basic income pilot. During the negotiations on the budget, one of the priorities from the official opposition was to establish this commission to develop a basic income guarantee pilot. Government led us to believe that the official opposition priority would be addressed in the budget, but as we found out last week, that commitment was not made.

Including of pilot program in budget

A question to the Premier: Why did you lead us to believe that this priority would be included in the budget when it wasn't?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier King: Mr. Speaker, what I'm saying here on the floor of the Legislature, in front of all of the Legislature and in front of all who are watching, is that we very much want to get to that situation where we can develop a basic income guarantee. We want to work together, we're not trying to stone wall this. The secure income pilot is a positive first step to put money in the hands of the people most vulnerable on Prince Edward Island.

Certainly, nobody is against that. When you say you're voting against the budget, you're saying I don't want Blooming House to have \$100,000 and I don't think anybody wants that.

What we're saying is we have to work together and we need the federal government to help us. When I go see the prime minister next Monday I'm going to ask him again, point blank, could we have the federal government partner in this because this is the perfect location to have this.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Premier King: We're working with you, not working against you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: End of Question Period.

Statement by Ministers

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Education and Lifelong Learning, Environment, Water and Climate Change.

Investing in Climate Training Opportunities

Mr. Trivers: Mr. Speaker, thank you.

I am pleased to rise in the House today to make a significant financial commitment to support Island professionals and recent graduates with training to understand and manage the impacts of climate change in their daily work. Over the next three years the Department of Environment, Water and Climate change will provide \$625,000 towards climate sense training programs.

These programs will be delivered in partnership between my ministry, the University of Prince Edward Island's climate research lab, Natural Resources Canada, Engineers PEI, the Prince Edward Island Association of Planners and the PEI Watershed Alliance.

There will be two streams to the program. For recent graduates, the ClimateSense year-long internship program offers a unique opportunity to gain valuable work experience, in both public and private sectors.

They will learn tools and skills that they can use for the remainder of their career.

For professionals and policy makers, ClimateSense offers opportunities to learn about climate change and share information, knowledge and best practices.

It will help them adjust their thinking, decisions and actions because of observed or expected changes in the climate. Our infrastructure and communities need protection from things like coastal erosion and sea level rise.

We must prepare for heavy rainfall events and monitor effects of climate change on our forests, fish, and wildlife. These are all challenges Island professionals and public servants are ready to meet head on in their work.

ClimateSense programs will develop expertise across many fields, planning, engineering, finance and watershed management, to name a few. This training will prepare professionals to handle whatever changes are on the horizon.

Earlier today I joined the hon. Lawrence MacAulay, Minister of Veterans Affairs, as Canada committed one million dollars to support this training and I offer my thanks to them.

ClimateSense training is about the Islander spirit, it's about being collaborative and being prepared as we build our future. I look forward to seeing this new training program rolling out and meeting the new interns.

I also encourage all of you to sign up for the initial course offering, that's everybody – Climate change 101 – for professionals and policy makers like us with Dr. Adam Fenech this fall.

Together we can continue to improve and adapt to ensure Islanders are protected at home and in their work for many generations to come.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Summerside-Wilmot.

Ms. Lund: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I am delighted to hear about this program, I am particularly pleased to hear about the

second stream of it which is geared toward policy makers. I think that we've seen historically a real knowledge gap in the people who are making policies and their genuine understanding of climate change, so I absolutely love this.

I think when we're having conversations around climate change as it pertains to PEI, we have a propensity to discuss erosion and sea level rise and I hope sincerely that there is going to be a focus, particularly around agriculture, for climate change because it's one area that is so vulnerable to the impacts of a changing climate and has a long lead time for adaptation. So I do look forward to hearing more about this program, but it's a great announcement.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Perry: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I want to start by thanking Minister Lawrence MacAulay –

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Perry: – not only him, but all the Island MP's who advocate for all Islanders. Over the last several years, the federal government has done a great deal to address climate change and provide real response to the challenges that we all face.

I'm pleased to endorse the announcement today because it will encourage a greater understanding of climate change and again, I thank this minister today who made a statement and I look forward to reviewing it in more details.

Thank you.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Expanding Scope of Practice

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

There are 47 private pharmacies here on PEI, plus the provincial public pharmacy program, all work in conjunction with our

health care system to provide an essential service to Islanders.

As with every health care profession, there are regulations in place for pharmacists to ensure a high standard of care and to provide safeguards for the well-being of Islanders.

We all know that pharmacists play a very important role in our health care system.

Expanding the scope of practice for health care professionals is a commitment of our government and I am pleased to stand and share with this House that effective today, pharmacists and pharmacy technicians will have authority to provide more services to Islanders.

This means that pharmacists will be allowed to prescribe and administer six additional travel vaccines, will be able to perform and interpret the results of three blood tests, will be able to demonstrate and administer patient automated devices and in addition, hospital pharmacists will be able to order and interpret diagnostic and screening tests to monitor and manage the drug therapy of inpatients and pharmacy technicians will be authorized to accept verbal prescription orders.

Consultation has taken place with various partners and stakeholders about these changes and the input that was received was incorporated into the regulations.

Pharmacists play an essential role in our health care system and we need to ensure they are working to their full scope and potential. We will continue to have conversations with the college of pharmacy so we can best determine what more can be done to empower pharmacists.

This in turn will help ensure Islanders have more accessible support and health services in their communities and closer to home.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Altass: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As everyone here is aware, increasing the scope of practice of our health care professionals is something that was

something that was part of the Green Party platform, as well as the PC platform, and I'm pleased to see that there's some progress being made in this area.

Particularly around pharmacists, this is fantastic news. I can tell you as something that sticks out in my mind from when I was knocking on doors during the election was I came to a door where a young pharmacist was there, his mother lives in my district and he lives in New Brunswick and he really wanted to come home but felt that because he couldn't practice to his full scope here that he wasn't able to do that at this time. So I'm hearing – it just sparked in my memory that and I think that this will have a big impact in many ways.

This is, of course, just one small piece of what we must look at in this scope of practice puzzle, so I would just like to give some suggestions around making sure that we're looking at how can we improve access for our family practice patients and increasing the scope of practice and availability of nurse practitioners for our family practice areas as well as more specialized areas. I'll give one great example – would be to hire a neuro nurse practitioner to support MS patients. That is something that has been advocated for by the MS Society of Canada, as well as the two neurologists on the Island who currently have a waitlist of about a thousand Islanders each and the wait time there is about 18-24 months for non-urgent cases.

Hiring a nurse practitioner there would be something that would right away start to decrease those wait times and increase the access to services for Islanders who are in need.

As well, I want to mention midwifery is another area where increasing the scope of practice is important and I was pleased again to see that there is some early commitment to that in the current budget. I would look forward to seeing the details of how that will roll out, what the timelines will be.

I just want to give a quick credit to a former member, Kathleen Casey for continuously advocating for this. I think it's a very important service and will really enrich the lives of many women who would benefit

from having a midwifery service on our Island.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. McNeilly: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I really think this goes back to client-centered service and speed and efficiency which we can deliver and get Islanders healthier.

There are a number of professions involved in the delivery of health care. Often, health professionals have operated in regulatory silos, which, on occasion, have made it illegal for certain professions to deliver services which they are trained and qualified for.

Expanding a scope of practice often results in making health care more accessible and can lead to efficiencies and cost effectiveness. Consultation needs to be an active ingredient in this. I thank the minister for the statement and I thank all the pharmacists out there for working hard for Islanders every day.

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

Lifeguards

Mr. MacKay: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize our Provincial Park lifeguards.

Last Saturday six lifeguards at Red Point Provincial Park beach helped rescue fishermen after their boat hit Red Point rock. When they discovered the accident they called emergency services, paddled out to check on the fishermen and took turns wading in cold water, monitoring the fishermen for signs of hypothermia while they waited for help to arrive.

RCMP, volunteer firefighters, the Canadian Coast Guard and paramedics all joined in the rescue, while lifeguards helped fishermen helped fishermen return to the shore using a paddle board and swim rescue technique.

What's especially impressive about this story is that Saturday was only the lifeguards third day on the job for the season, some were new staff and just received their national lifeguard training a week ago.

As minister responsible for tourism, I want to thank our lifeguards; Emma, Jay, Calleigh, Naomi, Skylar, Abby, on duty supervisors; Carley, Ty, and our Provincial Lifeguard Coordinator, Matthew Smith, who is in the gallery today.

You are all to be commended for your outstanding efforts, your commitment to your work, and for helping to ensure these fishermen returned safely to shore.

Thank you, thank you, thank you for your quick action and for helping to keep our fishermen, and Islanders safer on the water.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton.

Mr. Hammarlund: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to commend all the six lifeguards and all the other professionals and volunteers that helped to get the fishermen back in safe harbour. I think it's a wonderful thing.

Thank you.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Evangeline-Miscouche.

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

I, too, would like to thank the lifeguards for their wonderful job rescuing those fishermen.

Lifeguards at our provincial parks are a key ingredient to ensuring our parks are enjoyable and safe. Our lifeguards undergo intense training through organizations like the Red Cross. Their presence and skills are much valued in making summertime fun.

Lifeguards alone are not the only ones responsible for water safety. We and the public are also responsible to be aware of conditions, and to exercise caution and prudence around waterways.

I hope lifeguards are compensated appropriately for their dangerous and lifesaving job and I thank the minister for his statement.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Presenting and Receiving Petitions

Tabling of Documents

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier King: Mr. Speaker, by leave of the House, I beg leave to table my calendar from Monday, June 17th, 2019.

On Friday in the Legislature, the Leader of the Opposition made reference to a meeting that he – or perhaps it was suggested that I had missed in the media, but I had no such meeting setup with Carl Percy.

I know Carl Percy, he knows me. If he has a meeting setup with me, he will certainly get it entertained. And I wanted to move, seconded by the Honourable Government House Leader, that this document be now received and do lie on the Table.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Victoria Park.

Ms. Bernard: Mr. Speaker, by leave of the House, I beg leave to table universal access to no-cost contraception for youth in Canada and I move, seconded by the Honourable Member from Charlottetown-Belvedere, that the said document be now received and do lie on the Table.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Minister of Social Development and Housing.

Mr. Hudson: Mr. Speaker, by leave of the House, I beg leave to table a copy of a letter dated June 19th, 2019 from myself to the Honourable Jean-Yves Duclos, Federal

Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, and I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy, that the said document be now received and do lie on the Table.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Reports by Committees

Introduction of Government Bills

Government Motions

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Ms. Compton: Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. Premier, 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 Honourable Premier, that this House do now resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole House to take into consideration the grant of supply to Her Majesty.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

I'll ask the hon. Member from Tignish-Palmer Road to Chair.

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

There's been a request for permission to bring a stranger onto the floor.

Some Hon. Members: Granted.

Chair: Please state your name and title for the record, please.

Jordan McNally: Jordan McNally, Acting Director of Finance.

Chair: Thank you very much, Jordan.

I'm going to give way to the minister just to reply to some questions from the last time we had him on the floor.

Mr. Myers: Yes, so on Route 19 where we were talking about the sanding and plowing separate, we're in to talk with the contractors which do a combination truck there.

On the MacEachern Road, road maintenance staff are aware. The road has been graded and material will be added to it.

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct)

Mr. Myers: Apparently it's been graded.

An Hon. Member: What road?

Mr. Myers: Is that yours? I'm not sure whose road that was.

Oh yes, it was,

The brush cutters from time to time, the brush cutters do breakdown. When this happens we reach out to contractors to provide these services. At the moment, all the brush cutters are operational.

Mr. MacDonald: You just started (Indistinct)

Mr. Myers: They just started.

The biking strategy and I talked about it kind of a little bit different times in here. The drafts of Sustainable Transportation Action Plan contains five actions to improve active transportation, including biking and walking.

One action will increase and expand the active transportation infrastructure while improving safety and connectivity between destinations. The action plan is under development and we're hoping to launch it in the coming months.

A school zone sign in Montague, the traffic operation staff will be in Montague this afternoon to check and see if any are missing and where additional school zone signs are needed. So they're there this afternoon.

Chair: Okay members, last time we were on page 133: Public Works Operations – Administration. It was read. Any questions?

Shall it carry? Carried.

Direct Building Maintenance

“Appropriations provided for regular maintenance, janitorial services, power, heat and water to Provincial government buildings.” Administration: 1,160,000. Equipment: 2,000. Materials, Supplies and Services: 4,770,000. Professional Services: 433,100. Salaries: 1,882,400. Travel and Training: 4,500. Total Direct Building Maintenance: 8,252,000.

Shall it carry?

The hon. Member from Summerside-South Drive.

Mr. Howard: Where are the expenditures for power located?

Mr. Myers: For power?

Mr. Howard: Power and heat, just energy for the buildings and whatnot. It says up in the description it's for power and heat and water.

Mr. Myers: So it's in here under materials and services. This is for the buildings that we own. So this is infrastructure that we own, but it's in here for those ones. Yes.

Mr. Howard: So it's in that 4.7 million or 4.77?

Mr. Myers: Yes.

Mr. Howard: Okay.

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

Mr. Howard: Thank you, Chair.

Is there any data on how much power and fuel is used by our public buildings? I looked and I didn't see a breakdown in the information that was provided.

Mr. Myers: For the heat, it's 1,381,200, and for electricity it's 1,347,400.

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

Mr. Howard: Thank you, Chair.

So, 1347,400 in electricity costs and budgeted to the dollar. I've seen enough electricity bills over the year to know that that's impossible, so, just how can that be possible?

Mr. Myers: I'll have to check and get back to you.

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

Mr. Howard: So, is it the same for accommodations and leased locations? Is that power included in what we lease as well?

Mr. Myers: No, we're in direct building maintenance, so this is buildings that we own.

Mr. Howard: Just own?

Mr. Myers: Yeah. There's 55 of them, so there's 1.1 million square feet of space in 55 buildings in this section.

Chair: The hon. Member from Summerside-South Drive, do you have another question?

Mr. Howard: No, not in that section.

Chair: Shall this section carry? Carried.

Accommodations

“Appropriations provided for lease and rental costs, janitorial services, power, heat and water costs for leased accommodations.”

Administration: 9,443,700. Materials, Supplies and Services: 496,600. Professional Services: 213,200. Salaries: 16,300.

Total Accommodations 10,169,800

Shall it carry?

Mr. Henderson: Question.

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

Mr. Henderson: Minister, you have a building up in O'Leary there at the old vet clinic. I believe you and maybe some other ministers asked me numerous questions on this issue, back when I was minister. What are your plans for dealing with that particular building in potentially mitigating and renovating for it to be leased out to other businesses or other organizations.

Mr. Myers: So what building is it again?

Mr. Henderson: It would be the old vet clinic; it's attached to Access PEI in O'Leary.

There was a plan at one time to do something around Parks West, like moving the offices in there. In that particular case, you are renting space from somebody to do the Parks West offices, so it would make some legitimate sense to turn around and create your own facility and it would be the right size and scope of it.

Mr. Myers: Yeah, so that's a building we own that was in the last section, but I'll get the answer to that and I'll bring it back to you.

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

Mr. Henderson: I guess the biggest comment I'll make on it is that it's starting to get in shabby looking repair, just because nobodies been in thee for the last while. The vets have moved out to their own space somewhere else and nothing's happening for her to go in.

Another option I might suggest to you too, is the Western Sports Council. There's a lot of recreational activities that they could possibly use as a base of operations, free up some space at Access PEI. That's another solution to an issue too, so I just thought I'd bring that to your attention and have you take a look at it.

Mr. Myers: (Indistinct)

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

Mr. Howard: So I asked it already in the last section, but apparently it belongs in this section. Do you have the statistics for how much heat and electricity is used in our leased locations?

Mr. Myers: I do. So this is 490,000 square feet worth of buildings. The heat cost, or the fuel costs – I guess it's assuming that that's not the only heat source – but 53,800 and the electricity is 137,600.

Mr. Howard: 53,800 in fuel costs and electricity costs, 137,600.

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

Mr. Howard: That's it, thank you.

Chair: Shall this section carry? Carried.

Planning and Building Construction

“Appropriations provided for staff and related services in providing planning and building construction services to departmental operations.” Administration: 12,200. Materials, Supplies and Services: 120,500. Professional Services: 110,000. Salaries: 1,164,700. Travel and Training: 46,000.

Total Planning and Building Construction
1,453,400.

The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Belvedere.

Ms. Bell: I apologize this may not be in this section but I couldn't really find where it belonged. Where does the special advisor for housing report to? Is it in this section or on planning and building construction?

Mr. Myers: It's back at the very start under corporate services.

Ms. Bell: My apologies, I missed that completely.

Thank you.

Chair: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton.

Mr. Hammarlund: So where's the planning occur for all the other building programs of

the province? Like hospital and schools and stuff like that?

Mr. Myers: Here, yes.

Mr. Hammarlund: Is that in this department?

Mr. Myers: Yes.

Chair: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton.

Mr. Hammarlund: So what about the plans to reduce carbon emissions of the planned structures; is that taking place in this department?

Mr. Myers: That would be any planning for building construction this year.

Mr. Hammarlund: So how much effort do you put into that?

Mr. Myers: The department or me personally?

Mr. Hammarlund: No, I mean for the department.

Mr. Myers: Well I think there's an ongoing effort to be working on it. We've had conversations kind of, internally, in my short stint there, we talked about the net zero building idea and we talked about how we could do our own solar in the buildings and we talked about what are some of the efficiency challenges we have in some of our existing infrastructure and we talked about what it would kind of take going forward. I think there's a lot of work being done in that area inside the department.

Chair: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton.

Mr. Hammarlund: Well I have another question but again, I don't know if it fits in this particular section here. I've always been wondering, what is the financing scenario behind these windmills, past and future? Where does the money come from and where does it go? I think, Islanders as a whole, I think, are wondering why don't they get some of this free electricity that's produced by the windmills, I know it's not free, but how does it work?

Mr. Myers: It's not even in this budget.

Chair: Hon. member that's not in this section.

Mr. Hammarlund: Can you direct me to the section?

Chair: It would probably be in the capital budget this fall.

Mr. Hammarlund: Ok, thank you.

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

Mr. McNeilly: I just had a quick question about – under that section of materials, supplies and services, in your forecast its half a million dollars, it looks a little bit – it's just an anomaly there but maybe you could –

Mr. Myers: Yeah, that's the Summerset Manor demolition, so it was an anomaly. I don't think it was budgeted for and then it happened.

Mr. McNeilly: Yeah, exactly, I just wanted to ask about that.

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

Mr. Howard: No.

Chair: The hon. Member from Mermaid-Stratford.

Ms. Beaton: Actually I'm good, I think my question, school's go into capital budget, right? Yeah, so I'm good.

Chair: The hon. Member from Cornwall-Meadowbank.

Mr. Myers: The former minister of education – you can ask the minister of education.

Mr. MacDonald: I don't know if this is part of it or not, maybe this is more capital driven too, but the hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir had some questions relevant to school projects and that, and obviously TIE has the control of the construction, renovation and planning stages. So, under our government, we had a

\$500,000 infrastructure evaluation that I believe is going through your department at the time and it was from a third party, and that may answer a lot of the questions in relevance to which school has a priority? I'm just wondering if that's been discussed by your government at the time?

Chair: I have an intervention from the hon. Minister of Education and Lifelong Learning.

Mr. Trivers: So what is exactly the question about the infrastructure review?

Mr. MacDonald: The infrastructure review that we were –

Mr. Trivers: I understand the question now. The infrastructure review that you were proposing for \$500,000 in the budget that we cut, is that the one you're talking about?

Chair: Your conversations need to be directed through the Chair.

Premier King: Yeah and your answers too.

Chair: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Meadowbank.

Mr. MacDonald: Cornwall-Meadowbank.

Chair: Cornwall-Meadowbank, sorry.

Mr. MacDonald: Close though, on the border.

I guess what I was inquiring about; we had a lot of questions from Montague-Kilmuir, a lot of questions throughout the House from all members on their schools and their infrastructure. So I guess what I'm saying is, why wouldn't it be more appropriate, through TIE to have a third part representative to go into do an evaluation and to come out and say – and take it out of the hands of politicians and take it out of the hands of the school boards and say: here's an engineering firm that's going in to tell you which schools need the work most?

Chair: Ok and your question is directed to who?

Mr. Myers: Me?

Chair: The minister of transportation.

Mr. Myers: So, the school infrastructure only falls under us when we build a new building. They have their own budget for repairs, they have their own people that kind of manage those repairs, and they have their own priority.

To throw back to a question the member from O'Leary asked last week was, if it made more sense for it to be in one place. You're kind of in the same seam of whether or not, so it's definitely a bigger discussion for government on how we do it. When we went through some of these buildings, we talked about owning 55 and leasing a whole pile more and then we're – a lineup of ones that we're going to try to construct as well.

There's a lot of infrastructure that's kind of on the table there.

Chair: The hon. Member from Cornwall-Meadowbank.

Mr. MacDonald: Just a further question: Is the Cornwall arterial highway still under budget?

Mr. Myers: Yeah, I believe it is.

Mr. MacDonald: Thank you.

Mr. Myers: I think it's going to come in under budget.

Chair: Shall this section carry? Carried.

Total Public Works and Planning:
22,725,400.

Shall it carry? Carried.

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Capital Project Division

Traffic Operations: "Appropriations provided for staffing, materials, equipment and services for highway signage, pavement, line markings, traffic control lights and illumination." Administration: 30,600. Equipment: 7,300. Materials, Supplies and Services: 1,052,100. Professional Services: 7,500. Salaries: 2,124,600. Travel and Training: 47,100.

Total Traffic Operations: 3,269,200.

Some Hon. Members: Question.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Mr. Myers: Everybody's got a sign question.

Mr. Mitchell: Thank you, Chair.

I'm not sure if this is exactly where it gets asked, but it sounds like it's part of that.

So, the new roundabout in East Royalty, there's a rumour the last couple of weeks that that's not happening.

Can you clarify that, minister?

Mr. Myers: Yeah, it's happening but that is a capital project.

Mr. Mitchell: That's capital there, isn't it?

Mr. Myers: Well no, it's in the capital budget. They're in the capital division. These are kind of – we're coming into the people that would be responsible to take care of it, but yeah.

Mr. Mitchell: Okay, so that project –

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Mr. Mitchell: – is a go?

Mr. Myers: It's never been – there's never been anything happen besides.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Mr. Mitchell: Also, along with that, with the recent shave and pave on the bypass highway, is that just temporary, or is there work to go over the top of that now or is that –

Mr. Myers: I'll have to find out for you and get back to you.

Mr. Mitchell: That would be great, thanks.

Chair: The hon. Member from Evangeline-Miscouche.

Mr. Gallant: Thank you, Chair.

I had asked a question on this the other day and I was waiting to get here.

I have a subdivision in my district that is a new part of my district and they were inquiring about a couple of street lights in there. How would they go about getting some street lights? You know, at intersections in rural PEI, we put street lights up and the province pays for the street light for safety.

In this subdivision there's probably about six houses in there.

Mr. Myers: Yeah, so I'm not exactly sure who you would contact but Dawn Moase is the traffic manager up that way and if a request went in through Dawn, I'm sure that she would handle it appropriately.

Mr. Gallant: Okay.

With the Chair's indulgence, can I just go back and ask a question on something we just already did?

Mr. Myers: It's fine with me.

Chair: The hon. Member from Evangeline-Miscouche.

Mr. Gallant: Thank you.

As the minister is aware, he has roads in his district that are not paved, just like a lot of us do –

An Hon. Member: Not for long.

Mr. Myers: Not for long, yeah.

Mr. Gallant: Not for long, okay.

My question is, back a number of years ago there used to be a few more graders around and they were at individuals homes and when the rain stopped and it dried up, even some days the next afternoon, they were out grading the roads. Well, there was a change in that a number of years ago. The graders are kept at a certain location and they're driven by – the driver goes there and gets it and goes and does it.

When they get there, they do a great job, but its just – if it rains like it did the last four days, it doesn't dry up – or it dries up for two days and the grader is somewhere else, and it rains for four more days, those roads are not getting looked after. People have to

drive to and from work and they get in pretty rough shape.

Is there any chance you could look into that and see if that could be explored and maybe add a few graders?

Mr. Myers: Yeah, I absolutely will.

Mr. Gallant: Or operators?

Mr. Myers: Yes, absolutely.

Mr. Gallant: I don't know if you're hearing that from anybody else, but –

Mr. Myers: I haven't, but I mean I live in an area that would be similar to yours and I was out on some of those roads this weekend trying to get quickly between one Canada Day event and the other and they were pretty soggy (Indistinct) –

Mr. Gallant: Well I got a call –

Chair: The hon. Member from Evangeline-Miscouche.

Mr. Gallant: – and I realize and they realized it was early because it only stopped raining yesterday, but we don't know when the grader is going to get there. So, if it rains again tomorrow, or in two days, then the road is going to be in bad shape for quite a few days.

Mr. Myers: No, I will get an answer to that for you.

Mr. Gallant: Thank you.

Chair: The hon. Member from Mermaid-Stratford.

Ms. Beaton: Thank you, Chair.

Would it be okay if I went back a couple of sections as well? Just back to highway safety, if you don't mind?

Mr. Myers: (Indistinct)

Ms. Beaton: You had mentioned, because you had inherited some of District 5 in Georgetown Road and you had mentioned about the speeds and you heard a lot of complaints.

Can you just tell me what kind of efforts would be in your plan to get that traffic to slow down?

Mr. Myers: Yeah.

It's a tough one because the road is really, really straight and the complaints that I was hearing are probably similar to the ones you would be hearing; traffic to the rink is really heavy. There are two ice surfaces and a lot of the people who use the rink live in Stratford so they kind of jet back and forth on that road.

We installed a couple of overhead lights in – I don't know. There's something about them that is traffic calming, it feels like you're in a community and it slows people down, but we're looking to install one of the speed signs. When it's coming in it flashes and tells you how fast you are going and I've asked the department to look into – because we have that issue there but there's like five or six open issues right now with the department – with various areas across Prince Edward Island who have similar concerns. They're way above the speed limit.

I've asked them to look at what type of traffic calming measures we can use. You see them sometimes when you're driving in the states where the road appears like it's more narrow than it actually is and it seems to slow your mind down to the speed limit.

Those are the things, but it's very preliminary. It's an issue that I got on a lot of the doorsteps down through there this spring and it was one of my top priorities when I took to the department and they said: What can we do?

So, it's a work in progress.

Ms. Beaton: Okay, no that's (Indistinct) –

Mr. Myers: If you would like to be a part of that conversation, I would be more than happy to have you in to talk to the staff and if you have any ideas that you could contribute, that would be fantastic as well.

Ms. Beaton: Sure.

Chair: The hon. Member from Mermaid-Stratford.

Ms. Beaton: Thank you.

The community of Alexandra sends a letter in every year about the speed so it's something that's been ongoing. So, yeah, I'd love to be a part of that conversation, absolutely.

Mr. Myers: Okay.

Chair: The hon. Member from Mermaid-Stratford.

Ms. Beaton: I'll go back to the traffic operation section.

You and I had a side conversation about the paint on the roads.

I've heard a lot, especially from seniors, that at dusk and at dark they cannot see the markings on the road. So we have had a conversation in here earlier, I guess last week, or possibly the week before, that we build to national standards.

Is that the same that we do for our markings as well? Is there a national standard for markings of our roads when we're retaining them?

Mr. Myers: I will have to get that answer back. I'll assume that there is, but I'll have to get that answer back for you.

Ms. Beaton: Okay.

Chair: The hon. Member from Mermaid-Stratford.

Ms. Beaton: Thank you, I appreciate that.

Because I do a lot of road trips to and from Ottawa and back and really, when I look at the state of our markings compared to other provinces, and I'm not looking I guess at rural areas. I'm looking more at highways when I do those straight drive-throughs. But even between Summerside and Charlottetown, I'm sure that they experience it going up west and down east. We all experience it on our major roads.

So, if we could look at how we can – and I did look at the tags and I counted the tags because we had talked about those little reflective tags as good markings, they're actually every third per graded line so it's

actually a fair distance in between the line markings.

So if we can actually look at how we can do better when it comes to our highway markings – especially make sure that people are actually able to see where they're going. I think that would be a good step for us.

Mr. Myers: I agree and I think as we talked about the paint that we were using that lasted forever is banned because it's not very friendly.

So, the paint that we now use doesn't stay on the road as well and wears off, usually through the winter season. So I would agree that we need to have a better solution than what we have. I don't know what it is and I'm not 100% sure if there's one, but we do have staff that goes to national transportation meetings every year.

I'll put it on their agenda to maybe ask some of their colleagues who do similar type of work: What are they doing that gives them better success than us? Perhaps the answer just is they're paving them more often, too, which is –

Ms. Beaton: Possibly, it would be good to know.

Thank you.

Chair: The hon. Member from Mermaid-Stratford.

Ms. Beaton: Yes, that's great.

Thanks, Chair.

Chair: Shall this section carry? Carried.

Capital Projects Administration

“Appropriations provided for the office of the Chief Engineer for administration and supervisory staff of the highway capital projects.” Administration: 78,200. Equipment: 28,800. Materials, Supplies and Services: 36,500. Professional Services: 42,000. Salaries: 2,418,800. Travel and Training: 50,900.

Total Capital Project Administration:
2,655,200.

The hon. Member from Tyne Valley-Sherbrooke.

Ms. Altass: Thank you, Chair.

So I'm just noticing there is quite a discrepancy in the forecast budget in the estimate under the equipment and professional services, that it was far less and we've gotten back up to the same level for the estimate again.

So I'm just wondering if you could explain that a little bit.

Mr. Myers: So the under expenditure reflects the decrease in requirement for field, shop and office equipment during that fiscal year. So they just didn't have the requirement in that particular year to buy as much.

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

Ms. Altass: So I'm wondering about professional services in this department and what that might include, and specifically, I'll reference – what my question comes from here is around the consultations with the public for the Grand River roundabout.

I know that – well first of all, that was a problematic situation to begin with because the folks in that area didn't find out about it, as you know, until they heard about it in the media and there was some confusion around that.

But when consultation did happen, the chief engineer was there and he did the best job he could, I think, in many ways, but he didn't really have a lot of support so, and it was a pretty contentious issue.

So I'm wondering if professional services under this department could include like a facilitator to help navigate those discussions, make it a meaningful conversation with community, and also help outline what some of the next steps would be in terms of reporting back on those obligations.

Mr. Myers: The professional services here include: people who come in and do safety audits, engineering services that we would need to acquire to (Indistinct) some of our projects, and legal services currently.

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

Ms. Altass: So is there anywhere that, you know, a budget line or how would the chief engineer go about receiving some support in those sorts of situations? Because that's a skill in and of itself, is being able to facilitate public consultations probably outside of what he went over in his training, I would think.

Mr. Myers: Yes, so it would be in that line.

Ms. Altass: It would be in that line.

Mr. Myers: If we chose to do it, yes.

Ms. Altass: Okay.

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

Ms. Altass: Sure, is that something that has ever been accessed or been suggested to access for this?

I mean, I'm only giving the one example because that was my experience with this one situation, but I know that there's been other possibly contentious projects that have gone forward and there may be again; so just in terms of meaningful consultation with the public.

Mr. Myers: It hasn't been suggested in my time that I've been in there, though that time has been short.

Generally speaking, that's where we would get expert advice. Probably when we first started building roundabouts we brought in experts in those areas.

If we were going to build something that we didn't have the expertise in-house to do, we would bring somebody in. If we were trying to do something new, it would have a variety of things that we would bring forward.

If the staff in the capital projects want to bring somebody in to run a meeting for them, then they would be able to do that.

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

Ms. Altass: I think it's worth a conversation.

From what I saw, I think that there really was some support that was needed to help navigate that and make sure that everybody's voices were heard and that we were able to have some meaningful conversations on what the impacts would be in that community.

It would have saved, I think, a lot of time and stress and worry for individuals in that community if they had some support around those consultations.

So I would just suggest to you, minister, perhaps you can think about that in the future about what resources might be needed to make sure that public consultation is not just sort of a checkmark: we had a meeting, but that it's actually as effective as it possibly could be.

I think that maybe in this case where there was an under budget in that area as well, we might have thought about accessing some of those – some funding to support the public consultations on that in this area.

Mr. Myers: Sure.

Chair: Shall the section carry? Carried.

Design

“Appropriations provided for staffing, materials, equipment and travel for design.”
Administration: 9,000. Equipment: 500.
Materials, Supplies and Services: 5,500.
Professional Services: 4,800. Salaries: 606,900. Travel and Training: 10,300.

Total Design: 637,000.

The hon. Member from Tyne Valley-Sherbrooke.

Ms. Altass: So again, we're seeing a difference here but in a different way. So design is over budget in equipment materials and supplies, as well as professional services. So just wondering what the reason was for that?

Mr. Myers: Sure, so in equipment it was computers, but (Indistinct) computers.

So in professional services we had an increase in requirement for consulting services during the fiscal year. They were related to some of the future bridge projects that we were doing. That's basically it on professional services.

Was that the only two?

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

Ms. Altass: Well just about that, about professional services. So it's quite a bit over budget and then again it's down to 4,800. I'm thinking that in terms of design, if there's going to be any changes with new government looking at different models of approaching different projects.

I just wonder if it makes sense to keep that, not taking into consideration that you may need to have other consultations, professional services.

Mr. Myers: I'm not sure. I know at several times throughout the budget staff has asked for the forecast number to become the budget number because they were confident that that was going to be a reoccurring case. They haven't brought it forward in this one, but I can ask them why.

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

Ms. Altass: No, that's fine.

Thank you.

Chair: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton.

Mr. Hammarlund: I was just curious is this where roundabouts get the design?

Mr. Myers: Yes.

Mr. Hammarlund: Another question: How does the salaries, the 606,000, I assume that's design staff. What size capital budget do they control? I'm just trying to get a feeling for the relationship between the design costs and the output, which is the capital cost, of what that might be?

Mr. Myers: So they would design and take care of about \$56 million worth of projects.

Chair: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton.

Mr. Hammarlund: Thank you.

Chair: The hon. Member from Mermaid-Stratford.

Ms. Beaton: So if this is a place for roundabouts, I do have a question.

Active transportation lanes around roundabouts, can we look at the one that was built at UPEI. The bike lane actually stops going into that roundabout. So it actually isn't built completely with an active transportation scope.

The one that's at Cross Roads Corner that's going in right there, you know which one I mean, right by the EMS building, does that have active living transportation around the entire roundabout?

Mr. Myers: I'm not sure, but I'll (Indistinct)

Ms. Beaton: Can you check that? That'd be great, thank you.

I think we're at the point right now where if it's under construction and if it doesn't have it, especially when we are looking at a new high school going in that near vicinity that it needs to be part of that design. So if you could let me know that that'd be great.

Mr. Myers: Yes, I will.

Ms. Beaton: Thank you.

Chair: Shall the section carry? Carried.

Bridge Maintenance

“Appropriations provided for staffing, materials, travel and services to maintain small bridges.” Administration: 5,200. Materials, Supplies and Services: 1,464,500. Professional Services: 420,000. Salaries: 526,200. Travel and Training: 9,600.

Total Bridge Maintenance: 2,425,500.

The hon. Member from O'Leary-Inverness.

Mr. Henderson: Minister, I know there was a bridge in my district called the Stephen

Road Bridge in West Point that got blocked off late last summer, I believe.

A lot of farmers use that particular road to access fields to keep them off the main highways. It's a dirt road bridge.

I know I had a conversation with Stephen Yeo and Darrell Evans about the bridge, and I had agreed to not do any maintenance on it to get it up; that we'd hold off until budgets were more applicable.

Could you give me maybe an update or the status of that bridge? Will it be repaired in the near future?

Mr. Myers: I'll have to find out and get that back to you.

I know that there's been a number of them over the years that have kind of come out commission like that. I would have some in my district that have the same issues and concerns.

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

Mr. Henderson: I think you made an announcement earlier on that you are going to fix that particular bridge in your area that has that particular issue, but I just wanted to —

Mr. Myers: Did I?

Mr. Henderson: — bring that to your attention to —

Mr. Myers: I don't think I did, did I?

Mr. Henderson: Oh, you didn't.

Mr. Myers: No, I don't think so.

Mr. Henderson: I guess my point would be is if you could have an update on it at some point in time. It's not urgent, but farmers do use it. They do get their water from that particular brook, pumping water into their water tanks and stuff like that to take to fields.

So, just knowing it's on the list to be repaired or at least to be made accessible would be appreciative.

Mr. Myers: I'll get you an answer on that.

Chair: The hon. Member from Summerside-Wilmot.

Ms. Lund: Thank you, Chair.

My question pertains to bridge maintenance, I'm curious; I know in the past we've seen an increasing intensity in frequency of storms, which has impacted a lot of bridges getting washed away, most certainly related to climate change. I'm wondering if you have any idea on how many bridges were damaged due to weather events last year.

Mr. Myers: I don't know, but I'll find out.

Chair: The hon. Member from Summerside-Wilmot.

Ms. Lund: Thank you, Chair.

I would be interested to know approximately how much money that sees us spending unexpectedly.

Thank you.

Chair: Shall this section carry? Carried.

Materials Testing Lab

“Appropriations provided for salaries and related support costs for the materials testing lab and quality assurance for maintenance and construction operations.”

Administration: 12,400. Equipment: 23,800. Materials, Supplies and Services: 9,700. Professional Services: 5,000. Salaries: 1,293,900. Travel and Training: 23,400.

Total Materials Testing Lab: 1,368,200.

Chair: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton.

Mr. Hammarlund: It seems like a very large figure, but I know when I was involved with buildings, we almost entirely used private testing labs and I was just wondering what the nature is of the testing you do here and whether you have additional testing done by private labs as well? Like soil testing, compaction testing and stuff?

Mr. Myers: Yeah, so here we would do quality assurance on any of our road building materials or asphalt and compactions and all of those tests, but it'd be similar to the type of testing you would have used in building.

Chair: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton.

Mr. Hammarlund: So you basically do it all yourself within the same department?

Mr. Myers: It is a small staff, but yes, we do it all ourselves.

Chair: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton.

Mr. Hammarlund: That's it, thank you.

Chair: Shall this section carry? Carried.

Total Capital Project Division: 10,355,100.

Shall it carry? Carried.

Access PEI

“Appropriations provided for administrative support for staff who deliver programs and services on behalf of Provincial government departments through Access PEI sites.”
Administration: 88,200. Debt: 8,400.
Equipment: 5,200. Materials, Supplies and Services: 30,100. Professional Services: 66,600. Salaries: 2,680,200. Travel and Training: 47,100.

Total Access PEI: 2,925,800.

Chair: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Belvedere.

Ms. Bell: How many Access PEI sites are open to the public across the province?

Mr. Myers: Eight.

Chair: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Belvedere.

Ms. Bell: Thank you, Minister.

I know these been a change of time in terms of what those sites provide, but is there generally an equal provision of services in

all of those sites? Or are there certain sites that do things that others don't?

Mr. Myers: I think they all do the same but I'll get the answer for you.

Chair: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Belvedere

Ms. Bell: Thank you, Minister.

I genuinely – I'd worked with them in the past when they were IT sites and of course things are very different now and I'm familiar with the one locally but I genuinely don't know what they all do, so it would be very helpful just in terms of when you're referring constituents across the province.

One of the questions I did have minister was, is there any availability for office space for meetings with constituents still at Access PEI sites across the province?

Mr. Myers: I don't know. I would have to get back to you. It sometimes depends on availability of space, what other groups are in there. There's none in my district, so I've never had the luxury of using one, but I think in the case where there's open space, I don't think there's any –

Chair: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Belvedere

Ms. Bell: Thank you, Chair.

Thank you, minister that would be really helpful, we found from a caucus that sometimes there's been challenges in places we can safely connected or connect with constituents that are accessible and appropriate and it would be very helpful.

I know with previous governments sometimes that space was available to ministers, but if that could be made available to members of government, as they are doing their constituency work, that would be really helpful.

Mr. Myers: Yeah. If there's not an access site in your district, just let me know if you need space and we'll take it back to our accommodations people and find space where you're able to meet, by all means.

Ms. Bell: That's very helpful minister, thank you so much.

Thank you, Chair.

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

Mr. Howard: Under the debt, it's a fairly small amount, just \$8,400 but it doesn't change. What does the debt represent and why doesn't it change?

Mr. Myers: The debt represents the costs to cover service charges for financial institutions used by Access PEI for daily deposits. Summerside and Charlottetown use GardaWorld for (Indistinct) services. All other locations use Credit Union for daily deposits.

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

Mr. Howard: And so it doesn't change because?

Jordan McNally: I'll just address the forecast kind of thing, because that seems to be coming up a fair bit.

The forecast is done after the third quarter, so it's just a best guess estimate for the entire year and Public Accounts are currently doing the audit, so the actuals, definitely would be different than the forecast. But, at a point of time after third quarter, that would have been their best guess as to what they're actually going to spend.

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

Mr. Howard: And then it stays the best guess in our forecast for our estimate going forward? Like it just was 8,400 budgeted?

Jordan McNally: Yeah.

Mr. Howard: Is there a time when this debt is going to disappear off of here?

Jordan McNally: It's the service charges they pay, because they collect a whole bunch of money for on behalf of government, not just TIE, so they do daily

deposits at banks, so they have to pay for the service cost of GardaWorld and other things.

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

Mr. Howard: That's fine Chair, thank you.

Chair: Shall the section carry? Carried.

Total Access PEI 2,925,800

Shall it carry? Carried.

Energy and Minerals

Energy and Minerals

“Appropriations provided for development and implementation of energy initiatives for the operations of efficiencyPEI which provides Islanders with information, advice and financial assistance to reduced energy consumption.” Administration: 105,000.

Equipment: 32,600. Materials, Supplies and Services: 792,100. Professional Services: 747,900. Salaries: 1,422,000. Travel and Training: 80,700. Grants: 11,361,900.

Total Energy and Minerals 14,542,200

The hon. Member from Summerside-South Drive.

Mr. Howard: Over \$3 million was budgeted for 2018-2019 in professional services and only 385,000 is going to be spent. Why is that?

Jordan McNally: So last year's budget included money that's paid to contractors directly for the programs like the home comfort, because instead of the low income recipient paying the contractor, government will pay them directly. So originally it was budgeted under professional services but they quickly realized well it's under a (Indistinct) program, so that's why you'll see the big jump in grants this year, it's just kind of reallocation.

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

Mr. Howard: Salaries are about half of what was projected in 2018-2019 and bounced back in this year's projection, are we looking to fill the workforce here?

Jordan McNally: Yeah, so that one they added four programs through individuals in the budget last year. There was some delays in actually rolling out some of the programs, so it's due to vacancies, so they're still expecting to hire those people but it was kind of due to delays in programming.

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

Mr. Howard: Why such a significant increase in travel and training compared to last year?

Jordan McNally: A lot of it is to do with the increased grant line basically. So there's going to be a lot of programs rolling out this year, or expected to be rolled out, so part of that is actually travelling to work sites to do home energy audits, or such things like that.

Yeah, basically just the uptake in programs expected for the year.

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

Mr. Howard: That's a big update, it's about 14 times the amount that we actually spent last year. So are we going four times the amount of programs?

Jordan McNally: Well I say we're going to be really aggressive with some of the programs, so we are. The Winter Warming program and the home comfort program, we hope to have a bigger uptake on those. So yeah we expect to have more uptake on the programs.

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

Mr. Howard: Thank you, Chair. That's all.

Chair: Shall this section carry? Carried.

Total energy and Minerals: 14,542,200.

Shall it carry? Carried.

Total Department of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy: 220,736,700.

Shall it carry? Carried.

Mr. Myers: Thanks for your work, Chair.

Chair: You're very welcome.

Mr. Myers: Thank you, everyone.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Chair: Next we are going to have the Department of Environment, Water and Climate Change and we will begin on page 58.

You wanted to bring someone on the floor didn't you?

Mr. Trivers: Yes I'd like to bring a stranger on the floor.

Chair: Okay, a request has been made to permit a stranger onto the floor?

Some Hon. Members: Granted.

Chair: Do you have an opening statement?

Mr. Trivers: I do actually.

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

Michele Koughan: Michele Koughan, Acting Director of Finance and Corporate Services.

Chair: All right, thank you very much.

Mr. Trivers: Going to get my laptop.

Chair: Yeah, no problem.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you members for your patience, I just have a prepared opening statement that I wanted to look up.

An Hon. Member: Please don't (Indistinct)

Mr. Trivers: What's that now? Not a lot of paper used in this computer.

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct)

Chair: Members, again we are on page 58.

The minister will give an opening statement here shortly and then I'll start on the first section.

Mr. Trivers: Hello members.

I'm pretty sure I had it on here.

An Hon. Member: It's much faster this way.

Chair: Can't find it?

Mr. Trivers: I'll just talk about it anyhow.

Chair: Okay.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, members for your patience and it really is a pleasure to be bringing this budget to the floor.

The department has put a lot of work into this budget, obviously it's been 7 weeks now since I've been the minister so I've had to get up to speed with it, so I'm very lucky to have Michele Koughan on the floor with me to help answer the questions, but there are a pile of people in the background that put this together and it covers a lot.

The Department of Environment, Water and Climate Change covers a broad set of people that are working with a lot of the conceptual side of things on a climate change front. There's the adaptation measures, of course, where the rubber hits the road but a lot of it is measurements and statistics and estimating costs and trying to figure out what approach we take from a very much higher level and a more abstract level – even though we know that it has definite impacts on the ground.

On the other end of the department there's a whole group of people who are out in our forests, in our fields, on our land who are doing things day-to-day, everything from growing trees, to planting trees, to repairing forest management plans and this sort of thing.

It's a broad variety but one thing that I was told when I became minister and I've come to learn, is that everyone in the department, almost to a person, is in the department because they're passionate about what they do.

They believe, in particular, in conserving the environment. I think the past minister would probably agree with me there. They're doing it out of a love for their work and so you can be assured that we're in good hands with the

people in the Department of Environment, Water and Climate Change.

Some of the budget highlights are our focuses on climate change in this budget. There is a total of 4.1 million in new investments, this is not existing, new investments to combat climate change.

I should really acknowledge, of course, the federal government of course is our partner in that.

It includes 10 million dollars in incentives for fuel switching in existing residential homes and this term "fuel switching" means instead of heating with oil; we might be using heat pumps.

Also we have right now, as has been pointed out in Question Period, \$500,000 slated for the solar energy program and also around \$200,000 to support the carbon capture tree planting program and that comes from the Low Carbon Economy Fund, federal government.

Anyhow, this program is really neat because of course, we will see trees planted on PEI over the next 5 years to combat rising greenhouse gas levels and combined with our ongoing tree planting programs, it will result in one million trees per year, being planted.

Premier King: That's in the platform.

Mr. Trivers: That's in the platform, Mr. Premier, it is indeed.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Premier King: (Indistinct)

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Mr. Trivers: The other day I was with the Hunter-Clyde Watershed Group and the Pirate Off-Road Nation and they had approached me and they had approached the group and said: we want to offset our carbon footprint because we know the types of vehicles we drive –

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct) budget?

Mr. Trivers: This is very important stuff.

Chair: Okay minister.

Mr. Trivers: And so when we're talking one million trees per year, that's offsetting a huge, huge carbon footprint is what we need to do. So, partnerships are key on our approach to climate change and we are providing another \$200,000 – this is a great project, it's a watershed alliance, federation of agriculture, potato board and department of environment collaboration to research initiatives on best practices to keep soil on the land and out of our waterways, so important.

The climate change secretariat as well, another partnership, will provide an additional \$320,000 to support the training initiative ClimateSense that was announced today delivered with the federal Government of Canada and UPEI.

So those are some of the highlights, at the Premier's request I will leave it there.

I have so much more that I could talk about. We'll get right into question (Indistinct)

Premier King: You're taking my advice buddy.

Chair: Department of Environment, Water and Climate Change

Minister's/Deputy Minister's Office

“Appropriations provided for the operation of the office of the Minister, Deputy Minister and departmental records management.” Administration: 17,900. Equipment: 6,500. Materials, Supplies and Services: 8,000. Professional Services: 10,000. Salaries: 367,500. Travel and Training: 22,000.

Total Minister's/Deputy Minister's Office: 431,900

The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Victoria Park.

Ms. Bernard: I'm just wondering what grants would have been given out under this and why they were discontinued?

Mr. Trivers: Ok, and in fact Michele Koughan has a great response to that.

Michele Koughan: Actually the forecast was done in January and we thought that we would be spending that money and it actually did not go out the door. We've actually repurposed that and put it back into the climate change program.

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

Ms. Bernard: That's it, thank you.

Chair: Shall this section carry? Carried.

Total Minister's/Deputy Minister's Office: 431,900.

Shall this carry? Carried.

Forest, Fish and Wildlife

Division Management

“Appropriations provided for the management of the Forests, Fish and Wildlife Division, as well as the financial support to community-based organizations through the watershed management fund.” Administration: 22,700. Equipment: 3,000. Materials, Supplies and Services: 3,700.

Salaries: 485,000. Travel and Training: 19,800. Grants: 1,350,000.

Total Division Management: 1,894,200.

The hon. Member from O'Leary-Inverness.

Mr. Henderson: Obviously the question there would be, \$1.2 million budget last time, it was spent \$1.4 million. This year you're doing \$1.3 million. So that's money that goes to the watershed groups, the 70-some watershed groups on the Island?

Mr. Trivers: That is correct, that is money for the watershed groups.

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

Mr. Henderson: So I thought in the budget you said you were increasing the money spent to watershed groups by a fair bit of money; that shows to me you're cutting watershed groups.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you

What's going on there is they're probably more technical answers. That \$200,000 that I had talked about in the opening, where we're doing that study with the potato board, the watershed alliance group and the federation of agriculture and the department.

In fact, some of that money went into that I believe and Michele will correct me if I'm wrong on that. Maybe I should just let her answer. Ah, yes, as well, there were some students' salaries in there.

You go ahead; you answer that

Michele Koughan: Under the watershed program, the department also funds summer internship program for students that we embed right with the watershed groups. That money had always been in the grants and every year we moved it we forecasted it and paid it out of casual wages. So this year, we just thought we would move it right into the casual wages so that we didn't have to keep forecasting and actually answering the same question about why is your forecast up and down.

So we decided to permanently move that and then we increased it by an additional \$35,000 so we can keep up with the increase in student salaries. So it went from 60,000 to 95,000 in this current year. Then the 200,000 is the – 140 is the 200 less the 60 –

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

Mr. Henderson: So you're telling me that there's more students working in the watershed groups this year than there were last year, is that what you're saying or are you just incorporating –

Michele Koughan: No, I'm saying that the wages have gone up over the past number of years but that the grant did not keep up with that. So we found some money from within to be able to finance those wages.

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

Mr. Henderson: So, minister that sounds so disingenuous to say that you're increasing the budget for \$200,000 to your watershed groups when in fact, you're not even giving them what you gave them last year. You're

just recycling the money into a different section.

Mr. Trivers: I think you might be misunderstanding what's going on here. What is was is we found additional money to make sure that we could pay the same level of workers. Plus, we're also, and that's the \$200,000 I'm talking about, that additional project. That's the additional money in there, to do the best practices initiative working with the watershed alliance and the potato board and fed of Auditor General.

So the watershed alliance is of course, who over sees the watershed groups, so I don't think I would call it disingenuous. Maybe there's something that I'm missing here as well and I don't know, Michele did you have anything to add on that?

Michele Koughan: No, the 60,000 we could have given to the watershed but then they would have to hire the students. So therefore we take them on to the government payroll and we pay them. We put them directly with the watershed.

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

Mr. Henderson: So at the end of the day you're just changing the budget. I guess my biggest point would be as the third party over here and the Premier talks about collaboration – we're taking – we put forward a number of initiatives that we wanted to see in the budget, one of those it said, came back was our issue about an increase to our watershed groups.

The throne speech said that they were increasing money for the watershed groups; I do not see \$200,000 extra to the watershed groups in this budget. So how can you sit there and say that you've lived up to the expectation of that commitment, that's another one you talked about. You had two promises that you did commit hereto in the budget, now I'm going to have to say you're going to take one away?

Mr. Trivers: I met with the watershed alliance just last week and this is one of the things we talked about and in fact, what they said was what they wanted was a further investment into them and they said this

project we're doing, with the best management practices, really to reduce slow erosion, to keep more land on the land and out of our waterways, they thought that's where they wanted the investment to occur and that's where we're investing in the watershed alliance, which of course, oversees all the watershed groups, at their request.

Premier King: That's what you asked us to do.

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

Mr. Henderson: It's certainly not an issue that you're submitting the money to the watershed alliance and they go through their formula and how they distribute that money back out to the provinces, but as a member of a caucus here that said we're all about collaboration and we were going to get feedback that we were going to have some of our submissions and ideas and initiatives included in the budget.

Premier King: And you did.

Mr. Henderson: Well I don't see it and at the end of the day I've still not seen it, you're talking that you switched it over to something else a little bit of it that was – but it sounds like to me it's still the same amount of students we had, a few extra wages to those students, but that's because minimum wage went up. That's totally misrepresenting an increase to the budget to the watershed groups, in my opinion.

The 73 watershed groups, of which I have four in my district and you know, I'm pretty passionate about watershed groups and the value that they imply to making our streams and enhancing our wildlife habitat, as well as working with our farm communities and making sure that there's reduction in soil runoff and all of those things and I just don't seem to see there's any real interest here, you're playing semantics.

You've cut the budget, literally. On where it says grants to your division management, you cut that budget. No other way you can cut it than this way. You might have reassigned somewhere else, but you cut it to what you're supposed to be giving to the watershed groups.

Mr. Trivers: So member, what we did was we looked at your budget request and said okay: How do watershed groups want to be funded? What do they want money for? And it came out, that they said, give us money, give it to watershed alliance, watershed alliance we want to do this best management practices. That's their marquee project, that's where they want to be.

Could they use even more money on top of that? I would venture to say yes they could, yes. But this was the decision with that additional funding this year, in this year's budget, was for that best management practices study and it's amazing right.

We've got the watershed alliance collaborating with the federation of agriculture and the potato board and the department. And these best management practices, I mean I'm so excited, they're going to make a huge difference, I think, in our erosion.

And as you know last winter was one of the worst because the cover-crop didn't quite make it on and we had a low amount of precipitation over the winter, so we saw the soil being whipped in the air. We all saw the videos on Facebook etc., so this is an area that really, really needs to be a priority and that's exactly what we're doing is we're funding this priority at the request of the watershed groups.

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

Mr. Henderson: I'm still finding it hard to say – so you're saying for the funding for the watershed alliance through the grants comes through the division management of the department.

Yes, you have another section for student funding that you're putting a little extra money into that, but in this particular section, of which you spent 1.4 million last year, this coming year you're spending 1.3 million give-or-take and we had a request to increase those budgets by \$200,000 to which you haven't done is what I'm generally saying.

I'm not going to lament about it anymore, but from my perspective, I'm failing to see that commitment being met and from our

caucus' perspective, I wanted to see a bit more with that. Maybe the other members have some other – maybe I'm totally wrong on this, but I think you haven't lived up to my thoughts of collaboration when it comes to implementing some of our requests into your budget by what I see here.

Mr. Trivers: Thanks for your input, that's part of collaboration too.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Mr. Mitchell: Thanks, Chair.

Certainly I'd have to lend my voice as well to this debate that's going on before the House.

Obviously, when you sat on this side of the House and you indicated millions is what was needed to be invested in watershed groups, and obviously as former minister I did agree, and as a government we invested millions. Millions over nine years into watershed groups to get them to the level they are today.

It is disappointing that all you can see fit was to find a measly –

An Hon. Member: Come on.

Mr. Mitchell: – 200,000 to put towards these wonderful groups that do such wonderful work all across our province.

Obviously when I sat in the chair, contrary to what you just said –

Premier King: (Indistinct)

Mr. Mitchell: – obviously it was about boots on the ground, rubber boots on the ground doing the work in the streams and working to enhance waterways, watersheds all across Prince Edward Island.

Some of these groups were pretty new over the last couple of years who wouldn't have developed relationships in the communities to fundraise and to do the work that they need to have done. So to hear today, which you're talking not 200,000, you're \$130-\$140,000.

Split between – if you're taking 60 and putting towards the students, you're giving

140 to the boots on the ground or the rubber boots in the ponds. When you take their funding formula and divide that across the watershed groups at various levels and sizes, some of them see almost nothing.

So that's disappointing from my perspective. I'm sure it has to be disappointing to watch that alliance and all those people obviously working with other entities in regards to making sure soil stays on the land. Perfect. Well done. You should have found another \$1 million to do that, too.

I echo the same sentiment as the member behind me that it's disappointing when all you can come up with after eight years of sitting on this side of the House preaching millions of dollars to come up with a measly \$140,000 to put towards these people. It's disappointing.

Mr. Trivers: Well thank you for that input.

You know and I, of course, can't agree more about the value of the watershed groups and the work they do.

When I met with the watershed alliance last week, it was the president; they are very excited about this new government. They're very excited about this budget. They're excited about the great things we do.

I've been in this chair for what? Just about seven weeks now. This is the first budget. Watch me.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Mr. Mitchell: Obviously, when you look at the forest, fish, and wildlife folks out there, they're a tremendous section under your department who work very closely with watershed groups and work very closely with landowners in regards to our forestry needs, (Indistinct) climate change and sequestering of carbon. That department played major inroads there.

There was talk of further investment in new facilities. Is that still in discussion?

Mr. Trivers: Chair?

Chair: Go ahead.

Mr. Trivers: So, that is not a discussion I've had yet on the new facility, but as the former minister, you would know about those discussions in the past and so that's something I will go back and check on and see if that discussion is still in the works.

Mr. Mitchell: Yes, 2019 is supposed to be a big year for (Indistinct)

Mr. Trivers: So I'll find out. I have to admit I'm not aware of that.

I don't know, Michele, if you have information?

Michele Koughan: It's capital.

Mr. Trivers: Oh it's a capital budget item, that's probably why we haven't discussed it here, but I haven't talked about it with them either.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Mr. Mitchell: Yes, I'm good for now. I'll come back around.

Chair: The hon. Member from Mermaid-Stratford.

Ms. Beaton: Thank you, Chair.

So this section – and I apologize if you already said this – this section is for watersheds and forestry? What else in this section if you don't mind me asking?

Mr. Trivers: So we're right here in the division management area. Yes, that basically sums it up: forest, fish and wildlife division.

If you wanted to look at that, maybe here let me see if I can get a more thorough description.

So we've got here the Watershed Management Program. So this provides support and advice to 24 watershed groups in the areas of watershed planning, stream enhancement, funding applications, permits, and other organizational assistance.

The Watershed Management Fund itself provides financial assistance to community groups that cover – well it's actually the community groups themselves – cover over

almost 97% of PEI, so it covers almost the whole Island.

And in – let's see here – it also includes the 10 watershed summer students, and a watershed ecologist.

So, that's the management of the forest, fish, and wildlife division.

Chair: The hon. Member from Mermaid-Stratford.

Ms. Beaton: Management of the forestry.

So if I was inquiring about hedgerow programs and that kind of thing it doesn't fall under this section or does it?

Mr. Trivers: Go ahead Michele.

Michele Koughan: It's under production development.

Ms. Beaton: Production development.

Mr. Trivers: So that's coming up on page 59, I believe.

Chair: Top of 59.

The hon. Member from Mermaid-Stratford.

Ms. Beaton: Okay. I'm going to hold then until then.

Mr. Trivers: Okay, thank you.

Chair: Shall the section carried? Carried.

Forest Fire Protection

“Appropriations provided for the costs associated with forest fire prevention and suppression on private and public lands.”
Administration: 19,400. Equipment: 8,000.
Materials, Supplies and Services: 24,900.
Professional Services: 1,500. Salaries: 85,500. Travel and Training: 35,500. Grants: 8,000.

Total Forest Fire Protection: 182,800.

The hon. Minister of Fisheries and Communities.

Mr. Fox: Thank you, Chair.

Back two or three years ago, we started talking about the condition of our forest fire trucks that are stationed across the province.

Can you give us an update on that?

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, minister.

Yes, so we're in the year two of the five-year plan to replace the fire vehicles, the fire fighting vehicles, and we're moving forward with that.

It was a plan that was initiated under the former administration and the really great thing – I know the Leader of the Third Party will be glad to hear this – the previous minister had kind of opted out of a plan where our used fire fighting vehicles were going to go down to Mexico and be repurposed there and the Leader of the Third Party had actually initiated that program. Well now we're back on board to do that again and we're reinitiating that.

It's fantastic to see our used fire fighting vehicles being able to be repurposed down to Mexico where they're much-needed.

Mr. Fox: Thank you.

Chair: I'm going to now give way to the hon. Member from Summerside-Wilmot for recognition of guests and following that with a question.

Recognition of Guests II

Ms. Lund: Thank you, Chair.

I wanted to take a moment, I had spoken earlier about how it was my son Maddix's ninth birthday and I see my family with Maddix and Kingston in the gallery. I just wanted to say (Indistinct)

Thank you, Chair.

My question is on forest fire protection. It's a relatively small line item, but for forest fire protection we seem to have spent five times more than anticipated for professional services.

I'm wondering if you can tell me what that was about.

Mr. Trivers: Well, and Michele correct me if I'm wrong on this, but I believe it's because of the out-of-province travel for our firefighters to travel places like Alberta, for example, where they were just recently already this spring to fight fires.

I tell you, they make a massive difference. They're professionally trained firefighters. Down on Upton Road, they actually have a training facility there and they spend part of their workday, in fact, preparing to fight fires.

They're excellent. I got really a glowing letter of commendation from the Premier, or sorry the minister responsible in Alberta. I mean, the adjectives they're using to describe our firefighters were incredible.

I posted it to social media. I don't know if you saw it, but they do an amazing job.

Chair: The hon. Member from Summerside-Wilmot.

Ms. Lund: Thank you, Chair.

I couldn't agree with you more, and I think as you've already indicated our firefighters have been out west already this year, but I don't see any additional provisions from the anticipated budget even though we know wildfires are more prevalent with climate change and I imagine we will continue to contribute to that service.

Do you have any comments on that?

Mr. Trivers: Well the way my understanding is in my budget briefing is traditionally what you do is – because it's really hard to predict what's going to be needed for this, I mean in past years sometimes they're not needed at all and there aren't any forest fires.

So they usually, I believe, there's a minimal amount put in and then if there's more required because of a bad year it's a special warrant situation.

I don't know, Michele, can you speak to that?

Michele Koughan: Just to expand on that a little bit.

We do budget for fighting forest fires on the Island. When we do send forest fires to other provinces we're reimbursed for those costs.

So we do have offsetting revenue to offset those expenditures. So we're only budgeting for what we would typically use here on the Island.

Chair: The hon. Member from Summerside-Wilmot.

Ms. Lund: Thank you, Chair.

So when I see that we have spent 7,500 as opposed to the 1,500 that was budgeted, are you saying we've been reimbursed for the additional costs?

Michele Koughan: We have.

Ms. Lund: We have?

Thank you very much.

Mr. Trivers: Does a reimbursement still require a special warrant if we go that route?

Michele Koughan: It would if the department (Indistinct) such an issue, yes.

Mr. Trivers: You'll see that later on. Special warrants are scary things because it means the government has spent money not authorized to in the budget. In this case, you issue a special warrant even though there is the offset in revenues coming in from another province for example so don't be scared to pass that special one, it's a good one.

Chair: The hon. Member from Summerside-Wilmot.

Ms. Lund: Thank you, Chair.

When I'm looking over this, I see that we overspent on a few line items including salaries and travel and training, but I don't see provisions to allow for it in the future. I'm just curious why we expected these one off expenses.

Mr. Trivers: Okay. Thank you for that.

Do you want to take a stab at it, Michele?

Michele Koughan: Sorry, can you repeat the question?

Ms. Lund: Yeah, absolutely.

When I'm looking –

Chair: The hon. Member from Summerside-Wilmot.

Ms. Lund: Thank you, Chair.

When I look through this I see in addition to professional services we've also overspent on salaries as well as travel and training, by a fair amount on salaries in particular and I'm wondering why we are assuming that these are one off expenses that we're not allotting for in the budget.

Michele Koughan: Right, all of the expenditures over budget are attributed to us sending firefighters in the province –

Ms. Lund: All of these are?

Michele Koughan: – and the province reimburses us for all the costs: the travel, the training, any equipment we happen to purchase and the salaries are only the overtime for staff.

Ms. Lund: That's helpful.

Thank you.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Mr. Mitchell: Just a couple of real quick questions.

I was worried a change in how the province that the firefighters went to did not reimburse –

Mr. Trivers: (Indistinct)

Mr. Mitchell: So that's the same as it was in the past, we will see revenue back then.

So there was talk at one point in time to – within the public service commission there are other volunteer firefighters who have training, but because they don't fit under the division we're kind of unable to go to help the situation (Indistinct) and I don't know if the training needed to be upgraded or whatever as well.

Do you know if the program – or if there is still talking about that occurring to go to out province for fight forest fires in other provinces?

Mr. Trivers: I can see why this is discussed. It sounds like an excellent idea providing more help.

Mr. Mitchell: I'll plant that seed with you if there's something –

Mr. Trivers: Thank you for bringing that up, and I haven't had the discussions. I don't know if Michele will have an update, no?

I'll get back and make a note to get back to you on that one and where that was left off that.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Mr. Mitchell: And good to hear that the other trucks, the retired trucks, may end up going to Mexico where they'll be well utilized and used for parts, that's a good relationship build between PEI and Mexico.

Thirdly, did you say is there two vehicles replaced this year, because it was on track to replace about two vehicles per year over five?

Mr. Trivers: Yeah, we're just in the second year of the five-year plan. Whatever the plan was, if it was, if it was two vehicles per year then that's what we are headed towards, I believe.

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct)

Mr. Trivers: Is it one per year? The action plan is one per year.

Mr. Mitchell: Oh, you cut that?

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Mr. Mitchell: You cut that from two to one.

Mr. Trivers: Whatever the plan was in past, that's what we're following on that one.

Mr. Mitchell: Okay, it's good to hear that you're maintaining that.

Chair: Okay shall this section carry?

Mr. MacEwen: Question.

Chair: The hon. Member from Morell-Donagh.

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you, Chair.

Minister, when you say the old forest fire trucks are going to other countries, is that a donation?

Are we selling them? How does that work?

Mr. Trivers: My understanding is that it's a donation but, Michele; you can maybe expand on that? It is a donation.

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you, Chair.

The Member from Souris-Elmira, when we were doing estimates before and asked the minister of environment of the previous government about – we've local fire departments that were quite interested in these vehicles and that minister committed to looking at the option. I don't know where that went, that was last year. They didn't have those yet.

Have you looked at the option? It's something that the Cardigan fire department or Dundas, some of these spots were interested in.

Mr. Trivers: I think the minister of health has an intervention.

Chair: No, he doesn't. Go ahead.

He has a question, go ahead.

Mr. Aylward: No, I have an intervention, Chair.

Chair: Chair, he does have an intervention.

Okay, did you want to finish what you were saying first?

Mr. Trivers: I'll just say that in my discussions when we were preparing in the budget briefing, I had, I have similar questions to that. I'll let the minister jump in with his intervention.

Chair: I'll direct the conversation.

Mr. Trivers: All right.

Chair: Okay, the hon. Minister of Health and Wellness, you have an intervention?

Mr. Aylward: Thank you very much, Chair.

Kory MacAusland was the person that first brought this forward to myself and other various members.

Kory has been doing a tremendous job over the years, collecting used fire equipment mostly jackets, helmets, boots, etc. and taking them to various provinces in Mexico, which they are ecstatic over because every time they get some of this gear, it's like Christmastime for them because they are impoverished and state-of-the-art equipment for them.

The problem we have with these fire trucks, once they reach a certain age they are no longer covered under our insurance program. So even though rural fire department might like to have a piece of this equipment, essentially not able to use it because it wouldn't be covered under the insurance programs.

That's why some of these trucks when they age out, whether the pumps or the other apparatus on these pieces of equipment, they can't use because they're not covered through insurance programs.

Mr. Trivers: So I know that for example the New London fire company in my district has purchased used vehicles from, say, Québec at very, very good rates but, yes, I believe that's the reason why.

These ones are truly from Prince Edward Island perspective. They're not right now. Of course I would be willing to look into that just to verify and make sure 100 percent that they would not be suitable for any fire departments on the Island because it makes more sense that they offered them to our firefighters first.

Chair: The hon. Member from Morell-Donagh.

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you, Chair.

Thank you minister, look into for sure because I know there's outdated fire equipment that we have in our rural departments now so I'd be curious to know

what the age of the stuff we are passing on versus what's there already.

If you could confirm the story about the insurance being the reason and bring that back, I'd appreciate it.

Thank you, Chair.

Chair: You're welcome.

Shall the section carry? Carried.

Production Development: "Appropriations provided for the production of trees and shrubs for the forest management of private, public and forest lands, Carbon Capture and watershed enhancement and local landscape nurseries, as well as the tree improvement/seed production program. Administration: 36,000. Equipment: 12,000. Materials Supplies and Services: 274,500. Professional services: 15,500. Salaries: 719,000. Travel and Training: 18,500. Grants: 189,300."

Total Production Development: 1,264,800.

The hon. Member from Summerside-Wilmot.

Ms. Lund: What professional services are we purchasing in the area?

Mr. Trivers: Do we provide that in the grants? Or the handouts, pardon me? You go ahead.

So the professional services line is a 130,500 difference we decreased and you're wondering what services we provided, is that right?

Ms. Lund: Could you repeat that, I couldn't quite hear you.

Mr. Trivers: You just wanted to know what sort of services were provided last year?

Ms. Lund: What sort of services we provide under this year? We have previously allowed 146,000 and this year budgeting 15,000?

Mr. Trivers: That's right.

Ms. Lund: I'm just wondering what sort of services we've caught from this area.

Mr. Trivers: Michele, you answer that, it's an accounting thing.

Michele Koughan: That's the Low Carbon Economy Fund funding for the reforestation project we put it in professional services last year and moved it down to grants.

It will be spent through the department but not 100 percent how whether it's casual or types of materials but we know we have that amount.

Chair: The hon. Member from Summerside-Wilmot.

Ms. Lund: Thank you, Chair.

I appreciate that answer and that answers that particular question but when you bring up the Carbon Capture Program, I understand that we've allocated for a million trees to be planted.

Minister, you had just indicated in your opening remarks that you expected this to have a huge impact, I believe you said, on emissions.

Just wondering if you care to quantify how much carbon you expect to capture.

Mr. Trivers: A good question.

I'd have to do that calculation. I don't have those numbers at my fingertips and I will get back to you on that one. Perhaps you have done the calculations.

Ms. Lund: Not yet.

Chair: The hon. Member from Summerside-Wilmot.

Ms. Lund: Thank you, Chair.

While you're at it do you want to calculate the cost per of ton of carbon it will reduce?

Mr. Trivers: Yeah, that's great. Just one of those costs that we need in pursuing our carbon strategy.

Chair: The hon. Member from Summerside-Wilmot.

Ms. Lund: Thank you, Chair.

Mr. Trivers: You know what? The great department here has actually done some of those calculations, it looks like.

So on the reforestation program – so this is expanding and managing forest carbon (Indistinct) so that's where we are spending about 778,000 federal and 130,000 provincial over five years, over these five years we're going to remove 9,800 tonnes of CO₂ equivalent.

Ms. Lund: Did you say 900 tonnes?

Mr. Trivers: 9,800 tonnes of CO₂ equivalent.

Now with the caveat in here is by 2030 so we're going to let those trees grow and over the years, according to my numbers here – and I want to verify these calculations as well, but we're saying 9,800 tonnes.

Chair: The hon. Member from Summerside-Wilmot.

Ms. Lund: And have we done the calculation on cost per tonne of carbon reduced – just out of curiosity?

Mr. Trivers: That we do not have in our notes here, I don't believe. But, that should be a relatively easy calculation to do.

Chair: The hon. Member from Summerside-Wilmot.

Ms. Lund: Thank you, Chair.

A thousand trees being planted is very impressive. Can you tell me how that translates into acres?

Mr. Trivers: I cannot tell you that right now. I don't know exactly where those trees were planted in the past or where they're planned for in the future.

I can tell you; when I was out last weekend with that off-road group, we were at a farm that happened to be in New Glasgow and we were planting into an, sort of, an open-field area. They did 290 trees that day and I would estimate – I wasn't there for the whole thing – it would be like a few acres, perhaps.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Ms. Lund: It doesn't sound like a few acres to me.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Chair: The hon. Member from Summerside-Wilmot.

Mr. Trivers: That's what (Indistinct)

Ms. Lund: Could someone actually confirm that for me?

Mr. Trivers: I will confirm that, yeah.

Ms. Lund: That would be fantastic.

Mr. Trivers: It wasn't a massive area, which I was surprised at, actually.

Chair: The hon. Member from Summerside-Wilmot.

Ms. Lund: Thank you, Chair.

I'm also wondering if you can confirm at the same time the rate of current deforestation in acres.

Mr. Trivers: Yes, well we can definitely look into that. It's not something we budget for but it's a good question, yeah.

Chair: The hon. Member from Summerside-Wilmot.

Ms. Lund: Thank you, Chair.

Even though we don't budget for it, if we want to have a quantifiable understanding of what we are contributing we should first know what we're taking away. I think that would be useful.

I'm curious if you know what types of trees are currently being accounted for?

Mr. Trivers: What types of trees are accounted for?

Ms. Lund: Yeah, what types are we planting?

Mr. Trivers: The nursery carries a wide variety of species of trees.

In my note here, they have an intensive selection and breeding program. I can

probably get a breakdown of what they produce, but it's a variety of tree species that are based on the location where they are to be planted, what's best for the locations, is my understanding, as quantities last each year.

For example, the other day someone said: I want to be part of the carbon capture tree planting program. But, they said: I think all you can get now is white pines. I verified that with one of the watershed groups and they said: No, that's not the case.

In North Rustico this weekend, the watershed group was there, they were handing out these trees for people to plant free of charge; Wheatley River improvement group, Hunter-Clyde water group –

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct)

Mr. Trivers: This is where I was this weekend, member, and they had red maples, for example, and other species like that.

Chair: The hon. Member from Summerside-Wilmot.

Ms. Lund: Thank you, Chair.

To clarify, minister, you're talking about trees that are being given out by watershed groups. Is that being funded by this particular line?

Mr. Trivers: Yeah, I believe – I mean I can double check –

Ms. Lund: The trees in the watershed groups (Indistinct) –

Mr. Trivers: – on that, but I believe it's all part of the same funding.

That million trees includes the trees that are being planted by watershed groups.

Chair: The hon. Member from Summerside-Wilmot.

Ms. Lund: Thank you, Chair.

I'm just wondering if we are currently planting the variety of trees that fall under the Acadian forest, which are native to Prince Edward Island.

Mr. Trivers: I would say definitely, yes.

The tree nursery is ramped up specifically to specialize in those types of trees, but they grow much more than that. In fact, member, if any of you or your caucus would be interested in a tour of the nursery –

An Hon. Member: Call the hour.

Mr. Trivers: – I would love to set that up.

Chair: The hour has been called.

Minister?

Mr. Trivers: Mr. Chair, I move that the Speaker take the chair and that the Chair report progress and begs 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.

Everyone have a wonderful supper. We will recess until 7:00 p.m. this evening.

An Hon. Member: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: You're welcome.

The House recessed until 7:00 p.m.

Speaker: Good evening, everyone.

An Hon. Member: Good evening, Mr. Speaker.

Motions Other than Government

Speaker: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Belvedere.

Ms. Bell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I move, seconded by the hon. Member from Mermaid-Stratford, that the 13th order of the day be now read.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk: Order No. 13, *An Act to Amend the Climate Leadership Act*, Bill No. 102, in committee.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Belvedere.

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

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Ms. Bell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'll be Chairing this evening.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Belvedere, if you wouldn't mind chairing.

Chair (Bell): Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The House is now in a Committee of the Whole House to take into consideration a bill to be intitled *An Act to Amend the Climate Leadership Act*. Is it the pleasure of the committee that the bill be now read clause by clause?

Ms. Lund: Permission to bring a stranger on to the floor?

Chair: Permission to bring a stranger onto the floor?

Some Hon. Members: Granted.

Chair: Granted.

If you could take a seat and introduce yourself into the mic for the record, please.

Patrick Lévêque: My name is Patrick Lévêque, Principal Secretary in the opposition office.

Chair: Thank you.

Just a reminder for those on the desk to speak into the mics.

Would promoter like to give us a brief reminder of the bill before we begin debate?

Ms. Lund: Yes, please.

Mr. Trivers: Great idea, Chair.

Ms. Lund: The premise of what we're trying to do here is pretty straightforward.

There's more information available today than there was when the *Climate Leadership Act* was introduced and the current target brings us to carbon neutralities 15 years after the evidence tells us that we must if we want to avoid the worst effects of climate change.

When we discussed this last time, there was broad consensus around the science, the fact that our current target is insufficient, and the need to reach carbon neutrality by 2050. The steps that were being taken so far were also acknowledged, as was the need to do much more.

There seems to be some desire to continue speeding towards 2050 at a pace that scientists tell us would be dangerous and then hit the brakes around 2030 if new braking systems reveal themselves.

I'd ask members to first ask themselves if that sort of intergenerational gamble is something that we, as leaders, can seriously advocate for. Or, if we will vote to follow the best evidence and start applying the brakes now.

Chair: The hon. Minister of Education and Lifelong Learning, Environment, Water and Climate Change.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Chair.

I just wanted to take that opening statement and look at that, because I think it illustrates a point that I want to make. And this idea that by potentially not supporting this amendment, we're taking a gamble with the future and that to me, that's not what this amendment is really about, in my opinion.

I mean, if you look at very specifically what you're doing and the clause you're trying to amend, you're looking at a clause that talks about tying the price on carbon, the carbon tax, for producers and consumers, to a greenhouse gas emission target, and this is a

target that you have said and admitted has changed. It's a moving target. Now, granted it seems to be getting stricter and stricter the further we go, right? But that's the problem, and this was the problem I had with the act initially, was putting this target like that specifically in the act.

A better target would be – we want to be a carbon-neutral society by 2050. Because that's actually what the end goal is. And there's a lot of work to be done I think, again, by your own admission, to figure out how we get from here to there. And whether this goal of 1.4 megatonnes versus 1.2 megatonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent by 2030 is going to make or break that is debatable.

What we want is that 2050 and we want to get there in a way that allows us to be successful, to make sure that we don't do irreparable damage to our climate in the interim time where we're reaching that.

So going back to some of the discussions we've had – and we've talked about those three questions; what are the solutions? What are the costs of the solutions? What is the best way to get there based on those things? So I really, really would like – and in fact, in your questions on the budget today, the budget estimates for environment, you were bringing out some more of those costs, which is great. That's what we need to look at.

There's a whole variety of ways that we can reduce the GHG emissions. I mean, today we're talking about reforestation, right? And you're saying: How much does it cost and what's actually the cost per tonne of carbon that we're sequestering, et cetera?

I would love to put a more – I will choose my words carefully here – a broader target or that end point in there and then let's really have, I'll call it fulsome again, a fulsome discussions; a very thorough, comprehensive discussion about what the costs are and really debate that, and really debate how we're going to get there because I don't feel comfortable with right now tying our plans to a carbon tax, or a carbon price in this case, a price on carbon. I think that's putting the cart before the horse. We don't know that yet until we do that analysis that you put forward, right?

You say we've got to determine the costs. Let's look at the costs per tonne, let's look at the alternatives and then find out.

My question to you in the end is: Would you once again consider taking this to a standing committee – and maybe it's a special standing committee that studies only climate change and our plan? Would you consider doing that?

Ms. Lund: Minister, there's a couple of comments that I would like to make to you on this and I would like to this as the minister responsible for climate change, that you're not so ideologically opposed to the idea of a carbon tax; that when you do the carbon abatement costs, if it does in fact turn out to be more affordable and a more conducive way of reaching the targets that we need, that you wouldn't oppose it because of the word 'tax.'

Patrick Lévêque : If I could add a little bit – there has been some research done in Canada on the abatement costs of different methods of carbon reduction.

One that comes to mind is from the eco-fiscal commission, one of the main groups of economists in Canada studying how to reduce emissions. They looked at; for example, the cost per tonne of the electric vehicle rebate program in Quebec, which currently is fairly high. It's at \$8,000, some variation of that, but roughly \$8,000 whereas the federal one is \$5,000.

But the abatement cost of that measure was estimated at about \$395 per tonne of reduced carbon, whereas carbon pricing is far lower. It's actually lower than the estimated social costs of carbon at the moment. It would be less than \$40 per tonne. I mean, not to say that everything that is being proposed here, because there is all sorts of other measures being proposed here – that research needs to be done here as well to determine, but research in the rest of Canada has definitely suggested that carbon pricing is by a long shot, the cheapest way to reduce emissions.

Chair: Minister?

Mr. Trivers: As you say, these are estimates and I think there's room for debate

and discussion about the abatement cost and determining what's one of those should be on the table, which ones shouldn't be on the table.

There is some of that, I'm going to throw this out here, that are potentially subjective, as opposed to objective when it comes to looking at the scope of abatement cost. I'm going to throw that out there. Would you agree with that?

Ms. Lund: It depends particularly on which ones you're looking at, we can do the math on most abatement costs.

The social cost of carbon is something that could be more subjective, it depends on what you take under the scope but when we're talking about things like carbon tax, we can talk about what exact dollars were adding to this. Do you have something you'd like to add to that, Patrick?

Patrick Lévêque: Yeah, using the social cost of carbon as well, is as you say, it's not an exact science so to say, there is quite a bit of uncertainty in it but the number that was cited I think earlier of \$45 per tonne is the average estimate, but the document that I believe was tabled here awhile ago from Environment and Climate Change Canada, there technical document on the social cost of carbon also gives the higher range estimate which is substantially higher.

There you'd be looking at, opposed to \$45 as the average, the higher estimate kind of reflects the damage that could be caused if some of the extreme scenarios turn out to be more accurate but I think as we discussed before, is often the case. That higher cost instead of \$45, you're looking at \$190. The range goes quite a bit higher than \$45, that's just an average.

Ms. Lund: When it comes to moving this to a standing committee minister, I think that we have to first understand what it is we want the standing committee to consider and we talk a lot about common sense in this Legislature, I think the common sense thing to do is to set a target that's on track with what all the science tells us we need to have and then once we've set that target, I am entirely comfortable with the idea of issuing a special committee to examine the most

effective way to get there is, how we can reach that goal together. We can have all parties involved in that decision, everybody can share the responsibility and the credit for the work that's done with it, but we have to first tell them what they need to get to.

Chair: The hon. Minister of Environment, Water and Climate Change.

Mr. Trivers: Yes, so we're all here collectively representing Islanders, Prince Edward Islanders and any target we set has to represent them as well, right. There are a lot of different opinions out there and I do appreciate your comments about, we have to be a leader.

I don't believe it's up to us necessarily to tell Islanders that this is the target we're going to set because even if it is, as strong evidence as you have, because that's what the United Nations paper said, or the report said.

Ms. Lund: Yeah, the IPCC reports

Mr. Trivers: So even if it says that, I think we need to have, we owe it to Islanders to have that really detailed discussion about what it means when we're setting targets like that and to do that you have to understand the costs involved. For example, and it's all tied up again in the carbon pricing and the way the federal government defines that and you're talking about percentages below 2005 levels and things like that

Ms. Lund: I'm not; I'm talking about percentages below 2010 levels.

Mr. Trivers: You are, but the federal government has it in the Paris Accord and that sort of thing right?

So it's a bit of a moving target even the way that's defined right, in some ways. Because as we've talked about before, Prince Edward Island, I had already taken a lot of measures to reduce our carbon emissions before they brought in that target, which is percentage based, which means we start already at a lower point.

So I think it's really important that every member in this House, as a representative of

Islanders and all Islanders understand when we set a target, what we're going to be asking people to do.

Other things that come into that consideration, for example, the fact that the way carbon pricing is defined right now, is when we lower our electricity usage, our power usage because our power is coming from New Brunswick, they're the ones who are getting the credit for that, right.

We can do a lot of really good work here but somebody else who ends up getting the benefit in the short term. I know what you're saying; long term we have to make progress on this issue and I don't think that's an argument from anybody in this chamber, that long term we don't have to make progress.

But it's important if we want buy in from Islanders, that they understand exactly what we're doing, why we're setting the targets we're setting and what it's going to mean when we set that sort of target for us to get there.

That's why I'm suggesting we have those discussions and we don't rush to making changes, I mean, the act itself, of course the *Climate Leadership Act* and some of the other legislation and that changes because of it, most of us in the chamber can agree that was not a great approach.

We were talking about adding on a carbon tax, which was really a carbon tax to fuel and then talking about lowering the excise tax to reduce the amount of carbon tax we're paying.

We're talking about getting back any money that was taken in from that tax, through free licenses and reduced cost in registrations. I mean there's so much bundled up in this that I think, and every member of this House, like I said, needs to understand and the public needs to understand before we start changing our targets and that's why as a whole, I feel like we really need to look at this at a standing committee.

So I'm going to leave that there, that's my pitch as it were, not to you but as well to the House as a whole. Obviously to go to standing committee we do need unanimous consent and so if we can't go to standing

committee, my inclination right now, unless something changes in the debate today, is I probably won't be supporting the amendment but that's where I'm standing.

Ms. Lund: I would love to respond to that quickly, minister, if I may.

I think that it's important that you recognize that even if we don't get the opportunity to say that we're lowering our emissions by creating clean energy here but we aren't the ones reaping the benefit, that's just misinformation.

The more we can do to have local self reliance when it comes to energy, Islanders very much are reaping the benefits of that, as we find ourselves in a less stable climate, we're going to find power outages are more common. The more we can do to have local access to energy is critical. I agree that we have to let people know what we are asking them to do, as the hon.

As the minister responsible for climate change, I would think that you would see part of your role as educating the public, not that our job is to not inform them or to be hesitant with setting targets that are ambitious.

We have to have an honest conversation with Islanders and I would hope that as the hon. minister who's responsible for this, you would understand that.

Do you have something you'd like to add to that?

Chair: We have somebody else waiting to speak so perhaps hon. minister, I can come back to you after we go back through the list.

Thank you, minister.

Leader of the Official Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Chair.

I'll start with picking up on something that the hon. Minister responsible for Climate Change just mentioned about if we reduce our electricity use then New Brunswick gets the credit for that.

What we need to do is actually increase our electricity use, we need to electrify all kinds of systems here, including our transportation system or increasingly our home heating system and we're starting on that. But, as we electrify things we also have to de-carbonize the way that we create that electricity, so our electricity use is not going to go down. If we're going to get to carbon neutrality, inevitably our electricity use has to go up. So, that won't happen.

Just to go back to some more general things, the purpose of this amendment, as I understand it is to bring us in line with the IPCC goals, could you explain a little bit about the differences between the Paris Agreement goals and the IPCC goals and why you think it's necessary for us to comply with the IPCC rather than the Paris?

Ms. Lund: The Paris Accord came out first and at that point it had us on a target to reach carbon neutrality by 2065, if my memory is correct on that. At the time, we were maintaining two degrees of warming.

Science believed that we could do that and still manage safely; we now know that is absolutely not the case. The most recent report from the IPCC came out and made it perfectly clear that if we exceed 1.5 degrees of warming, we run the risk of reaching runaway catastrophic climate change where you have self-accelerating climate change.

We have no idea where we are going to hit that tipping point and lose control of that so in the interest of proceeding with caution and recognizing that this would be an enormous intergenerational gamble, the IPCC report says we must limit global warming to 1.5 degrees.

Patrick Lévêque: If I could also throw some numbers in here as well.

Ms. Lund: Please.

Patrick Lévêque: So just to get an idea of the difference, the Paris Agreement targets were based on a reduction of emissions – or a goal of 30% reduction of 2005 levels by 2030 which it equals a rate of -.04 megatonnes per year so you average that out in a line, it gets you to 2065.

The IPCC used a slightly different metric, rather than 2005 levels they used 2010 levels by a reduction of 45%, which is slightly more rapid goal than what is in this bill – that works out to a steeper reduction between now and 2030 and then a more gradual reduction afterwards and I think that's probably recognizing that there are a lot of existing technologies that we can exploit now.

Easy things that are here or very close, things like electric vehicles, battery storage which price is plummeting right now with the next few years, all that will be widely available.

Whereas recognizing that some of the longer term challenges might remain around things like aviation, certain aspects of agriculture, things like that. So it's anticipating that those will take longer to transition away from.

That takes us to carbon neutrality at that rate of decline. So they have the more accelerated rate by 2030 but still carbon neutrality by 2050, this bill just evens all that out to a –

Ms. Lund: Steady decline.

Patrick Lévêque: – a steady rate of reduction which, well it's .06 megatonnes reduction per year versus the current act which is .04 per year.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thanks, Chair.

I want talk a little about benchmarks along the way between now and 2050 and I heard the minister suggest that we should not have any benchmarks if I understood his argument correctly between now and 2050 –

Mr. Trivers: – I said discuss (Indistinct) –

Chair: Minister.

Leader of the Opposition: I'm wondering, we have a major renovation going on next door at Province House which is scheduled to be finished in 2021 I believe, it's been ongoing now for a number of years and I'm quite sure in their work plan they would've had benchmarks along the way that they had

to hit in order to be on schedule to be finished in 2021.

One of my concerns about not having any benchmarks whatsoever between now and 2050 is –

Mr. Trivers: That's not what I said.

Premier King: We do have benchmarks.

Chair: The leader has the floor.

Leader of the Opposition: – is that how can we hold governments in the near future to account if the only time we're going to actually measure whether we got there is in 2050.

Do you want to comment on that? I'd be absolutely happy to have an intervention if I misheard or misinterpreted what the minister said.

Chair: Intervention for the hon. Minister of Environment, Water and Climate Change.

Mr. Trivers: Yes, what I said was we've already determined that the actual targets are changing, but I also said we need to have a conversation about the targets to make sure Islanders and the members in this House know exactly what we need when we say we are setting a target.

For example if we go from 1.4 megatonnes per year to 1.2 megatonnes per year, we need to understand, because we're all voting on this on behalf of Islanders, that we know exactly what that means and what the ramifications of that are.

Frankly, I'm not sure we all do.

There's limited ways that we have to do that and if we're going to have that honest conversation with Islanders, let's have it in a standing committee and let's do that before we set targets that perhaps we'll look back on and say: man oh man, I'm not sure we were actually on board with that.

It's about getting all the information out in the open so that everybody understands what's going on. Then, in the standing committee, yes let's approve that with those targets and maybe we need more targets

than just one 2030, maybe we need one in 2025, one 2030, one in 2035 as well.

Ms. Lund: You can go first.

Patrick Lévêque: I'll point out –

Sorry Chair.

Chair: No, that's okay.

Patrick Lévêque: I'll point out –

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct)

Patrick Lévêque : Sorry, Chair.

Chair: That's okay.

Patrick Lévêque: The targets that are being amended through this bill would be in the purpose of the act, so it's not in itself going to have a direct impact. What will have an impact is how the government and how the Legislature as a whole and how it implements those.

The costs that will trickle down from this, if you will, will be entirely dependent on the choices that are made by deposit and the Legislature.

I'm not sure that having the discussion in committee – I'm just not sure what the discussion in committee would find without having a firm goal in place.

Chair: You had an intervention minister, if I could just come back to the Leader of the Opposition and then if you want to answer further, you can at that time.

Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Chair.

Of course we're talking about global climate here. There's been much discussion and I think the member who's defending the bill talked about the tragedy of the comments and the comments at length during the last discussion, and some decisions governmentally, democratically are made at a very local level, land use planning, for example, I think is entirely appropriate to be controlled at the municipal level.

When it comes to things like immigration and defense, those things are done at a national level – but for a really solid, successful assault to be made on climate change, that has to be at a global level.

There's a lot of discussion about: it's Prince Edward Island, we're tiny, we're the smallest province in Canada. We make up 0.5% of the population. Canada is the small producer of carbon emissions anyway, so why should we knock ourselves out? What about the cost, as the minister says, isn't this going to be a real hardship for Islander?

I'm wondering, I think Canada sits in the top 10 in terms of our tonnage. Well maybe I should ask you: Where does Canada sit in terms of complete tonnage, where do we sit in terms of per capita emissions and where does PEI sit within Canada in terms of per capita emissions?

Ms. Lund: In the world, I think we're – go ahead.

Patrick Lévêque: I don't have the exact numbers here in front of me, but before coming on the floor last time I was looking at some up-to-date numbers.

Canada in terms of gross emissions, not per capita, gross emissions, we are 9th in the world. Now, that is taking in that calculation, the European union has all bundled into one, so they're like 4th or 5th or something, so there may be – it's roughly – depends on how you define a country, I suppose.

In terms of per capita, I'm not sure the up-to-date numbers but typically we're higher again behind the U.S. And Australia, Canada is right up behind one of the – probably in the top 5 globally, consistently.

PEI, it depends on how you measure it. There are some measures that show PEI being the lowest per capita in the country. I think that generally takes out the – basically there are other measures that show PEI more middle or high in the pack within provinces when the emissions of our electricity that we import are added to that calculation.

So basically, there are different ways to measure it, but that's kind of the general pattern.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you.

Chair, can I have one more?

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you.

I think there are 174 countries in the EU signed onto the Paris Agreement in 2016. I want to keep coming back to our collective responsibility globally, and our local responsibility here as a distinct jurisdiction in Prince Edward Island to do our bit to contribute to this.

We haven't talked this evening; I think it was mentioned last time about the vulnerability of Prince Edward Island as a jurisdiction when it comes to climate change. I think you mentioned it this morning actually, member, when you were talking about the threats to agriculture as we currently know it here.

I'm wondering whether in all of the calculations that you have done or that you have, and I realize that it's a little bit difficult to calculate this accurately, but if we were to continue on our current trajectory what the average annual costs are to Prince Edward Island?

We have the \$53 million of crop insurance costs last year; we have the ongoing issues with rainfall patterns and erosions of our coastlines, spread of Lyme disease, for example, which is a burden to the health care system, and on and on and on.

Is there a – and I think you mentioned this earlier – is there a calculated cost for – and I'm not going to call it inaction, because it isn't inaction – but carrying on on our current trajectory?

Ms. Lund: Do you happen to know if there is a figure on that?

What is the estimated social cost of carbon by –

Patrick Lévêque: So if you use the social cost of carbon, the average of roughly \$45 per tonne, you multiply that by PEI's emissions you get a figure a little over \$80 million a year at the current cost.

Now, you know that's sort of a national figure. I wouldn't say that that would necessarily perfectly apply to PEI, but that's a rough estimate because I don't know the actual – I don't have any actual figures for PEI.

Ms. Lund: But what I would say is that there's an opportunity cost in transitioning early. There's actually a lot to be gained for an economy to be an early adopter.

Countries that are choosing to be early adopters are finding economic benefit. Farmers will be far better positioned if we do early adoption policies on Prince Edward Island.

I think we can safely say that we will save a significant amount of money by doing this soon, and then beyond, that we also stand to benefit from lowering our carbon.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Chair.

I have more, but go around.

Chair: I appreciate that, Leader of the Opposition.

The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton.

Mr. Hammarlund: Well first of all, I take issue with the minister of environment wanting to go back to the population.

I think, I feel I was elected to take care of problems like this. I think it's a really, really complex problem.

I'm not saying we shouldn't look to our constituents to see about how to work out the details, but I feel it's beyond going back. It's too difficult to get most people to understand what goes on, it's really complicated. I feel we are the leaders; we should make the right decisions now.

Then I get the feeling from scientists as well as from people out there, including the people that stand in front of our stairs when we come in here once in a while, there's an urgency to it. It's kind of a little bit ridiculous really to spend hours discussing whether it's like 65 or 2065 or 2050.

We need to do something now.

What we have on the table from the government is virtually nothing. The federal Liberal carbon tax was a total screw-up and basically gave everybody a bad taste as to whether you're on one side or another.

Here we are spending good tax payers' money to pay the federal carbon tax makes no sense at all. Meanwhile, we're driving cars like there's no tomorrow.

Lynne has a number. The biggest area where we need to reduce – the biggest opportunity to reduce carbon emissions is with the cars, and there's nothing on the table that helps do that. I don't think.

Free driver's licenses or a few charge up stations aren't going to make any difference. We need a carbon tax. I think it's branded wrong. You should brand it as a carbon grant, and then, politicians and people like grants.

If you use the proposal that Peter put forward there's a grant –

Chair: Could I get you please to use the district titles or ministries, rather than names.

Mr. Hammarlund: Sorry.

Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Hammarlund: Okay. I thought you were allowed.

Chair: No, no, no.

Mr. Hammarlund: Okay. My apologies.

The Green Party came forward with a plan that would give a grant, say a \$1000 grant, you know roughly speaking depending on the – to people that would make up for the increase price of the carbon that's experienced in taxes.

So the net effect would be no increase. So if the driver, the much talked about driver from Tignish was hit with a carbon grant tax like that, it wouldn't make any difference, you could drive as before if you wanted to.

But the point is that the only way you're going to reduce the use of carbon is to increase the cost of it.

The reason that not much happens here in the North America in terms of – like we have to go to Germany or a place that's not even cold there – it's about the same temperature there as in New York City or something like that – yet they're the ones that invent Passive Houses, which is like the gold standard for housing because energy is twice the cost there.

The key to reducing the energy is to increase the cost by a lot and to do it right now. If you do it right like with a well-designed carbon grant, carbon tax, I think it will be palatable to people and the higher price of the gasoline gives a lot more choices.

Like for instance, if the Tignish driver spent \$3,000 a year driving a car back and forth to Summerside, if carbon grants increases the cost to \$4,000. That's an extra \$1,000. He'll get a \$1,000 grant.

Anything he does to save taxes will have a lot higher return. For instance, if he gets a ride with somebody, instead of saving \$3,000, now he saves \$5,000. He saves the increased taxes plus the grant, so he saves \$5,000 as opposed to \$3,000. Same thing if he buys just a car that uses less gas, he will save a lot more than he did before.

Sorry, I'm carrying on. I think I'm taking too much time. I just had to get it out.

Chair: You have a question, the hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton? You have a question?

Mr. Hammarlund: I guess I wanted to ask Lynne –

Chair: Can you use the Member from Summerside-Wilmot.

Mr. Hammarlund: So ask the –

Chair: The member.

Mr. Hammarlund: The member of Summerside, is it not true that cars are the one item that uses the most – emits the most carbon on PEI right now?

Ms. Lund: I don't know if I could say cars in particular emits the most carbon –

Mr. Hammarlund: Transportation.

Ms. Lund: Transportation certainly does. It breaks down into a number of different sectors.

One thing that you mentioned, member that I would just slightly disagree with: I actually think the federal Liberal's carbon plan was pretty decent. That's just not what we ended up with.

We ended up with an amendment to that on this that was significantly different and subsidized driver's licenses, but that's not what the federal plan is meant to do.

Mr. Hammarlund: Oh, I agree. Initially, it was good. It was the particular way it worked in PEI.

I'm sorry, I should stop.

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

Mr. Howard: Thank you, Chair.

I just wanted to respond to some comments that happened in the previous debate as well, and one of the comments was: Well, what if Alberta doesn't hop on board, are we doing this all for naught? Well, Alberta has got oil. PEI has beaches, which means we have lots of wind and sun; and to go along with that, we have some high-capacity underwater cables.

I suppose my comments are just around the worst that could happen is PEI ends up an energy powerhouse and creates a bunch of jobs and local resiliency and becomes a leader in the world. That doesn't sound too bad if Alberta does pull out there.

I'd also like to respond to the notion of: Well, carbon-neutral by 2050's a fine target. The IPCC goals are 45% of 2010 by 2030, then 0% by 2050, essentially. I mean, we've got 10 years to achieve the first goal, which is getting us halfway there, essentially. It sounds like to me like it's a race where you have to sprint for the first bit and then you have a little bit of time to slow down and take your time after the fact. You wouldn't

really be able to do it the other way around. You're probably going to lose the race. Is that right?

Ms. Lund: Yeah. You and I were actually just talking about this recently. There's some indicators on early adoption versus later adoption. Did you want to speak to that?

Patrick Lévêque: Sure. I guess the qualifier with this is that the – I'm looking through the IPCC's summary for the 1.5-degree report, the summary for policy makers, and it's quite clear in this that – see if I can find the right lines here – that basically, the cost to reduce emissions in the short term is probably less than if we delay.

Part of that is that there are significant risks of things like cost escalation. If we don't do certain actions now, then we'll be locked into higher carbon-emitting things like power plants or things that we build now that'll last for 30 or 40 years.

Now, that will obviously depend on the local context. So what's true on the global scale might not be specifically true on PEI, which is why we need to develop our own plan here, which has been done. I'm not sure if I –

Ms. Lund: Yeah.

Patrick Lévêque: – answered the question.

Ms. Lund: That was exactly, yes, thank you.

Chair: You're finished?

Ms. Lund: Okay.

Chair: The hon. Minister of Fisheries and Communities.

Mr. Fox: Thank you, Chair.

I feel like we're skating around the issue. We're talking about dropping from 1.4 megatonnes down to 1.2, and nobody wants to talk about what that actually means. So I've heard conversations like having an honest conversation. I've heard things say: Let the minister educate. What are we educating on?

What is the actual meaning for dropping from 1.4 to 1.2? Does that mean I have to turn my lights off at 10:00 p.m. every night? Does that mean I can't take my kids to a hockey program around the province? Does that mean I can only drive my car on certain days a week? What are we actually talking about between 1.4 and 1.2? It's not funny.

Ms. Lund: I agree.

Mr. Fox: You're asking – but you're smirking! – you're asking us –

Ms. Lund: No, no, I agree it's not funny, what you're saying.

Mr. Fox: You're asking us to do something and vote on a bill without knowing what all the facts are.

Ms. Lund: And minister, one thing that you have just hit on the head that I think is so important goes right back to the announcement that the other Minister for Environment, Water and Climate Change made today, on how there's going to be two streams of education, one that is particularly for policy makers.

I find it so concerning how many people are in the position to be making decisions, are in leadership roles, who are in charge of steering at a time that we're in a climate crisis, who clearly do not understand the implications of it. I find that absolutely terrifying, minister. I agree with you entirely.

We are having a debate on whether or not we pump the brakes at a time that we are about to head into a climate catastrophe, and the people in the room don't all understand it. So it's incredibly important that we do have programs like this that tell us that, no, when we're talking about climate mitigation and climate adaptation, it doesn't mean you have to turn off your lights. It doesn't mean that.

It might mean that we're talking about more energy-efficient light bulbs, but that in and of itself, isn't going to be lowering our emissions. It means having a real plan. It means creating more windmills, it means converting to greater amounts of localized energy. It often means considering active

and passive transportation. It means putting in systems that allow people to continue to have a good quality of life, but in a way that is low carbon, and it's happening in other places, minister, these people are not sitting in the dark.

Patrick Lévêque: If I could add –

Ms. Lund: Please.

Patrick Lévêque: I think on maybe more concrete terms, what this would look like from within government, in particular, I would think it would mean we need to scale up a little bit the programs going on in Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy and in other departments that help people transition away from carbon-emitting vehicles or heat sources, whatever. An increase in those programs would probably – or an expansion, either new programs or more aggressive programs, would probably be what it looks like from the point of view of a government.

Chair: The hon. Minister of Fisheries and Communities.

Mr. Fox: Thank you.

So have you done any research into what actually the Department of Fisheries and Communities is doing to reduce carbon or initiatives that we're actually working on within the department, or have been working on in the department, in the last two or three years?

Ms. Lund: You're asking me if I have research –

Mr. Fox: I'm asking you that question.

Ms. Lund: – for your department?

Mr. Fox: Yep. Have you done any research into my department on what we are doing to try to reduce carbon and make things more greener within the industry and the Department of Fisheries and Communities?

Ms. Lund: Minister, I would say that's outside the scope of this bill.

Patrick Lévêque: (Indistinct)

Mr. Fox: I don't think we're –

Ms. Lund: If you would like to tell me about what you're doing, then I'm more than happy to hear it.

Mr. Fox: Well, that's what I'm (Indistinct) – this is getting to my point. We're putting in a target from 1.4 down to 1.2, and I don't think we know the whole story of what's going on, and going to what the minister of climate change and environment is saying, is I'd like to see this go before a standing committee and learn from what each department is doing.

We're doing work in aquaculture research. We have the AFA, the AFF fund now, which is to – with a couple of other programs we're going to be rolling out to help industry move to help industry move to more sustainable, environmental, cleaner ways, and I think we need to know what everybody's doing in every department to reduce carbon or to improve the environment, and I don't see this doing that.

Ms. Lund: One thing that I will say first – if I can, I just need to – is that I may not be able to tell you significantly or list every single program that's happening. What we do know is what our emission numbers are right now, and we do know that the emission numbers that we have right now are not on track for a stable climate.

So you could certainly give me the list of the things that you're doing. I could tell you that right now, the science is telling us what we're doing is not enough. Did you want to add to that?

Patrick Lévêque: So I might just add, to the minister, and the other part of his department as well in the community side, there's a lot going on at the municipal level with support of all levels of government, Summerside being kind of one of the leading examples in the country of how a community can convert to a – to reduce its carbon.

Looking at just renewable energy alone of nearly 50% penetration, leading the country there, that's led at the local level, and there's a lot of innovation going on at that level as well that is actively going on, and that's not necessarily guided by the province or any goals other than just knowing the general case of – or the issue of climate change that

needs to be dealt with and everyone's contributing their part.

Chair: The hon. Minister of Fisheries and Communities.

Mr. Fox: Thanks, Chair.

So there you go. Listening to what you just said for the last 30 seconds, you have not told me how we are going to get there to that target. How are we going to get to the target from 1.4 to 1.2 in 11 years? That's what I want to know. Does it mean take 50,000 cars off the road? Does it mean turning off the lights in a dairy farm at X hour? What's it actually mean?

Ms. Lund: So –

Patrick Lévêque: If I could, I think this goes back to what I said earlier, that we can't say exactly how that will happen; we don't know the answer.

What will happen will depend on the decision that government makes, so if the government decides that it wants to take all the cars off the road, which frankly I don't think anybody would say that's a realistic idea. Obviously we're not going to do that, but whatever government decides is the best way to do it, I mean, that's what will happen.

Ms. Lund: So, minister, to put another way, there isn't just one way to reach this goal. There are a multitude of ways we can reach this goal and anyone who has had any experience in planning would say that step one, is you set the goal and step two, is you examine all of the possible pathways you have to get there, then you can cost out those pathways and determine what one is the most effective

Mr. Fox: So, Chair?

Chair: Minister, if I could ask you for just one more, half the House is on the list so it would be great if we could move on.

Thank you.

Mr. Fox: Sure.

So going back to what you just said, do you have any suggestions on how we're going to

need to target? Any suggestions what so over?

Ms. Lund: Absolutely. The hon. Premier is correct; I do have many suggestions on that.

My current suggestion as I've put forward to the House tonight, I'm not sure if you heard me say this, I think step one is we set a target; a target that science tells us we need to and then I would suggest we strike a special committee on climate change and we come back to the House with the most appropriate pathway and I think the hon. Premier would agree with me that that's a sensible solution.

Chair: The hon. member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Deagle: Thanks, Chair.

I appreciate you bringing this issue forward because I know it's a good discussion to have.

I guess I'm wondering, just because of the kind of way it's worded, I think to reach that target we need to – well it's a price on carbon.

Do you guys have the calculation of what that price would need to be on carbon to reach that goal that you want to set it at?

Ms. Lund: That's a great question and I appreciate that, thank you.

I would say that carbon pricing is one piece of the puzzle when it comes to how we're going to handle –

Mr. Deagle: I'm sorry, can you say that again?

Ms. Lund: Absolutely, I would agree with you.

I think it's a great question and carbon pricing is part of it. So, I think that setting a price on carbon is important but then you have to match that with other actions. So the price of carbon as its set right now, I believe is \$20 a ton, set to go up \$10 a year, every year after? Is that what the federal benchmark has it as?

Patrick Lévêque: Yeah.

Ms. Lund: In so doing, it's a price signal. So that's not where you stop, you then work to make sure there is more public transit. You may put in place policies that encourage people to car pool. You may put out grants for different communities to engage in contests to lower their emissions.

You can do all kinds of other things at the same time, but when you pay the true cost of carbon along side of that, you're not artificially keeping the cost of carbon low, so it actually encourages people to move along.

A Nobel prize winner recently won by putting forward his thesis on how carbon pricing is the most effective way to lower emissions, so I don't have an exact figure on what it needs to be, but I think a carbon price is part of that story.

Patrick Lévêque: I might add to that as well that carbon pricing whether a carbon tax or a cap and trade system or some combination thereof, it is very much the emerging global best practice, kind of the paradigm that's coming around.

Most countries in the world either have one in place or are actively considering or have planned one. I forget the exact number, it increase every year but I think we're probably, I'm looking for it in here, I can't remember the exact figure.

Anyways, the point is that carbon pricing, as the main policy, is what's emerging across the world paired with complimentary policies that help for example, address local, particular variations. So in an agriculture place, we might have particular supports for farmers, that for example, an urban place might not need that kind of thing.

So you have different policies based on what you have and to make up for potential short falls and other things, so you get kind of a broader package of policies that do the job.

Chair: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Deagle: I guess I'm trying to get to the, so you don't have an idea of what the price per ton on carbon you think it needs to be at? Like do you think its \$100 or do you think it's –

Premier King: What does the report call?

Ms. Lund: I don't know –

Mr. Deagle: Yeah, does the report call for?

Patrick Lévêque: It would depend on the particular means of policies that any particular government would choose to go with. There are some estimates, I think from the INF a few years ago that we were estimating that it could go well above \$100 a ton, in the long term but I believe the research in Canada that the federal backstop was based on suggested price increasing by \$10 a ton, as it is now up to \$50 a ton but beyond that as well.

That's the research; the federal plan does not actually do that. It has been renegotiated at that point, so I guess it'll evaluate how effective it is and go from there.

Ms. Lund: One thing I would add to that hon. Member, is we were speaking with the hon. Minister on Climate Change today and I had asked him questions about the carbon abatement cost for his tree planting program, I'd be interested to see what that number comes back at per tonne, it's probably more than \$100 a tonne for carbon emissions.

Chair: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Deagle: Ok, so you're saying that it's going to have to be over \$100 a tonne, so right now it's at \$20.

Ms. Lund: We actually didn't say that it would have to be over \$100 a tonne.

Mr. Deagle: Well you did just say that it's going to have to be over \$100.

I'm just wondering when the carbon tax came in, when the Federal Liberals brought it in, I think gas went up, it was about four cents a litre and then they dropped it here cents so it actually only went up one cent.

But do you know how much the price of gas will have to go up when we're over \$100 a ton to meet this target that you want to set?

Patrick Lévêque: I don't have those numbers in front of me.

Mr. Deagle: Well, it's a lot.

Patrick Lévêque: As I said before though, that projected cost there are various estimates on that. Some higher and some lower, there are some as well who might say it should line up with the social cost of carbon, so more of \$40-70, depending on...

Ms. Lund: I would also point out that that's assuming we did nothing else along side of it. You will see those prices start to shift around with the other sweet of policies that go along with it, which is why I think all hon. members should be part of that decision.

We should have a discussion in a standing committee if we know what the target we need to get to is because the cost of not meeting those targets is exorbitant, I don't know if you've done any of the research into that.

Mr. Deagle: Yeah, I watch the news a lot.

Ms. Lund: If we exceed 1.5 degrees of warming, it's not going to be more cost effective to drive your car.

Chair: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Deagle: I certainly know that the consequences of not doing anything, but I think it's unrealistic that we need to drive. We're basically saying that if we don't do anything on PEI the world is going to overeat and obviously we want to do our part. I would certainly go buy an electric car tomorrow if I could afford to, but right now I can't. So a carbon tax, which your saying has to be – you said, Patrick, really over \$100 a ton if we really want to meet the target you're setting.

The price of gas is going to be phenomenally high; I'm not sure how people can afford it. We're talking over two dollars a liter. If it went up four cents at \$10 a tonne, it's going to go up a lot.

Right now, I think it's 60% of our two cents per 10?

Ms. Lund: That's right.

Mr. Deagle: Yeah? So it's going to go up a lot.

Right now, Islanders really – you buy an electric car but most people can't afford it. I right now still wouldn't be able to afford it, I think some of them, it depends on which one you buy but some of them are around \$40,000 plus and at the 60% of our, I think is it 60% of our emissions right now are through transportation?

Are we going to have to take all cars off the road to get this done?

Ms. Lund: Absolutely not.

I think my colleague here actually already addressed that. There are a number of ways that you can lower your emissions if you just looked at what's in our current climate change strategy and the energy strategy, if we did all of our things that are in that at an accelerated pace, we would get ourselves a long way there and that doesn't involve taking all of the cars off the road. So I think that feels a bit like fear mongering, to be honest with you, when we start having language around \$100 per litre –

Mr. Deagle: Well that's what you said.

Patrick Lévêque: If I could clarify that a little bit, the research out there is not saying to put in a cost of \$100 a tonne tomorrow. It's talking about building up at the \$10 per tonne every year, so you're talking about you might get to that in 10 years.

Ms. Lund: Which would be an additional rate of two cents a liter per year.

Patrick Lévêque: There are also –

Ms. Lund: So that's –

Patrick Lévêque: Well, yeah, and it's important to keep in context the actual increase on the price of fuel.

I mean, we regularly get swings of five or six cents just based on the market, which is far more than the carbon price.

Ms. Lund: And it's never resulted in people pulling all the cars off the road.

Patrick Lévêque: Well actually, there has been –

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Ms. Lund: But I'm not advocating for all the cars to go off the road.

Patrick Lévêque: Chair?

Chair: The, the –

Patrick Lévêque: The guest?

Chair: Mr. Lévêque has the floor.

Patrick Lévêque: Thank you.

Premier King: We think.

Chair: Allegedly.

Patrick Lévêque: If you look at research kind of going further back in energy costs and patterns of people purchasing cars or any vehicles, go back to like the 70s and the price shocks then or in the 90s when – there's a direct correlation between the price of fuel and the efficiency that – what types of cars people purchase.

So when the price of fuel goes up, the purchases of SUVs and larger, higher emitting vehicles go down. So the price signal does, in fact, work. There's a lot of research to back that up.

The other thing I wanted to point out is when we're talking about the longer term implementation of a carbon price, you also have to keep in mind that I was reading, I think just last week, that for electric vehicles, they are, indeed, now in the \$40-45,000 range for one with roughly the same range as a gasoline vehicle.

The estimates are that within the next four to five years electric vehicles will be cost competitive. So basically the next generation of electric vehicles will cost the same, roughly, as a gasoline car.

So by the time the cost of fuel gets high, gets significantly high due to carbon pricing, there will be many more alternatives on the road, which will make the cost of driving actually quite a bit cheaper.

Ms. Lund: And those price signals become all the more effective, don't they?

Chair: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir, can you ask your final question so we can move on to the rest of the list.

Mr. Deagle: So you just kind of mentioned before the price of fuel becomes significantly high, so how high would you like to see it? Or when do you think this will be happening?

Patrick Lévêque: High as it needs to go to reduce our emissions, I suppose. I don't know.

Ms. Lund: I feel like we have gone over this point, member. I'm not sure exactly what you would like me to say.

Mr. Deagle: I'm sorry, Chair.

I'm just curious. I'm asking if you know what the price on carbon will need to be to meet this goal, which you said you're not sure, and I feel like we should probably know what that is before we just set a target. Which we already have a target set, and before we change it, so what – I guess, you know, people – we don't need to, you know, tax people to death to change the way we do things.

We can change the way we do things through initiatives, you know, perhaps an initiative to help buy an electric car, those types of things. Why do we just need to – let's just jack the price of carbon and the price of gas, and hopefully it will make everything better.

I don't think it's going to happen.

Ms. Lund: I think you have misunderstood, member.

Mr. Deagle: You mentioned before the price of gas is significantly high. I'm just curious what price would you like to see gas at?

Patrick Lévêque: So I think as I've said before, the price that a carbon tax or cap and trade carbon price, the level it would need to get to would depend on the overall mix of policies used.

If, for example, it was the only policy used, which is not the recommendation, then it would indeed, be quite high if it's the only mechanism being relied on.

As we know, there are all sort, a whole plethora of initiatives that government has rolled out and is continuing to roll out more and more.

Mr. Deagle: Starting with?

Patrick Lévêque: Sorry?

There are all sorts of initiatives going on. The more – basically if we can we can find the optimal mix of things then the carbon price may not have to rise as high as if you relied on it exclusively.

The other thing I would also point out, as I think I did earlier, is that often these other sorts of initiatives like subsidies for electric vehicles actually cost more than a carbon price would. That's why we need to look at the full cost of these things and, well, ultimately, the government has to choose the things that best suit its agenda.

Ms. Lund: And I would just like to reiterate that two cents a litre a year is not probably accurately described as a jacking of the rate. It would be a very gradual increase, member.

Chair: The hon. Premier.

Premier King: Thank you, Chair.

And I do want to commend the Member from Summerside-Wilmot for bringing this forward.

One of the things I really like about being in the Legislature is this discussion. I think it's a very good discussion. I think it's been – this is the second time you've been on. It's been a very fulsome discussion.

For me, I think my own personal views have evolved over the last 10 or 15 years on this, and I hope will continue to evolve. I'd like to get it back to what we're actually debating, which is going from 1.4 to 1.2.

I think one of the questions or the comments I would make, I used to be a journalist and I used to be good at shorthand but I haven't

taken shorthand for a while. I believe Patrick said that when we talked about putting this to standing committee that we're not sure how that discussion, that committee, would take place without a hard target or something to that effect.

So I would argue and I would like to ask you, like, 1.4 would be a hard target, we're debating whether it's a hard enough target, but it is a target, right? I mean 1.4. That's currently there now?

Ms. Lund: I would agree. It's a target that has us on track for two degrees of warming, so I would have a hard time advocating for that.

Premier King: Oh, I understand, and I understand very much where you're coming from and you're doing a relatively good job of convincing me that this is the way to go.

I do this think that – let me ask you this, and I think I know the answer – so if we were at 1.2 for a target and just say something by 2025, we got there, we wouldn't stop, right? We would keep going.

Ms. Lund: Agreed.

Premier King: So to me the target is important and the goal is important, but I think it's more important that the actions we take as a body, as a government, or as a province, mean more to me than the 1.4 or the 1.2. Would you agree with that?

Ms. Lund: I would never oppose the idea of exceeding our targets.

Premier King: No, absolutely not.

Ms. Lund: I think that's wise, and if you would like to propose a friendly amendment to make my targets more strict, you will have my support, Premier.

Mr. MacEwen: (Indistinct)

Chair: Going once.

Ms. Lund: I have no objections to that whatsoever, but I think it's important that we have an honest conversation about it, and if we're going to bother having targets they should be credible targets. They should be based in science, and our current science

tells us that we need strict targets, more strict than what we currently have.

So I would love to have a discussion in the standing committee on the various ways that we could reach that goal, but I think step one is recognizing what the target needs to be.

Again, we'll take your friendly amendment.

Premier King: Sure. Just one more.

Chair: The hon. Premier.

Premier King: I know others want to speak on it.

I like the idea of a discussion in terms of what the action is, whether it's 1.4 or whether it's 1.2. To me I think it's high time, probably long past time, that we actually put the reasonable, concrete action into place to actually get to those goals.

I can't speak for the rest of my colleagues, but I'm going to have a hard time not supporting this. But as you can tell from some of my colleagues, we have spirited discussions in our caucus, which is a good thing.

I'm going to listen a little bit more, but you're convincing me a little bit. I would encourage you to continue.

Ms. Lund: Premier, I appreciate you saying that.

You and I had the pleasure of attending a ceremony at L'École-sur-Mer the other day, and I was struck during that ceremony that they made a speech on climate change. That they were talking about the young Swedish schoolgirl, Greta Thunberg.

I remember when we were graduating from high school nobody had to talk about climate change, and one thing that she has said is leaders are afraid to do this because they don't want to be unpopular.

We're saying these kids are going to change the world, and maybe they are, but we could probably help them out along the way.

I appreciate the fact that you're considering being a leader –

Premier King: I am already on board (Indistinct)

Ms. Lund: Thank you.

Premier King: Yes. Thank you.

Thank you, Chair.

Ms. Lund: Thank you.

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

Mr. Henderson: Thanks.

I've been listening to the debate with a lot of interest, actually, and I certainly appreciate some of the comments that the Premier said and I think you're doing actually a very good job Summerside-Wilmot of defending the case.

Ms. Lund: Thank you.

Mr. Henderson: I do sort of look at this issue as probably one of the greater issues of our time as a province of PEI and I've had the opportunity to speak in a couple of occasions, I think once in Tanzania and Ontario, the MLA Member from Evangeline-Miscouche and I were up to Ontario to speak to some of our colleagues there about the impact that climate change has on a small Island like Prince Edward Island, and in a more northerly climate.

I sort of hear some of the comments from the other side. It's almost like hearing, like, chicken little and the sky is falling, kind of scenario on this, but I always want to put this factor in place, is that there will be a cost no matter what happens— if nothing happens, there will be a cost.

I've been the minister of agriculture and I've seen what the impacts are on trying to grow a crop in this province when you get the extreme weather conditions. I'm certainly not an expert to know what actually causes all these things, but I'm a believer in science and carbon pricing seems to be a legitimate impact on having a way to mitigate, you know, impacts on carbon which have an impact on climate change.

The world has got together in Paris. The world has come up with a solution on

putting a price on carbon. To me it's not much good having a target if you are not going to hit the target – to make any achievable – it's like duck hunting and hitting the feathers. You didn't get anything. The duck didn't fall down here, so you have to try and figure this out somewhat. What

I've seen in my district is – maybe my colleagues on the other side aren't into duck hunting – nor am I, so maybe a bad a analogy. What I have seen in my district is, if you take a drive go by Milo today in that community, and take a look at the PEI department of forestry's forest reserve there. All the trees have pretty well blown out. It's a complete mess. That's a cost. Those trees aren't going to grow to be a harvestable – or you're going to have to go to try to get them out and it's going to be costlier to get those trees out of there. They become a fire hazard if we don't do something with them. That's an impact.

If you go to the West Point lighthouse – I had the Minister of Economic Development and Tourism out there – there is a cost to what's happened to that lighthouse. There is a cost to protect that lighthouse, it's one of our most premiere structures in this province. We're not going to just shut everything down just because some dunes have washed away. You have a cost of putting dunes back, and then you have a cost of protecting those dunes.

I see Bethany Collicutt-McNab in the audience there – but in West Cape there is a wind-proof home that went up under construction the Insurance Bureau of Canada assisted the homeowner that had a lot of wind damage on their property and they constructed a property that is supposed to be hurricane proof. That comes with a cost to those people. Not everybody can afford that, I get that, but if you don't do anything, there is a cost to that.

I was reading an article of the Insurance Bureau of Canada put out here not too awfully long ago and it says it's a stark figure when you look at a cost. Between 1983 and 2008 the Canadian Insurance Bureau of Canada membership paid out over \$400 million, which is nothing comparable to what it did in just the year 2016. One year they paid out 1.8 billion annually. That's just in Canada.

Now, we can say what the insurance bureau puts out on particular claims, so now we're at an average cost of 1.4 billion annually is what the Insurance Bureau of Canada is going to put out. That's just for the claims that the insurance company puts out. That has nothing to do with what your deductible is, your indemnities of losses that weren't insured. That's a cost that we're all going to bear, whether it's a few extra cents on gasoline or whether it's something like this, you are going to pay it, and you need – everybody here needs to know what that is.

When I look at places like Lennox Island, the coastal erosion issues are there, Conway Sand Hills just off my place there, sea level rises have an impact. It's coming whether we like it or not and we're going to have to do it things to mitigate and we're going to have to pay.

So from my perspective, I think you are doing a good job on what you are trying to accomplish here in defending this. We need to put realistic targets that are going to make a difference, and we are going to pay one way or the other.

I have a daughter that lives in Germany. When they say about the price of gas and the impacts it has – the price of gas over in Germany is about \$2.30 a litre, Canadian money, there is lots of vehicles still travelling in Germany but they do things a little bit different to make sure that they are taking that money and putting it back into things. They are going to be – I think it's by the year 2025 on complete renewables moving forward. There is one of a very industrialized country in the world so we're going to have to put pay for this.

I just find the arguments that I always get, that the tax and the price of gas is going to go up. Yes, the price of gas is going to go up whether we put it on or not. It's gone up 7 cents a litre the other day. There is no extra more on carbon pricing.

I think the reality is – I would say that the higher the price of gas goes up people will make changes. They will find an easier – they won't travel so much or whatever the scenarios might be, and that will drive the price of gas back down a bit to a certain degree.

There will always be a bit of leveling that will occur in carbon pricing in that regard, too, so I think that's something that's really important to be aware of.

The minister of agriculture and I – I have said sort of said there's issues coming with our crop insurance numbers are going to be (Indistinct) I'm getting concerned about that. He talked about some numbers a while back. I think there was a question from the Green Party and the facts are that we haven't even – we dabbled into our reinsurance last time, do you think the reinsurance premiums aren't going to be going up?

There are going to be costs that are born by – another issue that I'm seeing in my own fields with these large amounts of rain just even in the last couple of weeks we've had two rainfalls that are about 30 mls of rain at my place. I'm seeing spots that are wet spots that haven't been wet before. We have always planted them before. If the farmer happens to have some crop in that, that's going to be a claim on insurance.

So does that mean we're going to have to develop a program to do field tiling to try and drain that water off because it's coming in such an extreme?

Is the minister of agriculture willing to put money up to deal with that because farmers have to try to produce their crops to provide food for this nation in at least a way that they can make money? They can't lose money every time and they can't deal with insurance every time, because either your premiums are going to go up or your guarantee is going to go down, that's the way crop insurance works. It's fiscally responsible over a 10-year period and farmers if they can't afford the premiums and they can't get the indemnities back on it, they can't take the risk because their banker won't allow them to do that. Simple as that, the way it works.

We have to get real about this subject. We have to try to put the measures in place and at least put the targets in place that are going to work.

So with that, that's my little rant on the subject. I wish you all the best.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. MacEwen: He said that in Cabinet six years ago (Indistinct) didn't you?

Mr. Henderson: I did actually.

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

Mr. MacKay: Thank you, Chair.

Thank you, hon. member for brining this back to the floor. There's no doubt you certainly know your stuff and I'll be the first to admit I don't understand it, so excuse me for some of the questions.

Ms. Lund: It's okay.

Mr. MacKay: What it reminds me of, and I remember back here a year and a half ago when we were debating the *Water Act*. So I'll use an example, 1.4 to 1.2.

How are we going to lower that?

I remember asking questions on the *Water Act*: how are we going to do it? They said that comes in regulations. That comes in rules. I'm thinking: how can we pass legislation when you don't know the regulations, when you don't know the rules. This is where I'm struggling with this. I think it's great and I'm kind of the same, how do we get there?

A question: If I was to support this today, am I supporting a carbon tax?

Ms. Lund: That's a good question. I have to feel like because this bill pertains to a carbon tax that that's part of the story. Would you disagree with that?

Patrick Lévêque: No. It is tied to a carbon tax.

Ms. Lund: It's tied to a carbon tax but it's not saying that carbon tax is the only mechanism we can use to effectively reach the target. It's saying it should be one of the tools in the toolbox but it should never be the only tool.

Mr. MacKay: Right.

Mr. MacKay: The hon. Minister of Economic Development and Culture.

Mr. MacKay: Thank you, Chair.

So this is where I'm really struggling with the whole thing.

So we're elected by the people. Every district is different. You listen to peoples' concerns. My district, I can only speak for my district because that's the one I go door-to-door, but people are tired of paying tax.

They are tax, tax, taxed. 47% of Islanders right now are paycheque to paycheque.

Ms. Lund: Right.

Mr. MacKay: Right? They want to help. They want to help climate change. They are willing to do whatever – but a tax, I'm just – the whole thought of another tax bothers me because we're paying tax after tax after tax.

Islanders are taxed out right now. I would like to try every other incentive possible we can do. Try every other option and if it doesn't get there, then go to the tax. Leave the tax rate to the very last absolute thing we can do.

Ms. Lund: Then minister, if there's one thing I could say that I think you should advocate for in that case is fee and dividend; because it's a carbon tax that then immediately gets returned out to the people who are struggling. Forty-seven percent of people you were saying are living paycheque to paycheque? Those people would get back more from their carbon tax dividend than they paid out from it. It would actually give them a boost and it puts the price signal up for the people who are in the position to make the changes.

The way our carbon tax is currently structured, it is more detrimental to people who are struggling; but if we flipped that around, we could remedy that. I would hate for us to get stuck on the word 'carbon tax' because it says 'tax' in it. I think if we look at a fee and dividend structure, it's a very effective way to add that price signal and also help people who are struggling. We can do both at the same time.

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

Mr. MacKay: Thanks, Chair.

So this is where I'm struggling, right?

Ms. Lund: Yeah.

Mr. MacKay: You want me to pass (Indistinct) and vote on a piece of legislation when we don't know what the rules are going to be, right? And this is where I'm really struggling with it, that if I could see this is how we're going to get here, right, and what you had just told me, this is how we're going to do it, this is who it's going to affect, this is how many Islanders it's going to affect, right?

But in a sense I'm supposed to look at it and just say: Well, this is good will, let's just hope it works out and it's not going to affect anybody. This is where I'm struggling with it; and it's not only this piece of legislation, it's a lot of pieces of legislation that come through the House, because you don't have the whole story behind it, you only got part of the story.

And like I say, the whole thought of another tax on just – anything we can do incentive-wise, whatever we could do to offset it, I would rather go down that avenue before we have to go and apply another tax.

I don't have the exact number, but I'm being told that it's approximately – if an Islander makes a dollar, they get to keep about 40 cents of it. Now, I haven't got that confirmed, which I will try and do, but if we're talking that kind of numbers, no wonder 47% of people are paycheque to paycheque. We're all getting calls of people are struggling, can't get groceries, can't afford gas – look at the housing crisis we're in, can't afford rent – and yet we're talking about putting another tax in. That's the only part I'm struggling with.

Ms. Lund: So there's two parts I would love to add to that. I relate to your fear about poverty, and the need to do something about it. I actually think if we put climate change as the centre pin around which we build all of our policy framework, we would be looking at how do we alleviate poverty while addressing climate change, and the IPCC report actually, explicitly, takes into account the fact that we need to be considering poverty and various challenges that go along with climate.

So a fee and dividend is actually a really great way of doing that. For the people who have the most money and don't need the incentive, they don't get that cheque back. It gets redistributed to the people who are struggling and it helps them.

The one other thing I'm just going to say before I pass over to my colleague here: You had said you have some reservations about voting for a target when you don't know what the regulations are going to be around it; but you are in the enviable position of getting to make them. You're government and I'm not.

So we can have a conversation around what that looks like. I will contribute to that conversation willingly. I will bring all the evidence that I can to it; but ultimately, no one is going to be able to force a set of regulations on your government that you don't want, you can be part of that discussion and, in fact, you have to approve it.

Mr. MacKay: Chair –

Ms. Lund: Oh.

Patrick Lévêque: If I could –

Mr. MacKay: Yeah.

Patrick Lévêque: – just add to that, the fee and dividend model in particular, one of the aspects of it is that it is slightly redistributed. It does actually – and it benefits low income people and that's because – and this is PEI-specific data – that lower income people have a smaller carbon footprint. Part of that is because they simply can't afford to drive around or to drive larger vehicles, things like that, or have a vehicle at all.

Those people with fee and dividend model would receive the same rebate but they would be spending a fraction of that on carbon pricing. So they would actually see a – I think I had done the estimates on that at \$50 a ton – they'd be seeing several hundred dollars' benefit from that.

So whatever the – despite it being a tax, and I get that 'tax' is an unpopular word, but the net effect of this policy, because taxes are a form of policy, ultimately, would be

beneficial for people in that situation overall.

Mr. MacKay: So I realize government makes the decisions and so forth, but the only one that really states in the bill is carbon pricing, right?

Ms. Lund: Because that's all that's in this particular act, but it's not by any means an exhaustive list of ways we can remedy this problem.

Mr. MacKay: No, I realize that; but if I was to support this today, it's saying I'm supporting a carbon tax.

Ms. Lund: If you were to support this today, I would suggest that a motion should come forward tomorrow – and it would receive, no doubt, unanimous consent – to strike a special committee on climate change.

We have changed the structure of committees, as you are aware. We would have two members from each party and we would get to work with this target. We would come back to the House with a list of possible options on how to reach it that could have various scenarios and the House can vote on it.

Mr. Trivers: What a great suggestion.

Premier King: Seems like a great committee makeup. (Indistinct)

Mr. Trivers: What a great suggestion.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Some Hon. Members: [Laughter]

Ms. Lund: I'm in favour of it. I voted for it.

Chair: Minister of –

Mr. MacKay: I'm fine, thank you.

Chair: You're fine?

If I could just clarify for the committee that should a member want to bring forward a motion, it has to happen when the Speaker is in the chair rather than in the committee of the whole, and that could be tabled to make a motion for a standing committee to be

struck at that time, but it can't happen during the committee of the whole.

The hon. Member from Charlottetown-West Royalty.

Mr. McNeilly: Yeah, thank you very much.

This is a fantastic debate. I think it's a really neat experience and maybe ten years ago, I don't even – if you would have told me anything about carbon pricing or carbon neutrality, I would have not known what you were talking about. So I think we've come a great long way, and I think that's something that we all want to see. We all want to protect our Earth. We all want to see us get to where we need to get to together. I think that's where we can kind of start. That's where the debate is starting. We just have different philosophies on how to get there, I think.

I think Prince Edward Island has come a long way. Everybody that I talked to in the business community and that I've been associated with wants to protect our environment and wants to do well. I'm just worried, so I'm going to ask you a few questions about –

Ms. Lund: Please.

Mr. McNeilly: – different things and maybe I'll start with a quote: “When designed well, carbon pricing protects the competitiveness of Canadian businesses.”

So I want to know that what we're talking about here is going to protect the businesses and the business communities that I represent in my district, and I guess that's where I get a little bit nervous about moving maybe forward too fast. So can you repeat again about how can this protect and keep the costs down for businesses moving forward?

Ms. Lund: Well, when we were talking about the carbon fee and dividend, for example, part of that in our plan was actually a small business tax cut to help give them that little competitive advantage; but also, when countries and jurisdictions become low carbon adopters early, it does give a competitive edge to business. It creates good-paying jobs. It creates

resiliency. There are just so many spinoff benefits to it.

And depending on the model or mechanisms that we use to reach these goals, we can carve out that suite of policies to be most appropriate through that lens. I think what any good policy-makers have to do is first discuss where we need to get to and once we have that target in place, we can look at all of our local context. We can say we need to make sure we're particularly considering agriculture. We need to make sure we're particularly considering low income Islanders because we know that's really relevant in our context. We need to make sure our small businesses thrive and those are the lenses with which you use to design your policies that feed back towards your end goal. I would love to have that conversation once we've set a target.

Mr. McNeilly: Exactly.

Ms. Lund: I think it would be great to do that in a special committee.

Mr. McNeilly: Yeah, and I think that's where I look at things like the trucking industry. In Prince Edward Island, I am looking at this from strictly a lens about protecting the people in my district and around me.

I look at Prince Edward Island having trouble getting our exports to market. We're off the beaten path. If you look at, like, maybe most things are going to Boston or through New Brunswick or to Halifax, we have to go to get there. So we're at a disadvantage already.

And for Prince Edward Island, when I look at the lowest per capita in the country, I'm pretty proud of that number already. I'm pretty proud of the work that – you know, that's what we were talking about. Except for I think you were mentioning about the electricity that might get a little bit construed.

I guess what I'm saying is that I might have to – I would like to further this conversation in a committee where I can talk more about it and understand and learn about this a little bit more.

Is there any room, when you are looking at a bill like this, to move the targets that you've come – I don't know if I am allowed to ask this but I am new and I guess – can you look at a number like 1.3, are you stuck on moving from 1.4 to 1.2? Or is there –

Mr. Henderson: Compromise.

Ms. Lund: I would have a hard time to advocate for a goal that science told me would create an unlivable environment. I think the 1.2 versus 1.4 conversation – even though our province is small and we may be doing particularly well – that's our share of the global problem.

Mr. Henderson: You just (Indistinct)

Ms. Lund: So when we talk about this global problem that is climate change, every jurisdiction has a responsibility of doing their share, and this 1.2 target is doing our share.

So I personally, if you want to put forward an amendment that's more ambitious than what I am saying we need, I will absolutely accept it, but I wouldn't understand the rationale for picking an arbitrary number that had no science to back it.

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

Mr. McNeilly: Yeah, well, I mean – when you look at the Paris Accord 2065 and then the IPCC is the second thing, well, I'm just wondering what the next – what's number three?

Ms. Lund: Exactly.

Mr. McNeilly: In two year's time is the next number lower? Are we going to keep moving? It's just I want to – I look at climate change as something that we're all going to do together, like, for example, I've done landscaping, but I cannot take an electric whipper snipper and do the jobs that I can do with the other ones.

We're not ready yet. I don't have a choice.

Trucks are the same way with some people. They don't have a choice.

And unless we kind of move towards that kind of, you know, we're – some things we're there and some things we're just struggling to get there.

So I just want to kind of, you know, look at some compromise or some conversations moving forward, because we need balance on this, and I think that we know that climate change is important.

We're moving, like I said, I started this off by saying 10 years ago I didn't even know what carbon pricing was. I want to learn. I want to get better. I want to stop coastal erosion. I want to make sure Prince Edward Island is beautiful and protected and I think together we're going to move forward to get there.

Ms. Lund: So a couple of points on that, you were questioning what the third line of reports might come back and say. I can tell you since the 1980s climate scientists have been sounding the alarm bells saying hey this is a problem and then every single time without exception that a report has come back, climate scientists have said, actually, it's way worse than we thought it was.

Our models were very conservative and climate change is accelerating at rates that we hadn't anticipated. Every time the target gets more and more dire, the warnings become more extreme and our timelines get shorter.

So given that trajectory, I would have a hard time to back off our target and say that we should take a less ambitious approach knowing that without exception scientists have told us that we're not keeping up with what needs to happen.

And I would also say, yes, you may not be able to use an electric whipper snipper.

Mr. McNeilly: No, definitely.

Ms. Lund: But that's okay because the great part about designing it for local context is we can consider our own unique challenges.

If we do have to use the lenses of poverty, small business and agriculture, we can, because that's what our local contacts allow for. That's why I actually think we need to make our own plan.

I think it's entirely irresponsible for us to take an intergenerational gamble with what's going to happen for the next generation by setting improper targets. I think we set the correct targets and then we make the plan because we're leaders.

Chair: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-West Royalty, can I ask for your final question before we move on to the rest of the list.

Mr. McNeilly: Sure. Sure.

You know, when we talk about where does PEI sit, again, I'm proud of where we've gone or where we are.

I'm just looking at situations where, you look at a city like St. John, New Brunswick where I'd like to find out what their carbon emissions are versus the entire island of Prince Edward Island.

I'm not sure about those things yet, and I have to take some more time to do some research and make sure that – make sure something like this – I know what that really means to go from 1.4 to 1.2. It's on paper, but I got to make sure that's the right thing for my community.

Thank you.

Chair: Thank you.

The hon. Member from Mermaid-Stratford.

Ms. Beaton: Thank you, Chair.

I'm going to be brief. I'm just going to make a few statements.

First of all, none of us in this room are scientists and none of us are experts, but the people that were sitting in on this that tells us the 2050 is the timeframe that we have to be shooting for are scientists and are experts. So I just want to make that quite clear.

We are sitting here debating 1.4 megatons and I'm going to point out that there are no regulations to get us to 1.4 megatons, but yet that was accepted.

We are setting an example right now that we can move into a standing committee and reach 1.2 megatons and collaboratively work

together in order to find out how are we going to do that.

When you look at responsible private sector today, private sector are already working towards this. When you are talking about how we're going to reach these targets, we're talking about how we're going to reach them with what we have in our toolbox today.

Private sector is way smarter than we are. They're actually working forward to probably have a battery operated whipper snipper that you could use to do that job.

So all I'm saying is when we're talking about what we have in our toolbox today, sure, it's going to be difficult to get us there. But if we look at our plan for retirement or if we look at our plan for saving for our kids' RESPs, if we start that when our kid is born, and we work towards when our child is 18 and going to go off to university, it's going to cost us a whole heck of a lot less money on a monthly basis in order to get us to that target that our child needs to go to school.

So if we actually start now and work on that plan with benchmarks – because I think that that's what government really lacks in – is actual benchmarks and measurements in order to get us to a certain goal, we're actually able, as a group of 26 of us sitting here today, able to look at setting out a road map to achieve that and not just achieve 2065, which might have been okay, but scientists are telling us that it's not – we can actually set out a road map for us to hit 1.2 megatons at 2050. Or, heaven forbid, we even do better.

Because I think as an Island, we're the size that if we do better, we're a trendsetter.

Look at the election. People all across the world were talking about what PEI did when it came to politics, so just think about if we can be trendsetters when we talk about what we can do with climate change.

I think that's the lens that we need to be looking at.

I think I'm kind of disappointed that we're actually not as a whole body on board with what scientists and what the scientists and experts are actually telling us.

I think if we look from the lens of what we're actually going to be producing when it comes to technology and infrastructure; it's just going to close the gap for us.

I don't have any questions. I just want to simply say; none of us are scientists and experts, but we can pull people in and we can do something that government hasn't done in a long time, and that's set a really strong plan to reach a target because you can't have a project without having scope.

What's the scope? 1.2. That's what the scientists and experts are telling us and that's all I got to say.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Bernard: The Premier talked about his messy notes. I'm going to try and follow mine, but I've been sitting here listening and this is what just keeps coming to my mind.

The other day in Question Period I addressed the Minister of Education and Lifelong Learning, Environment, Water and Climate Change about one of the barrier that teachers face in teaching climate change which is a disconnect from nature or the environment and I dare say we are experiencing this in the House tonight.

I'm one of them. There is no blame being laid here. I am not an expert on climate change, but I do believe in science. I listen to science, and I follow science, and this is what science is telling us.

We don't know where that tipping point is. Our children and youth are the ones who are standing up, educating their parents about climate change, so when we talk about educating people in this, the children are doing this.

When we look – I had the pleasure of hearing, Jocelyn Plourde, who graduated with his masters in the Institute of Island Studies do a presentation on Samsø. It's a tiny Island, a tiny Danish Island and it's a great example of jurisdictions leading the world when we talk about the need to educate public.

They are a green powerhouse and the community buy-in was essential for that to happen. So what we see happening there are people who are pulling together, just private citizens pulling together, to buy a turbine. So it's the community members themselves who are driving this.

So we talk about a green economy; it just makes sense and the interesting thing about Samsø is how much it is like PEI and I can't just help but sit here. Yeah, change is scary, yeah it is but even scarier is the status quo. We need to do something. Yeah 1.2 okay, when it's at 1.4 we aren't sure how it's going to get there. Well, let's move it to 1.2 and do something now.

Thank you. No question.

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

Mr. Perry: Thank you, Chair.

I can truly understand and I can appreciate and I'd be more than happy to advocate to lower our emissions but you talked about no one in this room being a scientist or an expert.

So really when I think about that, you say you want to pass this with this target and then strike a committee, well why, that's like putting the cart before the horse. Why wouldn't you start the committee first, bring in witnesses who are scientists, who are experts to see if this is a realistic target or not.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Lund: Can I respond to that?

Chair: Yes.

Ms. Lund: I think the important thing to consider is that we already have reports from scientists. They've set the targets, they've told us that the IPCC report, it's been released; it was released maybe November of last year if my memory is correct and they said hey, we have to sound the alarm on this. We originally thought we could handle two degrees of warming and still continue on as a civilization, we now know that's impossible. Two degrees is way more dangerous than we ever thought it was.

We all need to get to 1.5, we must not exceed 1.5, excuse me.

So we don't need to strike a committee and bring in experts on what the target should be. There has been a plethora of scientists who have done a review on this and I should say, 1.5 is actually the negotiated down number whenever the IPCC scientists got together to discuss this. This is a negotiated report of about 190 different scientists who all put forward their ideas, 1.5; this target that we are debating is a conservative target, compared to what was put forward. So we have that information to work from.

As policy makers we don't need to bring in more experts on what the targets should be. What we need is a plan on how we're going to reach that target. So that is why I would advocate for first setting a goal that's responsible and is in line with what all of the science is telling us, and then we can examine the various pathways we can use to get there. There, there are dozens, there's probably limitless ways we could do this. The conversation as the hon. Minister of Environment, Water and Climate Change has regularly said, it has to be about how much does this cost, how much does it reduce carbon by and how is it compared to the alternative.

So once we know, yes, 1.5 is what science says we must stay below, then we can go forward, we can look at a suite of policies, we can play with it and figure out how we best protect agriculture, how we best protect the business sector, how we help those who are struggling and we can move that around until we find the suite of policies that's most appropriate for PEI. But I can think of no reason why we would strike a committee to determine what the science already tells us.

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

Mr. Perry: Thank you, Chair.

I can appreciate what you're saying but if scientists are telling us 1.5 is the target and you're amending this from a 1.4 to a 1.2.

Ms. Lund: I can understand the confusion there, thank you for that. Those are two different sets of metric and I can understand why that's confusing.

Mr. Perry: Ok, can you elaborate on that.

Ms. Lund: Yes, 1.4 is megatons, 1.5 when I'm talking about that number, its degrees of warming. I apologize for that; I can entirely see how that's confusing.

When we talk about global warming, right now we've already experienced about one degree of warming above pre industrial temperatures, that's on a global scale. That's where we're already at, that one degree. We used to believe that we could withstand about one more degree of warming and still as a civilization function, but that's not the case.

We can probably manage at 1.5 degrees as an outside figure, 1.5 degrees of warming above pre-industrial levels. In order to do that, we need to reduce the amount of metric tons of carbon that we dump into the environment. Our current leadership target, *Climate Leadership Act*, has us reaching 1.4 megatons of carbon in the atmosphere by the year 2030. But climate scientists are actually telling us that's not a great enough reduction. So mine is to amend it to bring to 1.2 megatons of carbon by the year 2030 and then I would like to see us reach carbon neutrality by 2050 which is in line with the IPCC report, but those are two different metrics, I'm sorry for that.

Patrick Lévêque: Just to further clarify that, the 1.4 and 1.2 is annual emissions of greenhouse gas equivalents, so that's PEI's mission, strictly.

Mr. Perry: Thank you for that clarification.

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

Mr. Perry: I'm still not convinced this is a realistic target to reach and again, I'm still a little bit, I guess I don't understand how or why this cannot go to a committee prior to setting a target or a new target I should say.

Because you're telling us the experts, and this is what the scientists say right? And that we should be taking your word for this.

Ms. Lund: I actually tabled the report, the IPCC summary for policy makers. It's on the books, you can go through it and take (Indistinct)

Mr. Perry: No, and I can understand that, but it's the matter of getting them into a committee and asking those questions to make their own decision at that time. I'm going to move on to something else if you don't mind.

Chair: I've got a long list.

Mr. Perry: Ok, well I only asked two questions.

Chair: This is your third question, would you like to ask another question Tignish-Palmer Road?

Mr. Perry: Have you consulted with anyone in the fishing industry because this is one of our major industries on Prince Edward Island and I want to know what the impact may be or what the demands may be on that industry.

Patrick Lévêque: We didn't do any specific consultations before this bill, it was based on the scientific reports, the updated numbers that were published after the bill was first passed.

I would point out, however, that the province, over the last several years has consulted extensively on various strategies, the energy strategy, the carbon climate change mitigation strategy, the climate change adaptation strategy, so there's been fairly wide spread consultation in that context already from government and there's a lot to dig through, through there and a lot of recommendations have already come forward on how – and the types of programs and initiatives that could be used to get us to whatever targets that we set. Those were done in the absence of any targets, so the targets were set after those plans were developed.

Ms. Lund: I will just add, I wasn't in the House when the 1.4 target was set but I don't know if anyone from that side of the floor would like to tell me if Liberal party did consult with fishing on that particular target? I don't know if that's the case or not.

Patrick Lévêque: On the initial bill.

Ms. Lund: On the initial bill.

Mr. Perry: Can I be put on the list again please?

Chair: Certainly.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you.

This has definitely been an interesting conversation and I've listened to members on the government side, bring forward arguments, which I find a little disturbing to be quite frank. Arguments about: will I have to still take my child to a baseball game, do I have to turn my lights off, am I only going to be able to drive on alternative days of the week, are we going to take all the cars off the road? These are unhelpful contributions to a debate where we have solid science; we have to stop pretending that we don't have solid science and that somehow a legislative committee of our Legislature can uncover something that we don't already know.

We have solid science telling us what we need to do, we know through a simple math exercise what our responsibility here is on Prince Edward Island to make our fair contribution to complying with the science that we know is solid and it's time for us to stop pretending that we have to somehow find something else out, we just need to act on this.

I'm reminded, unfortunately, of the debates during the 1970s when the tobacco companies did a fantastic job of sowing seeds about as to whether smoking was related to lung cancer and the whole strategy was to create uncertainty. Oh, we don't have absolute solid scientific evidence that smoking is related to cancer.

In fact one of their, if I remember right, one thing that they used to say is: doubt is our product.

I'm really discouraged by members of this House who say that they are unconvinced that we need to do this. I'm not sure what members of this House are waiting for to become convinced.

We have an IPCC report; actually we have a string of IPCC reports, top scientists in the world who spend their whole lives thinking and writing and debating what climate

change is, what we have to do to stop it from becoming a climate catastrophe and we're sitting here pretending we need to do more study.

As I understand it correctly, the member who is defending this bill, Member from Summerside-Wilmot, is saying this we need to pass this bill so that we comply with the science that we know is on the books and then let's set up a committee, not to figure out if we need to do that, but to figure out how we're going to put a plan in place on Prince Edward Island to make sure that we can comply and that's really important that people understand the distinction there; that we're not suggesting we set up this committee to figure out whether climate change is actually a problem for PEI and what we need to do.

The suggestion is to set up committee to put a plan in place so that we can comply with the target that we know we need to meet., I find it discouraging that members of this House remain unconvinced when you have such, such evidence in front of us.

Yesterday we the plastic bag reduction bill came into effect on Prince Edward Island, July the 1st.

Wouldn't it be great on the next day if we could bring forward a bill that showed us again to be environmental leaders in this country? I really ask members of this House not to question the brilliance of top scientists in the field on this and let's just get on with this.

Mr. Trivers: That's not what we're doing.

Premier King: Chair, an intervention.

Chair: The hon. Premier.

Premier King: No one is suggesting we do anything. We're debating going from 1.4 to 1.2 and I want to make sure that is clarified. With the greatest of respect to the Leader of the Opposition, nobody on this side of the House or that side of the House is saying do nothing.

We're debating going from 1.4 to 1.2. I want to make sure that's clear.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: I'm sorry, Premier with the utmost respect, that's not what I said.

If you listen carefully, I said we know what the scientists are telling us what we need to do. We know through a math exercise what our contribution to that has to be and it's to go from 1.4 to 1.2. That's what I said.

I was absolutely in alignment with what this amendment is saying.

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

Ms. Altass: I will be very brief.

I have heard several times in this House during this debate the analogy 'putting the cart before the horse.' For me, acting without setting a goal that is evidence based would be very much putting the cart before the horse.

We need to be making policies that are based on evidence and that is what this bill would be doing.

I also just want to go right back to the start of our conversation today and something that was said by the Minister of Environment, Water and Climate Change: What if we set this target and we then go – we regret it?

Mr. Trivers: I didn't say that.

Ms. Altass: Well, my much bigger concern is what if we look forward or in the future we look back and say: We had a chance to do something when we with could, and we didn't do it.

That's not something I want to live with, and I think we have an opportunity here to be leaders to act based on the evidence and that's why I absolutely support this bill.

Chair: The hon. Minister of Fisheries and Communities.

Mr. Fox: Thank you, Chair.

A minute ago I got a question from a fisherman and he wanted to know whether

or not you have taken into account any of the measures by fire, volunteer fire departments to lower their emissions with new firefighting trucks, and he is also wondering if you have taken into account any of the measures taken by fishermen across the province in reducing emissions on their lobster fleets with new technologies.

Ms. Lund: Minister, I – go ahead. Did you want to say something first?

Patrick Lévêque: I would suggest that would be the role of government to track those things. The government has the resources, people in place to do that, and does – I'm not sure if they specifically track those things, but there are many things that are tracked in terms of emissions that the Minister of Environment, Water and Climate Change may be able to give more specifics on that. I'm not sure.

Ms. Lund: I would add, minister, that the fishing community is particularly vulnerable to some of the impacts of climate change. I would say that warming temperatures and the acidification of oceans will have a devastating effect on that industry.

Patrick Lévêque: Particularly in the Gulf, we are particularly vulnerable here to that.

Mr. Fox: And I can comment on that –

Chair: The hon. Minister of Fisheries and Communities.

Mr. Fox: Thank you, Chair.

The last four weeks I have done extensive talking to fishermen across the Island, and they're telling me they are concerned.

Ms. Lund: Oh I bet.

Mr. Fox: But they are also telling me that they're looking at new innovative ways to reduce carbon and work for the better of the planet.

The next question I've got to ask you is, if I go back probably 25 minutes or so, your guest said that with the carbon tax or words to that effect that if you have a high price on fuel that it will hopefully cause a reduction in the usage or consumption.

Would you agree within that?

Patrick Lévêque: So the –

Mr. Fox: If fuel hits \$1.50 do you think consumption will drop, which in turn do you put a higher carbon tax on or higher tax with your argument or are you suggesting that consumers in PEI will lessen the amount of consumption?

Ms. Lund: what Patrick had referenced earlier is when the numbers go up, the price of fuel goes up in the past historically what we have seen is people choosing more fuel efficient vehicles, smaller vehicles, et cetera.

Patrick Lévêque: Yeah, or simply driving less. There is a fair bit of support for that.

Mr. Fox: So I think I can class myself as an expert because for 12 years I think I've bought more and sold more fuel than anybody all combined in here.

Over 12 years of running service stations from back in 1998, or thereabouts, until 2012, it was 12 years, I think, any time fuel went up consumption never dropped in this province. In fact, in 2008 fuel hit \$1.40 and a little bit above and during that period of time in this province consumption and quantity actually sold, increased dramatically. It did not decrease.

Chair: Is there a question?

Mr. Fox: That's my question. I would like to know how you think when we live in a rural province – I understand getting electronic cars or whatever, but I am wondering how this is going to help or work in a rural province when we depend so much, according to the member across the thing, on moving our goods to market and so on.

I had spoken to this a number of times, minister, I don't know if you were in the room when I did. I would say carbon pricing on its own is never intended to be the final and only tool in the tool kit. It's part of a suite of policies. If we only increase, excuse me, the cost of fuel, that alone is not going to solve the problem.

Ms. Lund: I've spoken to this a number of times. It's important that with that we have

other policies that compliment it and that way you have the price signal that accounts for the full cost of these emissions. That price signal will encourage people to make other choices if the incentives are there with it.

Patrick Lévêque: Yeah.

There is no single policy that would solve climate change on its own.

Ms. Lund: Absolutely not.

Patrick Lévêque: Carbon pricing has strengths but also weaknesses and that is the importance of what economists would call "gap filling policies," things to pitch in where the carbon price doesn't quite meet. There are a variety of things that would be needed.

Mr. Fox: One final question, Chair.

Chair: The hon. Minister of Fisheries and Communities.

Mr. Fox: I admire what you are trying to do, and I think over the last four years I've done a tremendous amount of talking in this House on projects like reforestation and preparing infrastructure for the future and climate change. I talked a lot on it.

So I take a little bit of offence to the Leader of the Opposition with him saying over there

–

Mr. Myers: Call the hour.

Mr. Fox: –don't worry.

Mr. Trivers: Extend the hour.

Chair: Is there unanimous consent to extend the hour?

Some Hon. Members: No.

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

Chair: Shall it carry? Carried.

Mr. Speaker, as Chair of a Committee of the Whole House having under consideration a bill to be intituled *An Act to Amend the*

Climate Leadership Act; I beg leave to report that the committee has made some progress and begs leave to sit again. I move that the report of the committee be adopted.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Member from Morell-Donagh.

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Member from Cornwall-Meadowbank, that this House adjourn until July 3rd at 2 o'clock in the p.m.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Everyone get a good-night's rest.

The Legislature adjourned until Wednesday, July 3rd, at 2:00 p.m.