

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY



Speaker: Hon. Colin LaVie

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The Legislature sat at 2:00 p.m.

Matters of Privilege and Recognition of
Guests

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

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

Welcome, again, everybody back to the Legislative Assembly for another day of important debate.

I want to pay special welcome to those who have joined us in the public gallery. I'm very lucky to have three political advisors and supporters in here today. Of course, I'd like to recognize Reg MacKinnon and Sterling MacRae from District 15 who are my political advisors, and some may say, the brains behind this operation.

So I'm awfully glad that they are here today. I've been very appreciative of their friendship and the support they've shown me.

And young Georgia Wood is here, who was our youngest political organizer over the course of the campaign, Georgia was at the headquarters every day, working hard and entertaining us and showing us her broad skills around language – she speaks French and she's a great colourer and she's a wonderful addition to the team and I was glad to get to know her a little better during the campaign, along with her grandmother Audrey Firth who is here, I see Marie Burge is here, so it's great to see her as well.

I want to pay special mention to our American neighbours south of the border, it is the 4th of July and it's always a wonderful celebration. They are, of course, great neighbours, they are a great trading partner and certainly a wonderful nation and I certainly want to pass along my congratulations.

I did get down to see the Mi'kmaq quill work at Receiver on Victoria Row of Melissa Peter-Paul and it is most impressive. I encourage if you haven't gotten down to go see it – I am looking now to purchase a piece to put in the Premier's Office, which I

think would be a very welcome addition to the office.

I want to say a very special congratulations to T. J. Shea of Tignish who has finished his career with the Western Capitals and has committed to the UPEI men's hockey team. A prolific scorer, a lobster fisher, an all around great guy from Tignish so a worthy addition.

I also wanted to just pay special tribute to my friend Jamie Richards from Murray Harbour. When I was driving in this morning I heard the story on CBC of Jamie who had a bit of a health matter while playing hockey in Moncton in a tournament and only for the quick action of some fellow players, including Randall Carter, a New Brunswick firefighter who used the defibrillator to restart Jamie. Jamie has been a great friend of mine for a long time, I went to school with his kids Mark and Don, and he's just a fantastic community minded individual. I'm very happy to hear that he's doing so well and just a reminder to everybody to don't take this precious life we have for granted. It can all end so fast and to enjoy every day here.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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

I'd also like to welcome everybody to the gallery, Marie Burge, always lovely to see you Marie and Sterling MacRae and his neighbor Reg Mackinnon. Sterling and I go way back and it's good to see you in here Sterling.

I was at a rally with a few members from this side of the House at City Hall here in Charlottetown just a couple of hours ago, some residents they are concerned about an asphalt plant that's being proposed in their part of the city and it was good to see the public out there, expressing their concerns and letting their elected officials know, on no uncertain terms, that they have concerns about what's being proposed there.

Finally summer is here, it's so lovely to see that. We missed Canada Day, of course, it was hardly summery, but here for the 4th of July, it's beautiful. I, too, would like to pass on my congratulations, my thoughts, my happiness to our friends to the south. Of course, many Americans live here on Prince Edward Island. Either as full-time residents or they're here for this summer, so special hello to them and many, of course, are on holiday here, so Happy Independence Day to all of them.

It's also an anniversary, of another event; 32 years ago a Newfoundland woman named Ann Walters and I got married in St. John's, so July 4th, to us, is known both to Ann and myself is the end of Independence Day.

[Laughter]

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Mr. Mitchell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It certainly is a pleasure to rise once again to welcome everyone to our public gallery. I see some very important people are in our audience today from O'Leary area. I'm sure they will be referenced a little further later on here, but to Sandra, Eileen, and Fairley, really nice to have you back in the House. It's not your first time; it's great to see you in again.

Also, to Reg, who I normally see at coffee from Tim Horton's; good to have you in as well, Reg.

I, too, would like to offer happy celebrations to our neighbours from the south. I have many cousins that live in the U.S. and usually they spend July 4th at home in Boston and then make their trek up to PEI and enjoy the rest of the summer here. So I do look forward to July 4th coming and going and then seeing my cousins all land home, so I look forward to that.

Also, on my way this afternoon over to City Hall, the Member from Cornwall-Meadowbank and myself while walking over were walking through the Confederation Centre, and we were very pleased to see a large number of people

gathering for the Confederation Centre Young Company performance that would be happening very soon. Obviously, a lot of those people are tourists to PEI and no doubt some of them are from the US, so it's really great to hear and to see that show is bringing people in and I'd say within five minutes there wouldn't be a seat left in the place over there, so it's great to see what's going on there.

Also related to tourism, we have two more race cards left at Red Shores Charlottetown Driving Park, tonight and Saturday and then all the action will switch next week up to Summerside Raceway and Red Shores of Summerside for one of the two biggest tourism weeks on PEI, the Lobster Carnival and Festival that will be held up there. It's based on lobster, it's based on harness racing and it's based on Islanders and those from other areas coming together and having a great amount of fun, for one of the two most important weeks.

We all know the other week will be Old Home Week that will be celebrated in August and hopefully we'll all be out of here and be able to attend that as well.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mitchell: And always, Mr. Speaker, to all that are viewing in from home or via the Internet, I do hope they enjoy today's proceedings.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Altass: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's a pleasure to rise today to welcome all of our guests in the gallery. In particular, I want to recognize Joann Doughart, who's here from Summerside, I believe, hello. We also have Jane Sharpe from Lot 16. Jane is the president of the Board of Directors of Lot 16 hall, so thank you so much for being here today.

I also want to recognize Marie Burge, it's wonderful to see Marie here in the gallery today. I've had the great pleasure of getting to know Marie over the past few years through our work with the PEI working

group for a livable income and advocating around a basic income guarantee. Of course, Marie is involved with many different social justice initiatives on the Island and it's wonderful to see her here in the gallery today.

Thank you.

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

Mr. Henderson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I, too, want to welcome those to the gallery, it does give me great pleasure to have three constituents in the gallery today. Not very often we get many from O'Leary-Inverness making the trek down. But anyway, I certainly want to acknowledge Fairley Yeo, she's been an active person in our community, she's involved extensively with the Knutsford Women Institute and quite involved in the Knutsford women's tea that she puts on there.

As well, she's also involved with the hospital foundation in O'Leary and I think maybe she heard word that we could be getting some services up in O'Leary if the minister of health would be so kind to grant that. We'll try to help her a little later on with that information.

Eileen Brown, Eileen was actually my campaign manager in the last two elections and Eilene is also quite active in a number of groups that help the engagement committee. She's also involved with the O'Leary Hospital Foundation, I think the O'Leary Farmers Co-op Board and her husband's actually on my district executive as well, as is Fairley as fair as that goes.

And I have to acknowledge my special person in here too is my wife Sandra. Sandra is on grandmother watch these days, Mr. Speaker –

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Henderson: – as were expecting our second grandchild sometime this month or the later part of the month and she was doing a little bit of babysitting duties yesterday for our oldest grandchild, so it's always good to have her to come down and actually see what I do.

I had been sort of saying that she's asking me how I've been handling the opposition – well I'm having a hard time getting a lot of answers out of this government. So I think these three ladies, they've always been great backers to me and I think they coming down to put a little bit of pressure on the government to give some good answers here when it comes to the House today.

I also want to acknowledge the lobster fishers of District LFA 24. They had a very safe and successful season in my district and especially a shout out to the three ports that are in my riding for LFA 24, and that's Lennox Island, the Eilerslie fishing station, as well as Hardy's Channel.

So continued success to them for the rest of the season.

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

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

It's a great pleasure to rise and I welcome everybody to the gallery. I know it must have been a hard decision for you to come here or go to the beach on such a wonderful day, so thanks for coming and listening and hopefully we entertain you.

Anyway, I want to say hello to the residents of District 14, especially a good friend of mine and Mr. Speaker, you would know the Lutz family. So Heidi Lutz's birthday today, she just moved into my riding, so one of my good friends and I want to say a big hello to her.

The Cavendish Music Beach Festival this weekend, I mean, is there a better festival in all of our land, in all of our country than that one? So I want to wish everybody an incredible –

Oh, is it next weekend?

Some Hon. Members: No, it's this weekend.

Mr. McNeilly: Is it this weekend? Yes, okay. Oh jeez, okay.

So anyway, I want to wish everybody well there, and make sure all the people there

have fun. Take care of each other out there and please, please use sunscreen because all of a sudden it just gets a lot hotter and we know the minister of health and I are really avid sunscreenerers.

So make sure you're out there enjoying yourself, listen to some music and put your sunscreen on.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Bernard: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It is with great pleasure I rise today to welcome back my colleagues and all of the friendly faces in the gallery today.

Welcome to George Hunter who joins us – seems almost every day from Kensington. And all the young faces we've been seeing in here has been pretty awesome. I hope they find it exciting.

I just wanted to welcome all the visitors we have on PEI right now. I really noticed today on my way into work and when I went down to City Hall today that there seems to be a lot more people around, a lot more traffic. So welcome everyone to PEI.

I have some special friends and visitors visiting from out of town right now, some from the states, so Happy Independence Day to everyone.

And a special 'hello' to everyone in District 12 Charlottetown-Victoria Park. Hope you have a great day.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Land.

Mr. Thompson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Today I stand and represent District 8, an honour and a privilege as always.

I'd like to welcome everyone. Sterling McRae, fellow farmer, I'd like to welcome you today.

This morning, I took a drive in the country through my district. I feel sometimes we

forget what attracts everyone to Prince Edward Island. It's the beauty of the agriculture right now.

Everything is greening up, the crops are growing, everything's in bloom. It's a beautiful time.

If you have a minute this weekend or an hour or two, take a drive in our beautiful country of Prince Edward Island and check it out, and particularly, District 8, it's beautiful.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

It is, as always, a pleasure to have the opportunity to rise. Great to be back in the Legislature with all of my colleagues.

Shout out and a recognition of all the ones in the gallery that have joined us here today. Certainly great to see Mr. Reg MacKinnon and Marie Burge, as well.

My colleague from the Western part of the province, O'Leary-Inverness, did recognize three ones that have made the trek down from the great West. I certainly would like to recognize them as well.

Great to see you down, Eileen. Fairley, Fairley Yeo, as the Member from O'Leary-Inverness had mentioned, Fairley just a fantastic volunteer in her community and the West Price area and certainly in the O'Leary area.

I had the pleasure here a couple of days ago to bring forward a minister's statement with regard to seniors of the year awards, and Fairley was one of the recipients. I believe it was last year, Fairley, and it just shows the tremendous work that she has done in her community and for her community.

Also great to see Sandra here. I would like to think that probably Sandra is more of the brains behind the operation up there, but always great to see Sandra, whether it's here or in the public. Been great friends for a

number of years and so it is a pleasure to see you.
And just to wrap up, a shout out to the great people in District 26 Alberton-Bloomfield.

Thank you.

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

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Of course, it's a pleasure to rise today and welcome everyone who's watching from District 18 Rustico-Emerald, and of course wish all our neighbours to the south, Happy Independence Day.

I want to welcome everyone to the gallery, but especially, I wanted to welcome Kent Dollar and Reg MacKinnon who have been supporters for many years. And kind of in and out of District 18, District 15, and those different areas in Queens over the years.

Of course, I want to recognize Sterling MacRae, who of course, is one of the founding members of the dirty dozen of the New Glasgow Lobster Suppers. He's one of these guys that it almost seems it doesn't matter when you go to the New Glasgow Lobster Suppers you're going to see Sterling around there. I don't know how he manages to be so many places at the same time.

But, great to see you here today and good luck with business this summer.

Thank you.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Evangeline-Miscouche.

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

It's certainly a pleasure to always rise in this House. I'd like to welcome everyone to the public gallery.

As the minister of agriculture stated, this is a wonderful time on PEI for scenery. On Tuesday, I had the pleasure of coming down with the hon. Member from O'Leary-Inverness. We kind of went across country and we ended up on the Sheepskin Road.

It was a beautiful road. All treed in, but we thought we better not pursue the road because we didn't know where it was going to take us.

It was quite a day. We got here safely.

But I do want to mention all the people that come to PEI – I was at the intersection at Miscouche on Tuesday before the hon. member picked me up, and, at the light, there's a car ahead of me with license plate from Nunavut.

I shook my head and I looked again, and I thought wow, you're a long ways from home. I'm sure they were enjoying our province, as we all do.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: I, also, would like to welcome everyone to the gallery.

Gergia Firth Wood, I'd like to welcome you to the gallery and her nanny. I'm good friends with your Poppy Wood and your Nanny Wood. I'm not sure if they call them poppy or nanny, but yes.

Also, I just recognized my sister, Eileen, and you might have remembered, I mentioned my sister Eileen in the House a couple of weeks ago and she's probably the only person on Prince Edward Island that ever run over herself with her own car. And she is probably going to run over me when I'm done.

But I am going to write to Guinness Book of Records, and see if I can get her into the Guinness Book of Records.

So welcome to the House, Eileen.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Statements by Members

Speaker: I will ask the hon. Member from Evangeline-Miscouche.

Shingles Experience

Mr. Gallant: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Give me a second to gather myself here.

In the last few days, I have spoken with a number of constituents who are disappointed with government's decision to delay the free shingles vaccine for Island seniors.

I have had shingles, not once but twice. I was fortunate to be able to get the vaccine early the second time which was just last February.

It's a terrible illness. It's very painful, and I know a lot of Islanders were very happy with the idea that vaccinations would be provided at no cost.

The fact of the matter is, this vaccine is fairly expensive, and especially difficult for those with fixed incomes. We know that it is difficult to fully fulfill every commitment right away, and we know the complicated matters, like the introduction of publicly funded pre-primary programs will take some work, but a shingles vaccine that is not really complicated.

Government said it would bring in the free vaccines and, for many people, it is disappointing that you are not following through on your commitment.

And if the government requires members on this side of the House to collaborate with them on introducing this vaccine, we would be happy to do so.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Stompin' Tom Centre

Mr. Perry: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's a pleasure for me today to recognize the Stompin' Tom Centre. The centre also consists of the homestead and school which were important to Stompin' Tom's life in Skinner's Pond and it's in its third year of operation.

The centre has been a huge success since the beginning. It draws visitors in great numbers and has become important destination in bringing tourists to Western Prince Edward Island.

A big part of this success is its programming. It has free live entertainment every day at 1:00 p.m., in addition, it has an evening dinner theatre program featuring two separate plays. My Ode to the Road – A Memory Journey With Stompin' Tom and My Stompin' Grounds - A Stompin' Tom Story.

There's also a festival series featuring Atlantic Canadian artists, which runs until the end of September.

I would like to thank the Tignish Initiative Board, the staff and volunteers who make the centre such a success.

I invite all members of this House and all Islanders to visit the centre and enjoy some West Prince entertainment and hospitality inspired by the legend and works of Stompin' Tom Connors.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Lot 16

Ms. Altass: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Lot 16 Hall has been a place for Community Connections since 1908 when the original building was hauled from MacDougall's Corner across the Grand River by horses. At that time it was 30x60 feet and over the years it has been expanded several times.

In 1935 a stage was added with a kitchen underneath it. In 1964 a kitchen addition was added on the south side as a centennial project. A furnace followed by an electric range were installed by the mid 1970's and this was followed by a new porch, bathroom extension and a remodel on the kitchen.

Over the years the hall has been the scene of many neighborhood socials, music and theatrical events, community celebrations and more. Community members have hosted showers, birthday parties and even wedding receptions within its walls.

This past winter the hall hosted a kill the chill music series that kept the hall hopping throughout the cold winter months. One of my favorite experiences at the hall was

when they hosted a 1930's era themed band called the Vaudevillian, who played jug band and rag time music. The band also held a washboard workshop that my daughter and I were able to take part in.

Though I won't be leaving politics anytime soon to peruse my washboard solo career, it sure was a lot of fun.

Currently the Lot 16 community is rallying together again to raise money for essential repairs to the halls, roof and foundation. They also hope to be able to replace worn out signage and add a dish washer and a heat pump. Donations of \$50 or more will be recognized on a unique piece of art, which will beautify the hall for years to come and there will be lots of opportunities to show your support at upcoming ice cream socials, family fun days and concerts. All are welcome and I hope to see you there soon.

Thank you.

Responses to Question Taken as Notice

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

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

Yesterday the member from Montague-Kilmuir asked how many Islanders have type 1 diabetes. As of March 31st, 2019 there were 509 Islanders with type 1 diabetes, including 130 children and 379 adults. I'd also like to add that our provincial diabetes program supports Islanders of all ages and our insulin pump program is for children and youth under the age of 19, not 25 as quoted by the hon. member.

I'd also like to note that we are currently working on renewing our diabetes strategy for the province and we hope to have that great release taking place early this fall.

Also, the member from Tyne Valley-Sherbrooke was asking about medical supplies provided through home care. On average, home care support 2100 clients each month, including those with acute, chronic, palliative or rehabilitated needs.

In relation to the medical supplies such as dressings, bandages, gauze and saline, home

care provides all of patients with two weeks of free medical supplies post-hospital discharge and that can be supplied by any hospital in-province or out of province. After the two week period, patients are required to provide their own supplies. Home care staff work closely with patients to determine if they have health coverage or insurance that could support additional supplies and that is if the need is long term.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

Yesterday the hon. Member from Summerside-Wilmot asked me how many of the affordable housing units planned for Summerside were already spoken for.

I've gone back to my department to confirm that all new provincially funded affordable housing units are filled using the housing registry. This means that residents for the 32 seniors and 30 family units under development for Summerside will come from the housing registry. The registry is not first-come first-serve, but is based on who is in the greatest need.

As well, I made a commitment to bring back information about a temporary shelter for Summerside. Our department is currently working to complete a temporary housing community needs assessment, to better understand and address temporary housing and its underlying causes.

We are working in collaboration with community partners, such as the John Howard Society, Blooming House, Lennon Recovery House, Canadian Mental Health Association, Bedford MacDonald House and the Mi'kmaq Confederacy of PEI on this work.

The community needs assessment will help identify service gaps and help shape future policy direction.

We will share those findings and recommendations with the community and with this Legislature when it is complete.

We anticipate the report to be finalized later this summer.

This year, we have increased funding to Bedford Macdonald House, which has allowed them to expand their programming. We have also partnered with Blooming House for a pilot shelter for women. While we complete the community needs assessment, we have extended our pilot with Blooming House.

As well, the budget that the hon. Minister of Finance presented last week commits \$100,000 annually to support a shelter for women in this province.

Before I sit down, I would also like to correct some information that was provided to the Legislature yesterday. The hon. member stated there were no temporary shelter services outside Charlottetown.

Chief Mary Bernard Memorial Women's Shelter in Lennox Island welcomes both Indigenous and non-Indigenous families and provides transport to and from the shelter, and other services.

As well, the member referred to our toll-free shelter line as an 'emergency shelter line for Charlottetown'. The shelter line supports all of Prince Edward Island and continues to do so.

If there are Islanders in critical need of temporary housing support, whether they live in Tignish, Summerside, Charlottetown, Montague, Souris or somewhere in between, I would encourage them to call the toll-free number 1-833-340-4722.

In closing, I would like to thank the hon. member for bringing this forward and I do look forward to working with the member on this file.

Thank you.

Mr. Myers: Good job.

Questions by Members

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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

Again, I need to express my gratitude for the prompt and the very complete responses that we received today, as we seem to receive every day. It's very much appreciated.

Every day I drive from Hampton into town and I pass the Cornwall Perimeter Highway project. I've watched the progress of the bypass of numerous, large machines pecking and scraping at the Earth to produce a road carved out, at least in part, of productive farmland.

I'm taken back to the debates that we had during the previous sessions of this House on the appropriateness of public spending on this project, in particular, and of the consequent reduction in money available to look after our existing highways generally.

The current minister has said in this House that this year the condition of the roads is worse than ever.

Extra dollars for road upgrades

A question to the hon. Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy: Will there be more money available this year to maintain our existing roads given the unprecedented problems that he has cited in this House?

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

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Leader of the Opposition brings up a really good issue here. It's one that's near and dear to my heart living in rural Prince Edward Island and, in particular, a district that has really rough roads.

We talked about, during my budget estimates, that there has been doubling of the gas tax. It's a one-time initiative by the federal government. A lot of that gas tax money we use directly for roads if they're inside a municipality. We do have some extra money to bring the roads up to snuff this year.

We're looking at our capital plan. We're looking where the needs are. We're looking where the most people are and we're looking at some of the things like our industrial corridor that goes into

Georgetown that's a very important, vital link to the industrial part of Kings County – that we make all of our steps to increase the amount of paving that we do.

At this point, I can't give you an exact number of kilometres, but it's definitely something that's top of my priorities.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thanks, Mr. Speaker.

While the Cornwall bypass is clearly close to completion, I'm wondering what future plans this government has – this new government has – when it comes to spending priorities on our roads, something that affects, of course, all Islanders whether your live in the country or the city.

Transportation is one area where technology and the response to climate change will create profound and rapid changes. Electrification, autonomous vehicles, car-sharing applications, and probably many more yet unimagined advances are destined to have a large and profound impact on both the number and the nature of future cars on our highways.

Data on future traffic trends

To the Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy: What data are your department using on future traffic trends as you develop your priorities when it comes to road construction and maintenance on PEI and the years ahead?

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

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We would have all kinds of different data that we would use when it came to building roads. A lot of our biggest concerns that we have right now was where the traffic count is going to increase substantially, particularly in intersections.

We look over by the St. Peters Rd., that intersection, how watch traffic has increased in the last 10 years and the last 20 years and so on and we know how much it's going to

increase over the next 10 years and over the next 20 years and it's quite substantial. We're looking at some of those trends while we're trying to get our plan in place.

But a couple things, because you did have a couple of different big things in there that you talked about, what the priorities are. Priorities, and my priorities has always been to fix up the roads in rural Prince Edward Island because I think it's very important that we enable people to continue to live there, that it's important to me that we show people in rural Prince Edward Island that we care as much about them as we do to the people who travel on the highways,

Also, when we talk about the perimeter highway, I had a chance to tour the perimeter highway the other day. I was critical of the amount that was spent there. I've got to give credit the Member from Member from Cornwall-Meadowbank and some of the initiatives that he has in and around that area that leads into Cornwall that's really going to put Cornwall on the map on some of the industrial ideas that they have and how the town is looking to grow and build once that additional traffic is taken out and they're able to make a downtown and a main street.

At the end of the day, I think there's some real positives for the Town of Cornwall and I commend him for the great work that they've done with the opportunity they've been given. As you know, not every community would take that opportunity to grow and build their own town and I'll tell you, Cornwall's booming.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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

Many contracts, of course, were rewarded for the Cornwall bypass project and I know that the current minister, as he just said, was less than impressed by how that process was carried out and ultimately how some of the contracts were awarded.

Tenders for Cornwall bypass

Question to the minister: Are there any further tenders related to the Cornwall

bypass to be awarded, and if so, what will you do differently from the previous administration?

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

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

So I think the last round of – if I'm wrong I'll come back to the House tomorrow with the answer, but my understanding according to my notes here is the last round of tenders went out in February and that everything is awarded moving forward and that we're on track to have the whole project open by this fall.

As far as what I would do different, I don't anticipate during my tenure here having to do a project of that size. As I talked about earlier, I have a very big interest in some of the rural roads, in rehabilitating the roads in rural Prince Edward Island.

I think that they've been forgotten some over the years and my priority is going to put rural Islanders first and put those roads that are the vital links that are going to take us to cities so that the people can come and spend their hard earned dollars in the capital areas of their respective parts of Prince Edward Island.

As always, we will do a tendering process and lowest bidder will win the award.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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

I've spoken repeatedly in this House about my preference for spending on our roads to be predominantly targeted to maintaining the condition of the already existing roads that we have. After all, we are the province with, by far, the greatest kilometer of distance of roads per resident – that fact along with the fact that the substrate in which we build our roads and the rough weather that we have here, creates that sort of major ongoing cost for the department. Many of your current caucus have expressed similar concerns to mine in the last session about the condition of our roads and the inadequate amount of money that we

dedicate to maintaining our already existing stock.

To the same minister: You've already sort of alluded to this but I want to make sure that I heard you right.

Emphasis on maintaining existing roads

Will we see a shift in emphasis now that you're the minister to increase spending on maintenance of the roads we already have, rather than building more new roads?

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

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

That's exactly what I intend to do. As you know, I inherited a portfolio where there was a five-year capital plan where there was an agreement with the federal government where a lot of the projects that are currently books have already been approved by Ottawa. We're looking at how we can ramp up some of those and get some of the more problem areas dealt with right away but it is the maintenance of the current roads that is the most important issue to me.

I can't speak for the perimeter highway and what the idea was at the time, that's before my time. But I can say during my stay in that office my intentions are to focus my efforts on the existing infrastructure, bring them up to the grade that they need to be because I believe it's high time that some people got decent roads to drive on in rural PEI.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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

I have to say that's one of the most satisfying answers I've ever had in this House.

Thank you, minister.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Myers: You didn't think it was going to be me either.

Leader of the Opposition: You're right.

Whether the roads are being repaired or repaved or created a new; they all need asphalt. We recently opened up the plants here on the Island. A new asphalt plant has been proposed for the West Royalty region of Charlottetown on the Sherwood Road.

Local residents, as I mentioned earlier in my opening statements, have raised concerns about the location of that plant which is really in the midst of a residential area.

A couple of hours ago, I attended a rally at City Hall along with members of this side of the House. About 40 other people showed up to express their concerns over this proposed plant.

Although the zoning, of course, for the plant is a municipal affair, the project has to be subject to an environmental assessment by the province before it goes ahead.

Environmental assessment re: asphalt plant

A question to the Minister of Environment, Water and Climate Change: What factors will you be taking into account when you make that environmental assessment?

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

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

That is a great question. I, too, have been contacted by many individuals who are very concerned about an asphalt plant in that area.

Really, when you look at it, the department relies on guidelines for asphalt plants for setbacks, primarily. It is a guideline from 1985 that has not really been updated lately.

It states: that no person shall build or install an asphalt plant in any territory zoned for residential, commercial, or parks and recreational use within 500 metres of such a territory. The asphalt plant and the loading and unloading and discharge areas of aggregate stockpiles shall be at a minimum distance of 500 metres from any dwelling and 100 metres from any watercourse.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Belvedere.

Ms. Bell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

In the recent budget address and associated documentation provided online, there was specific mention of active transportation corridors.

To quote: "Islanders are encouraged to opt for new ways of travel to reduce the number of passenger vehicles on our roads. Additional funding will be provided for Pat and the Elephant and Transportation West."

These specific organizations referenced both provide accessible transportation services to people with disabilities, seniors, and others with mobility challenges.

Neither of these organizations have any idea of what the budget announcement may mean to them as they haven't been consulted or contacted. They heard this for the first time on budget day, and there are no new commitments in the tabled budget or supporting documentation.

Funding for two organizations

Question to the Minister of Social Development and Housing: Could you provide any insight into the funding that will be provided to Pat and the Elephant and Transportation West?

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

Mr. Hudson: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker and thanks to the hon. member for bringing this forward.

Certainly, our department works and will continue to work with NGOs. There's 30 NGOs that we work with, which includes Transportation West, Pat and the Elephant, and a number of others.

With regard to the specific question, I guess first of all I would have to say, up until the budget is actually made public that we cannot divulge the information that is being put forward in that budget as far as funding to any individual, any NGO, or individual organization group.

With regard to the specific question though, I will, hon. member, take it under notice and bring back complete details tomorrow.

Thank you.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Belvedere.

Ms. Bell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would note that these documents have been in public for a couple of weeks now, and that there has been a publication made online with a highlight from the budget specifically highlighting these funding commitments which do not appear in the documentation provided.

Question to the Minister of Social Development and Housing: Will you honour the public commitment that has been made in the budget address and those communications to provide that increased funding to these two essential and worthy organizations?

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

Mr. Hudson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Any commitment that our department does make will absolutely be honoured.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Belvedere.

Ms. Bell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

That is also an awesome answer.

Returning to the statement, Islanders are encouraged to opt for new ways of travel to reduce the number of passenger vehicles on our roads.

Transportation re: people with mobility challenges

A question to the Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy: Could you provide further insight into how investment into transportation for people with mobility challenges, who otherwise cannot travel, will reduce the number of passenger vehicles on our roads?

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

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

So as I talked about different times in this House, probably two or three times so far, we have a sustainable transportation committee here in the province. There's people from my department that are on it, there's people from the minister of environments department that are on it. What we're bringing forward is the sustainable transportation strategy.

We expect it's going to be out this summer, it's going to cover off some of those things as, how do we help make people move around the province in a sustainable fashion and how do we move people around more on mass than they do now when everybody takes their own car.

So how Pat and the Elephant exactly does it, I guess, its currently already doing it. There's probably no change that's going to contribute towards that but we do have a bigger plan and we hope to unveil it this summer and I think it's really good and the briefing I've had on it so far, I'm kind of excited about it and I think everybody will be.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Summerside-Wilmot.

Ms. Lund: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Yesterday during debate on budget estimates, the minister responsible for climate change said something that I found surprising. He said that his department advised him that the costs associated with the target changes my bill is promoting, would be, "Very expensive."

Cost associated with target changes

A question to the Minister Responsible for Climate Change: Minister, knowing how much I value evidence, could you offer me some clarity on how your department came to this conclusion?

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

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

So what they did, was they looked at the reduction of CO2 equivalent emissions that would be required to get to a target like that's being proposed by the member from Summerside-Wilmot and they said ok, what kind of actions can we take in order to hit that target?

They made a various number of assumptions, for example, about the amount of funding in the Federal government might be able to provide. Looking at the number of vehicles on the road and they did their best to come up with cost estimates based on that data. I do hope to maybe have a version of that data that I can share with the member sometime soon.

Speaker: The hon. member from Summerside-Wilmot.

Mr. Lund: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As I've pointed out many times in the Legislature, there are multitudes of ways that we could reach any emission reduction target. In fact, the Premier and I have had several discussions on that. Each option would have a different cost associated with it and I've spent the better part of three hours advocating for us to choose the most cost-effective option at our disposal to reach my proposed target.

Carbon reduction mechanisms

A question to the same minister: Minister, which carbon reduction mechanisms did your department use in the models that they presented to you when advising you that the cost of meeting this target was too high?

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

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Primarily what they did was take what we have as the status quo policy on carbon pricing, which I've stated that I don't really believe helps reduce CO2 emissions really at all. So they assumed that would be in place and so they were looking primarily at really taking our transportation that uses fuel and switching that into something that doesn't emit CO2 emissions, like electric vehicles. That was the primary mechanism.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Summerside-Wilmot.

Ms. Lund: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Using electric vehicles is certainly one way to lower emissions but it's certainly not the only one, so I find it very concerning for the minister to stand up in the House and say that the only way we could move forward would be very expensive.

The minister went on to say that these experts could explain to us what a 1.2 target means and provide us with a full picture before we go changing the targets.

A question to the minister responsible for climate change: Minister were you also briefed on the overall costs associated with not meeting a global target of limiting warming to 1.5 degrees?

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

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As the member across knows, we've had a very lively debate about this very issue, while debating her amendment to the *Climate Leadership Act*.

One of the things I've been advocating for is a standing committee discussion of this very topic so we can get out all those costs. The department is in the midst of trying to put those parameters together and I just wanted to say, in the spirit of collaboration that's what we're doing. I'm listening to the member across, the department is listening.

We want to make sure we get all those costs on the table and we do a thorough job of that before we make any changes in target and understand exactly what that's going to mean to Islanders; look at all the different mechanisms, look at every option available. The analysis done so far has been done very quickly and I look forward to the member sending her bill to standing committee so we can continue to discuss it there.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Summerside-Wilmot.

Ms. Lund: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Our Premier has agreed with me many times on the need to reach carbon neutrality by 2050, but we are currently not on pace to meet that goal.

The minister has made some very bold statements in asserting that the experts in his department are advising him that meeting climate targets set out by the IPCC report are very expensive and indeed seem to be cautioning him against it, when a discussion around all the possible options at our disposal hasn't even taken place yet.

As the minister for this portfolio, when comments like this are made, they will be seen by your caucus to carry weight on a very important topic.

IPCC report targets 'expensive'

Question to the minister: Minister, will you table those calculations that you have so much faith in so this House can assess the fulsome nature of what you are using to base your decisions on?

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

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Let's be very clear on this fact. I speak on behalf of the experts in my department, they are extremely dedicated to addressing climate change, to meeting the targets that are set out and that is not the intention at all in my statements and if it was implied that that is not what they were doing, that is completely incorrect and absolute falsehood.

This department is working diligently to make sure we address climate change and they've made great strides in doing that as well with the current plan in place and that's what they will continue to do and in terms of their calculations – my reluctance to release them is, these are a work in progress, they're making all kinds of assumptions and the reason I'm willing to release them is exactly this kind of line of questioning will come about.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Cornwall-Meadowbank.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Mr. MacDonald: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Question for the Premier: As everyone in this House knows there is an energetic debate taking place over a piece of legislation, historical legislation, designed to strengthen our province's response to climate change.

On Tuesday, the Premier said the following, and I quote: I can't speak for the rest of my colleagues but I'm going to have a hard time not supporting this.

Premier support of Bill No. 102

Given the premier's statement, will he be supporting Bill No. 102 and when it comes to a vote?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

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

It has been a very spirited debate and what I said to the hon. member who brought it forward, and we have talked about it many times, I think the ultimate goal for everybody in this Legislature ought to be and should be and must be carbon neutrality. So how we get there is what we are really debating and what we are debating in the particular bill was the reduction to go from 1.4 to 1.2.

I don't think anybody was debating whether or not we believe in the science. I don't think anyone was debating whether or not we support these measures. We are actually debating changing or moving the target and what I said, and I'm very proud to have said, and I'm glad that the media picked it up is that I think it's incumbent upon all of us to have an open mind and look toward this with the ultimate goal trying to get to carbon neutrality.

I think would be very neglecting in our duties if we didn't have that goal in mind as we move forward.

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

Mr. MacDonald: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Next week my understanding the premier will be in Saskatoon and scheduled to meet with fellow Premiers. We know not too long ago Premier Kenny was here and we know Premier Kenney was advocating on his behalf for litigation in his province, and now we know that it has been defeated in two other provinces.

Supporting stronger emission targets

So will our Premier be telling his colleagues, and most specifically Premiers Kenney, Moe and Ford he will be supporting stronger emission targets and will he lobby them to do the same?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Premier King: Mr. Speaker, my position on this has been consistent from the very beginning.

I believe that it's incumbent upon all Islanders particularly those in the positions that we are in move this province towards carbon neutrality. As an island province more mindful than most of the changing climate and the impacts it has on here.

In terms of my colleagues, as the hon. Member from Cornwall-Meadowbank would know, the council of the federation is a diverse crew. There's very differing opinions, each individual premier is responsible to support what they believe their province wants and needs and I can tell this Legislature that when the discussion comes up with any of those three individuals that he mentioned, whether it's the prime minister when I meet with him on the way to Saskatoon, I will be telling them what Islanders want.

Islanders want us to work towards carbon neutrality. They want us to do it responsibly in a common sense way and my opinion on that will never change.

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

Mr. MacDonald: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Premier, I certainly hope that there will be no influence from the Kenny or Ford camps because they seem to be doing a pretty good job of influencing some parts of our country, including, Blaine Higgs in New Brunswick.

In late June, the province filed a notice of intervention with the Supreme Court of Canada over our province's intention to take part in a case launch by Saskatchewan in that province's fight against anti-pollution measures.

Anti-pollution measures and Supreme Court

Will the Premier tell the House the substance of that intervention?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier King: Mr. Speaker, essentially what happens is when a court case goes on like this, we file to be part of an intervention so we can see whatever the fallout of that court case would be that we could have some type of participation if need be.

This is an issue that we're all very mindful of; we're all very concerned about. As you know, when the new government was sworn in I told all of those who asked that we would not be joining the fight. I don't believe this is a fight we need to have. I want to have a discussion with the other premiers. I want to have a discussion with the prime minister and all of those in this House to find out what we can do in a reasonable, common sense way to get to the goals we need to get to and that's exactly what we're doing.

In this particular case, we're just reserving the right to participate if we need to at some point after the decision is brought down, but in no way shape or form should anyone suggest that we are joining that because we're absolutely not.

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

Mr. Henderson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

In response to a recent question in this very Legislature on EI zones, the Premier stated he supported one zone for PEI provided it was at the lower rate of the two zones.

EI benefits and an EI zone

Question to the Premier: Could you explain to this House how the number of work hours

required to qualify for EI benefits are determined in an EI zone?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier King: Mr. Speaker, I know the hon. member opposite would be as up-to-date as anyone on this issue, but essentially, the way the zones are broken down, I think it has to do with a number of factors in terms of what the EI rate is, what the job availability is in each region.

I believe in the rural region it's 600 and some hours – or no, sorry, in the city region it's a bigger number of hours that you need compared to what you need in the rural. I believe that the change was made to sort of reflect what the availability of jobs are in the rural areas versus what they are in urban Prince Edward Island.

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

Mr. Henderson: The Premier is correct in that. Kudos for that.

The key determined for the level of unemployment of an EI zone is divided by the amount of unemployment rate by the workforce capacity. As he would be well aware, that in rural zones, like in Prince Edward Island here, specifically in the rural eastern and western ends of the province, we have seen – would cause an increase in the number of hours if we went to the one zone and that would also decrease the amount of hours required in the Charlottetown area where there are more job vacancies than there would be in a riding like O'Leary-Inverness.

Does the Premier agree with this assessment?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier King: I'm not quite sure of the premise of the question.

I think that you would be suggesting if we went to one zone based on the city requirements now that it would be harder for people in – yes, it would be. Absolutely, and that's why I've been advocating to all of those in the conversation we had with the three mayors that we met with who asked

me to write a letter and support the letters that they would write to all political parties to suggest that we go to one zone.

I said that I would be prepared to do that providing it is the same requirement – the rural zone number that we use and not the higher one in the cities.

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

Mr. Henderson: The Premier is advocating for a one zone, Mr. Speaker.

In the Premier's and in the Conservative PC Party platform they advocate that they are strong voices for rural Prince Edward Island.

Jobs advertised and letter to federal minister

Does the Premier know how many job vacancies are advertised today on the West Prince job area on the Career Development Services website and will the Premier actually write a letter to the Federal Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Mr. Duclos, advocating for two zones instead of one zone?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier King: Just so we're clear, what I would be advocating for would be fairness across the board. I wouldn't want to see anybody in rural Prince Edward Island impacted so that's why I would not want to see that number go up.

But I do not believe that having the number in Charlottetown being the same is going to impact anybody in rural Prince Edward Island.

I think a leveling of the playing field is a reasonable approach going forward, providing that what we're lobbying for is a zone that is required – that is currently what we have in place in rural Prince Edward Island, which is the 490 hours or something whatever it is.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Morell-Donagh.

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

In the PC platform, we promised to broaden the scope of practice for nurse practitioners, RNs, RCWs, LPNs, and pharmacists. The minister of health made a good announcement yesterday on the work happening with pharmacy. Obviously, we need to go much further.

Expanding scope of practice for health care professionals

I'm wondering if the minister could update us on what his next steps would be on expanding scope of practice for health care professionals?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

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

I'd like to thank the hon. member for that question.

Of course health care is important to all Islanders right across Prince Edward Island. As the new minister of health, seven weeks in now, I'm starting that process by having consultation with our health care professionals, whether it be the colleges and the associations.

I think that there is a better way to deliver health care on PEI, and by having those discussions with our health care professionals we will determine the best way forward.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

When I became the critic for health, I certainly learned a lot from the minister who was the previous critic and I know he's in a position now to make good progress on this. We both pushed for exactly this for a long time.

Will the minister of health please let us know exactly about that timeline? I think urgency has to be of utmost importance in this.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

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

It's impossible for me to be here today and give a firm timeline on it. It is top of my agenda, and, as I've already noted, I've been meeting with some of the colleges and the associations.

You're right. We did make an announcement here the other day around the expanded scope for pharmacy and pharmacy techs. Those discussions, of course, are ongoing.

Just this past weekend, I met with the National Physiotherapy Association and the provincial president as well, and we had great discussions around how physio can be integrated better into our health care system to provide preventative measures as well before Islanders' conditions may become to the acute level that they're going to need hip or knee replacement.

There's many things that we need to do to improve the delivery of health care here on PEI. I can't, as I said, give you a definitive timeline here today, but, as I said, it is top of my agenda and everybody in my department knows that.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Morell-Donagh.

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you, minister. I'm glad to hear that is at the top of your priority list, as well as the department knowing that.

I know when I went door to door during the election and we talked about this expanded scope of practice and allowing our health professionals to do more, one thing that kept coming up over and over again was about recruitment and how hard it is to get certain members of these health care professional fields to PEI.

Does the minister realize and see and making it clear to his department, that if we start expanding this scope of practice, we

can actually use it as a serious recruitment tool and help solve some of the issues we have around recruitment of health care professionals in this province?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

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

Yes, recruitment is an integral part of delivery of health care here on PEI. We have a tremendous recruitment secretariat that's doing great work here on PEI. There's been two doctors just recently added to their complement in Western PEI and I look forward to receiving updates and being able to provide other announcements as far as recruitment of health care professionals.

But it's important to note as well that besides recruitment, we also have to look at what we have here currently on PEI or what we can change here on PEI. I'm very proud that the work that was done previously in the previous administration, particularly with Kathleen Casey and her work on midwives.

I'm extremely proud as the health minister to state that we are going to finally be able to introduce midwife service here on PEI. It's coming, it took a long time to get here, but it will finally be here.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Altass: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

All new medications developed must first be approved by Health Canada before distribution; they must then be reviewed to decide if the drug will be eligible for public reimbursement at a Provincial level.

Approval of medications by Health Canada

A question to the Minister of Health and Wellness: Are you familiar with how this review process works?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

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

There is a committee that looks at that and will use an example with regards to cancer drugs, we have oncologists that are on that committee, we have representatives from the Canadian Cancer Society on that committee, we have all qualified health care professionals that are working on these various committees to ensure the drugs that are coming forward are the drugs that are best suited for the delivery here on Prince Edward Island.

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

Ms. Altass: So just to clarify then, the committees that you're talking about, those are occurring at a Provincial level to review the recommended drugs?

That's my question.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

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

Yes, the province and we had a discussion on this last week when we had a bill on the floor with regards to the federal formulary and the provincial formulary and how we actually married those together.

So, as I said we have committees that review the drugs, we constantly review the formularies, we're all constantly talking with physicians as well, with regards to what drugs are available and what drugs might be available through the generic drug program as well. Which then can be provided at a much cheaper rate but there is a process and it's working very well.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Altass: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

So just to clarify, the Canadian Agency for Drugs and Technology and Health Process, known as CADTH, was introduced by health ministers in 2003 to replace 18

independent review processes that existed in different jurisdictions in Canada.

This pan-Canadian process conducts thorough and objective evaluation of the clinical economic and patient evidence on drugs and uses this evaluation to provide reimbursement recommendations and advice to Canada's Federal, Provincial and Territorial public drug plan. The pan-oncology drug review functions similarly, specifically for oncology medications.

Drugs not covered in PEI

Question to the Minister of Health and Wellness: How many medications that are currently recommended for coverage by CADT and the Pan-Oncology drug review are not currently covered yet on PEI?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

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

Again the hon. member is correct, there is that organization that does that preliminary work but its ultimately the responsibility of the province to regulate which drugs are provided her with a formulary, I do not have the accurate numbers here in front of me at my finger trips today but I'm committed and ill bring that back tomorrow.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Altass: PEI takes longer than any jurisdiction in Canada to approve new drugs for coverage, averaging 926 days, according to the Canadian Health Policy Institute. That is twice as long as Quebec and over one year longer than many other provinces to list new medications.

The minister also mentioned different committees at a provincial level which I believe is a fairly unique way to address this because we have such a backlog here on Prince Edward Island.

Timelines for drug approvals

A question to the Minister of Health and Wellness: Why does it take so long to review CADTH recommendations for medication coverage here on Prince Edward Island?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

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

Again, I don't have the information that obviously the hon. member is referring to here with me today. I will certainly bring that back.

But again, I can say with certainty that the health care professionals here on PEI that make the decision, and it's not me as the minister that says: Yes you can have this drug or no you can't have that drug. We have health care professionals here on PEI that are paid to do the work that they do and I have every faith in their decision making process.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Altass: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

So just to clarify, some of the medications that are currently not covered on Prince Edward Island include cancer, rare disease drugs, and mental health and heart disease medications.

I'll give an example, so PEI covered in total only 30 cancer medications recommended by the pan-oncology drug review by the year end in 2018, compared to 70 medications that are available to patients in New Brunswick and 74 in Ontario.

The health charities coalition of Canada states that: All people living in Canada should have equitable and timely access to necessary prescription medication based on the best possible health outcomes, rather than ability to pay.

Equitable and timely access to drugs

Question to the Minister of Health and Wellness: Do you agree with this statement?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

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

I'll say it again, we have a tremendous amount of talent here on Prince Edward Island with regards to our health care professionals and the work that they do here providing health care to Islanders is second to none. I would never, I would never question their ability to make the proper decisions.

What the member refers to is a recommendation, a recommendation is just that, it's a recommendation. We have health care professionals working day in, day out in our health field here on PEI that I rely on to make those qualified decisions.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Tyne Valley-Sherbrooke, your final question.

Ms. Altass: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Well I don't think it's difficult to see how not having access to the most up-to-date most effective medications would have an impact on the lives of Islanders, as well as, have long-term implications for our health care system.

Timeline for unmet medication needs

Question to the Minister of Health and Wellness: Given the backlog of medications that are available to citizens in other provinces but not PEI, will the minister commit to a timetable to address the unmet medication needs of Islanders?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Aylward: Yes.

Speaker: Okay, that's the end of Question Period.

The hon. Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy.

Recognition of Guests II

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

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

With your indulgence I'd just like to welcome Graham Miner to the gallery. Graham's the director of Highway Safety and between him and registrar Doug MacEwen, I must say I'm very pleased with how great they are to work with, how forward thinking they are and how everything they do is with Islanders in mind.

Statements by Ministers

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

Driver Training

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Moving to a new country is not easy. Every country has customs that may be a bit different than where you grew up, this includes driving. Many of us would have some difficulty knowing the rules of the road in China or India. Driving is a complex activity anywhere and it gets even more complex with our winter weather here in PEI.

Starting this September, Highway Safety will introduce a Newcomer Novice Driver Course. Newcomers are required to get a PEI license shortly after becoming a resident of our province.

Soon, they will also be required to take this course before they can take their road test. There are a few exemptions.

Newcomers who have taken an approved PEI driver's education course will not be required to take our course. And newcomers that have a license from a country with a reciprocal license agreement with PEI, such as the UK or Japan are also exempt.

Some of the topics covered in the course are: PEI's graduated driver licensing, our rules of the road, including rules on passing school buses, handling winter driving conditions, using child safety seats, and more.

The course will be five hours and taught in one or two sessions and there will be a registration fee. Newcomers can register for the course through their nearest Access PEI location, starting in September.

I believe that providing more information on road safety always benefits everyone on our roads. This driver education course is just one more step to get life-saving information to drivers using our PEI roads.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Howard: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Well, that sounds like a great program, I mean even just learning to drive on Prince Edward Island and going up to Montreal – a big city, Boston, anything like that, you know that there's quite a transition to make.

I applaud this initiative, and hope that we can expand it to make sure that everybody's got the training they need, whether it be youth or elderly or newcomers, everything we need to keep our roads nice and safe.

Thank you very much.

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

Mr. Henderson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I too, commend the minister for establishing this initiative, and I do want to, also reiterate some of his comments about minister Miner in the back there. Graham is a consummate professional. He certainly has the best interest of Islanders and our safety and roadways at heart. Any time I've had an inquiry to check something out he's always been nothing but the best and trying to accommodate our constituents.

I also agree that I think it is with society, very global economy, people coming and going, we do want to make sure that the people that are on our highways have an understanding of the rules of the road whether it comes to Prince Edward Island.

Certainly any jurisdictions that we don't have any reciprocal agreements on, when it

comes to our driver's license and recognizing drivers license from their jurisdiction, that a training session of this nature should very quickly determine whether they're capable of driving the roads.

I certainly endorse the minister's initiative here.

Thank you.

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

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Islanders care deeply about our water. We heard this during the election, and we heard it in 2017 during consultations on the *Water Act*. Today, I am releasing the water withdrawal regulations for public consultation.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Water Withdrawal Regulations

Mr. Trivers: The water withdrawal regulations are extremely important; they will control how much water is drawn from wells, water courses and wetlands.

Le règlement sur le prélèvement de l'eau est important.

Il contrôle la quantité d'eau prélevée des puits, des cours d'eau et des terres humides.

The Water Withdrawal Regulations are important.

They will control how much water is drawn from wells, watercourses and wetlands.

The water withdrawal regulations provide enhanced permitting of both low-capacity and high-capacity wells. To be clear, permits will be required for any wells that extract more than the normal household levels of water.

Under these regulations, we are closing a loophole as well. Currently multiple low-capacity wells are being used together to pump high-capacity volumes of water for irrigation.

Under the new regulations when multiple low-capacity wells are used together to pump the same volume as a high-capacity well, they will be treated as a high-capacity well and all regulations for high-capacity wells will apply. This includes the moratorium on high-capacity wells for agricultural irrigation.

In the meantime, we very much appreciate that very valid and very grave concerns have been raised about agricultural irrigation holding ponds that have been constructed.

Rest assured, government is listening. To address this, the Department of Environment, Water and Climate Change will immediately commence inspections of all existing irrigation ponds, and further, I will be working with my colleague, minister Thompson to ensure additional measures are taken to protect our water while the consultation on the water withdrawal regulations take place.

The water withdrawal regulations are very important for helping us manage and track who is using what amounts of water. The regulations lay out criteria for approval of water withdrawal rates. When applications come in, public servants will look at the cumulative impacts on watershed, the impact on human health and the aquatic environment, among other things.

These regulations will help government experts continue to manage our water supply with sound data and science. These are one of three sets of regulations that layout how we implement the *Water Act*. The other two sets of regulations are well construction regulations and water supply and waste water treatment system regulations. These were released for consultation in March.

Together, these three sets of regulations will allow the *Water Act* to be proclaimed this fall. The water withdrawal regulation consultations begin online today, and information is available at princeedwardisland.ca/wateract.

Public meetings are being scheduled, and will be held after the summer season to accommodate the many Islanders who are so busy this time of year, and when the water act is proclaimed, we will have a regulatory

system to manage water for the benefit of all.

Lorsque la loi sur l'eau sera promulguée, nous disposeront d'un système de réglementation qui permettra de gérer l'eau au profit des tous les Insulaires et de tous les secteurs de l'économie.

When the Water Act is proclaimed, we will have a regulatory system to manage water for the benefit of all Islanders and all sectors of the economy.

Future policy decisions will be science-based and backed by local research and this is something I believe everyone can support.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Summerside-Wilmot.

Ms. Lund: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

There are few issues that Islanders respond to as viscerally as they do with their water issues, and rightly so. I think there's good reason for that.

The importance of protecting, not just the quantity of our water, but also, the quality, genuinely cannot be overstated. We know Islanders followed the creation of the *Water Act* with great interest, and I would anticipate that we can expect vigorous and engaged debate on these regulations in the coming weeks. I have no doubt the feedback we will receive will be intense, and I looking forward to digging into these in the future.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Perry: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We hear this so often that water is one of our most precious national resources, because it's true. The development of this water withdrawal regulation is important to all Islanders, and was subject to extensive consultations. So Islanders are looking forward to reviewing and understanding these regulations, and I want to thank the

minister for this announcement today and look forward for more information.

Thank you.

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

Accessibility at Provincial Parks

Mr. MacKay: Mr. Speaker, social isolation is one of the main barriers Islanders living with disabilities face. As minister responsible for our provincial parks and beaches, I know how important it is that we break down this barrier by investing in successful recreational equipment so all Islanders can enjoy their spaces.

Over the past year my department identified areas of our provincial parks and beaches that needed improvement in accessibility.

Today I'm happy to share some improvements to access inclusion at our provincial parks.

We have installed six accessible swings at Kings Castle, Brudenell, Red Point, Bloomfield, Cabot Beach and Cedar Dunes. We've also installed two new accessibility maps making a total of three found at Basin Head, Cabot Beach and Cedar Dunes and purchased three new beach wheelchairs, making a total of four that can be used at Basin Head, Jacques Cartier, Cedar Dunes and Cabot Beach.

We know there is still more to do and we will continue to improve accessibility and inclusion at our provincial parks. Our goal is to eventually make all of our provincial parks completely accessible. We hope this equipment encourages more Islanders to explore our provincial parks and have fun in making lasting memories.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton.

Mr. Hammarlund: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

This is indeed a very welcomed development, but I have to boast a little bit here about my previous occupation.

One of my very first jobs on PEI was making this building; 40 years ago accessible and things have changed a lot since then for the better.

Back in those days, coming through the basement, through the back door was considered good enough, as long as people could get in, and it has changed considerably over the years, so we're now, when we speak about accessibility it's always equal, dignified coming through the front door. That includes all things, including playgrounds that we have seen a lot of the last new accessible playgrounds lately.

So I think it's a great development.

Thank you.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Evangeline-Miscouche.

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

This is a wonderful announcement. Parks are the best source of recreation and relaxation for all Islanders and visitors alike. It's important that in providing services at our parks, that there's accessibility to all regardless of ability.

I'm pleased government's considers accessibility a priority and I thank the minister for this statement.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Presenting and Receiving Petitions

Tabling of Documents

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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

By leave of the House, I beg leave to table a written question to the Minister of Finance and I move, seconded by the Honourable Member from Charlottetown-Victoria Park, that the said document be now received and do lie on the Table.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy.

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

By leave of the House, I beg leave to table answers from Question Period today, instead of saving them for tomorrow, with regards to the accessible transportation and what we are doing, it's in my budget and I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Health and Wellness, that the said document be now received and do lie on the Table.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

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

Mr. Trivers: Mr. Speaker, by leave of the House, I beg leave to table the *Environmental Protection Act* air quality regulations, in particular schedule (a) talks about the ambient air contaminant ground level concentration standards and I omitted that from my response in Question Period, so I want to table them and I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Agriculture and Land, Justice and Public Safety and Attorney General, that the said document be now received and do lie on the Table.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Minister of Finance.

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

By Command of Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor, I beg leave to table the report of borrowing pursuant to section 47 of the *Financial Administration Act* and pursuant to section 30 (1) with respect to all loans and advances and any defaults and payments since the last reported date of Sept. 30, 2018, and I move, seconded by the Honourable Premier, that the said document be now received and do lie on the Table.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Member from Cornwall-Meadowbank.

Mr. MacDonald: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

By leave of the House, I beg leave to table the Supreme Court of Canada document 38663 and I move, seconded by the Honourable Member from Evangeline-Miscouche, that the said document be now received and do lie on the Table.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Reports by Committees

Introduction of Government Bills

Motions other than Government

The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Mr. Mitchell: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce a bill to be intitled *An Act to Amend the Highway Traffic Act (No. 2)* and I move, seconded by the Honourable Member from Evangeline-Miscouche, that the same be now received and read a first time.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk (Reddin): *An Act to Amend the Highway Traffic Act (No. 2)*, Bill 103 read a first time.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Mr. Mitchell: Mr. Speaker, the aim of these amendments is to have all motor vehicles registered on a duration of ownership basis, as opposed to the annual vehicle registration system now in place. Vehicles will continue to be registered by their owners. Registered vehicles will still have to be inspected annually and must be insured. The idea of this amendment is to reduce the cost of owning a vehicle by eliminating the need for annual registration.

I believe this is a common sense approach and look forward to debate on it on the floor of the House.

Orders Other Than Government

Speaker: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Belvedere.

Ms. Bell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I call Motion No. 21 be now read.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk: Motion No. 21, Improving Youth Access to Contraception.

The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Victoria Park moves, seconded by the hon. Member from Tyne Valley-Sherbrooke, the following motion:

WHEREAS ensuring that women can choose whether or when to have children means they have greater control over their bodies and futures;

AND WHEREAS unintended pregnancies may derail life plans, particularly for adolescents and young adults;

AND WHEREAS adolescent parenting is associated with lower lifetime educational achievement, lower income, and increased reliance on social support programs;

AND WHEREAS the Canadian Pediatric Society has called for universal access to no-cost contraception for youth in Canada;

AND WHEREAS it is estimated that the cost of contraception coverage would be more than offset by the money saved in direct medical costs related to unintended pregnancy;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly urge government to provide provincial health plan coverage for and access to contraception at no cost to youth living in Prince Edward Island;

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly urge government to provide contraceptives at no cost to community-based health care services for youth, to support point-of-care dispensing and simplify access.

Speaker: I'll ask the hon. Member from Charlottetown-Victoria Park to start the debate.

Ms. Bernard: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

In 2012 the United Nations issued a report declaring access to contraception a human right. When youth have free confidential access to contraception, it contributes to their sense of anatomy and pride in their bodies.

I mentioned this when I was presenting the motion to update PEI's sexual health curriculum. This is a step that goes hand in hand with proper education. Though PEI has the lowest teen pregnancy rate in Atlantic Canada, it is still above the National average.

There is also the troubling fact that gonorrhea and syphilis numbers have doubled on PEI in that last two years. Clearly, use of and access to contraception is an issue in our province.

I have tabled a document that was published by the Canadian Pediatrics Society entitled *Universal Access to No Cost Contraception to Youth in Canada*.

In this document they stress the importance of timely access to contraception. Timely and confidential access reduces the rates of both, unintended pregnancy and STI HIV rates. Although it may be tough for us to imagine it, affording an \$8 box of condoms can be challenging for some young people. Cost is a significant barrier and youth are much more likely to use contraception when it is free. As many of these youth do not have insurance, their only choice is to pay out of pocket, or if they do have insurance, often times it does not cover the contraceptive of their choice or they do not wish for their parents to know.

As a combination of all these barriers and to reduce unintended pregnancies, which most adolescent pregnancies are, it has been recommended by the Canadian Pediatric Society that all youth in Canada should have confidential access to contraception at no cost until the age of 25.

The implications of unintended pregnancies cost our province in health care and the breakdown of those costs are also found in the pediatric society document. When the cost of supplying contraceptives is compared to the cost of unintended pregnancies, there really is no comparison as the direct savings are immense.

More than 25% of youth who do not wish to become pregnant don't consistently use contraceptives for various reasons. About 59,000 unplanned pregnancies a year occur among those under the age of 24 in Canada. As we know this leads to derailed life plans

for education, increases the likelihood of requiring social assistance and may lead to deteriorating mental health for these young mothers.

The Canadian pediatric society urges provinces to cover all contraceptives, including; condoms, which also protect against sexually transmitted infections under government health plans until age 25, provide no cost contraceptives to health care service clinics for youth, ensure that privately insured youth have equal access to confidential no cost contraception, continue to make short acting birth control pills, patches and injections available at no cost until the age of 25 should they become available over the counter.

This kind of program is not one that you reimburse for, it is not one in which service providers can choose certain contraceptives over others and in the proper delivery of such a service, contraceptives should be made available at the primary point of care.

Providing youth with a year's worth of contraception is even better as it ensures higher commitment of use. We must support, educate and nurture our youth, they truly are the future and should therefore have all they need to make their own decisions as it pertains to their health and life. There are some things that they need in order for proper development to take place.

When I presented the motion to update PEI's sexual health curriculum there were a few appreciative comments made by members in this House, towards educators who were tasked with teaching our students about healthy relationships and all that accompanies sexual health.

While it is hard to acknowledge that some of our youth are having sexual intercourse at such young ages, it is not hard to image keeping them safe. That is what this is all about, by providing timely, confidential, free contraceptives at primary care points, we would be showing our youth that they are valued and that we expect them to make responsible decisions when possible.

This is one way we can support them in doing this.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: I'll now call on the hon. Member from Tyne Valley-Sherbrooke to second it.

Ms. Altass: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I am proud to rise in support of this motion and to be the seconder on this motion. I believe that we, in this Legislature, have a responsibility to identify and remove barriers for youth to make proactive and healthy choices, including when it comes to their sexual health.

It has been shown that cost is the most significant barrier to contraception access, particularly for youth. Cost should not be a barrier to consistent and timely use of effective contraception for youth in PEI.

The current patchwork quilt of programs offered through clinics or not for profit organizations that strive to provide youth with access to contraceptives are limited and not accessible by all youth at all times.

Funding and availability for these programs varies over time, preventing youth from making well thought-out informed choices. It is also important that we make contraception free and accessible for all youth, rather than just those who are not already covered under private health care plans.

Many of these plans include reports of services accessed to be made available to the private insurance holder. For most youth, this would be a parent or guardian resulting in another potential barrier to access.

Additionally, requiring youth to pay out of pocket with reimbursement at a later date creates cost and confidentiality barriers.

We must also consider the societal level implications as a result of unintended adolescent pregnancies. The relatively small upfront expense of covering contraceptions for youth would be far outweighed by the cost associated as a result of unintended adolescent pregnancies for our health care system and our social service systems.

It is my hope that this will be an area where government will demonstrate long-term evidence-based decision-making and put the health and well-being of our Island's youth at the forefront.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Next speaking to the motion would be the hon. Member from Charlottetown-West Royalty.

Mr. McNeilly: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

This is a great motion, so I just have a few comments.

The Canadian Pediatric Society in May 2019 recommended free contraception for youth under the age of 25. Canadian contraceptive care providers have said the cost is a large barrier to access, and youth are disproportionately affected.

Society urged federal, provincial, and territorial governments to cover all contraceptive costs, including condoms, which are protected against sexually transmitted infections under government health plan until the age of 25 provide no cost contraceptive to health care services, clinics for youth. Ensure that privately insured youth have equal access to confidential, no-cost contraception, and continue to make short action birth control pills, patches and injections available at no cost until the age of 25, should they be available over the counter.

A couple of questions that I would have, would be the first in regard to the definition of 'youth' making sure that we know the areas. We talk about 25 a lot in these study; would we look into as a province going up to that high a number or what our guidelines would be?

The second item would be: it estimates that the cost of contraceptive coverage would be more than offset the money saved in direct medical costs related to unintended pregnancies.

I'd like a better handle on how much this would cost taxpayers.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Next speaking will be the hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Aylward: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

This is definitely a great motion that has been brought to the floor and I thank the hon. members for raising it.

There are many reasons why birth control or contraception should be free. Making these items free can definitely save many health care dollars. Contraceptives can have various benefits for those using them, for example, at times it protects the users from STIs and is effective in reducing unintended pregnancies and abortions.

My only concern with the motion as it is currently written, is that by asking government to provide contraceptives at no cost through community based health care services, this motion would effectively dictate how and by what means we should provide these products. There's no allowance for research into what may be the right model for Prince Edward Island.

The call to action in this motion is taken directly from the Canadian Pediatric Society's recommendation, but it gives no context, no evidence, into the specific needs here on PEI.

The motion calls for coverage through the provincial health plan, but my department needs the flexibility to determine which program would be most appropriate. Would it be Medicare, through Health PEI, Public Health, or the Drug Cost Assistance Program?

I don't know the answer, but that's exactly what I mean when I say we need to implement an initiative in the context of what is right for PEI.

Unfortunately, with respect to my hon. colleagues who brought this important motion to the floor, there seems to be some discrepancy, specifically, in specifying point-of-care dispensing, while at the same time referencing community-based services.

Depending upon the type of contraceptive, point-of-care dispensing may not be appropriate or available at the community care level. For example, a birth control pill is a drug, and therefore requires a pharmacist for dispensing. Other forms of contraception need to be in service and require a physician intervention, which may

not be readily available at the community level.

I am in favour of the spirit of this motion. However, I will be proposing an amendment to ensure the final motion gives the department professionals the ability to consider more fully all the options on how and where we can provide the best possible access to contraception to young Islanders.

It is an imperative that we are able to consult with the appropriate individuals to design the best model for Islanders.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I would like to move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Finance, the following amendment to Motion 21.

So for clause six, where it states currently:

Therefore be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly urge government to provide additional health plan coverage for and access to contraception at no cost to youth living in Prince Edward Island.

My suggested amendment would read: Therefore be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly urge government to explore options for providing coverage for and access to contraception at no cost to youth living in Prince Edward Island.

And the second part of that amendment would be to eliminate clause seven.

I do have copies here for everyone.

So, again, I move in the sixth clause, replace the wording "provide provincial health care coverage" with "explore options for providing."

So the new clause, as I already read, would be amended.

I also move, as I said, that the seventh and final clause of the motion be removed in its entirety.

The amendment is now being passed out, and it will give everybody a chance to review it.

Right now, Health PEI does, through both our Women's Wellness Program and our

sexual health services, offer contraception counseling and sexual health education to patients. As part of this process, we have professionals who speak with clients about the best accessible options for them.

Patients can self-refer to these programs and set up an appointment, or simply come to one of our many sexual health clinics available right across Prince Edward Island.

We also offer IUDs, if appropriate, to all patients who have had an abortion if they so choose.

The services we currently provide are free and available to all Islanders, and I totally agree that these services should continue to be free and accessible.

I'm very familiar with what the national pediatric society is proposing, and the timely access to effective contraception reduces the incidents of unintended pregnancy. I understand the cost is a significant barrier to using contraception for youth in Canada and in PEI.

Many must pay out of pocket because they have no pharmaceutical insurance or their insurance does not cover the contraceptive they desire or they wish to obtain contraceptives without their parents' knowledge.

Offering birth control at no cost can lift barriers that unfairly affect, not only youth, but also immigrants and people living with low social economic status.

I'm fully aware that the national body recommends that all youth should have confidential access to contraception at no cost until the age of 25. This is an important step to address the barriers youth face and reduce rates of unintended pregnancy.

Here on PEI, we must, and will, ensure that when we design a program tailored to meet the needs of Island youth – to design the best model for Islanders we also need to consult with the appropriate individuals, including our pediatricians, our primary care networks, Health PEI and community health services, student wellbeing teams and school counselors, our sexual health clinic leads, our Women's Wellness Program and Centre,

medical affairs, and we should look at what is happening in other jurisdictions.

What are the best practices in this area?

We know that birth control has significant health and economic benefits, and this is especially important for women and the transsexual people.

Birth control can help prevent illness like ovarian cancers, holistic, ovarian syndromes and heavy menstrual bleeding; conditions that are not even related to pregnancy.

For those who want to eventually get pregnant, birth control can allow a family to conceive at a time when they are adequately prepared with the appropriate prenatal and post-natal care.

Health aside, research shows that birth control has major economic benefits for women, allowing them to become financially sustainable, continue their education or career, and take care of their families.

In closing, I want to say, again, that I do agree with the spirit of the original motion. The amendment I am proposing will give us an opportunity to consult with Islanders and ensure that we tailor a program here in PEI to meet the needs of the people of PEI.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Is there anyone else wishing to speak to the amendment?

The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Belvedere.

Ms. Bell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'll be brief today.

In my work with at-risk populations, including youth at risk, women at risk and Indigenous populations among many others, one of the recurring things that we know around preventative health care is the access to affordable and accessible contraception independently for youth of any age.

We don't necessarily want to always have those conversations as parents or as communities about our children when our

children become sexually active, and the consequences of that, but one of those is about contraception, as the hon. minister mentioned, not only in terms of prevention of pregnancy, but in the prevention of other health conditions and health risks.

One of the things that we can do best to help prepare young people, it's often to prepare them for things that they haven't yet thought of and that's one of the things that having access to contraception does. When we make access to contraception something that has to be whispered about or that friends have to sort of help each other out or that people feel that they can't be truthful around, either because the access isn't available or they don't have the family support to do so, then we are limiting those choices and options and the consequences then become out of control necessarily of the individuals impacted.

Often trusted adults in lives of young people are not always family members. Sometimes trusted adults are people like health care professionals or educators, and we've heard a lot, I think, about the impact, for instance, of the mental health and wellbeing teams in schools and how for some students, guidance counsellors or mental health providers or those on-the-ground service providers can sometimes become those trusted adults for young people.

That's the case, too, when young people are faced with making really difficult decisions that they don't feel they can or want to bring forward, maybe at home. As much as a parent, I would like to think that my daughter would talk about everything with me, she's much more likely to talk to her friends or a teacher as she is to me. Perhaps I'm not home when she needs to have that conversation. Perhaps she just wants to talk to somebody else.

So having accurate information and then knowing where and when resources are available is a critical part of how we can support our young people and to have healthier outcomes and healthier choices.

The earlier we provide access, we are not going to be taking people down a path that they don't need to go down; we're just going to be giving them more options.

Mr. Speaker, you know how I feel about choice, whether that be choice in terms of how you express yourself in your gender identity, whether that's choice about how you choose to manage your own bodily autonomy, and in this case it's choice in recognizing that while children – our youth may not be old enough perhaps to even vote, they are actually still old enough to have children of their own and this is one of those considerations where doing the right thing may not make us feel comfortable, but it does make us a better society for recognizing the impacts and the consequences regardless.

I think one of the final things that I would add to this conversation, with a lot of the work that we have been doing recently around poverty and the conversations that we are having about what does poverty look like in PEI, we need to be mindful of how many children there are who are suffering without the choices that they made, but just in terms of the impact of their communities and their families and family dynamics, which are very complicated. For some young people, again, they're not necessarily in the best places and making the best decisions.

We always want to love and value and take care of every child that we have, but making a choice to offer contraception and to allow people to make their own decisions about their bodily autonomy does not mean that we don't love children. It just means that we recognize that we should be making those decisions at the right time, and that's as much as expression of love as anything else is.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the time to speak today.

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

Mr. McNeilly: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I just wanted to say a couple of things on this, especially with maybe the wording changes and as we get going, I have a daughter who is 24 and I know that she's seen some things going through university that was trying to support friends and trying to help out. I think that girls and women take a brunt of this conversation on and it hurts

my heart and I want to make sure that they're well taken care of.

I have to ask and to implore the minister to look at more of a measurable gap. So we put the word 'explore' in there. I don't really know what that means. Can we work on something where we can maybe get a report back on this if this motion does pass in the future and look and making sure that that word 'explore' doesn't get lost in the very nature of this motion?

We have to – this is an important motion because we often deal with this in times of trouble and I think we're trying to prevent and make sure that our youth are well taken care of and that they're ready to participate in sexual activities in a responsible manner, but they're the ones that are usually there for them, as the hon. member just mentioned, so let's be there for them now and see if we can pass this motion.

Thank you.

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

Ms. Altass: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I appreciate the opportunity to speak on this amendment, specifically. As well, I appreciate the minister engaging in this discussion around this motion and bringing forward some suggestions.

Regarding the changes proposed to clause number six, I have a similar concern to the member over here about the words 'to explore' and where that might lead in terms of actual action in moving this forward.

I believe that the minister described one of the issues with six that as originally proposed, would be the fact that it ties it to the provincial health plan coverage.

So, I would suggest that if you take 'provincial health plan' out of that and leave it that:

The Legislative Assembly urge government to provide coverage for and access to contraception at no cost to youth living in Prince Edward Island.

That would still leave your department then with the choice of how to do that without tying it to that one method, if that is the issue, that you would like to explore different options, you could still explore them by taking that out and making the commitment to actually still provide contraception at the discretion or the best way that your department decides.

I also just want to just speak briefly about removing clause number seven completely, and I think that's very problematic because we have – community-based health care centres, really a place where you would have many youth feel more comfortable accessing these resources. We don't want to limit access, so I think that having that in here is very important.

I might suggest that, again, one of the issues that was mentioned around this was that some contraceptives are prescription based.

So, for example, the pill, so perhaps if we change that one instead – and I don't know what the process is, I'm so sorry – but instead of striking it completely, if it were amended to say:

That the Legislative Assembly urge government to provide non-prescription contraceptives are no cost to community-based health care services for youth – and then perhaps strike the last part because, again, you said that there was an issue with point of care dispensing versus the way that we had framed it and the way that you viewed point of care dispensing, whether that falls under community health care coverage or not.

So, if you just strike that last part and still commit to providing non-prescription contraceptives to community-based health care services, that clause could still stand.

I realize that's a very detailed and possibly confusing description of how we might do that, so perhaps I will move an amendment to amend the amendment – that's allowed, right?

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct)

Ms. Altass: Yes? Okay, and I don't have that written out because – so can I just read or say what I would like to see happen?

Speaker: Do you have a seconder, also?

Ms. Lund: Seconded.

Ms. Altass: Okay, so seconded by the hon. Member from Summerside-Wilmot.

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct)

Speaker: We will need it in writing on paper –

Ms. Altass: Okay, I can get to that.

Speaker: – and pass all copies out.

Ms. Altass: Okay, that'll take a minute, but I can do that.

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct)

Speaker: Take a recess?

Ms. Altass: Thank you.

I'll do that right now.

Speaker: We'll just declare a recess for a couple of minutes so you can get the paperwork.

Ms. Altass: Thank you.

[Recess]

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

Ms. Altass: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

(1) All right I move, that in the amendment the words “explore options for providing” be deleted and replaced with the word “provide” in the 6th clause.

(2) That the 7th clause not be omitted as proposed by the amendment but that the word “non-prescription” be added before the word “contraceptives” in the 7th clause of the motion and that the words “to support point of care dispensing and simplify access” be deleted from the 7th clause of the motion.

So I'm just going to briefly explain why I think that this will hopefully address the concerns expressed by the Minister of Health and Wellness about this motion.

One of the concerns expressed regarding clause 6 was that tying this to the provincial health plan didn't provide enough flexibility to explore ways that we might best cover the cost of contraception for youth. Removing that allows the department to make those choices while still committing to covering an access to contraception at no cost for youth living in Prince Edward Island.

In terms of the 7th clause, there was a concern expressed about contraceptives that are prescription being provided at community-based health care centers and that of course, they couldn't, so it didn't make sense.

If you add in the word "nonprescription contraceptives" then that should address that concern.

There was also – it was my understanding – as I understood what was said by the minister that his understanding of "point of care dispensing" might contradict what's in this motion.

So if we remove that part to support "point of care dispensing" and simplify access, we can still hold to the intention of the clause, which is to provide contraceptives at no cost to community-based health care services for youth.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you.

Next speaking to the sub amendment would be the hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Aylward: Actually, if there's somebody else on the list. I just want a minute just to go through this a little bit more.

Mr. Myers: I'll speak.

Speaker: Speaking to the amendment will be the hon. Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy.

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

So first of all, I want to commend the hon. member for taking advantage of the parliamentary procedure to help get good

amendments to the floor so that we can have a fulsome discussion on these motions.

Mr. MacEwen: It's a page out of your book.

Mr. Myers: It's a page out of my book, it is. It tugged at my heartstrings when you did it.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Mr. Myers: It was a page right out of my book.

Just a few things that I want to talk about. So the spirit of the motion in a whole, I'm in support of.

I want to talk – I was born in 1972, so I grew up in a time when no one talked about sex anywhere, like anywhere at home, and people pretended like it wasn't happening.

You would have people's parents talking like it didn't happen, and you start doing the math and realize they're 16 years older than their children. You're thinking 'whoa' this has been happening for a long time.

This isn't a new thing. This has been happening for a long, long time. It's high time we stop pretending that it's not happening and it's high time we do something to address the subject at hand.

So thanks for a really great discussion. I know before we made this amendment to the amendment, the member from Charlottetown – I can't see the rest of your title – Charlottetown-West Royalty talked about making sure that government was committed.

People didn't like the word 'to explore' and I get that. I've been in opposition, so I've had a lot of opportunities to go over wording and talk about whether or not it was succinct enough to give a clear directive what was to happen.

We do have a really great opportunity in front of us as legislators with our committee structures. While this is great debate, and while we can bring this to a vote to have a really good discussion on this, I would really recommend members to use committees to their full capacity because now you will be able to.

Having been on committees where I felt stifled – I used to come drive to Charlottetown not – dreading to sit at a committee because I knew that there was no opportunity to kind of go in a direction that I would have liked to in often cases. I think it's exciting times for committees.

That's not saying that I would vote against any of this. I do support it.

But it's a great place to have subject area experts in to help push that narrative along, you know where you can bring in guidance counselors and they can talk about things that are happening in their schools, and health care professionals and some of the discussions that they're hearing. And some of the groups that are looking to have access to contraceptives and their organization to come forward and say: here's why it's important to us.

And then we can take a really strong report back to the Assembly this fall and say: here's what all the experts said. Here's what happening really on the ground. Here's why it's really important, and it kind of helps move the narrative along.

I guess I'm being told to sit down.

But anyways, I'm supportive of the spirit of all this and I wanted that noted in the record. I'm also supportive of member's shrewd moves over there to help to bring the narrative to where she wanted it.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Hon. member, are you adjourning debate?

Mr. Myers: I will. Yes, sure. I will adjourn the debate.

Speaker: The Member from Evangeline-Miscouche.

Mr. Gallant: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I move, seconded by the hon. Member from Tignish-Palmer Road, that Motion 31 be now read.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk Assistant (Reddin): Motion No. 31.

The hon. Member from Charlottetown-West Royalty moves, seconded by the Leader of the Third Party, the following motion:

WHEREAS, the provincial government budgets in excess of \$36 million on drug programs for Islanders;

AND WHEREAS, gaps in drug coverage for Islanders continue to exist;

AND WHEREAS, the Advisory Council on the Implementation of National Pharmacare recommends the establishment of a full-fledged national pharmacare program by 2027;

AND WHEREAS, the Advisory Council on the Implementation of National Pharmacare recommends the federal, provincial and territorial begin the process of implementation of a national pharmacare program in 2020;

AND WHEREAS, it is important that Islanders be represented in any collaborative discussions and efforts aimed at establishing a national pharmacare program;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Government of Prince Edward Island collaborate with its federal, provincial and territorial counterparts on the establishment of a national pharmacare program.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-West Royalty to start debate.

Mr. McNeilly: May I have the podium?

Speaker: Podium.

Mr. McNeilly: Yes. It's going to be a while.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's a pleasure for me to move Motion 31, which calls on the government of Prince Edward Island to collaborate with its federal, provincial, and territorial counterparts on the establishment of a national pharmacare program.

The impetus for this motion is the recent report of the seven member advisory council on the implementation of a national pharmacare program. The council reported

in June 2019 after studying the issue for one year and consulting widely with Canadians, it issued a report called "A Prescription for Canada: Achieving Pharmacare for All".

The council makes several findings including that 1 million Canadians report borrowing money to cover prescription drug costs, an unacceptable situation. The council also reports a patchwork of federal and provincial governments, as well as private sector drug plans that fail to stem spiraling drug costs and have left many Canadians uncovered for prescription drugs.

It is being recommended by the council that a national pharmacare program be adopted based on the principles of universality, comprehensive coverage, accessibility, affordability, and public funding. These principles are in line with the *Canada Health Act*.

Prince Edward Island has a number of different drug programs: Generic Drug Program, Catastrophic Drug Program, the senior program, the High Cost Drug Program, just to name a few.

Finally, the council proposed a phased-in approach to National Pharmacare that will be completed by 2027. Among the major steps are: federal-provincial negotiations, legislations, establishment of a national drug agency, and the development of a national formulary.

It is proposed a negotiation begin in late 2019.

I think all members of this House are aware many Islanders struggle with paying for prescription drugs.

The fact of the matter is this: not everyone Islander fits into the program or has access to private insurance. And the rising cost of medications has sometimes put Islanders at risk of making decisions of either feeding their families, or purchasing their medication.

And there seems to be an inconsistency in access to pharmacare for jurisdiction to jurisdiction. People in BC or other provinces – I think we talked about it today. We talked about New Brunswick, for an example just

next door – may have greater access to medication than Islanders do.

Some of the positive impacts of having a national pharmacare program include: the economy of scale, negotiations with providers at a national level can lead to significant savings when purchasing in large quantities.

Canadians on average pay 20% more in Canada compared to other advanced economies, making paying for prescription drugs difficult for some families.

Access; a national formulary will provide a consistent approach and patient access across the country. These are just two advantages in participating in collaborating in this national initiative.

As with any initiative, it will be necessary to ensure we are not moving backwards and in this case, reducing our program or formulary. PEI needs to win as we move forward in these negotiations.

A national pharmacare program would address this gap in our health care system, it is important that the provincial government be at the table, collaborating on the development of a national pharmacare program.

I also might add that we might even put in the motion that we talked about today, could be included in that pharmacare program as we move forward.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you for letting me speak to this motion.

Speaker: Next speaking to the motion would be the hon. Leader of the Third Party.

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

It certainly is a pleasure for me to second Motion No.31, calling on the government of Prince Edward Island to collaborate with the Federal, Provincial and Territorial counterparts in the establishment of a National Pharmacare Program.

Drug coverage is one of the major gaps in our health care system. There's no question about that and the best hope of addressing these gaps is through a national pharmacare program, involving cooperation between Federal, Provincial and Territorial governments.

There's no question that I wholeheartedly support the motion and I definitely urge all members of the House to support it and we'll look forward to much debate as we continue here this afternoon.

When I sat as minister of health, I did have an opportunity on, at least three occasions, to meet with Dr. Eric Hoskins and his committee who are tasked by the prime minister to strike out across Canada to begin discussions when it came to a national pharmacare program. Dr. Hoskins, obviously, was the minister of health in Ontario, previously to taking on that role and in conversations that we had at the table and explanations about PEI situations and the programs we had in place. I know the mover mentioned several of the programs, programs that the former government put in, we're very proud of the generic drug program, the seniors program, the high cost or catastrophic type drug programs.

One that I'm very proud of was the ostomy supply program, which came as a result of, I'll say, people advocating on behalf of their basic needs and we're pleased to revive that. I know the Minister of Health and Wellness is bringing forward some new work when it comes to insulin pump programs and that's a program that was brought in, I believe back in 2007-2008. It's made a significant difference Mr. Premier, in lives of young Islanders, young Islanders who are striking out on their own, they're getting their university degrees, they're heading out to jobs and these insulin pumps make a significant difference in their lives so that they can, I'll say, maintain normal lives to people that they sit beside every day at work or in schools and I think continuing on or enhancing or improving that program.

I also ask the minister to take a look at when it comes to diabetic needs. I know previously during the campaign one of our platform planks was diabetic strips for all Islanders dealing with diabetes, that's type 1 and type 2. So I do ask the minister to

continue to consider looking at that as a possibility for Islanders moving forward.

I know in discussions with Dr. Hoskins and his group – and actually I sat at FPT tables where this was a topic of discussion. Obviously the goal of this committee is to establish a national formulary, a formulary that covers needs for, not only all Islanders but all Canadians. I think honestly, the department and myself at the time, were very, very excited about that motion. Having said that, the discussion with the federal government was always about funding and it needs to continue to be.

As a third party we will continue to work with the government to ensure that the federal government does understand that they need to be a big player at the table when it comes to assisting with the costs but there are so many gaps in the system.

There's nothing that I probably talked about more in my year and a half in the role as the minister. I had phone conversations with families who just had some kind of a drug prescribed that wasn't covered on the formulary, that they just didn't have enough money at the end of the month to go out and cover these costs and that tears at your heart when you're on the other end of the phone.

Obviously you, yourself, Mr. Speaker, when you sat on opposition, brought forward a story last year of a person with a cancer need that was struggling to find coverage for that drug, which was able to go through the committee and get put on the formulary, it made a significant difference to that person and that family for a number of months. Those are the stories that there's no question about are so important to, not only hear initially, but to deal with, and to make a significant difference and I know the minister will continue to do that when families reach out to him.

When it comes to dealing with family members that have various medical needs that there's just no place for them to fit in, they fall through the gaps and the holes and there's nobody that can step up to help them. I know other provinces are potentially, no question about it, further ahead when it comes to their formularies but that does not mean that we can't be part of this.

I know there was a letter to the editor probably less than 10 days ago, from Mona O'Shea, head of our nurses unit on PEI and with the national representative – I can't think of the ladies name – the national representative of RN's across Canada that said: this is the time for this to be done now. It's the time for the federal government to step up, it's the time for the provinces to step up and continue in good faith, talking about insuring that we get this done and we get it done right. Obviously there's a lot of provinces who have currently done a lot of the research part of what drugs should be available to people that live in their provinces and there's no reason why we need to reinvent the wheel in some of these cases, we can definitely take the research they've done and the work they've done and incorporate it into our formulary.

So, I think those are things that we absolutely need to look at when we're talking about moving forward here. I know when it says the provincial government's budget is in excessive of \$36 million on drug programs to Islanders. Those are real dollars; we need to look at if there's ways to cut costs there, with the generics for instance. A number of years ago, I'll say brand names, when they're replaced with a generic; significant savings; absolute significant savings for the Island.

We have to look at more ways to do that there are other companies that are coming on board now and we have to develop relationships and work with them on new research and new drugs that are coming in line in the areas of cancer, in the areas of diabetes, in the areas of pulmonary issues, cystic fibrosis for instance.

So I mean, these are things that we have to jump up, be part of and do the right thing. Any discussions that are held though, I think it's important that the results come back very quickly. I anticipate that this will no doubt be part of a federal platform plank this year and I think we will see things ramp up significantly over the coming months in regards to discussions on this.

So, certainly, I would like to lend my voice to this motion, I'll lend my voice to Islanders that are looking for drugs to be available for them, to be available for their families, their parents, their children and

their grandchildren. So certainly want to offer my support to it and appreciate the member for bringing it forward.

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

Ms. Altass: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm pleased to rise in support of this motion, as I had brought up during Question Period, there significant gaps in drug coverage for Islanders. I had mentioned that, for example when it comes to cancer medications you know, we had 30 approved that were recommended, versus 70 in New Brunswick and 74 in Ontario. I've also consulted with the MS Society who is facing a situation where individuals are waiting for coverage for two new medications that would have a significant impact on their quality of life and their ability to maintain a job and all kinds of things.

So really, the impacts of having access to medications when needed cannot be understated.

I guess the only question I have, and this was actually sort of addressed by a member here earlier – is that collaboration, absolutely – so who initiates it? Has there been any discussion? It sounds like in the past there has been with the previous government, with the federal counterparts on this.

If anything, I would have liked to see stronger language, but don't worry, I won't amend it. I'm just going to support it.

Thank you.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Aylward: Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker.

I can assure you that I will not be bringing an amendment forward either. Listen, not a lot of time, but I thank the members for taking this very important motion forward. I'm a strong proponent for a national pharmacare program here, and I think it could benefit Islanders greatly.

I know that the previous minister of health did a lot of work on this file. I'm just getting up to speed on it now. I've had a couple of conference calls. I know our Premier is going to a First Ministers' conference next week, and I'm sure that pharmacare will be one of the top agenda items as well, because it is being discussed nationally, provincially, territorially.

Here on Prince Edward Island, we do have some great programs in place, and I'll commend the previous administration for bringing some of these forward; but I also want to thank the previous opposition for keeping the pressure on the previous administration for making some of these investments in health care here in PEI.

Right now we have 28 drug programs in the province. Last year, approximately 60,000 Islanders received assistance with purchasing over 1,192,000 prescriptions and covering costs associated with community pharmacy services.

On the national level, the one thing that keeps coming up is that the provinces are really glad this discussion is going on. We're very proud of the work that Dr. Hoskins is doing across this great nation; but the only one fear that we have, and the one really red flag that we want to raise, is that when this national pharmacare program comes to light and it's announced and it's put in place, that we're not looking at two, three, four years down the road, that the federal government, whatever government may be in place at that time, says: Okay, there you have it, there's your program, now it's your responsibility to fund it. Because unfortunately we have seen in the past where federal governments have taken that approach and then put the burden back on provinces.

As great as Prince Edward Island is, Prince Edward Island is not financially in a position to be able to fund a national pharmacare program in our jurisdiction. We do need the support of the federal government, and we need that long-term commitment from the federal government.

Mr. Speaker, this motion, I hope that we get to a vote because I will be supporting this motion.

An Hon. Member: Whoo!

Mr. Aylward: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Some Hon. Members: Question.

An Hon. Member: Call the question.

Speaker: Okay, Members, the question has been called.

All those opposing the motion, say 'nay'.

All those in favour, say 'yea'.

Some Hon. Members: Yea!

Speaker: The motion has been passed unanimously.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

An Hon. Member: Call the hour.

Speaker: Members, the hour has been called, and we will recess again at 7:00, but we have to pick our chairs, remember?

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

An Hon. Member: Oh, we did ours already.

Speaker: So let's see if we can get our chairs picked before we –

The Legislature adjourned until 7:00 p.m.

Recognition of Guests

Speaker: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Belvedere, recognition of guests.

Ms. Bell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's my pleasure to rise this evening and to recognize some special guests for personally and on behalf of my colleagues. John and Sue Whitaker joined us in the House this evening and I have gotten the look of 'no' from Sue, but I'm going to go ahead anyway.

Boyd Leard is sitting here in the back, and it's great to see you. I know you had a great

conversation with him, Mr. Speaker, he's one of your colleagues.

Welcome to the House this evening, it's great to have you here.

Speaker: I'd like to do a recognition of guests also.

He's a constituent of mine, Boyd Leard. Mr. Leard and I were good friends for the last number of years. A lot of years, we won't say how many. I don't want to give away my age or his age.

Boyd did run in the election. He came to me before he put his name forward and asked me my thoughts on if he should run or not. Of course, I told Boyd yes, automatically put your name forward. Anybody that wants to run in provincial elections, I encourage them to put their name forward.

Boyd did put his name forward for the Green Party of Prince Edward Island. We kept a clean campaign as friends. I did my thing, and Boyd did his thing.

In case you – I'm probably the only one that's allowed to do this, but you fellows might get away with it, we call him Boogey Boyd. There's a story behind that name and Boyd will fill you in.

Welcome to the gallery, Boyd. It's nice to see you and it's always nice to have a stand up and recognize a good friend.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Orders of the Day Government

Speaker: Okay. I'll call on the hon. Minister of Finance.

Ms. Compton: 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 supplementary supply to Her Majesty.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

I'll call on the hon. Member from Tignish-Palmer Road to Chair, please.

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

Hon. members, we are going to start on page 66, Executive Council.

Request has been made for a stranger to come to the floor.

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

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

Chair: Thank you very much.

Hon. Premier would you like to have this opportunity for an opening statement?

Premier King: I don't think so. I don't think it would make a difference.

Chair: Okay, we'll move right in.

Premier King: Sure.

Chair: Premier's Office.

“Appropriations provided for the operation of an office to support the Premier in carrying out responsibilities as Leader of Government and as President of the Executive Council. Employees provide program and policy advice, administrative support and organization, and liaison –

[Audio clip was played].

An Hon. Member: Sorry.

Chair: – with the public and the media.”
Administration: 22,000. Equipment: 3,500.
Materials, Supplies and Services: 5,500.
Salaries: 750,100. Travel and Training: 44,200.

Total Premier's Office: 825,300.

The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Victoria Park.

Ms. Bernard: I noticed there's a \$200,000 increase in salaries. I'm just wondering how many new positions this is for?

Premier King: That is for the addition of two. One is the position of a principal secretary and the other Legislative affairs and policy analyst.

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

Ms. Bernard: That's good.

Chair: Shall the section carry? Carried.

Executive Council Office.

"Appropriations provided for the operation of the Office of the Clerk of the Executive Council (responsible for the administration of Cabinet processes and management of Cabinet records), the Cabinet Committee on Policy and Priorities (responsible to direct and oversee the legislative and policy work required to fulfill Government's plan, and align it with fiscal and governmental agendas), and Engage PEI." Administration: 35,000. Equipment: 5,000. Materials, Supplies and Services: 23,000. Professional Services: 40,000. Salaries: 1,657,600. Travel and Training: 11,000.

Total Executive Council Office: 1,771,600.

Shall the section carry?

Ms. Lund: Question.

Chair: The hon. Member from Summerside-Wilmot.

Ms. Lund: Thank you, Chair.

Previously there were three cabinet committees: treasury board, the cabinet committee on priorities and the policy review committee. Why did you decide to cut that to two, Premier?

Premier King: It was just a merger of two committees that ended up sort of doing a lot

of the same work. So we merged them into one.

Chair: The hon. Member from Summerside-Wilmot.

Ms. Lund: Thank you, Chair.

The previous Premier, I note, had also made the same move when he first came into office, but then he later reversed that decision and went back to the three cabinet system – three cabinet committee system, excuse me.

I'm just curious why you think that this will be an effective move when the previous Premier found it not to be?

Premier King: Look, I think we would probably reserve the right to look at that going forward, but I think right now we felt it was the best move going forward too. You know, we have a small Cabinet, obviously, and we're trying to limit the amount of work that each of the Cabinet ministers have to do outside some of their biggest portfolios.

Chair: The hon. Member from Summerside-Wilmot.

Ms. Lund: Final question, Chair thank you.

Does this decision come with any cost or staffing implications?

Premier King: No, actually no.

Ms. Lund: Thank you.

Chair: Shall the section carry? Carried.

Total Executive Council Office: 1,771,600.

Shall it carry? Carried.

Intergovernmental and Public Affairs

Intergovernmental Affairs Secretariat

"Appropriations provided for research, consultation and analysis of cross-government issues; provision of support and advice; and preparation of briefing documents on strategic intergovernmental issues and opportunities to ensure that the interests and priorities of the Province are presented in dealings with other

governments.” Administration: 4,400. Equipment: 2,000. Materials, Supplies and Services: 2,000. Salaries: 273,300. Travel and Training: 62,800. Grants: 91,500.

Total Intergovernmental Affairs Secretariat: 436,000.

Shall the section carry? Carried.

Indigenous Relations Secretariat

“Appropriations provided to cover Indigenous-specific programs, initiatives and consultations under the Canada-PEI-Mi’kmaq Partnership Agreement together with grants to the Native Council of Prince Edward Island and the Aboriginal Women’s Association.” Administration: 6,500. Equipment: 3,000. Materials, Supplies and Services: 6,900. Professional Services: 466,500. Salaries: 432,300. Travel and Training: 16,100. Grants: 739,000.

Total Indigenous Relations Secretariat: 1,670,300.

Ms. Altass: Question?

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

Ms. Altass: Thank you, Chair.

It looks like there is a huge increase to professional services. It looks like Aboriginal legal specialist and general consultation. Can you tell me a little bit about what this is for?

Premier King: Yeah. That’s essentially the work that’s being undertaken to implement the framework agreement that was signed in January. So it’s essentially, even though the framework is signed now, they’re sort of working on the implementation of that. That is for an outside legal expert who is providing the service.

Ms. Altass: There’s an increase in salaries as well. Is that related to the same –

Karen Stanley: Yes.

Premier King: Yes.

Ms. Altass: So how many new positions would that be?

Premier King: One fulltime and one part-time.

Ms. Altass: And just to confirm, so these are the salaried, permanent positions then? Or is it –

Premier King: Yeah. So the fulltime is permanent and the part-time is temporary for now.

Ms. Altass: Okay. All right.

There’s also a massive increase in grants. So Aboriginal framework agreement, the 450k, that’s –

Premier King: Yeah, that’s the grant that we have committed to as part of the agreement to put forward on to help them implement the framework on their end.

Ms. Altass: Okay, very good.

Premier King: Yeah.

Ms. Altass: All right.

Thank you. That’s it.

Chair: The hon. Member from Cornwall-Meadowbank.

Mr. MacDonald: I’m fine, thank you.

Chair: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton.

Mr. Hammarlund: (Indistinct)

Chair: Shall this section carry? Carried.

Acadian and Francophone Affairs Secretariat

“Appropriations provided for the coordination of measures relating to the implementation of the *French Language Services Act* within the Province Government, including support to departmental French Services coordinators; coordination of several bilateral agreements; provision of translation services; administrative support to the Acadian and Francophone Community Advisory Committee, and several other initiatives concerning the promotion of the French language.” Administration: 8,500.

Equipment: 4,200. Materials, Supplies and Services: 9,000. Professional Services: 212,000. Salaries: 691,400. Travel and Training: 18,100. Grants: 10,000. Total Acadian and Francophone Affairs Secretariat: 953,200.

Mr. Gallant: Question.

Chair: The hon. Member from Evangeline-Miscouche.

Mr. Gallant: Thank you, Chair.

The grants went down from 76,000 to 10 – was that something to do with the CMA or –

Premier King: Yeah, that was the preparation for the

Mr. Gallant: Congress?

Premier King: – congress – yeah.

Mr. Gallant: Thank you very much.

Chair: The hon. Member from Evangeline-Miscouche.

Mr. Gallant: No, that's good.

Thanks.

Chair: The hon. Member from Mermaid-Stratford.

Ms. Beaton: Thank you, Chair.

So, the forecast on the funding on materials, supplies and services last year was 21,800, but this year re-estimated at 9,000 – the same as the estimate last year. So, if it was twice the amount, why don't we foresee that it's going to be the same this year?

Premier King: It's some of the increase costs for the printing and meeting costs related to promoting the communication strategy for last year, so we feel we'll be back in line this year with what the forecast was last year.

Chair: The hon. Member from Mermaid-Stratford.

Ms. Beaton: Thank you, Chair.

So there was extra last year that we're not going to be doing this year? Is that –

Premier King: Yes.

Chair: The hon. Member from Mermaid-Stratford.

Ms. Beaton: I'm good.

Chair: Shall this section carry? Carried.

Total Intergovernmental and Public Affairs: 3,059,500.

Shall it carry? Carried.

Communications and Public Engagement

Departmental Communications and Engagement

“Appropriations provided for departmental communication officers and public engagement support.” Administration: 13,000. Salaries: 1,440,700. Travel and Training: 10,700. Total Departmental Communications and Engagement: 1,464,400.

Mr. Mitchell: Question.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Mr. Mitchell: Premier, I see a \$200,000 increase in salaries under this section. What's that regarding?

Premier King: It's mostly just the increase from the public service increases for the 17 full-time people that are in there, so it's the increase – (Indistinct) that's our two engagement officers, sorry. Yes, sorry. We have outlined – sorry, let me correct that.

Mr. Mitchell: Okay, so –

Premier King: So, we have allowed for two public engagement officers, which we haven't yet hired. That's the difference in the salary, right?

Mr. Mitchell: Okay, so I see –

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Premier King: Sorry, yeah.

Mr. Mitchell: I see a couple of concerning points and I see that \$200,000 increase and a \$200,000 increase earlier under your heading in your Premier's Office regarding new staff.

We've been questioning you all week on gaps within your promises –

Premier King: Sure.

Mr. Mitchell: – and your deliveries and Islanders that have been expecting to see that come to fruition and we in the third party, we certainly haven't to come to some full determination yet on supporting your budget when it actually comes to a vote on the floor.

When we see things of this nature, and it came to us just today for certain that you will be leaving the province next week. Are you concerned at all that you're leaving the province in a minority situation on the floor of the Legislature when two parties have already indicated you don't have full support for the budget.

I know at other times, other premiers that were in the same situation stay on the floor of the Legislature and face the questions –

Premier King: I would prefer to stay. My choice would be to stay, but I think my duties as Premier – that I should go to the council of federation meetings. I would prefer to stay. My first choice would be to be here.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Mr. Mitchell: Well, I guess when I'm still talking to Islanders and they're still bringing up to me that they've supported your party for particular reasons as far as your promises, and I see things like this under your budget lines – it's concerning for me. I wanted to ask you that question.

Do you feel that western Canada is your best place next week? And if you do –

Premier King: Look, I think it would be a terrible miss for Prince Edward Island as one of the members of the council of the federation not to attend the meetings, but –

Mr. Mitchell: Well, you're a long way from having your budget pass.

Premier King: If you would have a preference that I didn't go, I guess I will put that under advisement.

Mr. Mitchell: I guess you're a long way from having your budget passed, that's all I wanted to –

Premier King: I'm sorry, I missed that.

Mr. Mitchell: You're a long way from having your budget passed.

Premier King: Oh, I realize that, yeah.

Mr. Mitchell: That's it.

Thank you, Chair.

Chair: The hon. Member from Mermaid-Stratford.

Ms. Beaton: So we're almost to the end.

Can you tell us how many additional staff the office has since the election?

Premier King: Which office do you mean?

Ms. Beaton: The –

Premier King: This office here in particular?

Ms. Beaton: Yeah, that covers the Executive Council.

How many additional salaries are in the budget?

Premier King: For the entire Executive Council office, you mean or just this particular section?

Ms. Beaton: For the entire – so if you add up across all of the requirement through the Premier's Office, Executive Council office – how many additional staff does this government require in order to operate?

Premier King: I guess we would have five new people in the office of children and youth, which will be just for this year, obviously. That will probably be transferred into the Legislature. We have the two that

we talked about in the Premier's Office, and we have these two positions that we have yet to fill in the strategic communications department.

Chair: The hon. Member from Mermaid-Stratford.

Ms. Beaton: So, other than children and youth, there's four total?

Premier King: Two so far. We've made allowance for two more.

Ms. Beaton: Two and then allowance for two more?

Premier King: Yeah.

Chair: The hon. Member from Mermaid-Stratford.

Ms. Beaton: Okay, thank you.

Chair: The hon. Member from Cornwall-Meadowbank.

Mr. MacDonald: Just back on the communications there for a second. So, you have a new communications person in the Premier's Office, and then you have – did you say two more communication people that you haven't hired yet?

Premier King: They're public engagement officers, yes, who would work under this (Indistinct) –

Mr. MacDonald: What do they – what's the definition of a public engagement officer?

Premier King: We can give you the job descriptions, if you wish, sure.

Chair: The hon. Member from Cornwall-Meadowbank.

Mr. MacDonald: So you don't have any – just brief. I don't need (Indistinct) –

Premier King: Well, yeah I have a pile of documents here. If you give me a second we could certainly find them.

They would be added to assist senior communications officers and work on the public engagement and outreach of government.

Chair: The hon. Member from Cornwall-Meadowbank.

Mr. MacDonald: So these are on top of the – okay. Interesting.

All right, thank you.

No more.

Premier King: They're junior level staff.

Ms. Altass: Yeah, no my question was very similar.

I guess I'm hoping for sort of a more complete answer as to – community engagement is extremely important. I'm wondering what are your additional goals of these two staff other than just more –

Premier King: Look, I would say as a former person who worked in that staff, that it might sound like a lot that 17 people work in there but they do a lot of work, doing the public engagement of government public programming across the board.

So I think the presentation that was made that we're weighing now is if we could bring in two junior level people to assist in the overall roll out of that. Communications is changing, compared to what we have done before, there's so many social channels et cetera.

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

Ms. Altass: Thank you, Chair.

So I guess a couple questions there. So you said that those are two junior level staff, they're starting at \$100,000 each?

That's pretty good. I have some experience working (Indistinct)

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

[Laughter]

Premier King: So no, they would be at a \$50,000 maximum level each. And the other level is a transfer from strategic communications. Sorry, yeah.

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

Ms. Altass: Oh, okay so \$50,000 each just for –

Premier King: Yeah. We moved the senior comms office from one to another. So that's why it's in here, yeah.

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

Ms. Altass: Okay. I was wondering if I could get – obviously I'm new.

Premier King: Me too.

Ms. Altass: If I could get clarification of the 17 people plus the two new. Coming from outside and what a lot of people wonder, what are all these people doing – so if you could help me understand that.

Premier King: Most of them all worked there before, as the member would know, no new hires other than these two that we've made allowance for. I can certainly give you a description of what they are, yeah.

Ms. Altass: Yeah, get a bit of an idea.

Premier King: Sure.

Ms. Altass: Get a bit of an idea of what that involves. Okay.

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

Premier King: You had them all.

You know them all very well.

An Hon. Member: Besides your new ones.

Premier King: I don't have any new ones either.

Sorry.

Mr. McNeilly: I guess what we're saying is do you have a plan to increase the amount of people in the future? In a minority government situation, it seems like a lot of people and resources going into the top level of, you know, planning and development in Prince Edward Island and we're talking

about, you know, a consultative approach to working for Islanders.

What's your plan?

[Laughter]

Premier King: I don't understand the question, sorry.

Mr. McNeilly: Are you planning on increasing the staff?

Premier King: Well, we have made allowance to hire two junior level people. So I would say your answer would be in that.

Essentially what we did in the Premier's office was we brought in a principle secretary which used to be the case. The current Clerk of the Legislative Assembly was doing both duties. I don't think it's fair for the top bureaucrat in Prince Edward Island to be doing political work. I mean small political work not party work but to deal with some of the political connections.

So we thought it was better to allow the Clerk to be what he's supposed to be, which is the top bureaucrat in Prince Edward Island, and to work with the public service and take the political agenda and move it through the public service accordingly. That's why we added the other individual there.

In this case, I think we're always looking to evolve how we do our government roll out, our public engagement as I say that is changing very much. People are expecting us to be more engaged with them and to actually consult and listen etcetera.

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

Mr. McNeilly: How much influence did you have on the plan?

Premier King: How much influence did I have? Zero.

Mr. McNeilly: So you're saying that you didn't hire anybody or you didn't –

Premier King: We made allowance for two positions that we haven't filled yet.

My plan would be, hon. member, after providing we get budget support and able to move on beyond the Legislature, I would like to look at how we deliver a lot of our programs as we talk about before.

One of the ones near and dear to my heart obviously is strategic communications. Having come from that position, as I say, a number of years ago, I think we need to sort of continue to evolve the thinking around the communications and outreach. I would like to have an in depth look at that providing we get support for doing it.

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

Mr. McNeilly: Are these two engagement officers, are they in competition now?

Premier King: I don't believe so, no. They won't be until the budget is passed, obviously.

Mr. McNeilly: It will be soon thereafter. Okay, that's all for me.

Thanks.

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

Ms. Altass: Thank you, Chair.

So Mr. Premier, you had mentioned the work, this department is small, the politics. I don't like to make assumptions.

Premier King: Sure.

Ms. Altass: I'm wondering if you can define that.

Premier King: So Cabinet deals with political decisions. I guess you feel what I mean. So when I talk about it's the politics, it's the civics lesson your leader was trying to give me the other day about the branches of government etcetera.

I don't feel it's fair for the top bureaucrat who is supposed to be an impartial person, who's a very qualified person to be in the job, to be given the duties of trying to steer some of the political influences around through the office.

When I worked in the office before, there was a principle secretary, there was a Clerk and they were different positions.

Ms. Altass: Okay. That's fine.

Thank you.

Chair: The hon. Member from Cornwall-Meadowbank.

Mr. MacDonald: So you have Amanda Hamel as your communications person now?

Premier King: Yes.

Mr. MacDonald: What's Erica MacDonald do?

Premier King: She would be the equivalent of – who was the – Tyler.

Chair: The hon. Member from Cornwall-Meadowbank.

Mr. MacDonald: So is she one of the engagement officers at the present time?

Premier King: No.

Chair: The hon. Member from Cornwall-Meadowbank.

Mr. MacDonald: Thank you.

Chair: Shall the section carry? Carried.

Strategic Communications and Outreach

“Appropriations provided for a range of services such as communications, planning and strategy development, advertising, photography and video production, editorial, media, web, social media and public outreach to all government departments and agencies and the Legislative Assembly.”
Administration: 24,100, Equipment: 67,800. Materials, Supplies and Services: 342,900. Professional Services: 30,000. Salaries: 1,206,100. Travel and Training: 17,300. Total Strategic Communications and Outreach: 1,688,200.

Chair: The hon. Member from Cornwall-Meadowbank.

Mr. MacDonald: Premier, you talked a little bit about outreach when you spoke on departmental communications and engagement and then we're talking about strategic communications and outreach here. Are they different? I guess I'm just a little confused.

Premier King: It's kind of the same, it's just the way they're divided up for budgetary purposes.

Chair: The hon. Member from Cornwall-Meadowbank.

Mr. MacDonald: Thank you.

Chair: Shall this section carry?

Mr. Hammarlund: (Indistinct)

Chair: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton.

Mr. Hammarlund: I'm just curious, we talked about government advertising before and I'm just wondering, does that cover all the advertising or are there other costs elsewhere in the budget? Is it somewhere else or is this kind of it for government advertising?

Premier King: Most of it will be here but some is embedded in some of the departments as well, but the bulk of it is here.

Chair: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton.

Chair: Mr. Hammarlund: Thank you.

Chair: Shall this section carry? Carried.

Total Communications and Public Engagement: 3,152,600.

Shall it carry?

Chair: The hon. Member from Summerside-Wilmot.

Ms. Lund: Thank you, Chair

Is this where the child advocate's office would be Premier?

Premier King: Oh are –

Chair: We're not at that section.

Ms. Lund: Oh I'm ahead of myself, excuse me. Sorry.

Chair: Total Communications and Public Engagement: 3,152,600.

Shall it carry? Carried.

Office for Children and Youth

“Appropriations provided for the operations and administration of the Office of Children and Youth.” Administration: 14,500. Materials, Supplies and Services: 10,100. Professional Services: 50,000. Salaries: 505,000. Travel and Training: 20,400.

Total Office of Children and Youth: 600,000.

The hon. Member from Summerside-Wilmot.

Ms. Lund: Thank you, Chair.

Is this where the child advocate's office is?

Premier King: Yes.

Chair: The hon. Member from Summerside-Wilmot.

Ms. Lund: Thank you, Chair.

Does the budget reflect the proposed changes to make this office independent, Premier?

Premier King: Yeah I think once the office is determined to be independent, I think then the budget will be determined from the Legislative Assembly, I believe it is, yeah because that's the entity that would be paying for the service.

Chair: The hon. Member from Summerside-Wilmot.

Ms. Lund: Thank you, Chair.

So the budget as it stands right now does not reflect that?

Premier King: That's correct.

Chair: The hon. Member from Summerside-Wilmot.

Ms. Lund: Thank you, Chair.

Is this where the extra child lawyer will come in as well?

Premier King: That's in justice and public safety, actually.

Chair: The hon. Member from Summerside-Wilmot.

Ms. Lund: Thank you, Chair.

Chair: The hon. Member from Evangeline-Miscouche.

Mr. Gallant: I certainly appreciate this is a duty (Indistinct) as we see in the salary increases.

Could you explain the difference between the advocate and the navigator? What would the position difference be in those positions?

Premier King: I don't know. I'd have to get back to you on that.

Mr. Gallant: Thanks.

Chair: The hon. Member from Evangeline-Miscouche.

Mr. Gallant: No, that's good.

—

Chair: The hon. Member from Evangeline-Miscouche.

Mr. Gallant: Thank you.

I certainly appreciate this as a new department (Indistinct) as we see the salary increase. Can you explain the difference between the advocate and the navigator? Like what would the difference be in those positions?

Premier King: I don't know. I would have to get back to you on that.

Mr. Gallant: Thanks.

Chair: The hon. Member from Evangeline-Miscouche.

Mr. Gallant: No that's good.

Chair: The hon. Member from Cornwall-Meadowbank.

Mr. MacDonald: Just curious, so this is a brand new office, right?

Premier King: I think there was three months last year of population.

Chair: The hon. Member from Cornwall-Meadowbank.

Mr. MacDonald: So what's your budget forecast? Where are those numbers coming from to be comparable if it's relatively all new?

Premier King: The forecast is based on what took place during those three months, it's calculated out over the year.

Chair: The hon. Member from Cornwall-Meadowbank.

Mr. MacDonald: So the former department, I think her name was Kathy Chaisson was the lawyer, the child lawyer and stuff. Is this taking place with that or?

Premier King: I think it's Michelle Dorsey, is that her name?

The child lawyer is in justice and public safety.

Mr. MacDonald: Or is this is Michele's budget moving forward? Michelle Docherty?

Premier King: Until such time as it becomes reporting independently to the Legislature.

Chair: The hon. Member from Cornwall-Meadowbank.

Mr. MacDonald: How many people are in 500 and 5000?

Premier King: Five.

Chair: The hon. Member from Cornwall-Meadowbank.

Mr. MacDonald: No further, thank you.

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

Mr. Howard: Thank you, Chair.

It doesn't look like the office of children and youth will offer any grants this fiscal year, is that true?

Premier King: Nothing is currently budgeted.

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

Mr. Howard: Will the office at some point become a funding source for community programs related to children and youth?

Premier King: I think that would probably depend on what the legislature decides when it becomes independent, I think.

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

Mr. Howard: No that's fine Chair, thank you.

Chair: The hon. Member from Mermaid-Stratford.

Ms. Beaton: Do you have a timeline when the bill will be tabled for the independent?

Premier King: What we've been working on right now is putting together the actual assessment of what that bill needs to look like, but because the scope is so broad I do think it's going to require a little bit of public consultation. It's our full intention to get something to the Legislature for this spring, but my guess based on what I've been seeing and hearing from the briefings that I had, it might be actually be debated and hopefully passed in the fall session.

Chair: The hon. Member from Mermaid-Stratford

Ms. Beaton: So if there's no costing in this budget as it currently stands, do you have the child advocate office independent, this will have to be addressed when we pass that bill, is that correct?

Premier King: Yeah it would have to be changed via special order once the –

Chair: The hon. Member from Mermaid-Stratford

Ms. Beaton: And do you have an idea of what the cost will be to have that office independent?

Premier King: I think that is sort of partly what's being negotiated, I mean you're going to need an independent site off site, you're going to need to figure out what the staff is, you're going to need to figure out if it's going to be an office that can assist those type of things and I think that's a discussion that will need to take place in here.

Chair: The hon. Member from Mermaid-Stratford

Ms. Beaton: So when you're running a \$1.8 million surplus and we haven't budgeted for something that is a campaign promise that you need to make that choice.

Premier King: Well we all want it.

Ms. Beaton: Will that eat up that surplus?

Premier King: I don't know until we determine what the budget will be, I mean we've allowed for this based on what the last three months were implemented. So I would assume and hope that whatever is in here can be transferred to the new office if that's even possible, then whatever needs then, I think we'll have to find the resources to do that. I think all three parties are committed to doing that.

Chair: The hon. Member from Summerside-Wilmot.

Sorry, Mermaid-Stratford.

Ms. Beaton: I know she does ask a lot of questions.

So we have commitment though that within this fiscal year we're going to be looking at passing a bill for this?

Premier King: I think as fast as humanly possible. As you can imagine, the scope of this is going to be much broader than what it currently is, so we just think it's going to require some public consultation because they are going to be entities, groups and individuals who are going to be impacted by

this and I think they need to know that and they need to have some input on how it works.

Chair: The hon. Member from Mermaid-Stratford.

Ms. Beaton: Thank you, Chair.

Premier King: The idea would be to get it right obviously and to make it as effective as possible.

Chair: Shall this section carry? Carried.

Total Office of Children and Youth:
600,000.

Shall it carry? Carried.

Total Executive Council: 9,409,000.

Shall it carry? Carried.

Premier King: Thank you Chair.

Chair: You're welcome.

Premier King: Thank you, Karen.

Karen Stanley: Thank you.

Mr. Trivers: Hello Deputy Speaker, how are you tonight?

Chair: I'm pretty good yourself?

Mr. Trivers: Good, good.

Chair: Are you all ready?

Mr. Trivers: I'd like to call a stranger to the floor.

Chair: A request for a stranger to come on the floor?

Some Hon. Members: Granted.

Chair: Thank you.

Please say your name and title for record.

Michele Koughan: Michele Koughan, acting director of Finance and Corporate Services.

Chair: Thank you very much.

Hon. members, we left this at page 60 and we have read climate change secretariat section, are there any further questions on that section?

Shall it carry? Carried.

Total Climate Change Secretariat:
1,344,000.

Shall it carry? Carried.

Environment

Division Management

“Appropriations provided for the management and administration of the Environment and Climate Change Divisions as well as the Energy Rebate Program and the Carbon Relief Subsidy Program.”
Administration: 8,700. Equipment: 1,000. Materials, Supplies and Services: 2,600. Professional Services: 50,000. Salaries: 321,400. Travel and Training: 7,700. Grants: 13,599,100.

Total Division Management: 13,990,500.

The hon. Member from Summerside-Wilmot.

Ms. Lund: Thank you, Chair.

Do we have any sense of how many households have taken advantage of the energy efficient equipment rebates, so far this year?

Mr. Trivers: So far this year?

Ms. Lund: Yes.

Mr. Trivers: That's a TIE project.

Chair: The hon. Member from Summerside-Wilmot.

Ms. Lund: Thank you, Chair.

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

Mr. Howard: I'm just looking at the breakdown of how the grants are rolled out, I mean there's \$6 million for energy rebates, I'm assuming that's for the first block of power, the rebate, when we put the HST on

electricity and the minister of energy decided to give a 10% rebate, is that what that is - that six million to Maritime Electric?

Mr. Trivers: So just to be clear, there's two line items. Yeah, you can go ahead.

Michele Koughan: Sorry, could you repeat the question. You're looking for a breakdown of the grants?

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

Mr. Howard: Just in the estimates book that we got here, it shows that there's \$6,096,021 that goes to Maritime Electric for energy rebates to Island residents.

Michele Koughan: So for 2019-2020, the Clean Energy Rebates, which is the rebates for Maritime Electric and Propane –

Mr. Howard: And 10% on the first block.

Michele Koughan: Yea, is \$10.1 million, that's total, but that's made up of \$9 million for electricity, \$840,000 for propane, \$180,000 for wood pellets and \$60,000 for fire food.

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

Mr. Howard: Sorry, yeah, those are different numbers than I'm looking at here.

Michele Koughan: You're looking at the forecast are you? Sorry, I was looking at the (Indistinct)

Mr. Howard: I'm looking at this big book here; I'm under EWCC Division Management.

Michele Koughan: On the handouts, sorry. I thought you meant the budget book.

Mr. Howard: Yeah, sorry, it's on EWCC-100 is the page.

Michele Koughan: Yes, the \$6.1 million is for Maritime Electric and Summerside Utility.

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

Mr. Howard: That 10% rebate on the first block.

Michele Koughan: I'm sorry, yes, I'm sorry about that.

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

Mr. Howard: Thank you, Chair.

Looking at this same list here now, what really strikes me is that we're giving out \$540,000 as carbon relief on rebate on driver's licenses, so how is that carbon relief?

And that's something I think I may even point it out when we were debating that last time when I was in opposition.

I've said several times on the floor here that I think that's probably not a very effective way to use any money that comes in through carbon pricing, because it really doesn't give any incentive to reduce carbon emissions.

I would agree with you.

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

Mr. Howard: Yes. So I mean something that does encourage less carbon use is more use of public transit. And the top line item, we give \$22,545 to that?

Mr. Trivers: Yes.

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

Mr. Howard: Thank you, Chair.

So that's a 10% discount for bus fares for \$220,000. I mean, if ridership stayed the same, we could give everybody free transit for \$220,000.

We're giving \$540,000 for free licenses. It just kind of boggles the mind.

Mr. Trivers: I agree with you, and this is something we're definitely looking at going forward.

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

Mr. Howard: Thank you, Chair.

There's another line item here that has me questioning things as well.

Propane is not much cleaner. It's a little bit cleaner than burning diesel fuel and the like, according to the sources I have, but at per unit of energy delivered that is, not per gallon.

We're given \$387,000 to burn propane as carbon relief?

Mr. Trivers: That is correct.

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

Mr. Howard: Could you explain how subsidizing something that releases carbon is relieving carbon?

Mr. Trivers: I would say that propane probably produces a little bit less carbon than, say, heating by oil. But –

Mr. Howard: It does a little bit. Sorry?

Mr. Trivers: – I would tend to agree with you, and this is an area we really want to look at.

Can I say it's one of those things that we inherited from the previous administration that we want to dig into and change?

This is something that I'm looking for your input in. I like your idea about the transit. We're also talking maybe about incentives for electric vehicles, using some of the money for that. There are lots of good ideas on what to do with that money. We have to talk about what are the biggest bangs for our buck.

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

Mr. Howard: Do you have any stats on what the numbers the department's using for how much more efficient propane is than diesel?

Mr. Trivers: I have to bring that back.

Mr. Howard: Thank you.

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

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

Chair: The hon. Member from Evangeline-Miscouche.

Mr. Gallant: Thanks.

The minister just touched on it; electric vehicles.

Do you have any plans? Is there anything to share with us at this point going forward like it seems to be getting quite a momentum? People are talking about. People are buying them.

Mr. Trivers: So the minister of transportation has talked a lot about it in some of his answers. It would fall under his department.

The first thing that I believe he's doing is we're putting in some charging stations that the infrastructure required for electric vehicles and going forward, we're looking at possibly bringing in incentives for purchasing electric vehicles.

It's a tough one though. We have to look it up carefully, because, of course, the people with the least amount of money are probably the ones that can least afford to buy an electric vehicle.

As the minister of transportation said many times, we want to make sure whatever we do is accessible to everybody.

Chair: The hon. Member from Evangeline-Miscouche.

Mr. Gallant: Just for clarification, his department would look after the infrastructure part, but you'd look after the grant part?

Mr. Trivers: That's –

Mr. Gallant: Under of these grants? A grant of 10% or 5%, would it be under you? Correct?

Michele Koughan: Yes, that's correct.

Mr. Gallant: Thank you.

Chair: The hon. Member from Evangeline-Miscouche?

Mr. Gallant: That's good, thank you.

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

Mr. McNeilly: Can you just clarify your position on the driver's licenses?

Mr. Trivers: I believe that they do not encourage the reduction of carbon emissions or CO₂ equivalent.

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

Mr. McNeilly: Are you going to increase those in the future, or put the fee back on?

Mr. Trivers: Something we're considering. Yes, we're open to that.

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

Mr. McNeilly: So on the registration reduction; are you looking at that as well?

Mr. Trivers: Yes.

Mr. McNeilly: So you're going to put the price up on it to register your vehicle?

Mr. Trivers: Maybe.

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

Mr. McNeilly: Sorry? Maybe?

Mr. Trivers: Maybe.

Mr. McNeilly: Okay. No further questions. Thanks.

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

Ms. Bernard: I'm still kind of stuck on the grants.

I have to say I have grave, grave concerns that the Minister of Environment, Water and Climate Change is saying we know these aren't effective in reducing carbon. I'm not

supporting a reduction in your bill from 1.4 to 1.2 because it's too expensive.

You know it doesn't work, but they're in here and they're still budgeted for.

I would like a commitment that you are going to get rid of the things that you know are not effective in reducing carbon.

Mr. Trivers: Well, this is budget estimates here. And I think – I would like to discuss that with you. I'd like to discuss that with Islanders. I'm not prepared to sit here on the floor today and say yes, I commit to that. I want to give a full well thought out response.

I mean, yes, I'll tell you that is definitely the way that I am leaning, but I'm not going to commit that to you right here right now on the floor. No matter how hard you bang the desks.

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

Ms. Bernard: With all due respect, we really need to see some leadership in this area and I don't think we need to consult with people to know that those aren't effective measures.

Mr. Henderson: No leadership.

Ms. Bernard: No more questions.

Chair: The hon. Member from Cornwall-Meadowbank.

Mr. MacDonald: Thank you.

And just curious, I guess there's a couple of ways that we talk about emissions and carbon reduction, and how we get people to change their habits specifically. And there's some good ideas, obviously.

There's also, I mean, when you talk about propane. I have two trailer parks in my riding, and I can tell you it's propane at every one of them. They're not the most influential or well-to-do people in my area – they'll burn propane.

So I think perception wise or not perception – that's not even the right word. It's a lack of a better word.

You have to dangle the carrot. You have to create the environment for these people to realize that a heat pump is much better than propane, propane is better than oil, and you build your portfolio like that.

Walking in and going, this is what we're going to do. I can tell you right now what's going to happen. It's going to be easy. So I hope you consider that the social aspect of this plays a major part in it. I'm a firm believer in reducing carbon emissions. I'm a firm believer in what was done in Paris.

But you can't come in and just cut everything without presenting to them a carrot versus a stick or we're going to have a society – We talked about transportation, that's wonderful, but I mean transportation, you know, it's a ways off. And yes, we could go and spend another 200,000 and give free ridership. And maybe it would increase, but then we have to go and buy another 20 buses and run them from east to west.

It's not as easy as a lot of people may seem it's easy.

Thank you.

Mr. Trivers: Well, thank you for that interjection there, Member from Cornwall-Meadowbank. Perhaps that answers your question as to why maybe we need a broader discussion. There's lots of different points of view on this.

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

Mr. Howard: Thank you, Chair.

So I was just wondering if within here, like there seems to be some significance. And I acknowledge what the member to my right is saying that we have to be mindful of those who can't afford any extra burden and whatnot.

But we're talking about the department of environment and climate change secretariat. There's certainly a place to make sure that our most vulnerable are sheltered, but I don't believe it's within these two areas. We're talking about using the money we have to address climate change properly.

So I'm just wondering, I heard the minister say that there's been a lot of analysis within the department about what it would take to get to 1.2 and how expensive that would be.

I'm looking at this seeing us spending a bunch of money encouraging more energy use through energy rebates, which once again there's something to be said for, but it's not on the climate change front, and subsidizing the use of carbon emitting fuels and encouraging more vehicles on the road.

With that detailed analysis that the minister is alluding to, that it's going to be terribly expensive, and all the waste that we're looking at here as far as actually addressing carbon emissions, has there been a detailed analysis within the department on the effect carbon pricing itself would have as an effective way to gather and use funds and transition Islanders? Is there that information within the department?

Mr. Trivers: A couple clarifications.

There's been a lot of analysis done with the 1.4 target. There's been preliminary analysis done for the 1.2 with a lot of (Indistinct) analysis.

To answer your last question, I would say there probably has been. I have not had that, you know, seen that analysis myself yet, and I can see if we can bring that back. I don't think I'll commit to bring it back.

I'll tell you what –

Mr. Howard: That was my next question.

Mr. Trivers: – I'll commit to having that my department present to the appropriate standing committee to have that discussion.

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

Mr. Howard: Ok, very good. So you're not aware on any study on carbon pricing within the department.

Mr. Trivers: I would say the department definitely has looked at carbon pricing quite a bit, but I don't think there's a report available that I could table for you.

Like I said, what I would commit to do is have the department come to the appropriate standing committee and let's have that discussion on price. I know you want to see action right now, you wanted to see action in this budget and what we're doing is we're taking measured action and its going to take some time to get that into place.

You know, be patient, we'll all have our chance to give input, that's what collaboration in a minority government is all about. Whether it be the Member from Cornwall-Meadowbank or the Member from Charlottetown-Victoria Park, or yourself, maybe the Member from Morell-Donagh has some input as well. But, we're going to make change and we're going to make change based on fulsome discussion and we're going to make change that will allow us to reduce our carbon emissions.

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

Mr. Howard: That all sounds very nice minister, in collaboration I'd be there to help you all along but I've heard you say that you will stand against it and then I've also heard you say that you don't have the information that might even be within your department.

Mr. Trivers: I'll stand against what?

Mr. Howard: The reduction to 1.2 from 1.4.

Mr. Trivers: I never said that.

Mr. Howard: I thought I heard you mention that.

Mr. Trivers: I said that I would not support the amendments to 1.2 because I want it to go to standing committee to have a fulsome discussion is exactly what I said.

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

Mr. Howard: Thank you, Chair.

I believe you also said because it was relating to carbon pricing itself and yet –

Mr. Trivers: That's right. So the 1.2 reduction, the amendment that's proposed in the clause ties it directly to carbon pricing,

which the Member from Summerside-Wilmot has said, repeatedly is not the only way to reduce carbon reductions. So I'm saying that when we amend legislation like that, that directly ties it to carbon pricing in the legislation, I'm not comfortable doing that without a fulsome discussion.

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

Mr. Howard: Thank you, Chair.

Chair: The hon. Member from Summerside-Wilmot.

Ms. Lund: Thank you, Chair.

I'm just curious minister to jump in on what you just said. Are you of the impression if we make that amendment it would not permit us to spend funds on things or reach our target through other mechanisms outside of a carbon tax?

Mr. Trivers: No.

Ms. Lund: Is that your concern, if we tie it to a carbon tax that it will limit our options and we couldn't explore these other various policies?

Mr. Trivers: No.

Chair: The hon. Member from Summerside-Wilmot.

Ms. Lund: Thank you, Chair.

Chair: The hon. Member from Cornwall-Meadowbank.

Mr. MacDonald: In our last sitting of the Legislature when we were in government, we put passed legislation that every cent that comes in under carbon, goes back in to programs. Is that not correct? Or am I having déjà vu?

So I guess some of these questions, everything is going to go right back into a program. It's not going to go into general revenue, it's not going to go into your bottom line, it's going to go into programs. So, you're going to have all kinds of extra additional money, like you will on the cannabis sales, and the edible sales. Maybe we should take the cannabis sales and the

edible sales and put it back into carbon? But that's – I mean there's some – we're talking finances but –

Mr. Trivers: Well that's not –

Mr. MacDonald: But that's right, right?

Mr. Trivers: That's not entirely true because the one cent net that's coming in on fuels from the carbon price going to give free licenses and discounted registrations, as well as to give rebates on a variety of fuels, including electricity.

Mr. MacDonald: That's just the first year, that's going to continue to increase? That's going to grow exponentially, so there will be all kinds of money there to reinvest.

Mr. Trivers: Assuming that it continues the way it is, yes.

Mr. Howard: Thank you.

Chair: Shall the section carry? Carried.

Water and Air Monitoring

“Appropriations provided to administer and issue high-capacity well approvals, air quality permits; conduct air quality monitoring; undertake groundwater and surface water quality and quantity monitoring; and prepare groundwater and surface water reports.” Administration: 11,800. Equipment: 34,000. Materials, Supplies and Services: 55,700. Professional Services: 96,500. Salaries: 895,300. Travel and Training: 58,000. Grants: 80,000.

Total Water and Air Monitoring: 1,231,300.

Shall this section carry?

The hon. member from Summerside-Wilmot.

Ms. Lund: Thank you, Chair.

When can we expect to see the release of the 2018 Provincial water quality report card, Minister?

Mr. Trivers: I'll get back to you with that.

Chair: The hon. Member from Summerside-Wilmot.

Ms. Lund: Thank you, Chair.

There's been a significant reduction in grants from what's been forecasted for 2018-2019, can you tell me why that is?

Mr. Trivers: Yes, we did the UPEI flow study and it cost less than last year.

Chair: The hon. Member from Summerside-Wilmot.

Ms. Lund: Thank you, Chair.

Why does our most recent water quality report only cover 62% of the provinces total area?

Mr. Trivers: That was probably a decision the department made; I'll have to get back to you on that.

Chair: The hon. Member from Summerside-Wilmot.

Ms. Lund: Thank you, Chair.

The government seems to be a little bit behind on releasing air quality reports. The last one that seems to be publicly available is from 2014, minister, why is this?

Mr. Trivers: I would assume that the department decided that's the last time they needed to do it. I'll get back to you on that.

Chair: The hon. Member from Summerside-Wilmot.

Ms. Lund: I'm just wondering why we aren't making these reports available yearly?

Mr. Trivers: I'll have to get back to you.

Chair: The hon. Member from Summerside-Wilmot.

Ms. Lund: Thank you, Chair.

Do you have any idea when we could expect to see the air quality reports for 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018?

Mr. Trivers: I'll get back to you on that.

Chair: The hon. Member from Summerside-Wilmot.

Ms. Lund: Thank you, Chair.

Chair: Shall this section carry? Carried.

Drinking Water and Wastewater Management

“Appropriations provided to administer approvals/regulatory compliance and protection related to water walls, drinking water and wastewater systems and for the administration of the *Water Act* Regulations; including well construction, water quality investigations; and other related services.” Administration: 6,500. Equipment: 9,000. Materials, Supplies and Services: 10,700. Professional Services: 7,000. Salaries: 329,600. Travel and Training: 34,600.

Total Drinking Water and Wastewater Management: 397,400.

The hon. Member from Summerside-South Drive.

Mr. Howard: I’m a little surprised that considering the introduction of the new regulations that we saw under the *Water Act*, we’ve only increased our budget forecast about 6,000 from last year. Are we confident that we’ll be able to properly enforce the new regulations at the current fiscal level?

Michele Koughan: The increase in budget for the *Water Act* was actually under the last section.

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

Mr. Howard: That’s it, thank you.

Chair: Shall this section carry? Carried.

Microbiology and Chemistry Laboratories

“Appropriations provided for the microbiological and chemical analyses of drinking water, surface water and wastewater.” Administration: 40,200. Equipment: 15,800. Materials, Supplies and Services: 174,300. Professional Services: 14,000. Salaries: 617,700. Travel and Training: 2,900.

Total Microbiology and Chemistry Laboratories: 864,900.

The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Victoria Park.

Ms. Bernard: How much revenue do PEI analytical laboratories typically take in annually?

Mr. Trivers: The revenue is \$750,000.

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

Ms. Bernard: Thank you, Chair.

When were the fees for tests last reviewed?

Mr. Trivers: When I was opposition I asked that question, so I believe their reviewed on a regular basis.

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

Ms. Bernard: I see that the estimate for materials, supplies and services has gone up by 50,000 from last year’s estimate, why is this?

Mr. Trivers: There’s been an increase in demand for services; the Health Canada contract for First Nation water testing was increased.

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

Ms. Bernard: Has there been any consideration toward lowering some of the fees for non-farmer residence of PEI. Some tests have separate fees for farmers and non-farmers, residents, non-residents.

Mr. Trivers: Yes, I believe there was some consideration.

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

Ms. Bernard: What percentage of costs associated with the tests are recovered through the charging of fees?

Mr. Trivers: There would be –

Michele Koughan: It would be quite a bit, there’s only about 114,000 max for that budget.

Mr. Trivers: So 750,000 over 864,900, that percentage.

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

Ms. Bernard: Are any tests conducted in labs other than the PEIAL, such as private industrial labs or academic labs?

Michele Koughan: I believe we do have a contract when the demand is high that we can take our samples to others, but I don't believe everything that goes into the lab is tested there, I believe –

Ms. Bernard: Thank you, Chair.

Chair: The hon. Member from Mermaid-Stratford.

Ms. Beaton: Thank you, Chair.

Would you indulge me to go back to Water and Air Monitoring for a moment, I know we passed it already but could we go back?

Chair: Ok, we'll go back.

Ms. Beaton: Thank you very much.

So I'll re-ask the question that Summerside-South Drive asked. So, considering that the new regulations of the *Water Act* were just released today and everything that we have discussed, under Water and Air Monitoring, do you feel that the increase under that section is enough to properly enforce the new *Water Act* regulations.

Mr. Trivers: Yes.

Chair: The hon. Member from Mermaid-Stratford.

Ms. Beaton: Thank you, Chair.

Could you tell me under what section that enforcement will be covered under, under which line item?

Mr. Trivers: So, what we have is several staff that work within the department. So I'll say it'll be covered under the salaries.

Chair: The hon. Member from Mermaid-Stratford.

Ms. Beaton: So from the estimate of last year, its approximately \$40,000 and under the forecast of last year it's about \$100,000. Are you saying that the whole \$100,000 for salaries is dedicated to enforcing the new regulations for the *Water Act*?

Michele Koughan: Actually, there was an increase; we have three new FTE's starting specifically for the *Water Act*. One will be a technician, one will be a hydrologist and the other will be a dedicated IT position. Some of the money was appropriated last year and some of the positions were not completely filled. This was a top up to make sure that all three positions were covered by the budget.

Chair: The hon. Member from Mermaid-Stratford.

Ms. Beaton: Thank you.

Can you confirm that all positions are fully resourced right now?

Michele Koughan: I'd have to get back to you on that; I'm not 100% sure. I do know the hydrologist position is; I'm not quite sure on the IT position that sits with finance so I'd have to check with that.

Chair: The hon. Member from Mermaid-Stratford.

Ms. Beaton: Thank you

But the forecast of salaries sits under – they're with IT – but it sits in under Environment specifically?

Michele Koughan: It would be billed (Indistinct)

Mr. Trivers: Member, since we went back to Water and Air Monitoring, can I make a deal with you?

Ms. Beaton: I'm not sure.

Mr. Trivers: Remember how you asked about that information about hedgerows, which I will bring back to you, but can we carry that section? I will get back to you, you made it conditional but if you let us carry that section, I went back for you, you know, it's a good deal?

Mr. MacEwen: Here we go.

Ms. Beaton: Are we really negotiating on the floor, I don't know if that's allowed because I'm still wondering what's going to happen next Tuesday night?

Chair: Mermaid-Stratford, we can get to that section (Indistinct) give you some time to think about (Indistinct)

The hon. Member from O'Leary-Inverness.

Mr. Henderson: The microbiology and chemistry lab, that share was split with the department of agriculture is it not?

Mr. Trivers: Sorry you'll have to repeat that.

Mr. Henderson: So the microbiology and chem. lab that we have as a province, that's split between the department of agriculture and the department of environment, so this section, is just the department of environment's component of that overall cost to that operation, correct?

Michele Koughan: Yes, this is the water.

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

Mr. Henderson: That's correct, okay.

So when I look at, let's say, your budget for salaries has changed and has gone down, but yet your materials and supplies has increased, which I get that you're doing more testing, but are you not going to get into a bit of an issue with meeting a service demand of trying to get those tests done and out in a timely fashion. I mean it's not a significant reduction, but it seems like there's some less there, so I'm assuming that's an overtime or something along that line?

So on salaries you spent last year 635,000 and now you've reduced it to 617,000 – change.

Michele Koughan: There's actually a water tech position that is vacant and we forecasted that there will be a bit of a delay in filling that position but the intent is to fill it.

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

Mr. Henderson: So the difference is really just the time period between the end of March to when they get filled.

Thanks for the explanation.

Chair: The hon. member from Charlottetown-Brighton.

Mr. Hammarlund: I just have a question about the range of testing available. I know a lot of it is ordinary testing of microbes in the water but to what extent do we test the chemicals ranging from nitrates to round up and stuff like that? Can you – if I bring in a sample of my well which is right next to a potato field – can you test for commonly used agricultural chemicals?

Mr. Trivers: That's a very good question. So we test for total chloroform and e-coli, chemistry, microalgae, but unless you have something to add, I'd like to get back to you with the exact, exactly what we test for, I can come back with a breakdown for you.

Chair: The hon. member from Charlottetown-Brighton.

Mr. Hammarlund: Could you include like the breakdowns for the round up and the other things break down into it, like the composites that you end up with in the water which isn't necessarily what you spray in the fields?

Mr. Trivers: Ill check in to see if they do test for that or not right now, I mean obviously, that would be great information to know, but I don't know what's involved in to test for that or how expensive those tests are. I'll have to get back to you.

Mr. Hammarlund: Ok, thank you.

Chair: The hon. Member from Mermaid-Stratford.

Ms. Beaton: Thank you Chair, I'm fine. I had the same question.

Mr. Trivers: Oh, did you say you wanted to take my deal?

Chair: Shall this section carry?

Mr. Trivers: Actually Chair, I have her information in front of me anyhow.

Chair: Ok, but we can get back to that a little later on. Right now we're on section Microbiology and Chemistry Laboratories.

Shall this section carry? Carried.

We're going to go back to yesterday, Fish and Wildlife. The section was read and it was not carried, the condition was that some information would be to be brought back, I'll give the minister an opportunity now to reply, with production development.

Mr. Trivers: So the fantastic staff in my department came back with the number of project or clients under the hedgerow program, in 2018, 41,600 trees were planted under this program, for 94 clients. This program will continue in 2019 but we're not expanding it right now, there's no current plans and the current program is meeting the demand that we have from clients.

Chair: My apologies that was under Production Development on Page 59, it was read and under those same conditions.

The hon. Member from Mermaid-Stratford.

Ms. Beaton: Can you tell me how many linier of feet that would be of hedgerows, or, kilometers, whatever. So you say its 94 clients, so that's great.

Mr. Trivers: But we have a number of clients and a number of trees, I don't have that information at my fingertips. I'd have to come back. I mean, it depends on how the trees are planted. I would think that would be an extremely difficult number to calculate, unless we looked at every single project and exactly what hedgerows were planted to try and total that together.

Chair: The hon. Member from Mermaid-Stratford.

Ms. Beaton: I'm sorry, I'm just asking questions.

Mr. Trivers: Yeah, so I don't have an answer for that. I don't even know if I can get an answer for that.

Chair: The hon. Member from Mermaid-Stratford.

Ms. Beaton: Ok, I'm fine.

Chair: Shall this section carry? Carried.

Shall total Forest, Fish and Wildlife carry? 8,103,200.

Shall it carry? Carried.

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Agricultural Outreach.

“Appropriations provided to administer pesticide management programs and the Agriculture Environment Officer Unit.” Administration: 6,300. Equipment: 4,500. Materials, Supplies and Services: 15,500. Professional Servies: 2,000. Salaries: 255,100. Travel and Training: 32,100.

Total Agricultural Outreach: 315,500.

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

Ms. Altass: Thank you, Chair.

So how broad is the scope of this division's mandate?

Mr. Trivers: How broad is the scope of mandate?

Ms. Altass: Yeah, I'm just trying to understand what exactly is this?

Mr. Trivers: All right. This section's focus is on managing the pesticide program, including issues related to the transportation, sales, use, storage and disposal of pesticides within PEI. It's principally on the licensing of the pesticide applicator and vendor businesses and on certification of applicators and sales staff. This section is also charged with the issue of special use permits that restrict or otherwise control the use of a pesticide.

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

Ms. Altass: Ok, so it's primarily around licensing and processing applications, I'm just wondering, how much of this is sort of

proactive, I mean it's called agricultural outreach. So I'm wondering how much outreach happens in terms of trying to engage with those in the community, the agricultural community around pesticide use and maybe I don't know, I just don't see how licensing and applications is outreach exactly?

Mr. Trivers: So we have four staff that really are responsible for outreach, and then they'd be the primary people that are doing that outreach. There's a team leader, agriculture and environment officer, and then three agriculture and environment officers that work with that team leader, and there's a manager as well of agriculture outreach.

Chair: The hon. Tyne Valley-Sherbrooke.

Ms. Altass: Thank you, Chair.

So all of those staff that you just described all fit under this salary category here, this 255,000?

Mr. Trivers: Yes.

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

Ms. Altass: Thank you, Chair.

To me it just seems like a fairly small, a surprisingly small amount, I guess, around pesticide management. It says pesticide management programs. So maybe you could clarify what are the different problems that fall – like, more than one program it seems like here, pesticide management programs?

Mr. Trivers: Well, I don't have the names of the programs in front of me right now. I could get back to you with that. I can tell you a little bit about the calls and interactions that they did.

Ms. Altass: Yes, that would be – sorry.

Mr. Trivers: I don't necessarily understand why you think it seems like a small amount, or why you think it seems like a small amount, but there were 312 calls/interactions they had as part of the outreach programs, and they included buffer zones, pesticide application, cases of soil erosion, pesticides

when they were drifting based on wind speed.

They were looking at manure, headlands of water courses, the air quality due to burning, pesticide storage, irrigation from water courses, the licensing of pesticides, the slope of water courses, crop rotation issues, transport of pesticides, groundwater irrigation, sales of pesticides, solid waste that was being littered and solid waste that was being dumped, soil erosion in water courses, stray livestock dumping, public concerns about wildlife. There were water course alterations and water course siltation, and of course, there was even more of that would go under the category of "other."

Ms. Altass: So these were calls that were received by this department and –

Mr. Trivers: These were complaints, inspections and information that were brought out.

Ms. Altass: So what, again, is the outreach part of it, then? So this department deals with complaints around all these areas. I get that. I'm just wondering – it just seems like an oddly named department to me if they're dealing with complaints and processing licenses. Where's the 'out' part?

Mr. Trivers: I think, Member, that when our staff in the agricultural outreach department – so these are ag-environment officers – go out, even if they're following up on a complaint.

Ms. Altass: Okay.

Mr. Trivers: What they're doing is they're approaching the landowner, and they're really doing it in a very tactful manner.

I think outreach is probably a good way to put it saying: We just wanted to give you some information, we had a complaint, we want to make sure you're complying, we want to help you understand why what you're doing is wrong, we want to help you solve your problem. It's not an enforcement role, it's an outreach role.

Ms. Altass: Thank you, Chair.

So is there anything, as I sort of mentioned earlier, that's proactive about this

department? If they're seeing a similar issue coming up over and over again, maybe sharing information with the farmers who are working in a smaller area to let them know: Hey, we've seen this a few times.

A little something to prevent future issues coming up, is there any proactive component to this work?

Mr. Trivers: You go ahead.

Michele Koughan: As the officers are out in the field, of course, and they're interacting with the landowners, they are providing them with information, and the education around why they're there and that type of thing.

As far as the pesticide piece happens, they're supplying them with the information and doing the testing in order for those people to get the licensing; and it's not necessarily those three or four people that are out in the field doing that. It could be an administrative person within the office in a different section who's overseeing that. Does that answer your question?

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

Ms. Altass: Work of this department is essentially pretty dependent on – or a lot of the work of it – on complaints coming in and processing them. Otherwise they wouldn't make connection with farmers.

Mr. Trivers: That's correct.

Ms. Altass: So they might – okay, yeah, all right.

Chair: (Indistinct)

Ms. Altass: I think that's it.

Chair: Okay.

The hon. Member from O'Leary-Inverness.

Mr. Henderson: Minister, this department, this works fairly closely with the department of agriculture. How would you describe that relationship with those two departments?

Mr. Trivers: Well, I think they do work fairly closely together. I've only been

introduced to the people that are working in those departments. I had one meeting. I think there's room, maybe a little room for improvement there. It's tough to share information sometimes between departments.

I know one of the things that we'd like to see in environment is maybe access to the farm management plans, for example, but there's really good reasons why that can't be shared. I like to think they work together pretty well, though.

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

Mr. Henderson: So you've seen a fairly highly publicized case just determined here in the last few days, the Alex Docherty case. It was a federal charge, of course. What lessons has your department or will your department take from that outcome, because the judge was pretty harsh on the enforcement of how they tried to convict that particular farmer.

Mr. Trivers: All right, so as you pointed out, the enforcement really isn't done in this department, what we might identify is a problem area in this department; but if any enforcement is done, it's in the department of justice.

Mr. Henderson: Well, I think that – and therein lies – I get all the different departments that are involved, but I think that was one of my frustrations when I was minister was that you've got really three different departments and you got the federal government.

For farmers, they're having a really hard time figuring out all these different rules. Why can't there be, like I say, when it comes to a log book, when it comes to the applications of pesticides by farmers, your department should have the big input, the department of agriculture, the department of justice, they should all have input into that log book that it's consistent so that when farmers have the log book they know exactly what they're trying to get and accomplish by documenting that information.

It's the same thing that goes with – like I say, once again, the charges were laid, there

was a lot of poorly done investigation, put the farm through quite a precarious situation and probably has cost them a lot of business and bad publicity, so I would really urge your department to work much more collaboratively with the other two departments to make sure that everything is fairly consistent.

Mr. Trivers: So thanks a lot for that advice, and that recommendation.

I would tend to agree with you that that's probably an area we need to work on. You were minister of agriculture at one time, and the former minister of environment is sitting down here. As you know, this sort of thing doesn't happen overnight; otherwise, you guys would have done it before, right? So we're going to look at that.

I've talked to the Dochertys and I've talked to other farmers and I've heard their frustrations. They've said: We talk with three different engineers and everyone gave us a different solution, we don't think any of the solutions will work, kind of thing.

I, personally have already in my limited time in this role heard from farmers and their frustrations and they're looking for ways to find a way to make it better for everybody, really, because there's a lot of money involved when you end up going to court, especially.

Mr. Henderson: Well, I urge you – but I really would encourage your department to take the lead in this. Your department is usually the lead in sort of developments on some of these policies in the protection of the environment.

The agricultural community has to figure out how to comply with most of those regulations, and obviously justice is more of the enforcement side of it. So it's really incumbent upon your department to take some reasonable responsibility to make sure you're communicating with the federation of agriculture.

But also, I think, to have good discussions with the federal counterparts, because like I say, farmers, they're trying to do a job. You're dealing with weather events that are becoming more prevalent and more

catastrophic and more extreme, and there's a cost that comes with all of that.

Mr. Trivers: (Indistinct)

Mr. Henderson: So I really urge you to do that, and I'm just making that –

Mr. Trivers: Yeah.

Mr. Henderson: – statement here –

Mr. Trivers: And –

Mr. Henderson: – on the floor of the Legislature, and you sound like you're agreeing to me but (Indistinct) –

Mr. Trivers: Well, I want to give you a concrete example of where our department is taking leadership on this issue, and there's money in the budget as well, and that's a program that's where you've got the watershed groups and the federation of agriculture and the potato board and the department all looking at best management practices, specifically for erosion cases. I believe in this case that's where we're starting.

There was another best management practice for greenhouse gas emission reduction. So these are the sort of projects that will lead the way there. I mean, our ag environment officers as you well you know are excellent, and we're working on it. They're great, they're leaders, we'll lead the way.

Mr. MacDonald: Okay, thank you.

Chair: The hon. Member from Cornwall-Meadowbank.

Mr. MacDonald: Yeah, this may not be an appropriate question for this area: subdivision review process, in that in any correlation to what TIE does as far as subdivision development, or how – what is that?

Am I in the wrong section?

Mr. Trivers: Are you in the environmental land management, is that where you are?

Mr. MacDonald: Sorry, I jumped ahead. I was just hoping.

Chair: We'll get to that.

Mr. MacDonald: Sorry.

Chair: No problem.

Mr. Mitchell: (Indistinct)

Chair: Do you have an intervention or you have a question?

Mr. Mitchell: I have a question.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Mr. Mitchell: So this working group of different entities that's coming out, will that develop your policy, possibly your legislation in regards to this movement forward, is that the goal?

Mr. Trivers: No. I don't think that's the goal. No. Although it – you know, their input would definitely be very heavily considered. You've got pretty great stake holder groups there. This project is specifically on best management practices and the most recent one is for soil erosion. It would definitely inform our policy and help inform legislative changes, but that's not the goal of the groups to actually write legislation or develop policy.

Mr. Mitchell: Have they asked you to be involved in policy development in regards to –

Mr. Trivers: Those particular groups that I named, the watershed alliance, as well as the potato board and the federation of agriculture, who have I met with so far? The watershed alliance hasn't asked specifically for that, neither has the potato board or federation of agriculture with me specifically yet.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Mr. Mitchell: It's great that that's taking place it would be very nice to see – I'll say call them some measurables that come forward – as a policy piece, possibly a legislative piece, if we get that.

Mr. Trivers: That don't seem a natural thing for sure.

Chair: The hon. Member from Summerside-Wilmot.

Ms. Lund: Thank you, Chair.

You had mentioned a number of different enforcement-type issues that our conservation and enforcement officers need to deal with and I'm just wondering how many people are currently employed to do that.

Mr. Trivers: We just talked about that in the – in our group, it's that agriculture outreach piece – specifically on the agriculture side. Anyways, there's four – well five, I guess, counting the manager. And that's in our department, there's other people in the department of agriculture.

Chair: The hon. Member from Summerside-Wilmot.

Ms. Lund: Thank you, Chair.

I know I've had conversations in the past with enforcement officers, and they seem to be really stretched to capacity. I just wonder if you've ever found there to be a need for more staff in that area.

Mr. Trivers: I'd have to ask the minister of agriculture. The enforcement officers are on his side.

Ms. Lund: Oh okay, whenever you were listing the various infractions that they go out to inspect, I was of the impression that this was the area that dealt with that.

Mr. Trivers: So these are environmental Auditor General officers, and they investigate the complaints, sort of the process is – and this is what the Member from O'Leary-Inverness was kind of alluding to is: we investigate complaints and then once charges need to be laid – we think that – we pass it off to the department of justice and the enforcement officers. The conservation officers take over to lay any charges, and they use the federal laws to do that, the way it's set up to date. So you have the three different bodies involved, and that's where things can go off the rails sometimes.

Chair: The hon. Member from Summerside-Wilmot.

Ms. Lund: Thank you, Chair.

Oh, I understand what you're saying. That makes perfect sense to me. I'm just wondering if you have the staff to support that work currently.

Mr. Trivers: On our side, we – it hasn't been brought up to me that we need more staff. I'll look at that. I'll ask that question.

Ms. Lund: Thank you, Chair. I'm good.

Chair: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton.

Mr. Hammarlund: I have a question. What are the magnitude of pesticides you are controlling? Are the farmers using \$100 million worth of chemicals or? Do you know?

Mr. Trivers: I don't know the answer to that.

Mr. Hammarlund: They'll tell you whether your department is big or small?

Mr. Trivers: So you're saying we should size the department based on the amount of pesticides being used?

Chair: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton.

Mr. Hammarlund: I'm sorry. I was joking a little bit.

But I would like to know what order of magnitude or what order of magnitude the farmers actually are putting on their fields. What are we talking about?

Mr. Trivers: Oh yeah, I think that's a question for the department of agriculture, the minister of agriculture would probably be better to answer that.

Chair: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton.

Mr. Hammarlund: So maybe this question is not in this department either. I was wondering: Where do you determine which pesticides are allowed to use and not allowed to use and, were you considering whether it should be banned or not.

Mr. Trivers: We ride primarily on federal – the federal department that's responsible, whose name I can't remember off the top –

Ms. Lund: PMRA.

Mr. Trivers: PMRA, there you go.

Mr. Hammarlund: Thank you.

Chair: Shall the question carry?

Mr. Howard: Question.

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

Mr. Howard: So would this department be responsible for analyzing the effects like (Indistinct) –

Ms. Lund: Neonicotinoids.

Mr. Howard: Neonicotinoids have on the bee population and the like and monitoring that, coming to some determination?

Mr. Trivers: So a couple years ago we had a great presentation from some folks who were doing studies on that and looking after bees. That actually, they're in the department but I believe they're under the fish and wildlife area, the folks that would do that sort of study and look at bees in particular.

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

Mr. Howard: Okay and how much interaction is there between this department and the department of agriculture as far as, like, precision agriculture? I heard the minister of agriculture mention that term the other day and I'm really big in that term, using technology to reduce the amount of pesticides. Considering this is in the department of the environment, I think reducing the amount of pesticides would be a huge part of the mandate of this agriculture outreach department. Is that on the radar?

Mr. Trivers: Not that I've discussed with my department at this point. I don't – honestly, at this point, I would have to go and ask them to see how they work together on that. I don't know. Do you know?

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

Mr. Howard: Does this department work with farmers to monitor their actual – the organic matter within the soils and things like that and help them to monitor those?

Mr. Trivers: No. In fact, I would say the precision fertilizing as well as the monitoring of soil organic matter, right now, falls probably primarily under the department of agriculture.

Chair: Shall the section carry? Carried.

Environmental Land Management

“Appropriations provided to administer and co-ordinate the environmental assessment and sub-division review process environmental permitting; contaminated sites; oil spill response; and to administer watercourse and wetland protection regulations: Administration: 17,000. Equipment: 13,200. Materials, Supplies and Services: 9,600. Professional Services: 16,000. Salaries: 644,200. Travel and Training: 44,600.”

Total Environmental Land Management: 744,600.

Chair: The hon. Member from Summerside-Wilmot.

Shall this section carry? Carried.

Beverage Container Management

“Appropriations provided –

The hon. Member from Summerside-Wilmot.

You’re going to have to speak up members.

Ms. Lund: Thank you, Chair. Apologies.

Can you explain the significant decrease in allotted funding for professional services compared to last year minister?

Mr. Trivers: Yeah so, there was a federal agreement with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans for culvert sizing and that ended so we didn’t get funding from that.

Chair: The hon. Member from Summerside-Wilmot.

Ms. Lund: Thank you, Chair.

What about the 35,200 for materials and supplies when the forecast was what, 9,600?

How do you account for that discrepancy, there seems to be a big difference?

Mr. Trivers: This is sort of an accounting thing so I’ll maybe –

Michele Koughan: With the formation of the new government, our department was reorganized. The unsightly properties used to fall under this program and it actually moved to land. Over with fisheries and land?

Shall this section carry?

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

Ms. Altass: Thank you, Chair.

Just looking at wetland protection regulations fall under here, so we were talking about wetlands in a previous section as well.

I’m just trying to clarify, so if this department, then, is responsible for ensuring that the regulations are being followed and then do an outreach as we talked about, if they’re not is that what I understand.

Mr. Trivers: So this section responsible for coastal zone management and the regulating of activities within 15 meters of water courses, wet lands, and buffer zones.

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

Ms. Altass: So does this department have any responsibility, then, other than in terms of wetlands dying, do they track anything in terms of the –

Mr. Trivers: In terms of what? Sorry.

Ms. Altass: Are they trying to do anything around expanding the wetlands, or it’s just around the ensuring the regulations are being met?

Mr. Trivers: Well, they administer the water course and wetland protection regulations, but – I'll just check here.

Michele Koughan: This division is responsible for the Wetland Conservation Fund as far as determining how much the landowner-developer has to pay into the Wetland Conservation Fund. So that's what they do in this section.

Ms. Altass: Okay.

Michele Koughan: But they don't –

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

Ms. Altass: No, that clarifies it for me.

Chair: Shall the section carry? Carried.

Beverage Container Management

“Appropriations provided for operation of the Beverage Container Program including administration and regulation of the *Beverage Containers Act* and Regulations; collection of containers; payment of refunds and handling fees; and program promotion and operation. Also provides appropriations to oversee the implementation of the *Plastic Bag Reduction Act*.” Administration: 2,000. Equipment: 6,000. Materials, Supplies and Services: 6,288,300. Salaries: 154,100. Travel and Training: 10,900. Total Beverage Container Management: 6,461,300.

Ms. Bell: Question, Chair.

The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Belvedere.

Ms. Bell: Thank you, Chair.

I'm wondering, minister, if you can provide us with just – I'm assuming the \$6 plus million under materials, supplies and services is to do with the cost of the management and refunds and handling fees.

Could you just give me the details on – that's a very large number.

Mr. Trivers: That's the revenue from beverage containers.

Ms. Bell: This is an expense.

Mr. Trivers: Sorry. I'm getting confused. Sorry, you go ahead.

Michele Koughan: So 6.1 million is the expenditures, and you're correct, that is the return of the bottle deposits back to the depots, as well as some equipment and a few other things.

Now, the revenue for this sits in finance, so we just have the expenditure side of this.

Ms. Bell: Okay. Thank you.

Chair: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Belvedere.

Ms. Bell: Thank you.

So the depots that do that collection, are they – they are taking their fees from the revenues that you pay them for their – like is there a contract and agreement with them?

Michele Koughan: There is annual contracting with all the bottle depots.

Chair: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Belvedere.

Ms. Bell: Thank you.

This fund includes the cost of those contracts?

Michele Koughan: It does.

Ms. Bell: How many contract –

Chair: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Belvedere.

Ms. Bell: Thank you, Chair.

How many contracts are there?

Michele Koughan: So there's several different contracts, depending on now – so the number of depots that we currently have – sorry it was a five-year contract, not an annual contract.

Ms. Bell: Thank you.

Michele Koughan: Currently there's 10.

Chair: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Belvedere.

Ms. Bell: Thank you, Chair.

So there's 10 depots that are on five-year contracts. Are those contracts publicly tendered when they come up for renewal?

Michele Koughan: I would check have with the department on that.

Chair: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Belvedere.

Ms. Bell: I would appreciate that.

Also, Chair if I could ask, what is the revenue that offsets the expenditure that goes out on this program?

Michele Koughan: So the total revenue from the Beverage Container Program is 6.88 million. We also receive another 1.1 million from the recycling program and then the expenditure is 6.288 million.

That's the estimate for 1920, so we're looking at a net of 1.6 million.

Chair: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Belvedere.

Ms. Bell: That's fantastic. You're making money on recycling. Got to like it.

My other question, Chair, if I can follow on from that –

Chair: Sure.

Ms. Bell: – is when was the last time that the *Beverage Containers Act* was reviewed and the associated regulations?

Mr. Trivers: I'll have to get back to you on that. I don't know.

Chair: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Belvedere.

Ms. Bell: Thank you, Chair.

And the reason for me asking is just obviously there's been a lot of changes.

I see that this does reflect – excuse me – this does reflect the implementation of the more recent *Plastic Bag Reduction Act*, but the collection of containers and the recycling of those programs, there have been many

changes in terms of how materials are used and we've had a lot of news around where our materials go when they are recycled.

For example, they can't go to the Philippines or China anymore.

So I would be very interested to find out perhaps from your department as to sort of how that – how are we mitigating those changes in what we do with recycling and if there are any associated costs with that.

Would that be something, minister, that you'd be able to bring back?

Mr. Trivers: I think I can look into that unless you have an answer.

Michele Koughan: The waste side would be Island Waste Management that would take care of that side of it.

Ms. Bell: Okay, Chair?

Chair: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Belvedere.

Ms. Bell: I appreciate that with separation of this, because obviously it's an ongoing challenge for us when we do these things.

I guess my point, minister, is where we have what is a lot of money moving in and through the program, and this is a key piece of our clean Island and recycling and so on is what are we doing with that? That when we collect all those things, where are they going after that and how are we reflecting that as part of our responsible policy towards environmental responsibility?

Mr. Trivers: It's a good question.

If I remember, past budgets when I was in opposition asking similar questions, there was a portion of some plastics at least that were burned and incinerated for heat.

Chair: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Belvedere.

Mr. Trivers: So I would – I'm going to look into that myself; I'm interested in finding out as well.

Chair: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Belvedere.

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

Minister, I think it is an area of concern. Obviously we've talked in other areas where we've talked about the challenges of how we do disposal. You can have a program which is clean on the surface, but then the nasty story may be the shipping container full of dirty garbage, for example, not saying that's what we've done here, but it doesn't make good news stories. It's also not actually good environmental policy.

And so in the same way that we don't want to see piles of tires being set on fire, we don't want to see piles of milk cartons either.

Mr. Trivers: Of course.

Ms. Bell: So perhaps, Chair, if I could ask another question to the minister it would be where we have the opportunity of \$1 million of revenue, is a really substantive amount of revenue, would there be an opportunity to look at perhaps some more creative things that we could do with recycling?

I know there's a company in Nova Scotia, for example, which is making high-end outdoor furniture with recycled extruded plastics; would that be something that you would ever consider here as an opportunity?

Mr. Trivers: Let's start at the beginning and find out what we're doing right now and I don't see why not?

But that would require, of course, an entrepreneur on this end to do that, right?

Ms. Bell: I'm sure we could probably find one or two of those.

Mr. Trivers: Probably.

Chair: The hon. Member from Summerside-Wilmot.

Ms. Lund: Sorry, Chair.

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

Mr. Howard: Thank you, Chair.

This department is responsible for the *Plastic Bag Reduction Act*, and I just don't

see any increase in expenditures or any significant ones here. Is there any cost to administer that program?

Mr. Trivers: Yes. It was \$97,000, believe it or not, that we budgeted, primarily for buying reusable bags to help kickstart the program and for promotions.

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

Mr. Howard: Moving forward, though, is there a cost to government for this *Plastic Bag Reduction Act* to be administered?

Mr. Trivers: Not that I'm aware of. No.

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

Mr. Howard: So when you go to the grocery store now if you want bag you're charged 15 cents. None of that comes to government. It all goes back to the retailer themselves.

Is that correct?

Mr. Trivers: That's right, 15 cents for a paper bag.

Mr. Howard: Yes.

Mr. Trivers: And a dollar for a reusable bag. It goes back to the vendor. They're the ones who have to buy the bags.

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

Mr. Howard: Do we have any information on how much those paper bags are costing them? Is this a revenue generator for –

Mr. Trivers: I can pretty safely say it's not a revenue generator. If it is, it's very, very small.

In fact, most vendors that I talked to would have loved to just give away the bags as opposed to having to charge for them but we said we want you to charge. I think the reasoning behind that, when that came in was we wanted consumers to really think about the fact that they were using a bad.

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

Mr. Howard: That's really interested Minister because if the retailers wanted to give them away and you wanted to create a price signal, and we're looking for funds in order to help transition us to cleaner technologies of all sorts, it seems like it would be a good revenue source for government to bring in?

Would you like to comment on that Minister?

Mr. Trivers: No comment.

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

Mr. Howard: So would that be something the government would entertain if indeed we are looking at significant revenues from bags being used on PEI and retailers themselves are not adverse to just giving those bags away like they used to, why don't we look at that as a source of revenue? I'm a bit confused there.

Mr. Trivers: I mean I can talk to the department about that.

I think that, well we can run the calculations and see, I can talk to the department. It is definitely a change in this program that was just rolled out. Which of course, it came into effect on July 1st but the act was passed last fell. But yeah, I mean what the heck. Everything is on the table right?

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

Mr. Howard: Yeah, pricing signals they really do work. They discourage people from doing behavior that you don't want them to do, so it's a good program.

Anyhow, thank you Chair.

Chair: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Belvedere.

Ms. Bell: Thank you, Chair.

Another follow up from my hon. colleagues on the discussion around the reusable bags would be given again that surplus; you

shouldn't tell me there's a \$1 million floating around. We have heard that those who are lower income will struggle to purchase reusable bags.

I know there have been a number that have been made available but they still cost money to purchase and use and I'm wondering if the department would consider providing reusable bags on an ongoing basis through the food banks or other organizations.

I'm assuming if you can buy them in bulk then it would relatively cost effective way to provide some additional supports, but minister it's just for your consideration that sometimes again, it's one of those things out of sight out of mind, but it can be a real challenge for people who are also not mobile.

So there having to carry bags a long ways. If you're walking with your groceries, if it's a good sturdy one would be a help, but the price point can actually be a barrier for some.

Mr. Trivers: Thanks for raising that.

Ms. Bell: That was it.

Chair: Shall this section carry? Carried.

Total Environment: 24,005,500.

Shall it carry? Carried.

Total Department of Environment Water and Climate Change: 33,884,600.

Shall it carry? Carried.

Mr. Fox: Let's get at it.

Chair: Hon. Members, we are now on Page 84. The Department of Fisheries and Communities, it has been requested that a stranger come onto the floor. Permitted?

Some Hon. Members: Granted.

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

Mary Kinsman: Mary Kinsman, Director of Finance and Corporate Services.

Chair: Thank you very much.

Minister, do you have an opening statement?

Mr. Fox: Yes, thank you, Chair.

Before we begin detailing discussions on the budget for the new Department of Fisheries and Communities, I'd like to take this opportunity to outline the new department and its future direction.

Our party's platform during the election campaign included a commitment to establish a separate fisheries department and we've followed through on that commitment.

Premier King: Another one, another one.

Mr. Fox: We are clearly focused on supporting the fishery and aquaculture industries.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Chair: Order!

Mr. Fox: We are clearly focused on supporting the fishing and aquaculture industries, growth through new ideas, innovative and substantial practices. The fishery in this province contributes approximately \$650 million to the economy, is the economy driver in many rural communities and employs more than 8,500 people.

My department is also currently focused on supporting the health and wellbeing of our rural communities. Prince Edward Island is one of the most rural of all provinces and we need to ensure we're providing rural residence with the opportunity to grow both economically and socially, specifically where fisheries play such a key role in our rural area.

Another major focus of this department is related to municipal governments, municipal governments serve approximately 70% of the total provincial population. They are vital and a valued partner in creating a vibrant and sustainable future of Prince Edward Island.

Municipalities make an important contribution and a sense of community we also value so much in this province.

Supporting our fishery and aquaculture industries, helping rural communities grow and prosper and strengthen local government is what the department of fisheries and communities is all about. I look forward to sharing details of the departments programs as we proceed through these estimates.

Thank you, Chair.

Chair: Thank you Minister.

Shall the department carry?

[Laughter]

Chair: Department Management Administration

"Appropriations provided for operation of the Office of the Minister and Deputy Minister and centralized administrative functions for the Department."
Administration: 8,000. Equipment: 1,000. Materials, Supplies and Services: 3,600. Professional Services: 1,000. Salaries: 287,800. Travel and Training: 15,000.

Total Administration: 316,400.

The hon. Member from Tyne Valley-Sherbrooke.

Ms. Altass: Thank you, Chair.

So I'm just wondering, I'm hoping you can explain to me a little bit about how we've come to the numbers in this section, considering it is, you know, a new department that has been pulled from other areas so you've got budget estimates and forecast from last year and this year. Just explain to me how that works?

Mr. Fox: So what we actually did in the department is, there was parts that we're the old Community, Land and Environment, of course then there was parts that were pulled out of fisheries and Aquaculture and these are what we believe is the best budget going forward to support this budget as we move it.

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

Ms. Altass: Oh, ok. That's fine.

Mr. Fox: Thank you.

Chair: Shall this section carry? Carried.

Chair: Total Department Management: 316,400.

Shall it carry? Carried.

Marine Fisheries and Seafood Services

Seafood Services

“Appropriations provided for the effective delivery of information, and product and market development programs for both commercial fishery industry and seafood products.”

Administration: 3,000. Equipment: 1,500. Materials, Supplies and Services: 53,300. Professional Services: 5,000. Salaries: 317,600. Travel and Training: 33,600. Grants: 204,300.

Total Seafood Services: 618,300.

The hon. Member from Tyne Valley-Sherbrooke.

Ms. Altass: Thank you, Chair.

Budget estimates and forecast for seafood development initiatives seem very specific and steady over time. It looks like 151,300; it's a very specific number over time. Can you explain why that is?

Mr. Fox: It's because during this year, we actually had employer cost benefits to the CPC group health plan and the group life and there's also two additional working days in the year.

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

Ms. Altass: I guess I'm still a little unclear on why it's so specific and steady, that's kind of what I was wondering.

Mr. Fox: Yeah this program focuses on domestic marketing development and new initiatives to strengthen the industry.

Innovation PEI also has a separate budget for international marketing outside of this.

Chair: Tyne Valley-Sherbrooke.

Ms. Altass: Okay. I'm still not sure that answers my question, though.

This 151,300 for estimated and the forecast and estimate for next year, it's just a really specific number. I'm just – I don't know. Down to the 300, I mean, I'm still not understanding why that – how does that work? How is that possible? I just don't understand.

Mr. Fox: Any comment, Mary?

Mary Kinsman: Each year, we (Indistinct) – we have a budget here of 151-three, you're absolutely correct.

Ms. Altass: Yeah.

Mary Kinsman: When we did the forecast between December and January, at that point we thought we were anticipating to spend the full amount –

Ms. Altass: Okay.

Mary Kinsman: – and we didn't make a change from one year to the next. You're right,

Sometimes we do move money and you will see throughout this budget we'll have moved money between programs, we'll have created new programs, maybe ended different ones; but in this particular line, we're expecting to spend about the same.

Ms. Altass: Okay. Sure. We'll move on, then.

I'm wondering if there's any funding provided for the shellfish association. I didn't see it in the breakdown.

Mary Kinsman: That's (Indistinct) –

Mr. Fox: That's –

Ms. Altass: Is it?

Mr. Fox: That's under –

Ms. Altass: That's under aquaculture?

Mr. Fox: – the section coming up.

Ms. Altass: Oh, sorry. That's in a different section.

Mr. Fox: Aquaculture.

Ms. Altass: So, do you happen to know when we'll see the 2018 fishery statistics? Will that be under this section or no?

Mr. Fox: No, we won't receive them yet because they're not completed yet.

Ms. Altass: Okay.

Do you happen to know when we would see that?

Mr. Fox: I haven't (Indistinct) – I know they're working on them but I haven't received them yet. As soon as I get them, I'll bring it back. I know the PEIFA made a statement in the newspaper yesterday and that was very broad, but I haven't even received what the landings are, and so –

Ms. Altass: Is it normal for it to take that long from the end of the year? It is?

Mr. Fox: Mary?

Mary Kinsman: We'd have to bring that back.

Mr. Fox: Yeah, we'd have to bring that back.

Ms. Altass: When was the last time the fees for these licenses were reviewed?

Mr. Fox: (Indistinct)

Mary Kinsman: (Indistinct)

Mr. Fox: I don't believe that's actually in this section, hon. member.

Ms. Altass: Oh, okay.

Mr. Fox: About the fees for licenses.

We'll have to bring that date back. She hasn't got that date with her when it was last reviewed.

I can tell you I had the discussion with the department back about two weeks ago –

Ms. Altass: Right.

Mr. Fox: – due to a concern being brought to me from a private vendor.

Ms. Altass: So do you have plans, then, to review these licenses again?

Mr. Fox: I can't hear you.

Ms. Altass: Sorry. Do you have plans, then, to review the fees for the licenses then again soon?

Mr. Fox: I can tell you the department, we are looking at it. I have talked to the deputy about it, and we're in discussions over that.

Ms. Altass: It's my understanding that back in 2014 the PEI lobster fishery received official certification from the Marine Stewardship Council, which was a great way to heighten the brand of the PEI lobster in the American and international markets.

Our herring industry also received an MSC certification in 2015. I'm wondering: Have any other PEI fisheries received MSC certification?

Mr. Fox: I would not know. I'd have to bring it back. In 2014-2015, I wasn't sitting in this chair, so –

Premier King: Mussels.

Mr. Fox: I'd be happy to bring it back.

Premier King: Mussels.

Ms. Altass: Do we have an intervention over there?

Premier King: Mussels as well.

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

Ms. Altass: So you'll have a look at that –

Mr. Fox: Yep.

Ms. Altass: – and see if there are other fisheries other than mussels, I guess?

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Ms. Altass: So does government work with industry representatives to help other fisheries here go through the MSC certification process?

Mr. Fox: Where'd you read that?

Ms. Altass: Where did I read – sorry?

Mr. Fox: What did you say?

Ms. Altass: I asked you the question.

Mr. Fox: I know, I heard. I (Indistinct)

Ms. Altass: Does –

Mr. Fox: It sounded like you were reading something.

Ms. Altass: Does government work with industry representatives to help other fisheries beyond the ones that we identified here that have already received the certification? Do they work with – does the department work with industries to help them go through that certification process?

Because it's obviously an asset, right?

Mr. Fox: I'd have to find that out.

Ms. Altass: Yeah. So –

Mr. Fox: I'm not aware of that program. You're actually the first person who brought it up to me, so I'm not aware of it. I'll have to bring that back.

I know that the department works very closely with industry across the Island on a variety of different programs and grants. There's a new Atlantic fisheries fund which they're working on also.

Ms. Altass: Okay.

Mr. Fox: And as we – in the budget, you'll actually see two new programs that we're going to roll out. We're actually retiring two programs that have basically extended their shelf life.

Ms. Altass: Oh okay.

What are the two programs this year?

Mr. Fox: We're going to get into that coming up.

Ms. Altass: That's coming up.

Mr. Fox: Yeah, it's coming up.

Ms. Altass: Okay, we'll hold on that.

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

Ms. Altass: Obviously, a lot of lobster fishermen right now feel like they're not getting fair prices from buyers and that government should be doing more to regulate prices here on the Island.

How much has department looked into working with industry to establish a price-setting board to make sure prices accurately reflect the value of and demand for PEI lobster?

Mr. Fox: We operate in a free market society and we are not involved in the prices or how they come to their prices on the market. The market sets the prices.

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

Ms. Altass: Thank you, Chair.

Well, I know that Newfoundland and the Magdalen Islands both have boards that determine the annual prices for lobster in the early spring and they also work within the same free market society, so I'm just wondering why that wouldn't be something that we would be considering as well.

Mr. Fox: It's not something that's been brought to me that's a concern in this province. You're the first person that's brought that up, hon. Member.

Ms. Altass: Okay. That's a surprise. Well, here you go: Brought up.

Mr. Fox: There you go.

Ms. Altass: So the department recently stopped putting out weekly price reports for lobster. Is that correct?

Mr. Fox: Yes, we did.

Ms. Altass: Why is that?

Mr. Fox: Actually, the marketplace was putting it out faster than the department was and it was more beneficial to them to use that information than what we were actually compiling and putting out.

Ms. Altass: Is that similar to what other Atlantic provinces are doing, then, in terms of allowing the industry to take on this responsibility?

Mr. Fox: The market is actually putting out better information I'd say than we are taking time to collect it, calculate it, and then put it out.

Ms. Altass: How much work does this division do to identify markets for fish species that aren't typically our biggest exports?

I know that the province has been working to making sure Island fishers got some quota for redfish in the event that the federal government ever lifted the moratorium on that fishery, but are there any opportunities to grow the industry by promoting the sustainable growth of some of our less big fisheries or more minor sort of areas that we —

Mr. Fox: Actually, I've had quite a lot of discussions with department officials on basically telling our story. I think there is room there that we can do a better job in telling our story to the world market on what our aquaculture and our lobster fishery is doing and I'm working with the department on that.

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

Ms. Altass: So in that work, then, you've specifically discussed making sure that some of our more minor fisheries are part of that story.

Mr. Fox: That's right.

Ms. Altass: This is about marketing, then, and how that might go forward? Okay.

Mr. Fox: Any new market we can get into is a good thing, right?

So what I've told the department to do is let's start looking at how we can better tell the PEI story; but you've got to remember that in places like China where there are such big markets, they really don't know PEI but they know Canada or Atlantic Canada.

So I've had discussions with the other governments in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia briefly on this and we plan on bringing it farther; but I want to tell that unique PEI story on a much broader level across the region, if we can.

Ms. Altass: So just so I can understand, then: I know that we've had a lot of trade missions to China and this — obviously, this is the previous government — but in your assessment or the assessment that you've made since becoming minister, the PEI story hasn't been a key part of those outreach initiatives?

That just surprises me. Is that the case?

Mr. Fox: Well, no, I just want to expand it.

Ms. Altass: Oh.

Mr. Fox: I think we can build on it. There's some really interesting videos out there showing how some of the products out of Norway is actually getting to the market from the actual water to the boat to the wharf, so I want to look at that as we apply it to mussels or —

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct)

Chair: The hour has been called.

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

Chair: Shall it carry? Carried.

Mr. Speaker, as Chair of a Committee of the Whole House having under consideration the grant of supply to Her Majesty, I beg leave to report that the committee has made some progress and begs leave to sit again. I move that the report of the committee be adopted.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Member from Morell-Donagh.

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I move, seconded by the hon. Minister of Fisheries and Communities, that this House adjourn until Friday, July 5th at 10:00 in the a.m.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Have a good evening everyone. See you in the morning.

The Legislature adjourned until Friday, July 5th, at 10:00 a.m.