

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. Minister of Finance, Deputy Premier.

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's a pleasure to be back in the Legislature today. It's beautiful, sunny summer day. Everyone's out there enjoying it, lots of tourists around.

Hoping everyone enjoyed their weekend. Cavendish Beach, I hear, was a grand success, and that's good to hear.

This week is the beginning of the Lobster Carnival week, well I guess started on the weekend. There were elimination races for the Governor's Plate, which will happen on Saturday, so lots of events happening up in Summerside.

Our own filly two-year-old is going on Wednesday night, hoping for a good outcome.

Wishing all the carnival goers and the horsemen a great week in Summerside and a great day to everyone today.

Thank you very much.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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

I, too, would like to welcome everybody back on this beautiful day after a beautiful Island weekend, a busy weekend for many of us.

On Saturday, it was my great pleasure, along with the Minister of Fisheries and Communities to attend the opening of the Bedeque Museum, one of many small but mighty museums here on Prince Edward Island. A fantastic little place there in Bedeque in the William Callbeck Building.

They opened four new exhibits on Saturday on Lucy Maud Montgomery's time there as

a teacher in the Lower Bedeque School, one on quilting, one on tall clocks, and another on two nurses – two wartime nurses. It was just a lovely event, and it was great to spend some time with the minister.

Prior to that, a number of us here in this Legislature, including the Minister of Environment, Water and Climate Change, and a number of my colleagues from the opposition caucus planted some trees in the Brackley Beach area. It was just a delight, it was again, a lovely morning and not too many mosquitoes even. We got a number of trees planted in a Habitat for Humanity build up there.

Mr. Trivers: How many, how many feet of trees?

Leader of the Opposition: I don't know how many feet of trees minister.

Jamie Mackay, who is one of the builders involved in that, I saw him last night actually in Summerside, I think he's the chair of the board of the College of Piping there in Summerside, who opened there summer season for the Highland Storm, with a fantastic rousing show. It was just lovely to be there, a full house, so many wonderful things happening here on the Island both inside and out, so congratulations to the College of Piping and I wish them a really great summer.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

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

Always a pleasure to rise and welcome those that are visiting the public gallery today; it seems to be well attended every day during this session of the House. It's great to have people come in to see exactly what goes on, on the floor of the Legislature on Prince Edward Island.

I, too, would like to congratulate the organizers of the Cavendish Beach Music Festival; I understand it was an extremely well-run event and another successful event this year. Congratulations to all those involved that have any part to play in it, it

takes a lot of logistics, it takes a lot of worrying I'm sure, but everything went without a hitch, I understand, and another successful year.

I made a journey to your end of the Island on Sunday. It may not be as well attended as the Cavendish Beach Music Festival, I think it ran a close second and that's MP Lawrence MacAulay's Strawberry Social that was held on his own property there in Midgell, not quite all the way to your neighborhood but in Midgell and there was many, I'll say thousands that were in attendance for that wonderful ice cream social at Lawrence MacAulay's.

As well, to all Islanders that are viewing in to watch the proceedings, I do hope they're having a wonderful day as well Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Fisheries and Communities.

Mr. Fox: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Welcome everybody back this week. I'd like to say hello to Annie MacDonald up there in the back row. Annie and I go to church together every Sunday, most Sunday's, she's a great lady. I want to also say hello to Christie MacKay, we don't recognize Christie enough when she's here, but I feel safe when I'm in here. Of course Margret's here in the back row, also, which is good to see.

Echoing the thoughts of the Leader of the Opposition, the Bedeque museum is something to see and I would encourage all the public to stop by and check that place out. I actually had a good conversation on Saturday with the board from the school and the possible replacement up from where it is now, up to the new area so it can be enjoyed by the public also.

I want to give a special shout out to the staff of my department. This morning I had the very rare opportunity of conducting a fisheries patrol around the whole coast of PEI with staff and the department.

I want to really shout out what the staff are doing to ensure our aquaculture industry and our fishery is a thriving industry across PEI

and the research that they're doing. The explanations they provided to me about what they're looking for and what they're watching for, it's just phenomenal. I think it just really goes to show what our staff on this Island are doing and what a beautiful place it is that we live in. Just thank you very much for the staff of Fisheries and Communities.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

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

It's certainly a pleasure for me to rise as well and bring greetings to those that may be tuning in today on the Internet or Cable 10 with EastLink and of course to welcome everyone in the gallery here today.

One individual in particular I'd like to give a big shout out and that's Dr. Pam Hudson who is actually starting as a physician at Western Hospital tomorrow. So Pam, great to see you here and thank you for returning to PEI to practice medicine, it's wonderful to have you and of course, Dr. Hudson would be the daughter of the Minister of Social Development and Housing.

I'd also like to send a hello out to our friends, our neighbours in the north. Today is Nunavut Day. It's a celebration for that province and I wish them all well.

Last but not least, I just wanted to let the hon. Member from Charlottetown-West Royalty know that as of today, July 9th, it is officially two months that I've been the health minister.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Summerside-Wilmot.

Ms. Lund: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm also happy to welcome everyone back to the House today, and I, too, would like to acknowledge the great work being done by Habitat for Humanity. We were very lucky to have them host a number of members from both sides of the House over the weekend to have some assistance planting trees, which we had a wonderful time with.

I will say that in the recent days, I've asked a lot of questions to the Minister of Environment, Water and Climate Change on tree planting, on trees in particular, and I'm happy to report he's an excellent tree planter.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

It is a pleasure to rise here in the Legislature for the start of another week and I want to give a shoutout to all the great people up in District 26 Alberton-Bloomfield. It's great to have spent the weekend up in my home district and meetings yesterday – always a pleasure

I want to welcome everybody to the gallery as well, and a special shoutout to my daughter, Pam. It's great to have you joining us here and we may see a bit more of you up west once the House rises for the summer.

I'd also like to just give a shoutout to a great strawberry u-pick operation up in my district; Rennie's U-Pick opens today. Anybody travelling through the western part of the province, if you want the best berries on PEI, drop into Rennie's U-Pick.

Just last – I'd comment on the drive down that I had this morning. It makes you realize just what a beautiful province that we do live in. Everything is so green. The smell of freshly-mown hay in the air – what more could you ask for?

The other thing is just the amount of road work that is being done as well. Now, it does slow the trip down a bit, but having said that, I have to give a shoutout to the Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy for the great work that his department is doing on our roads and keeping it safe.

Thank you.

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct)

Mr. Myers: Next comes the ask.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Land.

Mr. Thompson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

On behalf of District 8, I'm honoured and privileged to stand here again this week. I would like to welcome guests, and in particular Annie MacDonald. Annie and her husband, Elmer, is a tremendous family farm that is one of the best farmers on Prince Edward Island, in my opinion. Her husband, Elmer, is a role model of mine and I cherish every time I get to speak with Elmer.

My agricultural report is it's one heck of a hay day today. All of the farmers are out making hay today and it's the perfect conditions for hay.

Also, on the weekend I got to go to – my family and I got to go to the national park to the beach. The beaches are tremendous on Prince Edward Island, particularly in District 8. They're extremely special, so I invite everyone out to the beaches. Get out and enjoy this beautiful Island.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. McNeilly: It's a great pleasure to rise today and say hello to everybody in the gallery.

It was a pleasure to meet Pam today and various friends. It's a great experience to be down there and saying hello to everybody coming in. It's a real warm feeling, so welcome.

I'd like to say a very special hello to Patti Larsen who is here today. Patti is a great friend of mine for many years and I can't say enough about what she's done and how ambitious she is about going after things in life. A videographer, she was in the hair industry for a while and recently – she's probably one of the most successful authors in PEI's history, so just a great pleasure to have you here today and amazing work that you've done, so welcome.

Thank you.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Mermaid-Stratford.

Ms. Beaton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's a pleasure to rise today. I would like to recognize some guests in the gallery; Bethany Collicut-McNab, welcome, and her daughter Jane Marie – and I, too, would like to welcome Patti Larsen to the gallery. She is one of the best authors that PEI has ever seen and I'll speak about that a little bit later in my member statement. I'm glad to have you. Thank you for joining us.

I'd also like to just share that I spent a lot of time down in District 4 today. I seem to be in the Minister of Finance's district quite a bit because that's where my grandmother's family came from, the Richards.

We spent Saturday afternoon celebrating the life of an incredible man named, Kenny Jordan. Kenny passed away earlier this year and his family gathered on Sunday to recognize what a wonderful man he was and how much he contributed to that community.

He was a fisherman, he was a joker, he wore a great smile. I think everybody always remembered Kenny for his smile, and he'll be greatly missed by the whole family.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Evangeline-Miscouche.

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

As always it's a pleasure to rise in the Legislature and say hello to everyone.

I'd like to welcome everyone to the gallery, and a special welcome to Margaret MacKay from our District of Evangeline-Miscouche.

I'd also like to mention – I didn't get to the country music concerts, but I did get to the Summer Series Concert at the Mont-Carmel Hall on Sunday night. It was a wonderful evening of entertainment, step dancing, and it's in both languages.

I encourage anyone that's up around that area, there's seven more series this summer.

If you're there on a Sunday evening at 7:00 p.m. you'll certainly enjoy the entertainment.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: I didn't miss anybody.

Statements by Members

Speaker: The hon. Member from Mermaid-Stratford.

Patti Larsen-Author

Ms. Beaton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It gives me great pleasure to rise today to recognize international multi-award winning author Patti Larsen.

At age 12, while reading a Nancy Drew mystery, Patti realized her desire to be a fiction author when she grew up. She looked up and told her mom and dad that she wanted to be an author, and her father immediately stood up and took an old fashion typewriter out of his closet and gave it to her.

She explored teaching and journalism through UPEI and Holland College before falling into hairdressing for 15 years; as when Patti was in high school, she was told that nobody could make a living as a writer.

While working fulltime she wrote a screenplay and produced it into a full feature film. She got an offer to write for TV in Toronto, but her calling to write fiction was strong. She had an idea for a young adult paranormal story about a young witch named Sydlynn Hayle and the Hayle Coven series came to life.

In 2010, Patti took a leap of faith and she sold her hair salon to begin writing fulltime. *Family Magic* is a 44 book universe and in 2014 won World's Best Story.

Patti's characters have channeled through her over the years. In one day, she wrote 30,000 words which is approximately 150 pages, or half a standard novel. In one day, Patti obviously found her purpose in life.

She has published 111 titles in genres including children's books, young adult

paranormal, and adult murder mysteries. Her books are selling in over 60 countries over the world, and she has just signed a contract to sell into China.

When asked, Patti identified her biggest obstacle as being support and funding. Like all artists, Patti is an entrepreneur and it took time for her to build up a business that would support her fulltime.

Her success demonstrates that small investments within the arts and culture communities can pay huge dividends over time.

Thank you for joining us.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Heather Savidant

Mr. Deagle: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'd like to acknowledge an achievement of the Montague Sobeys grocery store manager, Heather Savidant. This week, Sobeys is celebrating Heather as a recipient of the 2019 Star Women in Grocery Award.

As store manager of the Montague Sobeys, Savidant has played a pivotal role in her local store with incredible leadership and dedication. After 20 years in the grocery industry, Savidant's passion for her store and community is as strong as ever.

Heather goes above and beyond for customers every day, regularly introducing innovative store offers and providing services Sobeys has rated as world class. She is committed to helping her team grow by providing leadership opportunities and support for local community initiatives.

Anyone who has ever worked in customer service knows that it is one of the most challenging industries out there. Customer service is often thankless labour.

While it may not seem like such a big deal at the time, expressing gratitude can make a

massive difference to the service provider, turning a bad day into a good one.

I'd like to take this opportunity to congratulate Heather on her achievement, and wish her all the best in her career.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Cornwall-Meadowbank.

Hannah MacLellan

Mr. MacDonald: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's my pleasure today to recognize a young woman of great ability and influence in our province. Hannah MacLellan is 20 years of age and hails from Charlottetown. She is a student at Carleton University studying for a Bachelor of Arts in Human Rights.

Of only 20 years of age, Hannah has been a powerful voice for the rights of persons with disabilities, not only in this province, but nationally and globally. Many people may remember her as the 2011 Easter Seals Ambassador.

Members who previously served in this Assembly may remember Hannah for being instrumental in the passage of an amendment to the *Highway Traffic Act* in 2016. That doubled fines for illegally parking in designated spots and changed outdated language in the act.

For example, Hannah's Bill, as it became known, changed wording from "disabled parking spaces" to "designated accessible parking spaces" in the act.

Hannah's work did not end there. In 2018, she was a force behind the *Provincial Miscellaneous Amendment Act* which changed the word "handicapped" to "persons with a disability" in five major pieces of provincial legislation, including the *Health Act*.

This past April, she attended the Daughters of the Vote event in Ottawa and gave a presentation on Bill C-18, a federal accessibility act.

The video of her presentation caught the attention of the Federal Minister of

Accessibility, of Carla Qualtrough, and eventually earned her an invitation to speak to United Nations panel at the Conference of States Parties to the Convention of Rights of Persons with Disabilities held in June in New York City.

Hannah MacLellan is a young woman who is making a positive difference for Islanders, Canadians, and people with disabilities throughout the world.

I'm sure all members of the House will join me in recognizing the tremendous contribution she has made in helping to improve the status of people with disabilities. One has to think Hannah is just getting started.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Responses to Questions Taken as Notice

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

Mr. Thompson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

In response to a question from the Member from Mermaid-Stratford last week about departmental funding for sustainable agriculture water supply ponds: in 2019/2020, there was no new funding for ponds.

In the fiscal year of 2018 and 2019, the sustainable agriculture water supply category of the agricultural storage ship program funding was to a single pond of the amount of \$4,900.

The Agriculture Stewardship Program is funded by the Canadian Agricultural Partnership. The project involved a pond that is filled by surface water collecting precipitation over 12 months for use when needed.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Questions by Members

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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

During media interviews following Question Period last week on midwifery services being introduced on Prince Edward Island, the Minister of Health and Wellness indicated that government was considering a user-pay model for midwifery here on Prince Edward Island.

User-pay model for midwifery services

Question to the Minister of Health and Wellness: How many other Canadian jurisdictions expect families to pay directly for these services?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

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

Actually what I said in the media interview and in this House, as well, is that government is very proud that we're finally going to be able to bring midwifery here to Prince Edward Island and that we're looking at every option.

We're in the consultation process right now and ongoing with regards to the colleges and the associations to see how best midwifery can be brought in and complemented with the other health care professionals.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you.

And indeed, the minister did say that, but he also said that they were considering a user-pay model.

No other jurisdiction in Canada – I'll answer your question, minister – no other jurisdiction in Canada has adopted a user-pay model for midwifery services, and a lot of Islanders are surprised by this option even being on the table.

Midwifery is not some sort of gold plated elitist service that should be available only to those who can afford it.

As Peter Rukavina put it in a recent blog and I quote: "Midwifery is not an upgrade to business class, it's basic health care. There

is no rationale whatsoever for classifying it as anything other than this, and to fly a trial balloon that positions it otherwise is an insult to those who have worked so tirelessly for so long to reintroduce a practice that was standard and accepted during our grandparents' day."

To the minister: Why is midwifery being considered in this light by your department?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

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

Again, I'll repeat what I said before. The government is extremely proud that we're going to finally be able to introduce midwifery here to Prince Edward Island as another health care service. Until we have all the details, until we have all the consultation, all those decisions are yet to be made.

Again, the government is very proud that we will be introducing midwifery.

Thank you.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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

I don't look too often to Ontario these days for political leadership, but just yesterday, that province announced greatly expanded funding for midwifery services. Committing \$178 million in spending in this fiscal year, with the minister of Health in Ontario, Christine Elliot quoted as saying this, and I quote "Midwives are an essential part of our public health care system." She also added that midwives promote best practices that lead to higher breastfeeding rates, fewer medical interventions and shorter hospital stays.

The province is also expanding midwives scope of practice to allow them to prescribe more medications. Scope of practice is something of course we've talked about repetitively in this House.

As I mentioned on Friday in Question Period, the cost savings of midwifery services are well documented.

Cost saving services with midwifery

A question to the minister: Why would we even consider user-pay for a service that provides a net saving to the province?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

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

Again, I'll repeat, this government is extremely proud that we will be the government that is finally able to bring midwifery services here to Prince Edward Island. If the hon. member wants to talk about cost savings, is he suggesting that we're going to release some of the OBGYN's that are currently working here on PEI and providing services for the roughly 1400 births annually?

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: I don't think I'm obligated to answer questions but the answer is absolutely 'no' to that question.

Public health system and user fees

To the same minister: Are there any other areas of the public health system where we might expect this government to introduce user fees?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

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

You know, again, I question how the hon. member can think we're going to have cost savings when we're going to actually be adding another service here to Prince Edward Island. The answer to his follow up question is, no.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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

Also during his comments last week the minister stated that introduction to midwifery services was and I quote: In our platform. Meaning I would assume, in the PC platform for the recent election.

Could the minister please direct me to the page where I will find this commitment?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Aylward: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'll be more than happy to bring that back.

Thank you.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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

Good luck with that minister, because actually, nowhere in the PC platform does it mention the word midwifery at all and the only platform with any concrete costed commitment to introduce midwifery comes from the Green Party. That policy minister was drawn from consultations with the birthing community here on the Island and also speaking to mothers, both perspective and actual.

Our commitment was to provide fully integrated and publicly-funded midwifery services into our health care system.

Commitment of midwifery services for Island families

To the minister: Will you commit to fully integrated and publicly-funded midwifery services for Island families?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

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

Once again, I've said it over and over again. This government will be introducing

midwifery for the first time here on Prince Edward Island and we're very proud of that.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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

The introduction of midwifery services was also one of the few policies taken from our platform as I've just described; the government claimed that they were putting in the budget in order to secure our support.

As you know, the official opposition was extremely disappointed that we were told a basic income guarantee pilot would be part of the budget, only to discover that it wasn't actually being considered at all and the Premier was just playing word games.

Now we see that another Green Party priority will not be delivered— excuse the phrase — will not be delivered as expected. Minister, are you familiar with the term bait and switch?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

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

Again, I repeat, this government will be the government that will introduce midwifery here to Prince Edward Island.

An Hon. Member: Good job.

An Hon. Member: That's what we want to hear.

Mr. Aylward: Mr. Speaker, sorry if I may — the minister responsible for Social Development and Housing and myself met with the critics from across the floor very early on in our mandate and we sat down and I'm very proud that the critic for health and wellness here on PEI actually brought that forward as one of her top priorities when we had that discussion and we are following up on that commitment.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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

To be clear, according to Wikipedia, Bait-and-Switch is a form of fraud used in retail sales but also employed in other context.

First, customers are bated by merchants advertising products or services at a low price, but when customers visit the store they discover that the advertised goods are not available, or that the customers are pressured to buy some other – to consider something similar but higher priced items.

When the Green caucus asked for government to make midwifery services available, we meant services that will be fully integrated into our health care system and paid for with public funds. This is the second time that this government has failed to follow through on a budget speech rhetoric with real meaningful programs and services needed by Islanders. Yet, the Premier has repeatedly said that he wants to collaborate with the other parties using the principle of good faith and no surprises.

Government and empty promises

To the same minister: How can we expect Islanders to maintain confidence in this government when so many of your commitments are turning out to be empty promises?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

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

I guess I would say to the public is: Watch us; it's going to happen.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Altass: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The front page of today's *Guardian* highlights one aspect of our mental health crisis here on PEI that over 1,000 patients

are waiting to see a psychiatrist after referral. In the article the Minister of Health and Wellness states: We all need to roll up our sleeves and work collaboratively together to make sure Islanders are getting the help where they need it, when they need it.

Mental health crisis re: psychiatrist services

Question to the Minister of Health and Wellness: Could you please provide some specifics on who will be involved and what this sleeve-rolling and collaborative process will look like?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

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

I'm very proud to say that the work has already begun. Yes, this headline that was in *The Guardian* today, it was shocking, it was unacceptable. The level of wait times we're at just hasn't happened over the last two months; it's a situation that has slowly been evolving and there's many factors that have contributed to it.

But, I'm very proud to announce here today that I've asked the committee on physician resource planning to look at increasing the complement of psychiatrists here on PEI as much as 5.8. We are doing great work over here on this side of the floor. It's unfortunate and I feel terrible for the families and for the individuals that are waiting to see a psychiatrist, but we're working hard to make that change.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Altass: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

In the article the CEO of Health PEI suggests individuals who have been referred to psychiatrists may not have been triaged properly.

Psychiatric referrals and mistriaged

Question to the Minister of Health and Wellness: Is your department tracking the number of psychiatric referrals that have been mistriaged, and if so, will you share this information?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

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

The frontline as such of health care here on Prince Edward Island would be family physician primary care. What we've instructed the family physicians to do is actually go back and reinterview any referrals that they may have had to psychiatry to see where they're at now, to see if they've actually successfully found services or psychiatry or otherwise and then to retriage them.

We've also hired a specialized nurse in mental health and this individual is also reviewing all of the files that are currently waiting for a referral to psychiatry.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Altass: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

One way that government has attempted to manage the psychiatry shortfall in PEI is to fly in locum doctors for short stints; sometimes only a weekend. These psychiatrists will often see a patient only once and some patients have told us these visits that are so short have little commitment to in-depth meaningful mental health care, and in some cases, maybe doing more harm than good.

Fly-in-fly-out locum psychiatrists

Question to the Minister of Health and Wellness: Will you be continuing to utilize fly-in-fly-out locum psychiatrists? If so, how will you evaluate their effectiveness?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Aylward: Mr. Speaker, I can't change the past. My focus as minister is to move

forward and to get the proper care for the individuals that deserve it.

Again, that's what this government is focusing on. That's what the department of health is focusing on – is to put real measures in place. Will there be times that locums are required? Yes. It's a necessary part of the health care system.

We, as I said, are looking at increasing the complement of psychiatrists here on Prince Edward Island by as many as 5.8 FTEs. That will be a sizeable measure to provide psychiatric services here to Prince Edward Island.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Altass: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I just want to repeat the last part of my question there, which we didn't get to, so how will you evaluate the effectiveness of these locums? How will you check in to see if they are causing more harm than good?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

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

We do have health records. We do analysis on those. Those are audited as well.

I'm extremely proud of the staff that we do have that are working in mental health and addictions here in PEI right from tip-to-tip. They are dedicated, professional employees that care for Islanders.

We have an unfortunate situation that evolved over a period of time. We're not looking at the past. What we're looking at is how to best service those individuals and we're going to take every measure that's possible and required to ensure that Islanders are safe.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Altass: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I want to take this opportunity to highlight that there are other immediate steps that government can take today to help those living with addictions and mental illness. For example, Lennon House is a community-based initiative that has been borne out of a grieving mother's desire to support those struggling with addiction and mental health.

The mission of Lennon Recovery House is to provide a temporary home in a caring, healing community for persons recovering from addictions and co-occurring mental health disorders, to foster a culture of self-respect in caring for each other in an atmosphere of compassion, responsibility and accountability to engage clients, staff, volunteers and the local community in a holistic plan for healthy living.

The building itself has been donated and renovations have been ongoing with the help of not-for-profits and community members. The opening of Lennon House will have a direct impact on the health and wellbeing of so many who are struggling. All they are waiting for at this point is government.

Funding and support to Lennon Recovery House

Question to the Minister of Health and Wellness: Will this government provide funding to support Lennon House to open its doors and if so, when?

Some Hon. Members:

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

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

Well, I'm very familiar with Lennon House. Actually, I'm a very good friend of Dianne Young's, the person that has created Lennon House, and the concept around it is very noble and I do support it.

However, opening Lennon House is not going to help with our psychiatry issue because Lennon House will not be employing psychiatrists.

Our department, as well as several departments of government, are in constant negotiations and discussions with Lennon House, and hopefully down the road we will get to an agreement.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Belvedere.

Ms. Bell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As we heard in the House a few days ago, government will invest \$225,000 to develop a PEI secure income pilot, which will provide 400 people with additional funds over a three-month period from January to March 2020. This will provide an average of \$187 per person per month.

Those who are on social assistance will not have existing supports clawed back because there's now a policy in place to prevent that from happening after we raised it as an issue here in the House last spring.

Selecting of people for secure income pilot program

A question for the Minister of Social Development and Housing: As there are approximately 5,300 people on social assistance, and at least another 15,000 people who are working poor, how will you select the 400 people for this pilot?

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

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

I do thank the hon. member for the question.

As the hon. member is aware, this is a pilot program, a secure income pilot program, and our department, the ones in my department, are working on just what the parameters of the pilot program are going to be.

As I have mentioned before to the hon. member, and the hon. members across the way, any suggestions that they do have, I am more than happy at any point in time to take them under consideration.

Thank you.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Belvedere.

Ms. Bell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I think I would start with suggesting poverty is not a lottery.

Poverty measurement tools re: pilot project

A question for the hon. Minister of Social Development and Housing: What poverty measurement tools do you think are the right ones to decide who gets this money and who will you consult with to determine the best measures?

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

Mr. Hudson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

If I did hear the hon. member correctly, she did state that poverty is not a lottery? I agree a hundred percent, it is not a lottery. We have a department that is dedicated completely to helping the most vulnerable on this great Island of ours. This program that we are putting forward, this pilot project, is one, to take it to that next step to identify shortfalls, to identify opportunities that we as a government, that we as a department, can come forward with to make sure that the most vulnerable in this province are taken care of and are provided for.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Belvedere.

Ms. Bell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I will repeat my previous question as I didn't get an answer. A question for the hon. Minister of Social Development and Housing: What poverty measurement tools do you think are the right ones to decide who gets the money and who will you consult with to determine these measures?

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

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

In my answer to the first question that the hon. member put forward, I did indicate that our department are working on the parameters, what the delivery mechanisms, what will be looked at under this pilot program will entail.

The hon. member also asked who is going to be consulted with. We have a poverty reduction action plan that consulted with numerous ones across this province and I also put it out in my response to the hon. member's first question, that yes, at any point in time, I would be happy to meet with her, anybody across on the far side of the House, whether its third party members or opposition members to receive their input, their suggestions.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Belvedere.

Ms. Bell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The point of doing a pilot project is to collect data to better inform future, long-term policy decisions.

Timeline for informed decisions

A question for the hon. Minister of Social Development and Housing: Do you think a three-month period is a sufficient period of time to collect data to make informed decisions for the next phase, or is there a next phase at all?

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

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

That is an excellent question from the hon. member as she had referenced in her first question, \$225,000 in this fiscal year with the program, the pilot program coming into effect January of 2020. That will be for a three-month period of this fiscal year.

On a go forward basis as with any pilot, we will be monitoring it, we will be reviewing it, and yes, I am optimistic that as we move forward that we will be able to build upon that program.

Thank you.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Belvedere.

Ms. Bell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Any additional money for those in poverty is good news and \$187 could really make a difference for individuals and families who are struggling.

Poverty measurement tools re: pilot project (further)

A question for the Minister of Social Development and Housing: What things do you think they will have to give up when the pilot is done and you take that money away?

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

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

I would say that the hon. member is possibly jumping to conclusions here. Nobody has talked anything about taking money away from people.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

A question today for the Minister of Finance. We know the minister is one of the more experienced members on that side of the House. I assume that the minister was very involved in both the preparation of the Conservative election platform and of course, the budget.

We also know that there is a real crisis on Prince Edward Island right now in terms of shelter and affordability. In the Conservative platform, a promise is made to offer and I quote again: Immediate action to help Islanders with rental cost: I will be pleased to table that a little later today.

Neglect of rental assistance program in budget

So why did the minister neglect to include the immediate 4.9 million rental assistance

program in the budget that was promised in the provincial election?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

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

We know the third party is very well versed in our platform, and thank you very much for bringing that to my attention.

As Minister of Finance, I will tell you we met with every department. We've consulted with both the opposition and the third party about what the priorities were and we took that back and looked at that versus what the departments thought were their priorities.

We committed to balance the budget, which we did, and moving forward we'll continue to look at all suggestions offered by both the opposition and the third party moving forward including that.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Third Party your (Indistinct).

Mr. Mitchell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I don't recall specific discussions on the cut to housing in Prince Edward Island.

Again to the Minister of Finance, I assume the minister was involved in the preparation of that Conservative election platform. The minister has been on record over the last year talking about this housing crisis.

Was the minister involved in promising a \$5 million rental assistance program as part of that Conservative platform?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you again for that question.

As the members across the floor there in the third party realize, some of this budget was brought forward by yourselves. At the time of the election, we look at the asks, we look at the money that has to be spent in every department, and we need to look at that.

We were late into the game as far as the budget. We did what we could with the

money we had. We said we were going to commit to having a surplus, which we did. We will take all of those election promises, and, moving forward, they will be implemented.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Mitchell: The minister was so concerned with housing that last year she proposed a rental freeze across Prince Edward Island and as a response to increasing costs at that time. I will table those quotes later.

Supports for tenants in rental assistance plan

Given that concern, did the minister fail to fight on behalf of tenants when the rental assistance plan was discussed during their recent budget preparation?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Ms. Compton: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Well as we well know, the third party across the floor got 12 years to fulfill their promises and there a number of them that we are working on now that were part of what you wanted to do, part of what the opposition party wants to do.

We will continue with all of the promises, and look at them on a need basis there.

The Member from Cornwall-Meadowbank is quite well aware after being finance minister that every department comes to you and everything – the member from O’Leary every department comes to you –

Mr. Henderson: It’s not easy.

Ms. Compton: – they’re all wonderful, wonderful suggestions. They’re all wants and asks that are all good.

We will continue to look at every ask, every want, from all the departments: the opposition and the third party going forward.

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

Mr. McNeilly: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

A question for the Minister of Finance: Fewer than 10 months ago, the minister demanded that the former government order IRAC to cancel a rent increase.

Mr. Henderson: Demanded?

Mr. McNeilly: At the time, she said that allowing the increase to go ahead made the suffering worse for many Islanders.

Order to IRAC re: rent increase and rent freeze

Question: Has the minister taken steps to arrange a rent freeze before any further increase takes place?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

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

As I’ve stated earlier, there are a number of issues coming forward. We know housing is at a crisis. Government is partnering with both municipalities, with the federal government, with private partners to try and rectify that problem.

It will not happen overnight. There is a huge demand on construction right now. There is a huge demand on just getting the work done.

We will continue to work with our partners across government and across the private sector to ensure that the rental freeze that is there if it needs to happen it will happen – we need to move forward from where we’re at now.

Tomorrow we could use 2,000 new houses or new accommodations. We do not have them right now, but we are working towards that.

Thank you.

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

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct)

Mr. McNeilly: I want to follow-up on a question raised earlier.

In a September 25th, 2018, press release, the minister called the rent increase allowed by IRAC a ‘flawed process.’ She also said a quote: ‘Enough is enough. Cancel this rent hike.

I will table this later.

If the minister was sincere in calling the process flawed, will the minister please explain the steps taken by government to fix this issue?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

In opposition we ask many questions, I will admit that. I expect both the opposition and the third party to continue to question government. I said it before, opposition is here to oppose, to make sure that the decisions that government make are the right ones or the very best ones we can make. I will continue to stand by that in government, as I did in opposition and I appreciate the question.

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

Mr. McNeilly: That’s good because I only have one more.

Platform commitment of rental assistance program

In the platform, it says something about launching a mobile rental voucher, \$4.875 million this year. Given the ministers statement 10 months ago and her description of the situation as a crisis, can Islanders expect to see government meet its election province and introduce a rental assistance program as soon as possible?

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Ms. Compton: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

We will again, fulfill our platform commitments. That whole list you have over there, we will work towards filling every one of those commitments over the next term of our government. As long as we are here, we will work on that.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Morell-Donagh.

Mr. Deagle: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Climate change is certainly touching us all in PEI and the lobster industry is no exception. Research is critical to ensuring our future generations enjoy the benefits that people are right now.

Research for fishing industry re: climate change

You would know the Atlantic Fisheries Fund is a great resource for research into this type of thing. I have a question today for the minister of fisheries: What is the minister doing to encourage research that helps prepare the lobster fishery for changes relating to our changing climate.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Fisheries and Communities.

Mr. Fox: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I’ve actually have many briefings on the AFF, also with the PEIFA on this issue. I know the Atlantic Fisheries Fund is basically for PEI to run a \$38 million fund available over seven years. It basically has three pillars in regarding around innovation, sustainability and also infrastructure, which also touches on the science partnership.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Morell-Donagh.

Mr. Deagle: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

What is the minister doing to encourage research into the lobster industry so that the future changes on the industry are integrated?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Fisheries and Communities.

Mr. Fox: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I thank you hon. member for his question.

Like I say, I've actually met with industry many times, I encourage people to reach into the AFF and make the applications if they have any type of project that will help the industry. I know that we've been very successful in some projects, like onboard processing and holding capacity, the adding of shelters over top of vessels which also increases quality. There's some other projects that are also being looked at also. I encourage anybody that has a project to help that industry to put an application in.

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

Mr. Deagle: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The lobster industry is worth over \$2 billion a year nationally, yet there's no current research chair for lobster science in Canada. Other resource industries like agriculture and fisheries have research chairs to ensure there is scientific research being conducted to support the sector.

Need for lobster industry research chair

A question to the hon. Minister of Fisheries and Communities, will you advocate your fellow fishery ministers across the country about the need for a lobster industry research chair to improve environmental and economic health of the lobster industry and will you push them to have that located right here in PEI?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Fisheries and Communities.

Mr. Fox: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

That's actually an excellent question and I think that would be great for PEI. I must mention though right now, we have a lobster biologist, Robert McMillan on staff and he's to take care of lobster resource monitoring program and that's in conjunction with DFO and also the PEIFA, but I will lobby and I will move forward on that suggestion.

Thank you very much.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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

If the three most common chronic health conditions in Canada, arthritis is number one, hypertension/high blood pressure is number two and hearing loss is number three. Hearing loss is a chronic condition that can lead to more serious issues and health problems if hearing and accessibility tools are not available or affordable.

Hearing loss serious issue for Islanders

A question to the hon. Minister of Health and Wellness: Does government consider hearing loss to be a serious issue for all Islanders?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

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

Yes, hearing loss is definitely a concern to this government and that's why we have campaigns in place to help educate people, especially around worksites, to wear the proper ear protection and to our youth as well.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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

Indeed, prevention is a very important aspect of this, but later today I will be presenting documents from an organization called Hear PEI, including a petition with over 2,000 signatures calling for government to extend coverage for all Islanders suffering from hearing loss.

Here on PEI, seniors and adults over 65 are not treated equally in access to hearing aid funding. Those under 65 apply through the accessibility supports program and applicants qualify based on their net income, and almost everybody qualifies. Those over 65 have to apply through the income

supports program, and applicants qualify based on their assets. Currently, anybody with assets over \$2,500 becomes ineligible.

Accessibility to funding for hearing aids

To the same minister: Why are there two different measures for accessibility to funding for hearing aids?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Hudson: Mr. Speaker?

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Hudson: Yes, and I do appreciate the question that the hon. member is bringing forward.

Hearing loss is a challenge for anyone at any age group and is more prevalent in seniors.

Will we look at this? Can we look at this on a go-forward basis? I would say yes, absolutely. Can I give a guarantee or would I give a guarantee today? I'm not in a position to do that for the hon. member or for this House.

At this point in time, Island seniors – the hon. member is correct – Island seniors who are low income do qualify on an annual basis for up to \$1,500 per hearing aid, so which would be, if my information is accurate, would be \$3,000 per individual senior.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you.

That's true for seniors under 65, but those over 65 it's means tested and if you have \$2,500 in your bank account you qualify for zero dollars.

Untreated hearing loss has been associated with a number of other conditions, including depression, social isolation, increased risk for falls and accidents, and it often

contributed to a misdiagnosis of dementia. All of these result in increased health care expenditures to government, and hearing almost always, of course, deteriorates as we get older, resulting in the demographic most in need of supports being the one where funding is most lacking.

To the same minister, or to the Minister of Health and Wellness, I don't really mind: Why is government prepared to fund the cost of issues that often result from hearing loss, such as depression and dementia, but is not seriously looking at ways to help those with hearing loss be able to afford hearing aids?

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

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

Again, I thank the hon. member for the question.

I think on a go-forward basis, as I had said, hon. member, previously, I'm not in a position to stand here today that I would give any commitment with that. I think that it is a very pertinent question that you have raised – suggestion that you have brought forward and as we move forward as a government, certainly one that I personally would be willing to take under consideration.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Bernard: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Gender-based sexual violence is a pervasive issue in Canada, particularly for young Canadian women. 47% of all sexual assault incidents reported in Canada were committed against women aged 15 to 24, with 41% of these cases having been reported by students.

Under reporting is common, and it's been estimated that as many as one in five women will experience some form of sexual assault while attending a university or college.

Last year, the Legislature passed the *Post-Secondary Institution Sexual Violence Policies Act*, which has yet to be proclaimed.

Proclamation of Bill 41 re: protection of students

A question to the Minister of Education and Lifelong Learning: Will your government proclaim this act to ensure that students have strong supports and protections before they return to school in the fall?

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

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I want to thank the member for that question. It is a very serious issue and those stats are really incredible with the one in five. It's something that needs to be addressed and it's great that that legislation was brought forward.

I'm meeting with the UPEI Student Union and that's definitely one of their priorities as well. I will get back to the member with a definitive answer, but I'll talk to my department and I don't see a problem with getting that proclaimed.

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

Ms. Bernard: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I appreciate that.

Having policies in place to protect students is an important start to addressing sexual violence, however these policies place greater expectations on institutions especially when it comes to investigating reports and disclosures, and providing accommodations and supports to survivors. All of which require dedicated resources.

Financial support for sexual violence policy implementation

A question to the Minister of Education and Lifelong Learning: How will your government support these institutions as they implement their policies, and will this include financial support?

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

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Indeed, that's an important consideration. Whenever you make legislative changes and proclaim legislation, you have to consider how it's going to be supported and implemented. That would be part of what we need to consider in the department before we do proclaim the legislation.

I'll get back to the member with some more details on exactly how we would do that, but we have been in discussions with postsecondary institutions. We'll continue those discussions to make sure that if and when we do proclaim that legislation, the supports are there.

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

Ms. Bernard: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

During the campaign, the PC Party committed to introducing the third option to make it easier for survivors to make disclosures of sexual violence.

This would allow survivors to go to the hospital after the assault has occurred, get an examination done with the proper evidence taken, then it can be stored for up to a year buying the survivor some time to work through the trauma and decide if they would like to press charges or not.

Access to services for disclosure of sexual violence

A question to the Minister of Justice and Public Safety: When will Islanders be able to access this service?

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

Mr. Thompson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

To the member across, I acknowledge the importance of your question.

Our department is working quite diligently to get this out and I'll get the answer to you right away on the timeline.

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

Mr. Howard: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

When I had a closer look at what the department of environment was spending its roughly \$7.8 million budget on, a few questions arose. This budget is expected to almost double in the coming years to \$13.6 million.

Desired results from grants re: environment

Question to the minister responsible for environment: What are the desired results from the expenditure of funds through grants from this department?

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

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

If I understand the funds that the member's talking about related to climate change then there's really two areas we're trying to address. One is adaptation and that's where there's activities that are taking place to help sort of repair the results of climate change and adapt to them.

The second one would be mitigation, which is trying to reduce the amount of carbon emissions.

Perhaps I misunderstood the question, my apologies.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Summerside-South Drive your final question.

Mr. Howard: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Just to clarify for the minister, what I was speaking to was some subsidies that go to – well part of it is for free drivers' license, but the rest of it goes to subsidizing energies.

Subsidizing energy rebates

So I was just wondering if you could comment on what the purpose of those funds and what all of the new expenditures for this year might be?

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

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you for the clarification.

Yes, so the portion which are the energy rebates that are given for – partly for electricity.

I believe the idea there was to give people an incentive to move towards devices that use electricity and do a fuel switching.

The idea was if you're – there's a tax on gas, for example, you can move to an electric vehicle where in fact there's a rebate – an energy rebate on the electricity that's used to power that. It would give an incentive.

I should say that the experts in my department have some mixed feelings on this rebate, and we're reviewing that and I look forward to having some discussions with the member in the future as to how best we might continue that.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

[End of Question Period]

Statements by Ministers

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

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

Before I get into the actual presentation, ministerial statement, I would certainly like to welcome Andrea MacDonald to the Chamber. It's great to see Andrea; she is the Chair of the Poverty reduction council, so again, welcome.

Call for Members-Poverty Reduction Council

The Poverty Reduction Council was established in January 2019 to help guide the 67 action items and \$68 million government investment over five years in the Poverty Reduction Action Plan.

The council's key duties include; responding to direction from, and providing advice to,

the Minister Responsible for Poverty Reduction, overseeing implementation, monitoring and reporting of the Poverty Reduction Action Plan and engaging with the public, community groups, not-for-profit and service organizations.

This government believes that our province is much stronger when we work together to ensure that all Islanders feel secure, feel supported and can lead healthy, independent lives.

We believe that Islanders can help make a difference and shape the future direction of our province. That is why we are changing the membership of the council to add additional members from the community. Islanders with lived experience and those who work day-to-day with Islanders experiencing poverty are encouraged to apply through Engage PEI.

These diverse voices will bring a range of experiences and views that will help us consider the many factors contributing to poverty, as well as ways to create and take action on our short and longer-term solutions.

Mr. Speaker, the Poverty Reduction Action Plan was released in November 2018. Islanders have seen immediate impact including significant increases to social assistance allowances, support to create a 211 information line, the ostomy supplies program and support for shelter services such as Bedford MacDonald House and Blooming House.

Within the next six months, we will act on addressing key recommendations of the Action Plan, including the introduction of a new Secure Income Pilot Program which will benefit the most vulnerable.

Too many Islanders are struggling. We want to ensure that the actions, policies and programming available through government and the community can help meet the basic needs of Islanders and protect the common good.

I look forward to welcoming new members to the council and to working with the people of Prince Edward Island to tackle the issues of poverty.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Belvedere.

Ms. Bell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm pleased always to hear of any discussion about action to address poverty in PEI. Where there are one in five Islanders living in food insecurity, meaning that they may not know where their next meal is coming from, we need, obviously, action that is broad ranging across all departments, not only the department of social development and housing.

We need to see that this action and the poverty action plan is actually being considered in every consideration that the government makes because this is affecting literally thousands and thousands of Islanders who are in at-risk; whether that means of their health, of their wellbeing and their potential future.

I also look forward to further details on the expansion of the council. Currently it has nine identified members who are serving into 2021, so I'm looking forward to seeing that further expansion which will only bring a greater voice and experience to the council and better inform the work that it does.

I'm also excited to hear that the minister is the minister responsible for poverty reduction because that is actually a part of the mandate of the council and although that's not officially in your job title minister, I'm assuming that that is by presumption, your title as well.

But I'm also excited because the poverty reduction council is specifically there to support local community networks and you've heard me speak of the community sector network and how important it is that there's a minister responsible who works directly with the community voices and so as that's in the mandate of this council, I'm really looking forward to an announcement, of not only that that engagement is happening, but that there is funding support for that organization as well, so that it can actually do the good work that it's meant to do.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Cornwall-Meadowbank.

Mr. MacDonald: Thank you Mr. Speaker.

Kudos to the former minister of social services, Tina Mundy, I think. A lot of energy was put into putting this poverty reduction council together. I think if you look at the list of members and obviously the chair person who is with us today, it's extremely important.

Poverty is a very complicated issue and it entails and engulfs many different departments. But I will say, housing is first and foremost a very integrate part of reducing poverty on Prince Edward Island. I've urged the minister to ensure the mandate that is set out in the housing portfolio that he continues and pushes forward with it and his Cabinet members as well, because it is extremely important and it is an issue.

I look forward to seeing the additional council members on this list. I can say this, too, as being a former minister; that I tell the members to allow the council to do their work. Live by what the council has to say because they're breathing, sleeping these issues and stay out of their way until they need your funding.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Lone Oak Brewery

Mr. MacKay: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The craft beverage industry on Prince Edward Island continues to grow. The province is now home to eight craft brewing operations and three cider producers and more are on the way.

A recent report suggests the industry employs more than 200 people on Prince Edward Island and injects more than \$80 million into the economy annually. This industry has tremendous potential, not only for the owners and employees of the breweries themselves, but for the PEI economy as a whole.

Earlier today I was very pleased to attend an announcement on another new brewery for the Island. Lone Oak Brewery and Cidery will soon begin operations at Gateway Village in Borden Carleton. The company recently made a successful application to the McCain Fund and received a \$200,000 dollar grant to assist it with the setup of its new space. The company will also receive a \$225,000 loan from Finance PEI that will assist with the company's start-up costs.

Provincial financing has proven invaluable to the province's economic development goals.

Our financing programs support 900 businesses with close to \$400 million in loans. Those loans have helped businesses to start up, expand, improve efficiency and hire more workers.

They also make the province money which can be reinvested in more economic development activities, or in services Islanders depend on. And it is by no means "free money". Our loan programs make an average of \$4 million a year after all expenses are accounted for.

So not only do these programs benefit Island businesses and wider the economy, but they also benefit everyday Islanders.

I also want to thank McCain's for their efforts to spur economic development in the region. The McCain Fund has helped nearly a dozen businesses expand or get off the ground in Borden Carleton.

The grants provided through the fund have helped to create dozens of jobs and have helped young entrepreneurs realize their dreams.

I wish the owners of Lone Oak Brewery and Cidery the best of luck as they move forward with their new business. It's a great example of young entrepreneurs who are working to make their dream a reality. I am confident it will be a welcome addition to the town and to the craft beverage industry on Prince Edward Island.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. member from Charlottetown-Brighton.

Mr. Hammarlund: Thank you Mr. Speaker and the hon. Minister of Economic Growth, Tourism and Culture.

I share your enthusiasm for local breweries. Not only do I like to enjoy the taste of craft beer and cider, but I take particular pleasure in local products knowing that as you state, that every dollar spent will go to work here on PEI and spread local prosperity.

I note with ease with which local breweries started all over PEI, with both federal and provincial governments happily contributing grants and loans and of course, places like this are really important. People gather and discuss important issues like affordable housing over a good beer and my suggestion is that based on your success in your innovation department, maybe you should take on a portfolio like affordable housing as well.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Cornwall-Meadowbank.

Mr. MacDonald: Mr. Speaker, I'm pretty excited to hear the hon. minister get up and talk like he did today about the loan portfolio on Prince Edward Island. I've heard him for the past four years, a detriment that loan portfolio was to our Island, but obviously things have changed.

So I just want to – kudos to these young guys that are opening this establish in Borden and to see it fitting in the community of Borden, I think, is extremely important. When you look at the population of Borden is not that large but if you take into consideration almost 600 employees in Borden – I remember some of them telling me that in the winter time they'd go to the rink for burgers and fries, so to have an establishment like this, plus being the entrance to the Province of Prince Edward Island, the start of Confederation Trail, I think these young guys are going to do very, very well and kudos to them and kudos to Finance PEI, IIDA and IPEI for getting some of these businesses started because young people are our future.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Wellness Grant Program

Mr. Aylward: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm pleased to rise in the house today to announce that communities and organizations can now apply for provincial government funding for wellness initiatives that promote healthy living.

We want to mobilize communities, giving them the guidance and financial support they need to work together to improve the health and wellbeing of Islanders.

This year we've redesigned the Wellness Grant Program to have two funding streams and this should help to make the grant program more accessible for community groups, and to remove some of the administrative burden.

The two funding streams are: the Community Catalyst Grant and the Health Promotion Grant.

All projects funded through the program need to address at least one of the pillars of the province's Wellness Strategy, such as living tobacco free, being physically active, healthy eating, consuming alcohol responsibly and mental health promotion.

The Community Catalyst Grant is designed to support Island communities in building local capacity for wellness. The program provides successful applicants with up to \$1,000 and applications are being accepted up until December 2019. This is for grassroots projects that can benefit an entire community or organization, projects such as community gardens, sensory pathways in schools, programs to reduce social isolation, or developing municipal or organizational policies for reducing tobacco use.

The Health Promotion Impact Grant is designed to support larger, targeted initiatives that address modifiable risk factors for chronic disease and Wellness Strategy pillars. Successful applicants can receive up to \$7,000 and the submission deadline is July 19, 2019. The Health Promotion team has already done several workshops across the province to promote the grant program. They have also reached out to partners and organizations who work

in the area of health promotion or within community settings.

Applications have been available online for the past month and submissions have already started to roll in. All of the application details for both of these grants are available on the government website under the Department of Health and Wellness.

We recognize the importance of promoting healthy lifestyles and reducing future reliance on the health system. Our intent through the Wellness Grant Program is to help strengthen and mobilize Island communities, so that together, we are helping to make the healthy choice the easier choice for all Islanders.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Altass: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I think that this is a great improvement here to have these two streams. Particularly, I want to acknowledge the value of a community catalyst grant stream that recognizes how important our communities are for wellbeing, that local knowledge and context and what small organizations, what municipalities and schools, what they can do in their communities when people get together and have just a little bit of resources to move things forward, so I do think that's fantastic.

I would perhaps just suggest that maybe its \$1,000 that's offered or available under this community catalyst grant stream and I would suggest that \$1,000 could be quite limiting for some programs that we might open that up a little bit more to allow communities to really explore a little bit further what they can do to improve wellness, but other than that, I think it's a great idea to have these two different streams.

Thank you.

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

Mr. McNeilly: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

This is great news and I, too, applaud both streams of the catalyst program. I do believe that wellness really starts in the community, that's where a lot of people are being active together and these grants are going to go a long way, so I encourage the communities to get out there and support that.

The health promotion aspect of it, we talked about chronic disease and \$7,000 going towards programs, I think that's fantastic. When people get chronic diseases, wellness doesn't stop and we have to make sure that whether you're fighting against cancer, whether you're fighting against different things, you have to keep hope. I do believe that people need to be active and well every day as they are fighting through difficult circumstances in their lives.

This is nice to see and I do believe this is an inclusive participation type program and wellness is all about everybody in the community being able to be active and everyone fits. So as we get going further ahead, I think that wellness has been a very small portion of health and wellness. I'll look at increasing that over the next coming few years but this is a great first step.

Congratulations minister.

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 document entitled 2019 Advocacy Action Regarding Increased Funding for Senior's Needing Hearing Aids on PEI, signed petition book No. 1 and I move, seconded by the Honourable Member from Charlottetown-Brighton, that the said document be now received and do lie on the Table.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

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 document entitled 2019 Advocacy Action Regarding Increased Funding for Senior's Needing Hearing Aids on PEI, signed petition book No. 2 and I move, seconded by the Honourable Member from Charlottetown-Brighton, that the said document be now received and do lie on the Table.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

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 document entitled 2019 Advocacy Action Regarding Increased Funding for Senior's Needing Hearing Aids on Prince Edward Island, law postings, letters to politicians, letters of support received and a copy of the petition.

With your indulgence, I feel I need to explain to the House why these are being presented as documents rather than being tabled by a petition.

The group HearPEI collected over 2,000 signatures for this petition, that's an unusually large number for this House and it was a very well-worded and a very powerful petition but there was one tiny problem with it. The prayer of the petition asked the Legislative Assembly to supplement the cost of hearing aids and in that action involves disbursement of public funds and that's not something by the rules of this House that is allowed in a petition.

But despite this, I feel that there is a great benefit in presenting this petition even if it is under the portion of the House business, tabling of documents.

I specifically want to thank the organizers Daria Valkenburg, a lady who's already been witnessed here in the House today and Ilene Macdonald who is sitting behind me, they put a huge amount of work to bring this petition forward to the House, supported as it is and I know signed by at least four members of this House; myself, Cornwall-Meadowbank, the Leader of the Third Party and the minister for climate change and all those various other things.

Anyway, thank you for that indulgence Mr. Speaker. I move seconded by the Honourable Member from Charlottetown-Brighton, that the said document be now received and do lie on the Table.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Mr. Mitchell: Mr. Speaker, by leave of the House, I beg leave to table documents which are related to the PC platform regarding immediate action to help low income Islanders with the rental voucher program as part of their campaign platform, as well as other documents by the minister regarding the crisis on housing over the past number of months and I move, seconded by the Honourable Member from Cornwall-Meadowbank, 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 to Written Questions from July 5th 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

The hon. Minister of Fisheries and Communities.

Mr. Fox: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

By leave of the House, I beg leave to table Response to Budget Estimate Questions dated July 5th 2019 and I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy, that the said document be now received and do lie on the Table.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Minister of Fisheries and Communities.

Mr. Fox: Mr. Speaker, by leave of the House, I beg leave to table Regional Economic Advisory Council Activity Report for 2018-2019 and I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy, that the said document be now received and do lie on the Table.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Minister of Finance.

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, by leave of the House, I beg leave to table Answers to Written Questions from July 4th and I move, seconded by the Honourable Member from Montague-Kilmuir, that the said document be now received and lie on the Table.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Minister of Education and Lifelong Learning.

Mr. Trivers: Mr. Speaker, by leave of the House, I beg leave to table Responses to Questions Taken as Notice during Budget Estimates and I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Fisheries and Communities, that the said document be now received and do lie on the Table.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Minister of Education and Lifelong Learning.

Mr. Trivers: Actually, I'm in the wrong section for this, pardon me.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Mermaid-Stratford.

Ms. Beaton: Mr. Speaker, by leave of the House, I beg leave to table a question to the Department of Finance regarding the Fresh New Flavours catalogue and I move, seconded by the Honourable Member from Charlottetown-Belvedere, that the said document be now received and do lie on the Table.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Member from Mermaid-Stratford.

Ms. Beaton: Mr. Speaker, by leave of the House, I beg leave to table a question to the Department of Finance and I move, seconded by the Honourable Member from Charlottetown-Belvedere, that the said document be now received and do lie on the Table.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Member from Charlottetown-West Royalty.

Mr. McNeilly: Mr. Speaker, by leave of the House, I beg leave to table a document Cancel Today's Rental Rate Hike: Compton and I move, seconded by the Honourable Member from O'Leary-Inverness, that the said document be now received and do lie on the Table.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Okay, that's it for documents.

Reports by Committees

Introduction of Government Bills

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I beg leave to introduce a bill to be intituled *An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act* and I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Health and Wellness, that the same be now received and read a first time.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk: Bill No. 12, *An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act*, read a first time.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I have a brief explanation. The bill is to amend the *Income Tax Act*.

It proposes three measures to raise the basic personal amount to 10,000 with proportionate changes to the spouse and equivalent to spouse amounts to increase the threshold of Low-income Tax Reduction program by \$1,000 to \$18,000. The bill also

reduces the provincial tax rate on small business by 0.5% from 3.5% to 3%.

Each of these measures are effective January 1st of 2020.

Government Motions

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Ms. Compton: Thank you.

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

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Member from Tignish-Palmer Road, to Chair.

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

Permission to bring a stranger onto the floor?

Some Hon. Members: Granted.

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

Mary Kinsman: Mary Kinsman, Director of Finance and Corporate Services.

Chair: Thank you very much.

Hon. members, we left on page 87.

Employment Development Agency.
Management: General was read.

Are there any further questions?

Shall the section carry?

The hon. Member from Tyne Valley-Sherbrooke.

Ms. Altass: Thank you, Chair.

So I'm just noticing there's a substantial increase from the estimate to the forecast, but your budgeting had decreased this year. I was just wondering if you could explain those variations.

Mr. Fox: Can she speak up again?

Chair: Could you repeat your question?

Ms. Altass: Sure.

Chair: Thank you.

Ms. Altass: I'm just noticing that there was a substantial increase from the estimate to forecast, and that your budgeting had decreased this year. So I was just wondering if you could explain what that variation is all about.

Mr. Fox: Thank you, hon. member.

That's actually reduction from the STAR and STREAM program being moved over to workplace and advanced learning and that area.

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

Ms. Altass: Okay. So why was it moved over?

Mr. Fox: Just a better fit.

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

Ms. Altass: Okay, that's it.

Thank you.

Chair: The hon. Member from Evangeline-Miscouche.

Mr. Gallant: The reasoning for the reduction in staff in salaries, is that part of that as well?

Mr. Fox: Yes.

Mr. Gallant: Okay, thank you.

Chair: Shall this section carry? Carried.

Total Management: 186,400.

Shall it carry? Carried.

Job Creation and Placement

Community and Business Projects

“Appropriations provided for wages of individuals hired by businesses and non-profit organizations to work on approved projects, the majority of which are rural-based.” Special Projects Program: 2,854,400. Job Creation Program: 613,800. Jobs for Youth Program: 1,264,900. Rural Job Initiative: 724,000.

Total Community and Business Projects: 5,457,100.

Ms. Altass: Question.

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

Ms. Altass: Thank you, Chair.

So I just noticed that there are slight increases in most of the programs, and I’m just wondering if this is reflective of more positions or higher wages or what’s going on here.

Mr. Fox: Relation to minimum wage increases.

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

Ms. Altass: All right, so I’m also wondering about the Rural Jobs Initiative and that has decreased. So I’m wondering why the forecast from last year is lower than the estimate for the Rural Jobs Initiative?

Mr. Fox: Yes, basically funds were reallocated to provide additional funding through either the EDA programs to meet client demands. So basically transfer funds over.

The goal of the RJI program is to support 100 positions and the revised budget will provide enough funding to meet the target.

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

Ms. Altass: That’s fine, thank you.

Chair: Shall the section carry? Carried.

Total Job Creation and Placement: 5,457,100.

Shall it carry? Carried.

Total Employment Development Agency: 5,643,500.

Shall it carry? Carried.

Okay hon. members, we’re going to move onto page 32, which is the Department of Economic Growth, Tourism and Culture.

Permission to bring a stranger onto the floor?

Some Hon. Members: Granted.

Chair: Thank you.

Could you please state your name and title?

Shannon Burke: Shannon Burke, Director of Finance.

Chair: Thank you very much.

Okay hon. members, again page 32.

General Administration

Corporation Management

“Appropriations provided for the operation of the Minister’s and Deputy Minister’s offices; trade negotiations and policy; records management; and staff development.” Administration: 20,000. Equipment: 4,500. Materials, Supplies and Services: 13,100. Professional Services: 180,000. Salaries: 962,200. Travel and Training: 43,500.

Total Corporation Management: 1,223,300.

The hon. member from Charlottetown-Victoria Park.

Ms. Bernard: Why the huge increase in the professional services?

Mr. MacKay: That was the Partnership for Growth funding.

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

Ms. Bernard: Thank you.

Chair: Shall this section carry? Carried.

Total General Administration: 1,223,300.

Shall it carry? Carried.

Culture and Heritage

Cultural Affairs

“Appropriations provided for the development, implementation, delivery and monitoring of programs and services in the culture and heritage sector, heritage preservation, museums, the arts and cultural industries.” Administration: 1,800. Equipment: 700. Materials, Supplies and Services: 1,900. Professional Services: 5,000. Salaries: 231,700. Travel and Training: 11,800. Grants: 2,170,200.

Total Cultural Affairs: 2,423,100.

Shall this section carry?

The hon. Member from Cornwall-Meadowbank.

Mr. MacDonald: How many staff are with culture and heritage now?

Mr. MacKay: Three staff.

Chair: The hon. Member from Cornwall-Meadowbank.

Mr. MacDonald: That’s fine, thank you.

Chair: Shall this section carry? Carried.

Total Culture and Heritage: 2,423,100.

Shall it carry? Carried.

PEI Museum and Heritage Foundation

PEI Museum and Heritage Foundation

“Appropriations provided for the study, collection, preservation, interpretation, and protection of the human and natural heritage of the Province; operation of six historic heritage sites and a National Exhibition Centre; and production of the Island Magazine.” Materials and Supplies: 3,800. Salaries: 1,094,000. Travel and Training: 600. Grants: 281,000

Total PEI Museum and Heritage Foundation: 1,379,400.

Shall this section carry?

The hon. member from Charlottetown-Brighton.

Mr. Hammarlund: Thank you.

What sort of projects are covered for the 281,000 grants.

Mr. MacKay: Hon. member, that’s just a grant to the corporation itself, it’s for museum and heritage, so it’s the grant just for the corporation itself.

Chair: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton.

Mr. Hammarlund: The Museum and Heritage Foundation does an incredible job at managing its six historic heritage sites, with fairly limited resources. I’m wondering, has the foundation identified any further historic sites that would like to take over? Like the Bedeque museum came up just recently?

Mr. MacKay: Not that I know of as of yet member, but I do feel that there probably is quite a few. We’re going to sit down, this is one of the departments, and through the department obviously I think, needs a complete review to see what needs to be done.

As you see, not too much has changed, so I think we do need to sit down and review it and see what we could be missing and possibly look at moving forward for another year. Over the summer this will be one that we’ll be looking at for sure.

Chair: The hon. member from Charlottetown-Brighton.

Mr. Hammarlund: The foundation has a very large collection that are stored in an old steel building out in the Industrial Park, it's been there for like 30 years and they're battling bad climate, including roof leaks and stuff. What efforts are they taking to preserve this invaluable collection for future generations?

Mr. MacKay: Well, obviously we have discussed on a provincial museum here last week in the House. Since the questions come to light that day as well, I've had a few people reach out to me and have discussed with the department, as well as the Premier, to see what we could do moving forward. I think we all feel that it needs to happen, so what can we do to get it there as quick as we can, without breaking the bank.

So you're going to see a lot of discussions. Hon. member, I would love to have you at the table for some input on that, so over the summer here as we get going, we'll get together as well as with everyone involved, the department staff and see what we can come up with to get to a long-term solution.

Chair: The hon. member from Charlottetown-Brighton.

Mr. Hammarlund: Thank you.

Chair: Shall this section carry? Carried.

Total PEI Museum and Heritage Foundation: 1,379,400.

Shall this section carry? Carried.

Labour Market Research and Population Development

Administration

“Appropriations provided for research, recruitment, settlement and retention.”
Administration: 14,500. Equipment: 4,500.
Materials, Supplies and Services: 110,000.
Professional Services: 100,000. Salaries: 873,800. Travel and Training: 31,500.
Grants: 1,101,500.

Total Administration: 2,235,800.
Shall it carry?

The hon. member from Charlottetown-Meadowbank.

Mr. MacDonald: Close enough, Cornwall.

Chair: Sorry, Cornwall-Meadowbank.

Mr. MacDonald: Temporary foreign workers fall under this category?

Mr. MacKay: That's a good question hon. member, I'm just going to take a second here and try and find out.

Shannon Burke: Are you wondering about the foreign qualification recognition program?

Mr. MacDonald: No, I'll tell you what it was. Temporary foreign workers is just a question in general about when you take on a temporary foreign worker it costs a lot of money to train them into the role and this may be part of it but I don't know where it falls, it used to be skills and I was wondering if there is any money ever set aside to help these businesses to incorporate these temporary foreign workers in their training.

So I'll give you an example; a trucking company trains a driver with all the new technology in a truck, they hire them. They spent seven or eight thousand dollars on them before they stepped foot in, basically in the vehicle, like to work. I'm just wondering if there's anything available to them? I wasn't sure if it was in this area or somewhere else?

Shannon Burke: I think the funding for that is still with Skills PEI, so there was a separation and some of the grant side went to a different department, but I believe the funding for that sort of thing falls under skills.

Mr. MacKay: I will find out hon. Member. I'll get back to you.

Chair: The hon. member from Cornwall-Meadowbank.

Mr. MacDonald: So at the present time, what are our retention rates roughly with immigration? Do you know that off –

Mr. MacKay: I don't have the exact number, but I'll get that for you as well.

Mr. MacDonald: That's fine, no I'm good.

Thank you.

Chair: The hon. member from Evangeline-Miscouche.

Mr. Gallant: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

In your budget estimate it shows there's about a 10,000 dollar increase for skill labour and I'm just wondering like, with the shortages that Island companies have with skill labour –

Mr. MacKay: Where do you see that at hon. member?

Mr. MacDonald: Next section here, we're not done yet.

Mr. Gallant: Yeah, we're still here. In labor Market Development, you went from 2,225,800 to 2,235,800.

Mr. MacKay: I'm not seeing that hon. member.

Mr. Gallant: Your bottom line.

Shannon Burke: A portion of that is salaries. You'd have some staff that would increase in their steps, maybe from a five to a six, so a portion of that is related to that.

Chair: The hon. Member from Evangeline-Miscouche.

Mr. Gallant: Is there any movement from the department to increase some funding to bring skill workers here and keep people here?

Mr. MacKay: Not as of right now hon. member, but it's something, like I say, with this department we're going to go through the whole department itself. So it'd certainly be something we'd consider.

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

Chair: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton.

Mr. Hammarlund: I'm looking at the detailed page, ETC-26. I see a big portion of the money goes to the PEI Association for Newcomers, I think they're an excellent organization. Can you detail a little bit more what they provide for the money? Or, this is a grant – it used to be a grant you supply every year?

Mr. MacKay: I don't have what they provide but I will get that back to you.

Chair: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton.

Mr. Hammarlund: I assume that the CIF is the francophone equivalent, am I correct in that?

Mr. MacKay: Yes.

Chair: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton.

Mr. Hammarlund: Thank you.

Excuse my ignorance, but are the RDÉE PEI. What is that? Again, it's detailed in the – as one of the grant recipients for \$86,000.

Mr. MacKay: I'll have to get the details on that one for you, hon. member.

Chair: Intervention by the hon. Member from Cornwall-Meadowbank.

Mr. MacDonald: RDEE?

Mr. MacKay: Yes, RDEE PEI.

Mr. MacDonald: RDEE is the French, I forget the exact title, but it's similar to the business side of economic development through the French community in Prince Edward Island. There is a title, but it is –

Mr. Hammarlund: (Indistinct)

Chair: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton.

Mr. MacDonald: Exact, similar to that yes, RDEE.

Chair: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton.

Mr. Hammarlund: One other curious thing. There's a – under miscellaneous settlement grants, there's a 247,500 figure carried under on one side and it disappears on the other. What exactly is that, and why is it not there anymore?

Shannon Burke: So when we're forecasting, we're showing – if you look at the forecast amount column – we're showing the amount of actual grants that we're giving out during the year and because we're currently in the process of grants for 2019/2020, we're just listing it as a one line item.

Mr. Hammarlund: Okay.

Chair: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton.

Mr. Hammarlund: Thank you.

I think that's it for this.

Chair: Shall the section carry? Carried.

Total Labour Market Research and Population Development: 2,235,800.

Shall it carry? Carried.

Labour and Industrial Relations

Labour and Industrial Relations

“Appropriations provided for industrial relations services to employers, unions and individuals; the Labour Relations Board; the Workers Advisory Program; the Employment Standards Board; the Employer Advisor and the Workers Compensation Appeals Tribunal.” Administration: 47,600. Equipment: 2,000. Materials, Supplies and Services: 25,900. Professional Services: 212,000. Salaries: 835,500. Travel and Training: 31,600. Grants: 2,500.

Total Labour and Industrial Relations: 1,157,100.

The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton.

Mr. Hammarlund: Am I understanding it right, that this department basically deals with the unions working for the government?

Mr. MacKay: No hon. member, they do support various different offices here; seven different offices.

Six in total.

Chair: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton.

Mr. Hammarlund: I'm sorry, I don't understand. They support six different what?

Shannon Burke: So they have the Office of the Employer Adviser, the Office of the Worker Adviser, Workers' Comp Appeals Tribunal, anything that falls under the Workers' Comp – people working through the appeals process, and also for unions as well – external.

Mr. Hammarlund: For unions as well.

Chair: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton.

Mr. Hammarlund: Okay, thank you.

So there's a very large amount of money used for professional services, what is that expenditure for?

Mr. MacKay: So hon. member, there was a backlog and in order to get caught up they went outside and hired outside legal and that's what that cost is.

Chair: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton.

Mr. Hammarlund: Thank you.

Ms. Altass: Question.

Chair: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton, do you have another question?

Mr. Hammarlund: I'm finished.

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

Ms. Altass: Thank you, Chair.

So just to clarify, so this division here or department looks at the – it covers supports for unions so what about supports when they

are in negotiations? Is that in this department here as well?

Mr. MacKay: We're not sure on that, hon. member, but we can get back to you on that one.

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

Ms. Altass: Yes, I would appreciate that. So just wondering about when negotiations for unions or for employers when they require conciliation or mediation or arbitration, is that where all this falls? If that's the case, it seems like this is a fairly small budget for that type of thing, but I could be –

Mr. MacKay: I think it's more advisory role, but I'll confirm for sure.

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

Ms. Altass: Thank you, Chair. That's all.

Chair: Shall the section carry? Carried.

Total Labour and Industrial Relations:
1,157,100.

Shall it carry? Carried.

Total Department of Economic Growth,
Tourism and Culture: 8,418,700.

Shall it carry? Carried.

Hon. members, we're now going to page 38 to Tourism PEI.

Corporate Services

General Administration

“Appropriations provided for records management, reception services and office administration.” Administration: 16,000. Debt: 43,000. Equipment: 25,000. Materials, Supplies and Services: 26,500. Professional Services: 27,000. Salaries: 316,400. Travel and Training: 13,800.

Total General Administration: 467,700.

Shall the section carry?

The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton.

Mr. Hammarlund: I was wondering what the nature was that the significant annual debt service, 43,000?

Mr. MacKay: That's just the bank charges, credit card fees for front desk, for parks, Brookvale.

Mr. Hammarlund: Oh, I see.

Chair: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton.

Mr. Hammarlund: Thank you.

Another question was on the equipment why you went so much over in the 2018/19 forecast, 78,000 versus the 25,000 budgeted for this year?

Mr. MacKay: So mostly it was the accounting module we were updating, as well as some office equipment.

Chair: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton.

Mr. Hammarlund: Thank you. I'm done.

Chair: Finished.

Shall the section carry? Carried.

Parks Administration

“Appropriations provided for the management and regional administration of provincial parks.” Administration: 14,900. Materials, Supplies and Services: 40,500. Salaries: 297,900. Travel and Training: 13,000. Total Parks Administration: 366,300.

Shall the section carry?

Ms. Altass: Question.

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

Ms. Altass: I was hoping to get clarification just on how many administrators there are that cover all of the parks, how many people cover – how many parks does each administrator cover? How does that work?

Mr. MacKay: That's a good question, hon. member. I don't know if I have that info with me.

You're talking just the offices itself?

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

Ms. Altass: Thank you, Chair.

No, just it says parks administration. So this is: "Appropriations provided for the management and regional administration of provincial parks."

So I was wondering, I mean in terms of the management of the parks, how many at this level of administration and oversight, how many parks is someone responsible for, each manager? How does that work?

Mr. MacKay: So there's two offices: one is in the east, and one is in the west. That covers the eight campgrounds, four east, four west; 13 day use parks; Brookvale Ski Park; and the Confederation Trail.

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

Ms. Altass: So where is – It's east and west, so where is the line then where they split?

Mr. MacKay: We'll have to get back to you on that one, hon. member.

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

Ms. Altass: Okay, that's it.

Thank you.

Chair: Thank you very much.

Shall the section carry? Carried.

Parks Operations

"Appropriations provided for the operation, maintenance and upgrading of provincial parks." Administration: 75,000. Equipment: 21,000. Materials, Supplies and Services: 1,013,000. Professional Services: 10,000. Salaries: 2,025,900. Travel and Training: 83,000.

Total Parks Operations: 3,227,900.

Mr. Henderson: Question.

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

Mr. Henderson: Minister, you were up and took a look at Cedar Dunes park there and I must commend you. They did a good job in putting the dunes back and cleaning up that mess there, but I guess my question ultimately will be for the next phase, if there is a next phase in actual shoreline protection.

Is that in this budget and would that be considered for this fiscal year?

Mr. MacKay: No, hon. member. It's not in that so, as of about a couple of weeks ago now, I instructed the department to go through all of the parks to find out what work needs to be done on all of the parks and hash out a bit of a plan here over the summer into the fall under the capital budget.

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

Mr. Henderson: Is there any potential of funding through other sources i.e. the climate change mitigation strategy or funding or that nature to deal with that? Because that's really what that is doing – it's really not a budgetary issue. It's really a climate change issue.

Mr. MacKay: I believe so.

In the brief discussions we've had, there's quite possibly some funding for that. Once again, as the summer progresses here and the department goes through everything, that is going to be something.

There are lots of programs out there that I think we can take advantage off, that sometimes might be forgotten, so over the summer we're certainly going to be looking at that and I expect to have something the latter part of September, as not only your park in the west, but all parks. It's something they're working on as we speak.

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

Mr. Henderson: Do you have a sense of what money you did put out for kind of replenishing the dune there? Maybe that's an option, is you just keep doing that every time (Indistinct) comparable.

Mr. MacKay: I don't know if I've got the exact cost on that. Don't quote me on saying this, but I think it was 50,000 in total, which wasn't too bad for the amount of work that was done.

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

Mr. Henderson: Yeah, I wouldn't dispute that part of it, but I mean I guess that's what I'd be looking at. If there would be at least a strategy to do it on the long-term basis by doing something a bit more permanent, or, if it's a case of not doing something more permanent, to at least replace what's there on a regular basis. Although that may not be the best long, long-term strategy, it might get you to a point where you can get the funding from other sources.

I do appreciate your efforts on this and your interest in the project.

Mr. MacKay: Thank you, member.

Chair: The hon. Member from Mermaid-Stratford.

Ms. Beaton: Thank you, Chair.

Minister, you announced yesterday that Basin Head is opened up for people to be able to enjoy again. Do you have any sense as to how much that cost the province in order to repair the damages from the storm?

Mr. MacKay: Not 100%. I can get that and get it back to you. I would just be guessing. I think it's in the vicinity of 150,000.

That was with the work of the wharf itself, as well as the dredging, we partnered with TIE on that one. So, I don't have the exact number but it's in that range. I will confirm though and get back to you.

Chair: The hon. Member from Mermaid-Stratford.

Ms. Beaton: Do you have any sense – are there any contingency funds or anything that

have been allocated for fixing our provincial beaches knowing that the storms are getting more frequent and more volatile?

Mr. MacKay: Not as of yet, but obviously it's something we're going to need to address because it's going to be an issue season and after season. We see it, not only in our parks but we see what's happening on all of the federal harbours and wharfs across the – so with the weather patterns being the way it is, that's going to be a discussion this summer with the department as well, because we know this isn't going to be the only time.

We see what happened in Cedar Dunes and Basin Head, so this is going to be something we're going to have to deal with year-in and year-out, so there needs to be something, for sure.

Chair: The hon. Member from Mermaid-Stratford.

Ms. Beaton: Other than Cedar Dunes and Basin Head, are there any reports of any other provincial beaches that have sustained significant damage over this past winter?

Mr. MacKay: Not that I'm aware of. I haven't heard of any.

Ms. Beaton: Okay, thank you.

Chair: the hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Deagle: Just a quick question, Chair.

Panmure Island Provincial Park, the driveway on either side of it, there's two parts to it. It needs some gravel and probably just a grader to look at just cleaning up. It's in pretty bad shape. I'm just wondering if you could look into doing that.

Mr. MacKay: Certainly check into it, hon. member.

Like you say, that's going to be something, I believe, that will be looked at this summer with all the parks itself. There's nothing allocated for that. As far as a grader, we could probably get a grader out sooner than later to get it tidied up and come up with more of a long-term solution come another year.

Chair: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Deagle: Yeah, all it needs is probably a couple of loads of gravel and a grader and it would fix it up. You pretty well lose your car when you drive in.

Mr. MacKay: It's something we can check into, hon. member, yeah.

Mr. Deagle: Thanks.

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

Ms. Altass: Thank you, Chair.

I'm wondering, would pay for seasonal workers be included in this section?

Mr. MacKay: Yes, it is.

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

Ms. Altass: So how – what percentage then – or what amount of the salary listed here is for full-time workers and what is seasonal?

Mr. MacKay: We don't have the breakdown but I can give you the exact number of how many employees are there now in total.

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

Ms. Altass: Okay.

Mr. MacKay: There are 114 casuals, 76 students, 12 Jobs for Youth, six EDA and there are only 3.4 full-time positions.

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

Ms. Altass: Thank you, Chair.

So, obviously a few of those, the Jobs for Youth and EDA programs, are not out of this budget, so I guess I would just be curious to know what the breakdown is here because we do have the full-time administration above. So I'm wondering how many of these workers are full-time and how many are seasonal. I'm just wondering what that breakdown might be (Indistinct) –

Mr. MacKay: Yeah, we're going to have to go back to the department on that one, but I will get it for you and bring it back tomorrow.

Ms. Altass: All right, thank you.

Chair: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton.

Mr. Hammarlund: I assume that there are revenues in the operation that they show elsewhere.

Can you tell me what the relationship is between the cost of running the parks and the revenue coming in?

Mr. MacKay: You're looking for the total park revenue?

Chair: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton.

Mr. Hammarlund: I was just looking for – order of magnitude, I was looking for actually what's coming in compared to what you're spending.

Mr. MacKay: The 18/19 parks revenue was \$1,258,112.

Chair: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton.

Mr. Hammarlund: Okay, a relatively small proportion of the actual costs? Does that include the golf courses, for instance?

Mr. MacKay: No, that's just parks.

Mr. Hammarlund: Just parks? Okay.

Mr. MacKay: It's just parks, yeah.

Chair: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton.

Mr. Hammarlund: Some American jurisdictions like California have established park foundations, bodies which use charitable proceeds to fund the maintenance and expenses of the park systems.

Has the government ever considered setting up anything like that?

Mr. MacKay: Nothing like that has been brought to my attention, hon. member.

Chair: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton.

Mr. Hammarlund: Okay, thank you.

To what degree does park staff work with environment, water and climate staff to maintain the ecological integrity of the park? Is that an inter-governmental affair?

Mr. MacKay: I'm not sure on that one, hon. member, but I can check with my department and get back to you on that one.

Chair: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton.

Mr. Hammarlund: So, which brings me to my next question.

Is there a strategy in the province for how you look at the parks in terms of maintaining an ecological integrity in the provincial parks?

Mr. MacKay: A strategy itself, you mean?

Mr. Hammarlund: Yeah, do you –

Mr. MacKay: I'll double check that.

I know the department has a pretty good handle on the parks. They do a phenomenal job and they seem to – whether there's a strategy done, I have no idea but I will confirm and get back to you.

Chair: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton.

Mr. Hammarlund: I've had some complaints about the poor maintenance of the provincial parks. I haven't really gone into further detail, but I assume that it probably relates to garbage collecting over the winter.

Is that a fair statement? So it gets looked after and cleaned up in the spring?

Mr. MacKay: Yeah, that's a possibility.

I think what has happened over the years, the parks have started to deteriorate. They need work. They need capital put into them.

That's one of the things that my department is working on over the summer now.

I've already given our government and my government a heads up that I will be asking, if we're going to promote our parks as beauty and tourist attractions, we need to make sure they're in good shape.

Mr. Hammarlund: Yeah.

Chair: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton.

Mr. Hammarlund: I was wondering where funding comes from for lifeguards at provincial parks. Honestly, I didn't even know we had lifeguards at provincial parks, but if we do, where does that get funded?

Mr. MacKay: That just comes out of our park fund.

Mr. Hammarlund: Okay.

Chair: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton.

Mr. Hammarlund: Thank you.

Chair: Shall this section carry? Carried.

Mark Arendz Provincial Ski Park at Brookvale

“Appropriations provided for the operation of the Mark Arendz Provincial Ski Park at Brookvale.” Administration: 18,200. Equipment: 39,000. Materials, Supplies and Services: 261,500. Professional Services: 3,100. Salaries: 611,100. Travel and Training: 13,100.

Total Mark Arendz Provincial Ski Park at Brookvale: 946,000.

Shall this section carry?

The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton.

Mr. Hammarlund: It's a great place, actually, and I think it's great that it has for many years now been operated over the summer as well.

Equipment costs are going up considerably this fiscal year. Why is that?

Mr. MacKay: That's a new POS system, software system.

Chair: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton.

Mr. Hammarlund: Is there a bus service that allows children from Charlottetown and Summerside to attend the park without having parents with a car?

Mr. MacKay: I'm not sure on that member, but I can check and get back to you on that one.

Chair: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton.

Mr. Hammarlund: I would just suggest that would be a great way, to not only service the people that have a great need, but also to increase the revenues at the park.

Mr. MacKay: I do know, the few times I was there last winter, it seems to be the school itself does quite a bit. The three occasions I was there, two occasions, there was schools from all across Prince Edward Island that had some (Indistinct) there.

Chair: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton.

Mr. Hammarlund: Thank you.

Chair: Shall this section carry? Carried.

Golf Courses

“Appropriations provided for the operation of provincially-owned golf courses, including maintenance and marketing of the courses.” Administration: 136,000. Debt: 58,400. Equipment: 39,500. Materials, Supplies and Services: 1,625,900. Professional Services: 7,600. Salaries: 2,391,200. Travel and Training: 32,100.

Total Golf Courses: 4,290,700.

The hon. Member from O'Leary-Inverness.

Mr. Henderson: Minister could you give us an update on when we'll hear more on the duty to consult challenge that's in front of the courts? I know I'm not asking for an outcome, but just when we may get that settled regarding the Mill River property?

Mr. MacKay: Truthfully hon. member, I haven't heard a thing on it.

Mr. Henderson: Is there any way you could maybe get that back to me, just to, like I say, if it's going to be next month or is it next year?

Mr. MacKay: Yeah, no, I know it's still before the courts, I'd have to check with justice on that but I haven't had a briefing or an update on that at all.

Mr. Henderson: Maybe justice could intervene on that?

Mr. Trivers: It's still. Oh, sorry, Chair.

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

Mr. Thompson: It's before the courts and it's going to take a couple months, the appeal process and we're waiting on that.

Chair: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton.

Mr. Hammarlund: How many golf courses does the province operate, own and operate?

Mr. MacKay: Three.

Chair: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton.

Mr. Hammarlund: So is the Mill River Golf Course included, still in the coming years?

Mr. MacKay: No.

Chair: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton.

Mr. Hammarlund: So how come the operating costs are staying exactly the same?

Mr. MacKay: So that was the previous administrations. I don't know what to say with I, but the loss is from Mill River, from when the government owned it, so that's the difference.

Shannon Burke: That's the grant that's provided. So when the province operated the golf course they had losses, then when Mill River was sold they used those losses to

provide an operating grant over a number of years.

Chair: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton.

Mr. Hammarlund: That's the first time I've heard that you can give a grant from your losses, but anyways, I see what you mean, basically they're providing the same money to subsidize the new operation.

So what are the provincially still owned golf courses doing about the water, do they use holding ponds for irrigation or deep water wells?

Mr. MacKay: I wouldn't know any of that hon. member, I can check and get back to you on that.

Chair: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton.

Mr. Hammarlund: So again, is there any sustainable climate or policy going on with the golf courses, like in terms of water is one of the other ones regarding fertilizer and pesticides and stuff like that.

Mr. MacKay: I'll double check on that hon. member and get back to you tomorrow on (Indistinct)

Chair: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton.

Mr. Hammarlund: That's all for now thanks.

Chair: Shall this section carry?

The hon. Member from Mermaid-Stratford.

Ms. Beaton: So minister, you know I love my golf courses right. So a question on a current golf course is: Do we actually make money on the golf courses?

Mr. MacKay: No. So some courses do make money, I don't have the break down on it, but when you combine all three of them – approximately – plus administration, last year's loss was about 220,000.

Chair: The hon. Member from Mermaid-Stratford.

Ms. Beaton: Has the province looked at any kind of certification for conservation projects around the golf courses?

Mr. MacKay: Not that I'm aware of, I'm not saying it hasn't just that I haven't been updated on it, but I will check and get back to you.

Chair: The hon. Member from Mermaid-Stratford.

Ms. Beaton: When it comes to herbicide and pesticide use on the golf courses, what's the provinces policy on that?

Mr. MacKay: I wouldn't know hon. member, but I'll find out and get back to you on that one.

Chair: The hon. Member from Mermaid-Stratford.

Ms. Beaton: Ok, I'm aware, I'm just going to share this with you. I'm aware and I don't know if the province is striving towards this but the Audubon certification where it can protect conservation like wildlife and that around it. I know Greenwich is up around where the piping plover would be and where endangered species would be.

So I just throw that out there because I do know there is a golf course on the Island that could apply for this because they're operating under the regulations, I guess, that would qualify for that certification.

So I think that, if we're actually going to be operating golf courses then we should look at how could we be a step up from the rest and actually take into consideration how we can preserve wildlife around them and actually capitalize on that. I think that would actually help tourism if we could say that we are doing something that (Indistinct) give us a competitive advantage would be my suggestion.

Mr. MacKay: Certainly, I don't mind bringing that back.

Ms. Beaton: I'm good, thank you.

Chair: Shall this section carry? Carried.

Total Corporate Services: 9,298,600.

Shall it carry? Carried.

Strategic Initiatives

Strategy and Evaluation

“Appropriations provided for strategic planning, industry investment, evaluation and research services.” Administration: 7,700. Materials, Supplies and Services: 5,600. Professional Services: 293,000. Salaries: 565,500. Travel and Training: 15,000. Grants: 3,059,100.

Total Strategy and Evaluation: 3,945,900.

Shall it carry?

The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton.

Mr. Hammarlund: So what exactly is coming out of these strategic initiatives for a cost of close to \$4 million, what are we getting?

Mr. MacKay: A lot of it is industry grants. So the festivals, events, so forth come out of that.

Chair: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton.

Mr. Hammarlund: Okay, so professional services, again, I was wondering what that figure was. But I think I found a question in the appendix here, it's like consultants for the chief research strategist and stuff like that, as (Indistinct) consultant off the ETC-55.

Mr. MacKay: Just give us a second hon. member; we don't have the same page numbers as you here, so we're just trying to find it.

So your question again hon. member?

Chair: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton.

Mr. Hammarlund: I was initially wondering what the professional services were but it turns out its some consultants you hired and it's listed (Indistinct) there.

Mr. MacKay: Yeah I don't have a complete breakdown.

Mr. Hammarlund: I have the breakdown, so I guess I'm fine.

Thank you.

Chair: Ok, the hon. Member from Summerside-South Drive.

Mr. Howard: Under the strategic investment grants, I suppose, there's 300,000 for the Mill River experience operating grants so that's for operating expenses for what?

Mr. MacKay: That was for the reallocating, so when the government had sold off Mill River, they gave the 300,000 basically, to run it for the year.

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

Mr. Howard: To run it for the year, is that what you said?

Mr. MacKay: It went towards that, yes.

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

Mr. Howard: Is that a onetime expense or is that going to be ongoing?

Mr. MacKay: It's close to being done, it was over – once again, the other side of the House might know a little bit more – four years I believe.

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

Mr. Howard: Thank you, Chair.

I was under the impression that we didn't do operating grants or we were adverse to them. In relation to the PEI Discovery Centre, for instance, they were looking for 100,000 in funding in order to operate and that's quite a bit less than this 300,000 a year.

Mr. MacKay: I agree hon. member, I scratched my head when I looked at that myself.

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

Mr. Howard: Thank you, Chair.

Chair: Shall the section carry? Carried.

Regulation and Compliance

“Appropriations provided for management and administration of licensing, signage and compliance.” Administration: 5,000. Materials, Supplies and Services: 13,500. Professional Services: 5,000. Salaries: 191,900. Travel and Training: 8,300.

Total Regulation and Compliance: 223,700.

Shall it carry? Carried.

French Services

“Appropriations provided for projects under the Federal/Provincial promotion of Official Languages Agreement.” Grants: 138,900.

Total French Services: 138,900.

Shall the section carry?

The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton.

Mr. Hammarlund: I was just wondering who got the grants, 138,000.

Mr. MacKay: There’s a list of about 30 or 40 on here, hon. member.

Mr. Hammarlund: Okay.

Mr. MacKay: You should have that in your hand out, I believe. You might not, but I can get you this info if you want.

I can read it out. I don’t mind, but there’s quite a few of them.

Mr. Hammarlund: What’s the nature of—like give me an example or two?

Mr. MacKay: It’s for Acadian tourism development marketing.

Mr. Hammarlund: Okay, fine.

Thank you.

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

Mr. McNeilly: I just want to go back for a second to the regulation and compliance. Is that where tourism licensing is?

Mr. MacKay: I believe so.

No, it’s the *Highway Signage Act* under the *Tourism Industry Act*.

Mr. McNeilly: Oh, okay.

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

Mr. McNeilly: Okay, perfect.

Thank you.

Chair: The hon. Member from Evangeline-Miscouche.

Mr. Gallant: Can I just go back to the French services, like it hasn’t changed at all. Is that federal money that goes into the province for Official Language Agreement?

Mr. MacKay: Yes, it’s federal money.

Mr. Gallant: There’s no increase in it. Is there a reason for that?

Mr. MacKay: That’s a good question, hon. member. I haven’t asked that question, but I can find out.

Mr. Gallant: Okay, thanks.

Chair: Shall the section carry? Carried.

Total Strategic Initiatives: 4,308,500.

Shall it carry? Carried.

Tourism Marketing Communications

Digital Marketing

“Appropriations provided for customer relationship management, sales, packaging and new product development.” Administration: 2,600. Materials, Supplies and Services: 2,700. Salaries: 386,000. Travel and Training: 3,700. Grants: Integrated Tourism Solution: 486,900.

Total Digital Marketing: 881,900.

The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton.

Mr. Hammarlund: I was just wondering what kind of new product development took place?

Mr. MacKay: Under what section, hon. member?

Chair: Digital marketing.

Mr. MacKay: No, I realize that, but –

Mr. Hammarlund: You're just stating that that's what you're doing in this section, new product development.

Mr. MacKay: So, you're just more curious what the staff does in that department?

Like, they would monitor all the social media websites. They're the ones that deal with industry itself, so back and forth as far as the reporting goes, so document numbers itself. So how our tourism numbers are looking, so they're working with the tourism industry one-on-one and so forth, back and forth.

Chair: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton.

Mr. Hammarlund: Okay. Thank you.

Chair: Shall the section carry? Carried.

Visitor Services

“Appropriations provided for tourism information, travel counselling and Visitor Information Centre activities.
Administration: 52,000. Materials, Supplies and Services: 44,200. Professional Services: 19,500. Salaries: 743,200. Travel and Training: 26,200.

Total Visitor Services: 885,100.

Shall the section carry? Carried.

Advertising and Public Relations

“Appropriations provided to market Prince Edward Island tourism in the areas of advertising-creative, advertising-buy and production, web marketing and consumer promotion.” Administration: 7,500.

Materials, Supplies and Services: 2,457,600. Professional Services: 957,600. Salaries: 471,700. Travel and Training: 21,200. Grants: Atlantic Canada Tourism Partnership: 354,300.

Total Advertising and Public Relations: 4,269,900.

Shall the section carry?

Ms. Beaton: Question.

Chair: The hon. Member from Mermaid-Stratford.

Ms. Beaton: So this will be the section where we do all of our advertising for PEI, correct?

Mr. MacKay: Yes.

Ms. Beaton: So I looked through the notes and I didn't see – do you know who the major vendors that actually do – that are marketing for us?

Mr. MacKay: No, I don't. Not right off.

I don't have a complete breakdown on that, hon. member, but I can get it.

Chair: The hon. Member from Mermaid-Stratford.

Ms. Beaton: Do you have any idea what percentage would be Island businesses? Local Island business?

Mr. MacKay: No, I don't, but I will get that. It was a question I had asked a few weeks ago as well. Obviously with our marketing and our budget hasn't really increased for years and years and years, I've had a lot of questions on that and that was one of them I had discussed.

I'll see what I can find out and bring it back to you.

Chair: The hon. Member from Mermaid-Stratford.

Ms. Beaton: Thank you.

Because obviously if we are hiring local talent to do it rather than off-Island then the economic benefits are –

Mr. MacKay: This is going to be one of them that obviously, when we are reviewing the department, this is the stuff I want to know.

Ms. Beaton: Okay.

Chair: The hon. Member from Mermaid-Stratford.

Ms. Beaton: So last year we had forecasted the same amount for materials, but the budget was significantly less. Any idea why we would have spent less on it that we're back up to the same budget again? It's about 340,000 in the difference.

Mr. MacKay: Yes, so that was a decrease of 300,000 for the Acadian World Congress. It was moved to strategic initiatives and went out as a grant.

Chair: The hon. Member from Mermaid-Stratford.

Ms. Beaton: Okay. That's it.

Thank you.

Chair: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton.

Mr. Hammarlund: In your detailed breakdown of the advertising of public relations expenditure type, you have an interesting figure there that says \$338,000 variance from forecast. That's kind of an interesting way of balancing the budget.

Mr. MacKay: Where about are you at, hon. member?

Chair: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton.

Mr. Hammarlund: It's the appendix ETC, page 57 where you give the breakdown of the individual marketing agencies.

Mr. MacKay: Was it the 28,938 you're looking at?

Mr. Hammarlund: No, there's the forecast amount, very last forecast amount says variance for forecast 338,343, which appears to be the difference between what you actually forecast and what your budget is. I was just wondering.

Mr. MacKay: We're just trying to find it for you, hon. member.

Shannon Burke: Without saying what page it's on, we usually complete our forecast in January, so that's where the number comes from.

When we try to prepare our handouts, we use the actuals as of the time the handouts are prepared. There's usually several months in between, so you might be a little bit over or under in some. We're just trying to tie it into the forecast that's in the book based on the actuals.

Chair: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton.

Mr. Hammarlund: Well that means that the professional services amount you have of 957,600 listed in the main estimate actually isn't that number but it's 338,000 left as far as I can figure.

Shannon Burke: Yes, that's correct, but you'll have overs and unders in all of the different sections because –

Mr. Hammarlund: Okay, yes.

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

Mr. Howard: Thank you, Chair.

That was the same question.

Chair: Shall the section carry? Carried.

Media Relations/Editorial

“Appropriations provided for editorial services and familiarization tour/hosting.”
Administration: 5,200. Materials, Supplies and Services: 116,600. Professional Services: 15,000. Salaries: 154,300. Travel and Training: 25,000.

Total Media Relations/Editorial: 316,100.

Shall this section carry?

The hon. Member from Mermaid-Stratford.

Ms. Beaton: Thank you.

Do you mind if I go back one section just for a second.

Mr. MacKay: Yes, that's fine.

Ms. Beaton: So I see a lot of media production, team and film production. Sorry, it's only \$10,000. I just want to touch on that for a second, because I want to know if that is Island talent as well, that we'd be getting an opportunity to do the work for the Island.

Mr. MacKay: If it's what I think it is hon. member, what we do, we go out and we bring media in to do a story. So for example we're always looking to market our Island, so what we might do, there might be a media request out of Toronto that wants to do a story on somebody in the oyster industry, their way of life, how it's done and so forth. So we're always trying to promote our province and I think that's probably what that falls under.

Chair: The hon. Member from Mermaid-Stratford.

Ms. Beaton: Ok.

Mr. MacKay: So it would be media requests, whether it's Time Magazine, I'm just throwing it out there, magazine, a media request out of Toronto or the news or anything like that.

Ms. Beaton: Thank you.

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

Mr. McNeilly: What's the difference in percentages that we advertise with, regionally or nationally versus internationally?

Mr. MacKay: I don't have the exact breakdown but obviously the department does a very good job of figuring out where people are coming from.

I mentioned I think it was the first time up, we've got people coming from Germany, we've got people coming from Australia, Taiwan has been a big tourist destination, in Canada we still have Ontario, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, all through the Eastern

States, so we're always trying different avenues.

Like I say, when they told me about Australia and Germany I kind of laughed, I said there's no way people would come that far to this little Island and the numbers are pretty good. I don't have the breakdown but I'll see what I can find out for you.

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

Mr. McNeilly: I'd like to figure out because we've seen over the course of our history that a lot of tourists come from Japan and they're coming in because of Anne of Green Gables and I was just wondering with this budget – and I know they're up to speed and our experts are – but are we continuing that, are we fueling that growth to get them to the Island?

Mr. MacKay: I had asked that question not too long ago and our tourism numbers from Japan were always high and they're not as high now and I asked why, but I was told they changed their curriculum in school because in Japan, it was part of the curriculum that they used to read Anne of Green Gables and now they no longer do that. So that's made the difference in our numbers.

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

Mr. McNeilly: Ok, so maybe it's continuing the relationship with Japan to try to get it back into the curriculum because it seemed to be a big economic driver.

Mr. MacKay: They did air Anne of Green Gable production, on whatever the local TV channel was there, I believe a year or year and a half ago, it might be a couple of years ago and the numbers did go up. It was a TV series that was done, so that was one thing that they worked with and the numbers did increase with that. They do feel it's going to start coming back on the incline but that's why, that's the reasoning I got.

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

Mr. McNeilly: Is there any sense or ideas about maybe kind of working almost like

reverse tourism? So when people come in on cruise ships, we're getting hundreds or thousands of people every year on cruise ships, they go back to their own homeland, if we can advertise in those countries to promote tourism in the future. Just an idea, because they've been to the Island, they would love it and you know, they've already been here. So, to attract more people.

Mr. MacKay: I think it's a good idea, I think the big thing right now that we're finding is our tourism numbers are increasing and really, they're coming naturally in a sense. Like the industry itself and the department do a phenomenal job. My questions always been, what happens if we just double the tourism budget, can we double our numbers and I can't get an answer because what's happening, the budget line in a sense for marketing has stayed the same but our numbers have increase drastically without any more money going in. So that's something the department is going to review though as well, because I would like to try some different advertising and different markets.

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

Mr. McNeilly: Maybe we're looking at; it's not a new idea, but continuing to work together collaboratively on a shoulder season kind of wellness events or more sporting events or getting people on the Island in the off-season.

Mr. MacKay: Definitely.

Mr. McNeilly: Great.

Thank you, minister.

Chair: Shall this section carry? Carried.

Fulfillment

“Appropriations provided for media distribution.” Administration: 172,900. Materials, Supplies and Services: 4,900. Professional Services: 21,600. Salaries: 133,600. Travel and Training: 3,700.

Total Fulfillment: 336,700.

The hon. Member from Tyne Valley-Sherbrooke.

Ms. Altass: I'm just noticing that in this section that administration is higher than salaries, which is really unusual. Why would that be?

Mr. MacKay: Postage.

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

Ms. Altass: Postage, so postage like stamps goes under administration?

Mr. MacKay: Yeah, it's because this is where we mail out the visitors guide.

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

Ms. Altass: Ok, question answered.

Thank you.

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

Mr. Howard: Under professional services, we exactly forecast what we estimated and then we're going up 5,000 this year. Is there anything in particular we're expecting to do?

Mr. MacKay: So what this is, this is basically data (Indistinct), a request that came in. So it's increasing but it's to go through because you get different requests every year so it's just shuffling out the old request and focusing on the new is what it is.

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

Mr. Howard: Under that administration column, its going down pretty rapidly from what we budgeted to what we forecast to what we're budgeting this year. Is that a result of digital trends?

Mr. MacKay: Yes, exactly. Fewer mail-outs and more people using online.

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

Mr. Howard: Thank you, Chair.

Chair: Shall this section carry? Carried.

Publications

“Appropriations provided for the production and printing of publications, management of photo library and audio-visual services.”

Administration: 3,000. Materials, Supplies and Services: 197,500. Professional Services: 46,200. Salaries: 147,700. Travel and Training: 3,200.

Total Publication: 397,600.

Shall this section carry? Carried.

Travel/Trade Sales.

“Appropriations provided for travel/trade promotions and international development.”

Administration: 15,500. Materials, Supplies and Services: 302,100. Salaries: 161,300. Travel and Training: 30,200.

Total Travel/Trade Sales: 509,100.\

Shall the section carry?

The hon. member from Charlottetown-Victoria Park.

Ms. Bernard: I’m just wondering if Tourism PEI is focusing on any new tourist markets this year?

Mr. MacKay: I do know, once again like I say, this has been pretty new to me over the last couple months but it was a question I had asked. Taiwan is one that they’ve been working on. We’ve had very good numbers out of Taiwan and we’re developing a really good relationship there. What I had asked the department as well, is where we missed.

So there’s some good ideas – that you can imagine – we got that many people working in a department, some of the best ideas (Indistinct).

So what I’ve done, I started going through the department saying: what do you think, what’s your opinions and they’ve got some real good ideas. So I think you’re going to see – probably be different and (Indistinct) coming out of here. I’m excited to try new ideas to see if they work. So, that’s one project, once again over the summer we’ll be working on and throwing some ideas around about where we think we should be at.

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

Ms. Bernard: I appreciate hearing that. Thank you, Chair.

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

Mr. Howard: So did you just mention that we’re looking at new markets like Taiwan and what not?

Mr. MacKay: Yes.

Mr. Howard: Our estimate in 2018-2019 is exactly the same as the 2019-2020. Is there something we’re dropping off to focus on new markets?

Mr. MacKay: No I don’t think, I think a lot of it comes down to where the numbers are at right. So as far as – you take, we’ll use Japan for example, what the numbers were 20 years ago aren’t the numbers now. So we’re going back and forth and so forth.

As far as these numbers, I still don’t know if they’re enough, if they’re not enough, if they’re too much until I get down into the weeds through the department itself and start asking some questions.

Basically, the message I delivered is: I don’t want to take money and waste it. I want to make sure what we try next is going to work and I want some homework and some science done behind it to see where it’s at. So that’s why a lot of these numbers have not changed in this budget, it’s kind of the status quo because I want to make sure when we do it, we know what we’re doing, we’re doing it right..

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

Mr. Howard: Thank you, Chair. That’s fine.

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

Ms. Altass: Thank you, Chair.

So I’m just wondering about the materials supplies and services under this section and what that money would be spent on because

it's not publications because that's a whole different section. I'm just wondering what kind of materials.

Mr. MacKay: So what this is, so this'd be tourism operators from other countries or throughout other provinces that come in and do a tour of PEI. So it's a way for us to promote our product to other tourist operators in the industry across the world.

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

Ms. Altass: So the materials and supplies, then, would be things that we are providing these tourism operators to encourage them to (Indistinct) –

Mr. MacKay: Right. It would be the cost of touring them around itself.

Ms. Altass: Oh.

Chair: Tyne Valley-Sherbrooke?

Ms. Altass: Okay. That's it, I think.

Chair: Shall the section carry? Carried.

Total Tourism Marketing Communications: 7,596,400.

Shall it carry? Carried.

Total Tourism PEI: 21,203,500.

Shall it carry? Carried.

Mr. MacKay: Thank you, Chair.

Days like this, I'm glad I'm not the minister (Indistinct)

Some Hon. Members: [Laughter]

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Chair: (Indistinct) someone from the floor?

Mr. Thompson: Yes, I do, and I have a statement, too.

Chair: Hon. members, we are now on page 24 under the Department of Agriculture and Land.

A request has been made for a stranger to come onto the floor. Permission?

An Hon. Member: Granted.

Chair: Thank you.

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

Mary Kinsman: Mary Kinsman, Director of Finance and Corporate Services.

Chair: Thank you very much.

Minister, I understand you have an opening statement.

Mr. Thompson: Yes, I do, Mr. Speaker.

Before we begin, I'd like to say a few words about my role as Minister of Agriculture and Land. After two months, I've been impressed with the great programs the department offers in the agricultural industry. The dedication and passion of the staff who deliver these programs are also remarkable. The department is focused on sustainability and forward thinking.

Some examples of great work happening are the Community Food Security and Agriculture Awareness Program, Perennial Crop Development Program, environmental stewardship programs, the ALUS, the Organic Industry Development Program. As I move forward in my mandate, I will be working with the department staff to ensure we offer the best suit of programs to benefit producers and the environment.

As you know, agriculture is a priority for me personally, as I am a farmer, a father, and I want the industry to prosper for future generations. To do this, we must focus on healthy soils and protecting our land. It is important to find a balance that continues to promote a successful economy, sustainable environment base.

You can be sure that along with the staff of the department, I will make every effort to deliver on this goal.

Thank you.

Chair: Okay.

Department Management

Corporate Services: “Appropriations provided for operation of the office of the Minister and Deputy Minister and centralized administrative functions for the Department.” Administration: 43,600. Equipment: 3,000. Materials, Supplies and Services: 40,500. Professional Services: 15,600. Salaries: 381,100. Travel and Training: 65,400.

Total Corporate Services: 549,200.

Shall the section –

The hon. Member from O’Leary-Inverness.

Mr. Henderson: So what were the cuts on that particular section attributed to?

Mr. Thompson: Salary adjustments, member. Administrative and material supplies accounts, available budget has been reallocated somewhere else in the department. Summer student and provincial vet has increased.

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

Mr. Henderson: So they were reassigned somewhere else? Maybe you could explain a little more detail of that.

Mr. Thompson: We’re reorganizing the department, so provincial vets and the increased lab testing costs are reallocated.

Mr. Henderson: Oh, okay.

Chair: The hon. Member from O’Leary-Inverness?

Mr. Henderson: That’s fine.

Chair: Shall the section carry? Carried.

Total Department Management: 549,200.

Shall it carry? Carried.

Farm Business Risk Management: “Appropriations provided for administration of the Department’s farm income support programs.” Administration: 60,500. Equipment: 39,300. Materials, Supplies and Services: 35,700. Professional Services:

11,000. Salaries: 2,088,000. Travel and Training: 232,900. Grants: 16,889,700.

Total Farm Business Risk Management: 19,357,100.

The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Belvedere.

Ms. Bell: Thank you, Speaker.

In the grants section, you all see a substantive increase for the grants line from estimate to year-to-year. I know there’s a number of different grants in here, but I’m not clear what the change is from the previous ‘18-19 to ‘19-20 to show that extra five million, almost six million.

Mr. Thompson: Member, that’s a great question. AgriInsurance program increased 1.7 million as a result of the unit price increase in potatoes from \$10 to \$12. Four million is a 24% increase in the premium rate in the growth in the program.

Chair: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Belvedere.

Ms. Bell: So is this a reflection, minister, of some of the things we’ve been talking about in terms of some of the challenges in the industry, and reflecting the investments that the province is having to make to manage that risk?

Mr. Thompson: Most of this money is in the insurance part of – and a lot of this money, the 5,000 is from the mink industry when it crashed. They had insurance on that. So we paid out for the mink, and we’re just catching up to that. That’s where that money is being allocated from, so – it’s all related on premiums and through the insurance fund.

Ms. Bell: Yeah. It actually never occurred to me about – I honestly haven’t thought about the last time we talked about the mink industry.

Mr. Thompson: Yeah, so is there is not much of a mink industry anymore.

Ms. Bell: No, no.

Mr. Thompson: So hence the –

Ms. Bell: Hence the fails.

Chair, there's obviously such a broad sector, a number of sectors within this envelope that you sort of – this is a good example of that, where you talk about mink and potatoes in the same paragraph – but where is the reflection of the increased premiums specifically for the potato industry that we've talked about a lot in the House recently, where are those reflected?

Mr. Thompson: Those will be in next year's budget because we're always a year –

Ms. Bell: Yea- to-year, but in the estimates, and they're not showing up in the estimates –

Mr. Thompson: I'll pass over to Mary.

Ms. Bell: Okay, great.

Thank you.

Mary Kinsman: So this year, the rates did go up. So that's where you're seeing the increase in the program.

Ms. Bell: Okay.

Mary Kinsman: The interest rates actually went up about 24% –

Ms. Bell: Wow.

Mary Kinsman: – this year.

Ms. Bell: Twenty-four percent?

Mary Kinsman: Yeah. That's taking us back to our 2014 rates. The rates go up and down depending on the usage of the program. We have good years and bad years. When we've had a bad year like we did last year, then our rates will go up to reflect that cost. It's an actuarially sound insurance program.

In fact, last year, the rates – every five years, the rates are reviewed. Every year they're reviewed, and then we have an actuary review of our process every five years. They have to also be approved by the federal government.

As you're aware, the insurance program is shared a third, a third, a third, basically. The

province pays a third of the cost, the federal government pays a third of the cost, and the producer pays a third of the cost. So as our costs go up, so do the federal government's and so do the producers'.

Ms. Bell: And given the increasing impact and rapidity of change that's coming from climate change, do you see that maybe that cycle of that kind of five year, may have to be increased accordingly as well?

Mary Kinsman: Over the years, we've had – we will go four to five years with good years, and then we may have a bad year. Right now I'm not sure if I can speak to cycles due to climate change. We'll certainly see it. If we have another bad year, it will impact the rates once again.

As I say, it's still actuarially sound. Producers will need to make a decision when it comes to price: how much they buy, what type of insurance they buy, that type of thing.

Ms. Bell: You can see, though, the concern, because obviously a 24% increase that may be flattened out over that kind of five-year basis on an actuarial position, but that way it's resulting in one year and almost a \$6 million increase in the risk portfolio, the risk premium envelope. If that accelerates, say we have – God forbid we have another year like that, and we're looking at another 24% increase next year, is that another \$6 million hit, increase next year that we have to fund?

Mr. Thompson: Could be possibly, but it's insurance-based. The federal government and province and the producer have to – it's on the uptake. Maybe the prices will become too high for farmers, but right now, I can't answer that question because we're just on – we don't know – I can't predict the crop this year.

An Hon. Member: Could be a great year.

Ms. Bell: I understand that it's like investing or anything else. Long-term returns and long-term impacts and it's really hard to do those predictions, but part of our models, particularly for insurance and for the assessment and prediction of insurance, impact, and cost, is about looking at a whole basket of measures and making evidence-based decisions on those.

We know that we're seeing in the construction industry or in home insurance, for example, we're seeing real shifts happening in those insurance industries around, for example, homes that are no longer able to be insured because of flood plain changes as a result as a result of climate change. Or, increased weather activity, for instance, in New Jersey you now can't insure your home if you live within two miles of the shore in New Jersey anymore.

So this is one of those things that we talked about in lots of other instances. At what point are we going to start planning for these impacts? Because \$6 million a year of an increase in one line item in an entire budget is it a huge hit to take on a fiscal basis. At what point does it become feasible to keep doing that and/or how do we start thinking how we mitigate that?

Mr. Thompson: We have to look at the five-year numbers I think is what is a better way to look at that and it's something that we can consider down the road.

Chair: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Belvedere.

Ms. Bell: Thank you, Chair.

Agreed, I guess what I'm suggesting, minister, with all due respect is that when we're looking at, for instance, climate change impact and with 10 or 11-year cycle and five years is half of that, if we see the kind of impacts accelerating like they are, five years may be far too long to be thinking about planning ahead for potential impact. And please don't think in any way that I'm not suggesting that we shouldn't be providing this insurance I recognize how terribly valuable and important it is. But there's also the need to be fiscally responsible.

Mr. Thompson: Absolutely, absolutely. I'm all about being responsible. My fellow colleague and critic will be happy to discuss the future (Indistinct) of this program with her (Indistinct)

Ms. Bell: Thank you minister; much appreciated.

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

Mr. Henderson: Minister, on some of your grants under this section here, you've got some pretty significant increases to some of the crop insurance based on the premiums. Is there any request for new commodities to go under crop insurance?

Mary Kinsman: On an annual basis, the staff worked at the various commodity groups. It's up to the commodity groups to come in and meet the staff and ask for requests.

And yes, normally, potato board comes in, various different groups come in to speak to the group. They take those requests forward. They have to meet the criteria of the program; they take them forward to the federal government to see if they're economically viable and whether or not it will get added to the program.

Mr. Henderson: I'm aware of that part of it, but there's currently no new requests by any of the commodity boards to add – get involved in the crop insurance program.

Mr. Thompson: Not since I've – in the two months I've been – exactly two months today, apparently.

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

Mr. Henderson: My other question when it comes – obviously we increased the unit price of the potato industry by two cents up to 12 cents, but we can go to 14 cents, correct?

Mr. Thompson: Yes.

Mr. Henderson: So what's your opinion as minister on whether we should go to that based – I'm pretty sure the potato board has requested to go to 14. Or to at least allow the farmers that option to do that. What's preventing them?

Mr. Thompson: I think we're waiting to see on the uptake. We have to meet with the director, Lisa MacDonald, of course, and see what uptake on the insurance was this year. Premiums went up. Some of the farmers were struggling from last year, it's a real

concern what the uptake was on unit price we have now. It's something that we're going to look at.

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

Mr. Henderson: Back to the new commodity issue, there's a number of western provinces have a price insurance scheme for livestock. Just wondering what your thoughts are on that and whether that's something – I know there's a process to go through that, and the industry would have to request that.

Mr. Thompson: I don't like the word scheme.

Mr. Henderson: Scheme is what it is. It's a plan.

Mr. Thompson: Plan, okay. We haven't looked at that yet but we will.

Mr. Henderson: So you've three sections under this section for grants, you've got AgriStability, AgriInsurance and you got AgriInvest. I asked you a question in the Legislature regarding AgriRecovery. Where are we at with that and is this the section that that would come under?

Mary Kinsman: Minister, there have been negotiations with the federal government. How AgriRecovery works, it's a framework, not a program.

Mr. Henderson: Well aware of it, yeah.

Mary Kinsman: So a commodity group or a group to come to us as they have, the potato board and the PEI Horticultural Association has come forward with requests, then we take that forward to the federal government. All groups provide information that is assessed – the federal government has an assessment process. We've all fed into that.

At this time, both the federal and provincial governments have a process that they have to follow for approving the process. Really no announcement can be made one way or another until the approval processes are complete and an agreement has been signed. So as such, we can't really release any

details yet on AgriRecovery. It's not in these numbers, you're correct.

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

Mr. Henderson: So you're saying you would have no allocation reserved for that particular program should it be finalized?

Mary Kinsman: You're not seeing an allocation, minister, in our budget because there was nothing approved. There was not a program available – there was not a program approved. Government has a contingency because they were well aware that we were going through a process and a back and forth on a new program.

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

Mr. Henderson: Where does that contingency come from? You say government, it's not under the department of agriculture at all, is it the department of finance? Or would they have to issue a special warrant for that?

Mary Kinsman: If there is a program, we would have to follow the rules of government. And our base budget right now is this and any addition would be a special warrant.

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

Mr. Henderson: So ultimately what you're saying then that it's not really accounted for anywhere in this budget, but under the contingency, if there was that potential of that agreement being assigned, so that really tells me that your budget is way out of whack; that there's even a remote potential of a surplus here as a provincial government.

I'll be curious to hear the minister's response to that.

You know the numbers that are going to be talked about under AgriRecovery.

Mr. Thompson: Yeah, AgriRecovery. The numbers – it was budgeted, and just because it's not in our budget – it's not going to affect the surplus.

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

Mr. Henderson: There's the question. So then where does it reflect in this overall document that has in all these pages in it that says that there's a 1.8 million surplus with AgriRecovery not even in here anywhere? I don't know how that could possibly be.

Mr. Thompson: Mary just said why we can't announce anything yet, and I have to abide by what I am told.

I'd like to tell you more and I will tell you more.

Mr. Henderson: I certainly would not want to put you in the situation, or anybody in the House here to give a number, but all I'm saying, is there is a request at AgriRecovery, and there is –

Mr. Thompson: Can you save this question for the finance minister.

Mr. Henderson: Okay, I'd be happy to do that.

Chair: The hon. Member from Mermaid-Stratford.

Ms. Beaton: So under risk management, typically, risk management is one of the most important aspects whenever you are going into an uncertain time, which last year we know what happened to the potato crop. This year, we don't know. Next year we also don't know.

However, studies have shown that through climate change that our farmers are going to be extremely exposed as to how they're going to manage going forward. And I know we're coming up to a sustainability section for agriculture, but I'd ask why we would have forecasted 91,000 last year for professional services in risk management, but we're at about 11,000 this year. What would make us think that we don't need assistance through risk management in order to navigate us through the next few years? It seems like the wrong place to cut, as far as I'm concerned.

Mr. Thompson: So the decrease was to do with the actuary from the service effect. So we can't predict that going forward, so that's

a number that's going to change from year to year.

Chair: The hon. Member from Mermaid-Stratford.

Ms. Beaton: Yes, but in risk management you would be planning for an issue to happen, you wouldn't be cutting at a time right now. You would actually be putting money into that plan for that. So if you're actually cutting in that section, how are you planning going forward?

Mr. Thompson: The staff and the department, professional services are outside, so we have lots of qualified staff and we continue to bring in more staff all the time that can handle these. I'd rather work in the department than outside because we do have extremely qualified staff. They're great people.

Chair: The hon. Member from Mermaid-Stratford.

Ms. Beaton: So when I look at your salaries, your salaries are the same. So how are you going to get that extra resource power to put towards risk management planning if you're not going to increase salaries?

Mr. Thompson: So there is a planning section coming up.

Ms. Beaton: And it's in that?

Mr. Thompson: It's in that.

Chair: The hon. Member from Mermaid-Stratford.

Ms. Beaton: I will hold off until the risk planning section.

Chair: The hon. Member from Summerside-Wilmot.

Ms. Lund: Thank you, Chair.

Minister, my colleague was talking about the need to plan particularly as it pertains to climate change in this sector and I quite agree with her. Your response was centered by looking at this five years from now and I caution that farmers are particularly vulnerable to climate changes and

adaptations in this sector are slow, they have a long wait time. Do you have any comments on that?

Mr. Thompson: Pardon, could you repeat that?

Ms. Lund: Do you have any comments on that?

Mr. Thompson: Is that a budget question?

Ms. Lund: Yes. You need to budget to make those work.

Mr. Thompson: Could you say your comment again then, please.

Ms. Lund: Absolutely. I was saying my colleague was talking around the need for long-term planning. We see that in other areas, they have to budget for it. I'm sure the minister of transportation has to take into account sort of storm cycles that we can expect to see when designing infrastructure.

We do have to plan for climate change; we definitely budget for that minister. So I'm just wondering; she was talking about the need to have a plan that incorporates climate realities, particularly as they pertain to agriculture, but your response to her question was that you would look at these numbers down the road.

Mr. Thompson: The department is always improving on their testing, on their actions. The stewardship program, sustainability, we're always moving forward, we're always planning and in that sense we're forward-thinking in the department.

I know climate change is important to you and it's important to this department as well and we're focusing on that, not necessarily in this section of the budget, but as we go along you'll see more and more that we are planning.

Chair: The hon. Member from Summerside-Wilmot.

Ms. Lund: Thank you, Chair.

I'm not talking about testing though; UPEI's climate lab recommended moving forward on this in their adaptation recommendations that came out probably three years ago. I'd

have to confirm the exact date of that. I'm not sure if it's responsible to disregard that recommendation that we incorporate climate scenarios that we're likely to live in and consider that in determining future crops and cover crops.

Do you have any comments on that?

Mr. Thompson: Yeah, I'll take that back to the department and we definitely will look at that and consider it.

Ms. Lund: Thank you, Chair.

An Hon. Member: Call the hour.

Chair: The hour has been called.

Mr. Thompson: Mr. Chair, I move that the Speaker take the chair and the Chair report progress and beg leave to sit again.

Chair: Shall it carry? Carried

Mr. Perry: 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 House will recess until 7:00 p.m. this evening.

The Legislature recessed until 7:00 p.m.

Speaker: Good evening, hon. members.

Some Hon. Members: Good evening, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Belvedere.

Motions Other Than Government

Ms. Bell: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. Member from Mermaid-Stratford, that the 14th order of the day be now read.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk: Order No. 14, *An Act to Amend the Climate Leadership Act*, Bill No.102, in Committee.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Belvedere.

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

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Belvedere, I'll ask you to Chair, please.

Ms. Bell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you.

Committee of the Whole House

Chair (Bell): The House is now in a Committee of the Whole House to take into consideration a bill to be intitled *An Act to Amend the Climate Leadership Act*.

Is it the pleasure of the committee that the bill now be read clause by clause?

Ms. Lund: Request to bring a stranger onto the floor?

Chair: We have a request to bring a stranger onto the floor.

Some Hon. Members: Granted.

Chair: Welcome, stranger, for the third time. If you could take a seat and introduce yourself for the record and to the House, please.

Patrick Lévêque: My name is Patrick Lévêque, Principal Secretary in the Opposition Office.

Chair: Okay and perhaps the promoter, we have been here before, but perhaps if you have a brief statement to give context particularly for the gallery. If I could just remind the gallery that there is to be no interjection from gallery or noises accordingly, please.

Thank you.

Ms. Lund: Thank you, Chair.

This piece of legislation is really straightforward, and we're now surpassing three and a half hours of talking about it.

But to recap, the target that we currently have in the only piece of legislation that addresses carbon emission targets is outdated. It was based on the evidence we had at the time, but new evidence from an internationally recognized definitive authority is telling us we need to adjust our target to do our share of mitigating the global crisis.

We've heard concerns that adjusting our target within the bill may limit our ability to meet the target through mechanisms outside of carbon pricing. I can assure you that is no way accurate.

We have a target now within this piece of legislation, and that's never impeded us from using a variety of tools to reach that target. There's nothing within the scope of my bill that would make that so. It only deals with the fact that we are currently shooting for the wrong target.

We've heard concerns about the pathway to achieve this target and what it would look like, and I'd suggest that those pathways be based in evidence with a focus on whatever abatement options will give us the biggest emission reductions for the lowest cost.

I'm proposing that once we have an appropriate target, we strike a special committee on climate change who would be tasked with researching what that pathway would like and bring back recommendations for this House to consider.

But step one is setting the target.

There has been broad consensus in this House around the need to reach carbon neutrality by 2050, and given the fact that I hear no opposition on that goal, installing the benchmarks along the way to ensure we will reach that goal should be both straightforward and commonsense.

Chair: Thank you, and for the record, the clause to be debated is: subsection 2(1) of

the *Climate Leadership Act* R.S.P.E.I. 1988, Cap. C-9.1, is amended by the deletion of the words “1.4 megatonnes” and the substitution of the words “1.2 megatonnes”.

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

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Chair.

Thank you, member, for bringing your bill to the floor.

As previously stated, my initial thought was that we form a committee or send it to an appropriate committee to actually talk about the how we would get to the 1.2 because I believe it is a significant change. My department has said it's a significant change.

I want to state, and I've always stated, that I never had any issue with the target itself. That is valid, I believe the IPCC report, and it's definitely a target that we need to achieve.

But I wanted to go to committee to talk about the how, because you've clearly indicated that you would like to strike a special committee on climate change where the committee can look at that how and the plans and the costs involved in a fulsome way.

I am changing my mind and saying that because you're setting that committee for the how, I am willing to now support this amendment to adjust the target.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Trivers: And I would like to call for the question, unless someone else wants to speak.

Chair: I have the Leader of the Opposition and then we'll see where we go from there.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Chair.

Firstly, I want to express my thanks to the Minister of Environment, Water and Climate Change for the statement he just made and the one that he delivered outside to the crowd that was gathered there.

And because we haven't heard from all of the others in the House, I think it's important that we make it clear as to what reasons you might have for not supporting this bill. I think there are three possible reasons why you would not want to support this bill.

The first one is that you don't believe in science, and the evidence is overwhelming.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct).

Leader of the Opposition: I have heard nobody in this House who has said that they do not believe in the science.

Mr. Myers: You're grandstanding. Let's take it to a vote.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Opposition has the floor.

Leader of the Opposition: The second reason is that you do not believe in math.

An Hon. Member: You're grandstanding.

Leader of the Opposition: Because if you extrapolate from where we need to be, the math tell us that we need to be at 1.2.

Mr. Fox: (Indistinct)

Leader of the Opposition: The third reason that you may not want to support this bill, is that you do not believe in fairness that you do not believe that PEI should do its fair share.

I want to apologize on behalf of my generation for the terrible job we have done on living in this planet.

When I listen to young people outside speaking of fear of having their own children and one of my own children has expressed that to me that moves me to the point where I really hope that all members of this House will support this amendment.

Thank you, Chair.

Chair: Should we call the question?

Some Hon. Members: Question.

All those in favour of the amendment as presented signify by saying 'aye.'

Some Hon. Members: Aye!

Chair: All those in opposition to the amendment please signify by saying 'nay.'

Some Hon. Members: Nay!

Chair: By my hearing the aye's have it.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Trivers: Are we going to ask for a count?

Ms. Lund: I move the title.

Chair: *An Act to Amend the Climate Leadership Act.*

Shall it carry? Carried.

Ms. Lund: I move the enacting clause.

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

Shall it carry? Carried.

Ms. Lund: With no amendment?

Madam Chair, I move the Speaker take the chair, and that the Chair report the bill agreed to without amendment.

Chair: Shall it carry? Carried.

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

Speaker: Shall it carry?

Leader of the Opposition: Can we have a standing vote, please?

Speaker: Hon. members, a standing vote has been asked so Sergeant-at-Arms ring the bell, please.

[The bells were rung]

Mr. Henderson: The third party is here and ready for the vote, Mr. Speaker.

Ms. Lund: Mr. Speaker, the official opposition is ready for the vote.

Mr. Deagle: Government members are ready for the vote.

Speaker: Okay all those voting against the report of the committee please stand.

Clerk: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir, the hon. Minister of Finance, the hon. Minister of Health and Wellness, the hon. Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy, the hon. Minister of Fisheries and Communities, the hon. Minister of Social Development and Housing.

Speaker: All those voting for the reporting committee, please stand.

Clerk: The hon. Member from Morell-Donagh, the hon. Minister of Economic Growth, Tourism and Culture, the hon. Minister of Education and Lifelong Learning, the hon. Minister of Agriculture and Land, the hon. Member from Cornwall-Meadowbank, the hon. Member from Evangeline-Miscouche, the hon. Leader of the Third Party, the hon. Leader of the Opposition, the hon. Member from Charlottetown-Victoria Park, the hon. Member from Charlottetown-Belvedere, the hon. Member from Mermaid-Stratford, the hon. Member from O'Leary-Inverness, the hon. Member from Charlottetown-West Royalty, the hon. Member from Tignish-Palmer Road, the hon. Member from Summerside-South Drive, the hon. Member from Summerside-Wilmot, the hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton and the hon. Member from Tyne Valley-Sherbrooke.

Speaker: The ayes won the vote, the bill is passed.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Belvedere.

Ms. Bell: Not quite as exciting.

Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. Member from Charlottetown-Victoria Park, that the 13th order of the day be now read.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk: Order No. 13, *Government Advertising Standards Act*, Bill No. 101, in committee.

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

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Ms. Bell: I will be your speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Belvedere will you please Chair?

Ms. Bell: I certainly will, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you.

Chair (Bell): The House is now in a Committee of the Whole House to take into consideration a bill to be intituled *Government Advertising Standards Act*, is it the pleasure of the committee now be read section by section?

Leader of the Opposition: I call a stranger please.

Chair: I have a request to call a stranger to the floor.

An Hon. Member: Granted.

Chair: Thank you.

You can take a seat. Give your name for the microphone please.

Nathan Hood: I'm Nathan Hood; I'm the senior policy advisor to the official opposition.

Would the promoter like to do a brief intro of –

Leader of the Opposition: Yes just very brief. Thank you, Chair.

Just before we get going I would like to inform the House that members of our office including myself and Nathan with the Member from Morell-Donagh and staff from his office and we have a number of amendments to bring forward to the bill, some by us and some I believe from the Member from Morell-Donagh. We've had discussions on this and we can debate them of course, before the House.

I wanted to make the house aware that we have met and discussed these.

Chair: Thank you.

And for the House, we were doing section by section and we've got to section four, but I believe that there is – are there any amendments to be tabled in advance to that section?

Perhaps we can do to Member from Morell-Donagh first.

The hon. Member from Morell-Donagh.

Mr. MacEwen: I know the Leader of the Opposition is very interested in the Legislature versus the Executive branch so I have to clarify, it's not staff that works for me but staff under communications PEI, and I can't remember the exact titles but Mark (Indistinct) and Amanda Hamel. So they don't work for the House Leader.

Leader of the Opposition: Thanks for the clarification, my apologies.

Mr. MacEwen: Make sure (Indistinct) –

An Hon. Member: Can we FOIPP them?

Mr. MacEwen: We will all be FOIPP'ed here shortly.

Thank you and I do appreciate the meeting today to talk about amendments that we were interested in taking place and so, we do have five amendments that I would like to introduce all at once. One does have to do with the section that has been previously passed, but we have agreement to do that and I just wanted to say thank you for letting the communication staff go in and discuss the changes.

I don't believe everybody in the chamber is aware of the amendment yet so we should go through them one by one.

Mr. MacEwen: Sure.

Chair: Thank you, hon. Member from Morell-Donagh.

Do you have any amendments to be tabled to the section we've already reviewed that we need to go back? I have five. You have five amendments.

How old you like to table those?

Mr. MacEwen: One at a time.

Ms. Bell: Ok, start with your first one, then.

Mr. MacEwen: I'd like to do them all at once, but I can't do that.

Chair: The clerk will advise accordingly.

The hon. Member from Morell-Donagh.

Mr. MacEwen: So I'm just waiting on copies for the amendment to go back to section one but we do have copies for the four amendments for section four, if I can start there and we can work on the other one after.

Chair: That would be great, thank you. So we'll get those.

Mr. MacEwen: We'll pass those out?

Chair: Yes, and we will be able to review those amendments have gotten around then we'll be able to review those amendments and figure out where they fit into sections more or less.

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you.

Chair: So there are four different sets going around?

The hon. Member from Morell-Donagh.

Mr. MacEwen: There are four amendments on section four that are going out right now. Right?

Clerk, are we sending out all of them? Just so everyone has them all so that I can –

Chair: So, Morell-Donagh, what I'd suggest is once those are all out that we go straight into it because we're on that section anyway and it makes sense, then we can go back to your fifth one after this.

Do all members of the committee have a copy of the amendments? Great.

The hon. member from Morell-Donagh.

Mr. MacEwen: The copies of the fifth amendment are here as well. Are you okay with if we pass those out as well as the full set?

Chair: Sure. The more the merrier.

Mr. MacEwen: I guess, I'm not sure if it's the Chair or the member of the bill. I forget who I'm supposed to be asking.

Leader of the Opposition: I'm cool with that too, member, thank you.

Chair: So are we waiting on?

Mr. MacEwen: Chair, would you like to do section four first or go back to section one.

Chair: We can work on section four, is that where we are now? Those ones have all been handed out first as well?

They will be there shortly if anyone is missing anything, we can do some leaning and sharing in the intro, that would be great?

The hon. Member from Morell-Donagh, did you want to propose your first amendment?

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you, Chair.

Chair: Starting with amendment 12 – is that correct?

Mr. MacEwen: I move that clause 4 (1)(g) of Bill No. 101 is deleted and the following is substituted:

(g) Subject to subsection five should not include to its significant degree, a colour associated with the government party, other than an approved corporate colour of the government of Prince Edward Island and its approved trademark and word mark.

Chair: Are there any questions on the motion that is presented?

Shall the motion carry? Carried.

The first amendment 4 (1)(g) is carried.

Do you have another amendment Morell-Donagh?

Mr. MacEwen: So I would like to move that section 4.4 of Bill No.101 is deleted and the following is substituted.

It's the exception, 4 Clause (1).

Exception - audience outside province (4) Clause (1)(c) does not apply to the use of a name, voice or image of a member of the Executive Council or a member of the Legislative Assembly

(a) if the audience for which the item is intended is located outside of the province or

(b) if the purpose of the item is primarily to recognize

(i) a significant achievement

(ii) a national or provincial event or

(iii) an event by or on behalf of a participant in an industry sector such as tourism or a community organization.

Chair: Thank you, are there any questions on the amendment of granted?

Seeing no questions, shall it carry? Carried.

The Motion is approved as presented.

The hon. member from Morell-Donagh.

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you, Chair.

I'd like to move that subsection 4 (6) of Bill No. 101 is amended by the deletion of the words 'this section' and the substitution of the words 'Clause 4 (1) (b).'

Chair: Are there any questions on this amendment? Seeing no questions, shall it carry?

Carried as proposed.

The hon. Member from Morell-Donagh.

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you, Chair.

Another amendment on this section, I'd like to move that Section 4 of Bill No. 101 is amended by the addition of the following after Subsection 6. It's the exception, notice of advertisement, 7 Clause (1) (b) does not apply to an item on Google Ads or similar service or social media, such as Twitter or Facebook, where the service or social media platform provides a notice that the item is an advertisement or a sponsored post.

Chair: Thank you

Are there any questions on the amendment as presented?

Shall it carry? Carried.

The amendment is approved as presented.

So we can now return to, we were on debate on Section 4, which would now be presented as amended with the amendments that have just past. Are there any further questions on Section 4 presented with amendments?

The hon. Member from Morell-Donagh, did you want to now go back to section one?

Mr. MacEwen: Yes. Clerk, do I need any permission to go back to a previous section or just the Chair's –

Chair: Yeah, if the committee is – (Indistinct) permission of the committee to go back to section one?

An Hon. Member: Sure.

Mr. MacEwen: So kind.

Chair: Yeah, so granted?

Mr. MacEwen: So kind. Thank you.

Chair: I think (Indistinct)

Mr. MacEwen: I'd like to move that section one of Bill No. 101 is amended a) by renumbering it as subsection 1.1, and b) by the addition of the following after subsection 1: the exception. 2: this act does not apply to the official website of the Government of Prince Edward Island.

Chair: Are there any questions on the amendment as presented?

Shall it carry? Carried.

The amendment is carried as presented.

So now we need to vote again on section one as amended.

Section one as amended, that was per the amendment just passed, shall the section carry? Carried.

Thank you, members.

An Hon. Member: Carry the bill.

Chair: Is it the will of the committee that we continue section by section or would you like to carry the bill?

Some Hon. Members: Carry the bill.

Mr. Myers: Question.

Chair: I'll call the question?

Some Hon. Members: We've got a question.

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

Mr. Myers: Did you talk to the Auditor General about this?

Chair: To the promoter?

Mr. Myers: Yes.

Leader of the Opposition: Yes, minister, we did when we were first drafting this bill last fall, I believe it was. We had a lengthy meeting with her and she was satisfied with the role that this bill puts her in, yeah.

Mr. Myers: How much extra time did she consider this was going to cost her department?

Leader of the Opposition: Yeah, we did talk about that and because we chose the less onerous method of a complaints-based mechanism rather than a proactive mechanism where only advertising where a complaint triggers this bill to come into effect, it was her guess that it would be

actually minimal work and that it wouldn't cause any onerous strain to the office.

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

Mr. Myers: So, effectively, every time government advertises we could get a complaint, or numerous complaints, about said advertisement.

Did she have any idea how much that would tax her department staff?

Leader of the Opposition: No.

I don't remember exactly the details of the conversation, but we talked. All the questions that you're presenting now, minister, we brought up in the conversation that we had and I was definitely left with the impression that she did not feel this was going to be a difficult thing for her department, her office, to deal with.

Chair: Minister?

Leader of the Opposition: Do you want to add anything to that?

Mr. Myers: So, over the course of the year, do you know how much government advertising there is?

Leader of the Opposition: Yeah, about \$300,000 worth, and exactly how many ads that translates to, I'm not exactly sure; but that's how much money government spends, approximately, year to year.

Chair: Did you have something to add to that to the (Indistinct) –

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct)

Chair: No?

The hon. Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy.

Mr. Myers: So it would be the number of ads that I'd be wondering because the dollar value is completely irrelevant because each time there is an ad appears, somebody or numerous people could complain, which will require the Auditor General to examine the complaint, examine the ad in question

and provide a written decision as to whether or not the item met the standards.

It would be important – in my opinion, I think it would be important to know how many times government advertises and how many publications they advertise in so we would have an idea of how much extra work we could be taxing because at the end of the day, if the auditor doesn't have enough staff, she's going to come to legislative management and ask us to provide her with either more staff or more money to do this.

So I think that if you didn't have that number, you missed an important part of your research.

Is there any way you can provide that number to the House?

Leader of the Opposition: I do not have it. Nathan, do you?

Nathan Hood: There was a FOIPP request that our office had done and part of the scope of that was – I believe the number of advertisements that government had put out that featured a likeness of a every-member of Executive Council, I believe there was over 100 or so ads over the time period set out in that FOIPP request, which I believe was about a year and a half.

The thing to keep in mind with this piece of legislation is that the complaints process that we have set out is that it's a member of the Legislative Assembly that has to file that complaint. Like the member had said, we didn't want to create a process that would create a big burden on the Auditor General.

Really, it would be up to the members of this House to file a complaint if they felt that an advertisement did not meet the standards. The Auditor General also does not have to go through with a full investigation. The Auditor General could receive a complaint, determine that it's frivolous and vexatious and then choose not to pursue it.

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

Mr. Myers: Yeah, so I realize all of that.

It doesn't change my opinion that somebody – you're assuming that somebody won't

complain or that they'll complain under the premise that you've laid out, not the premise by which they would view said document or advertising.

The other thing is I'm surprised that you would box out the public because you guys are the ones that talk about how you want to consult with Islanders and be a part of having this fulsome conversation with Islanders every day, yet you box it out to 27 people.

Do you think that's a little bit elitist when it comes to how people might deal with this?

Leader of the Opposition: As MLAs, I think we all – one of the parts of our job is to be a conduit for public concerns.

I can think of a number of issues that I brought forward in motions and indeed in legislation which had their genesis with a constituent coming to me and expressing a concern and this does not box out the public at all. They are absolutely able to approach their MLA, or an MLA from another district for that matter, and have a complaint that they feel is legitimate, brought forward to the Auditor General through their MLA.

So, this is actually a mechanism for MLAs being a vehicle for the public.

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

Mr. Myers: So you think that's an adequate way to have the public?

Would you say that's the case in every consultation? That it's fine for the MLA to be a conduit for everything? That we don't have to go to the public for anything anymore?

Leader of the Opposition: I think that's probably outside the scope of the discussion regarding this –

Mr. Myers: It's actually not because it's what you just said.

You said – it's exactly what you just said, that we're a conduit for our constituents to bring issues to this House. So either you believe that or you don't.

Leader of the Opposition: I believe in this case, the assertion that you made that we are boxing out the public was not justified because we can act, within the parameters of this legislation as it is written, to be the conduit for the public.

I'm not suggesting that that's the case for every piece of legislation, but for this I am.

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

Mr. Myers: I would think if you wanted to make this completely transparent, you would allow people outside of government to – or outside of this Legislature to file a complaint.

How long will it take the Auditor General to write a decision?

Leader of the Opposition: I want to deal with the comment you made just before that.

A minute ago you were talking about not making sure that we don't create an onerous situation for the Auditor General and yet, you feel that allowing –

Mr. Myers: No, what I said to you – I said did you have the numbers of how many times we've advertised and you said you didn't. So you don't know whether it's onerous or not because you don't even have the numbers to provide us so we can make an adequate decision on it. That's what I said.

Leader of the Opposition: Okay.

I'm sorry, what was the question that you asked, Minister, in the follow-up (Indistinct) –

Mr. Myers: My question was: How long do you think it will take the auditor to write a written decision?

Leader of the Opposition: I think that would vary depending on the nature of the complaint that came forward, but my guess is it would be a very quick – within a matter of days.

Chair: I can do one more with you, Minister, and then come to somebody else and then come back to you.

Mr. Myers: Sure.

So did she tell you that, that it would take her a short period of time to write it?

Leader of the Opposition: I honestly cannot remember, Minister, the details of that particular part of the conversation. I remember talking about that but I do not remember the number that she gave me.

Chair: The hon. Minister of Fisheries and Communities.

Mr. Fox: Thank you, Chair.

I'm interested in a clarification on something. You have given me the opinion that this bill will cost the Auditor General more duties or possibly work, right?

Leader of the Opposition: I'm sorry, I didn't hear the last bit. It would cause the Auditor General –

Mr. Fox: The bill will cost – if I understand this right, the way the bill is written, this possibly could cost the office of the Auditor General more work. Is that right?

Leader of the Opposition: It will potentially cause more work depending on whether or not there are any complaints.

Mr. Fox: So –

Chair: The hon. Minister of Fisheries and Communities – oh, sorry.

Nathan Hood: Just to add onto that, the one constant in the legislation is that each year there will be an annual report from the Auditor General on government advertising and then, depending on the number of complaints that come in during a year, there may be work associated with that. It's also entirely possible that government advertising is clean as a whistle, there's no complaints and I mean there's no additional work in that area.

Chair: The hon. Minister of Fisheries and Communities.

Mr. Fox: Thank you, Chair.

So has the hon. member met with the audit committee on this bill?

Leader of the Opposition: With, I'm sorry?

Mr. Fox: The audit committee?

Leader of the Opposition: No.

Mr. Fox: You haven't.

So you have had no discussions with the audit committee on this bill, which directly affects the Auditor General, is that correct?

Leader of the Opposition: We met with the Auditor General and one member of her staff, but we did not meet with the audit committee.

Mr. Fox: So I'm sort of wondering why you would not meet with the audit committee who specifically deals with the Auditor General on the bill, can you explain that?

Leader of the Opposition: Can I clarify, my apologies for my ignorance member, could you tell us what the audit committee is exactly?

Mr. Fox: The audit committee is a committee of the Speaker of the House, the Leader of the Opposition and also the Minister of Finance. It's my understanding in my previous role that the Auditor General works directly with the audit committee on her budget and her proceedings, so I'm wondering why you would bring a bill to the floor that directly deals with the audit committee, but you've had no direct consultation with the audit committee on this bill, can you explain that?

Leader of the Opposition: I have to admit, member, that I was not aware of the existence of the audit committee, although being the Leader of the Opposition, and one of the three members that you just cited, it clearly hasn't met since I assumed that role.

We, again, the discussion we had with the Auditor General was lengthy and fulsome and we left that with a distinct feeling – at least I did – I will let Nathan speak for himself that the Auditor General was satisfied that this bill was not going to cause any onerous problem for her office.

Chair: The hon. Minister of Fisheries and Communities.

Mr. Fox: Thank you, Chair.

I'm wondering, we're debating a bill on the floor that possibly is going to cause the Auditor General more work and increase the cost on her budget and I'm wondering if this bill is out of order because there could be a distinct cost on to the Auditor General or the government as it stands.

Leader of the Opposition: Are you finished minister?

Mr. Fox: That's the question, I'm wondering.

Leader of the Opposition: Sure, I'm surprised by the wording of your question. I think we took into consideration the potential for extra work that this was going to create for the Auditor General's office. We met with her, we got assurance from her that that would not be the case and we brought the bill forward, so I feel that we did our due diligence but I'd appreciate Nathan's opinion on that.

Nathan Hood: Yeah, so we designed this legislation and the way that we felt would be the least onerous on the Auditor General. When we met with her, we certainly came away with the opinion that she was comfortable with this legislation.

Chair: The hon. Minister of Fisheries and Communities.

Mr. Fox: Thank you, Chair.

I think I would like to have a ruling on whether or not this bill is out of order.

Chair: One moment please.

Thank you, Minister of Fisheries and Communities, I've conferred with the Clerk and confirmed a couple pieces around your request for ruling on a procedure.

Two parts, one of them is that this bill has been validated in consultation with the body who is appropriate for determining their own budget, the Auditor General as discussed.

In addition, it has also been validated by the Legislative Council, her aware of the restrictions on the opposition in terms of what the official opposition can bring

forward in terms of the scope of legislation for expenditure.

Above that, being that this bill is currently in the second reading which is a debate on principle and content of the bill, it can proceed through this section of the debate without risk of consideration of financial implications, there is the option for you to do any additional due diligence on that between the second and third reading.

So, it would be the recommendation of the Chair that the debate continue on the bill and that your point is taken. That work on advising on whether there is a fiscal impact on this bill be done after completion of second reading.

The hon. Minister of Fisheries and Communities.

Mr. Fox: Thank you.

I would like to ask that the Auditor General meet before the Committee of the Whole and hear her opinion or be able to ask questions to her on the bill.

Leader of the Opposition: Chair, I'm not sure where the decision on that would lie. I'm not sure if that's appropriate procedure for Committee of the Whole.

Chair: The hon. Minister of Fisheries and Communities.

Mr. Fox: Well I would argue that we have a guest on the floor and he's giving his opinion on stuff that we, as a House, or I should have also the option to be able to ask the Auditor General questions. I think that's my right.

Chair: I would expect that that would be a question for the Committee of the Whole and if they wish to call an additional witness on your request, minister, so I will check with the Clerk. But my understanding is that it's not a procedural issue on the request to call an additional witness. So, I will again need to check with the Clerk, because I honestly don't know what the procedure on that one is. Give me a moment please.

Minister of Fisheries and Communities, thank you for your request.

It is not the procedure for the Committee of the Whole House, to call witnesses, it is the procedure of the Committee of the Whole House to bring forward supporters for the promoter, i.e. a stranger on the floor or a supporter for the work of defending and during a debate, but it is not the procedure of the Committee of the Whole House to bring forward or to call witnesses, that can only happen in standing committee through that external process. So, your request for the Auditor General to appear is denied.

Are there any further questions on this bill?

The hon. Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy.

Mr. Myers: So you've all said numerous times that you had full support of the Auditor General, do you have a letter stating that?

Nathan Hood: Our meeting was an in person meeting and that's where she provided the support.

Mr. Myers: Sure, but she can write. You're giving her the ability to write based on this legislation, so surely you could ask her for a letter so you can come back to the Legislature and say look: We have the support of the auditor. You've all said it once, it's a quite simple ask.

Leader of the Opposition: I think it's important that we note it would be unusual in my opinion for an independent body of this Legislature, of which the Auditor General is one, to pass judgments on the merits of a piece of legislation being brought forward by any member of this House.

I think it was appropriate to ask the Auditor General whether the work that may arise from this bill could be carried out within the current budget of her office and that's the reassurance that we got from her. I presume we could ask her for a letter to that effect, but I don't think it's a requirement?

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

Mr. Myers: I would say it's equally odd for you, for any of you to come to the floor of the Legislature and speak on behalf of the Auditor General as though you had the

authority to. She's an independent body of this Legislature. So if you can't come to the Legislature and say that she's okay with it, then bring a letter, because I don't think that either of you have the authority to speak for her.

Leader of the Opposition: I'm not speaking on her behalf. I'm relaying the information that we got from her during a conversation.

Mr. Myers: But I don't know that. You do not have the authority to speak on behalf of the Auditor General.

Chair: Is there a question, minister?

Mr. Myers: Well, I'd like the confirmation that he understands that he doesn't have –

Chair: Minister, can you speak to the Chair, please?

Mr. Myers: Sure. Could you ask that the promoter of the bill, if he thinks it's appropriate for him to speak on behalf of the Auditor General?

Leader of the Opposition: As I said a minute ago, I've been asked several questions by a number of members of the House, actually, whether we did any consultation with the Auditor General. I have brought forward to this House my recollections of that discussion. These are my opinions. They are my recollections of the discussion. I'm not speaking on behalf of an opinion held by the Auditor General. I'm just presenting the information that I believe that I remember from that meeting.

An Hon. Member: So it's your interpretation.

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

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Chair.

So I'd be uncomfortable voting on this bill until I saw proof that validated that what you said is true.

Chair: I would remind the member to be careful of his words in the House.

Mr. Myers: I didn't say that it was untrue. I said I wanted him to prove it was true.

Chair: I would remind the member to be careful of his words in the House.

Mr. Myers: Okay, fine. Can he confirm it through a letter.

Leader of the Opposition: I could absolutely send an e-mail to the Auditor General and ask for verification of the information that I brought forward.

Mr. Myers: That would be fantastic, thank you.

Chair: The hon. Minister of Fisheries and Communities.

Mr. Fox: No, I'm fine for now.

Chair: Thank you.

Are there any further questions? Should we call the question for the bill?

Mr. Myers: No.

Chair: Fine. We are currently on section five.

Shall section 5 carry?

Mr. Myers: (Indistinct)

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

Mr. Myers: But, so when I – we just had a conversation and he said he was going to talk to the Auditor General. How do we carry on with the bill without having that letter back from the Auditor General that he's just told me he'd provide?

Chair: Are you asking us to pull the bill from the –

Mr. Myers: Yes.

Chair: – floor, Minister?

Mr. Myers: I am.

Leader of the Opposition: We can ask that question.

Chair: (Indistinct) committee that the bill continue to be under debate?

Signify by saying 'aye'.

Some Hon. Members: Aye!

Chair: Is it the will of the committee that the debate is ceased? Those who wish the debate to cease, please signify by saying 'nay'.

Some Hon. Members: Nay.

Mr. Fox: (Indistinct)

Chair: No. Can I see a show of hands for those who would like to see the bill continue under debate, please?

Show of hands those who wish to see debate continue.

Mr. MacEwen: Chair?

Chair: One moment, please.

Ten. Is that a hand? That's a ten.

Mr. MacEwen: Chair, I just need clarification (Indistinct)

Chair: Thank you.

Mr. MacEwen: Sorry, I just need clarification of what you're actually (Indistinct) –

Chair: Hon. Member from Morell-Donagh, I have asked whether the debate on the bill should cease. That's the only way this can cease, is that the committee of the whole requires it to do so.

Mr. Myers: No, it's not. The promoter can pull it whenever he wants.

Mr. MacEwen: Yeah.

Chair: Well, he's not choosing to do so.

Mr. Myers: Oh, (Indistinct) – there you go. (Indistinct)

Chair: So the committee of the whole –

Mr. MacEwen: Chair?

Chair: – has the right to continue the debate on the bill if the committee of the whole wishes it to be.

Mr. MacEwen: Chair?

Chair: Morell-Donagh.

Mr. MacEwen: So, if you vote to cease debate on the bill, is that a vote against the bill?

Chair: No, it's a vote to pull the debate on the bill for today.

Mr. MacEwen: And is the promoter allowed to bring the bill back –

Chair: Yes.

Mr. MacEwen: – with that – okay.

Chair: Morell-Donagh, yes, so we are – so this is –

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you.

Chair: I'm asking a question. I have ten votes in support of the bill continuing in debate. May I see a show of hands for those who wish the bill to be pulled from the floor today?

Oh, look, we have ten.

So as the Chair, my vote is a tie vote, so I vote for the debate to continue in committee of the whole.

We are currently on section five. Are there any questions on section five?

Mr. Fox: Chair?

Chair: Minister of Fisheries and Communities.

Mr. Fox: Thank you.

So going back to conversations with the Auditor General, can you give us a breakdown, hon. member, of what you think the possible cost could be on an investigation or for the Auditor General to look into it? Per incident?

Leader of the Opposition: Members, as we've already discussed, that would be

entirely dependent on the number of complaints that come forward, and that's something that would be difficult to predict.

As well as the nature of those individual complaints, should any come forward.

Chair: The hon. Minister of Fisheries and Communities.

Mr. Fox: So back a few minutes ago, you made a statement, said 'matter of days' that you think confident that – I took it that a complaint goes into the Auditor General, that she could come back to the House or back to you or to the complainant in a matter of days on a – how do you come to that?

Leader of the Opposition: Well, member, again, it would depend on the nature of the complaint; but it's really actually a very simple process, and in Ontario, where there is legislation which is proactive, they go through hundreds and hundreds of advertisements, which they have to do prior to them going out, in very quick measure.

So if you look at the parameters of what the investigation requires, it's really not a terribly complicated process. It's very clearly laid out. When an advertisement might be in contravention of the act, and the Auditor General has the latitude to use her discretion on that and come back with a – sometimes it will be very obvious, I would imagine, where there's a contravention. Other times it would require the Auditor General to use her discretion; but in either case, I think it would be a relatively quick process.

Mr. Fox: Can you explain the investigation process?

Leader of the Opposition: Yeah, actually, we're not on that section, member, that's section 6.

Chair: So we're section 5, minister.

Mr. Fox: Thank you, but he just spoke about the investigation process.

Chair: Can you speak through the Chair, please, minister?

Mr. Fox: Well, I am, Chair.

He just spoke – I'm talking the third person here – he just spoke about the investigation process and the statement that he just made, so I'm asking him to explain what he's referring to in his statement. He opened the door.

Chair: Minister, that process is in section 6, so if you'd like to wait until we get to section six, we can discuss it then.

Mr. Fox: Wait till section 6.

Chair: (Indistinct) questions on section 5?

Mr. Fox: No. Fine.

Chair: Are there any other questions on section 5?

Shall the section carry? Carried.

Section 6.

The hon. Minister of Fisheries and Communities.

Mr. Fox: I'd like him to explain the investigation process that he's talking about.

Leader of the Opposition: Sure. So if you look through the bill, member, you'll see section 6(1): "A member of the Legislative Assembly may make a written complaint to the Auditor General that the item specified in the complaint does not meet the standards set out in this Act."

You can look back to section 4, I think it is, for standards. I won't read through all of those, but there are a set of advertising standards by which the Auditor General would come to her conclusion as to whether this was a valid complaint.

Section 6(2), when "...a complaint to the Auditor General under subsection (1) concerns an item about which the Auditor General has given a decision under subsection 5(2), the Auditor General may hold an inquiry in response to the complaint if the government office made public the item which the Auditor General had decided did not meet the standards set out in this Act."

What that means is if a government agency proactively put forward a piece of

advertising that was deemed to be problematic, then the Auditor General may hold an inquiry. An MLA would make a complaint, the Auditor General would investigate it, and they would get back to the member in question; and at the end of each year, the Auditor General presents a report to the Legislative Assembly of any of those things which has happened during that year.

Chair: The hon. Minister of Fisheries and Communities.

Mr. Fox: Thank you, Chair.

So the inquiry you're speaking of is totally under the Auditor General?

Leader of the Opposition: I'm sorry, could you repeat that?

Mr. Fox: The inquiry you're speaking of is totally under the Auditor General?

Leader of the Opposition: Yes, or somebody in her office.

Mr. Fox: Thank you.

Chair: Are there any further questions on section 6?

Shall the section carry? Carried.

Section 7, Auditor General's powers.

Shall this section carry? Carried.

Section 8, Disclosure.

Shall this section carry? Carried.

Section 9, Annual report.

Shall this section carry? Carried.

The hon. Minister of Fisheries and Communities.

Mr. Fox: I'm just wondering one thing. Where does the protection of personal information come into effect here?

Leader of the Opposition: I'm sorry, minister, could you repeat that again?

Mr. Fox: Where does the protection of personal information come into effect?

Leader of the Opposition: What personal information were you thinking of, minister?

Mr. Fox: On the complaint.

Leader of the Opposition: Well the MLA would make the complaint to the Auditor General, the Auditor General would report back to the member, and, then at the end of the year, the report is made public.

I don't believe there's any requirement for the member to be named. I can't actually remember.

Mr. Fox: So that's just my point. Is there any protection, Chair, for the protection of the member?

Leader of the Opposition: In section 8. Disclosure (1): The Auditor General shall not disclose to any person information disclosed to the Auditor General during an inquiry.

So there it is, member. I'm sorry. I didn't know which section that was in. So there is protection there, unless – if you look at 8(1)(a): except with the consent of the member of the Legislative Assembly who made the request”.

So you can ask – you can waive that right, but that information would not be disclosed.

Chair: So for Section 9 on the Annual Report.

Shall this section carry? Carried.

Section 10. Access to Records.

Shall the section carry? Carried.

Section 11. Immunity for publication, distribution, and conveying message.

Shall the section carry? Carried.

Section 12. Regulations.

Shall this section carry? Carried.

Section 13. Commencement.

Shall this section carry?

Question from the hon. Minister of Fisheries and Communities.

Mr. Fox: How did you come to the date of January 1st, 2020?

Nathan Hood: So as the bill is written there are regulations that need to be developed by government for this legislation. We wanted to make sure that government had ample time to develop those regulations before the bill had come into force, and that government wasn't squeezed to develop those regulations.

So this allows, basically, any advertisement starting at the start of the new year to come under this legislation.

Mr. Fox: Question.

Chair: The hon. Minister of Fisheries and Communities.

Mr. Fox: Have you done any work on regulations?

Leader of the Opposition: We actually spoke today about that, and so I guess strictly speaking that the work on that has commenced, but nothing is written yet.

Mr. Fox: Question.

Chair: The hon. Minister of Fisheries and Communities.

Mr. Fox: Do you have any information on what you're proposing in regulations?

Leader of the Opposition: I can defer to Nate for that.

Nathan Hood: So what would be in the regulations is what is specified in the –

Leader of the Opposition: Section 12.

Nathan Hood: – each of these clauses. I imagine that would be Communications PEI or someone related to that office who would work on these regulations.

Mr. Fox: Question.

Chair: The hon. Minister of Fisheries and Communities.

Mr. Fox: Would you consider the moving of that date further into the future by six months?

Leader of the Opposition: For what reason, minister?

Mr. Fox: We're into July. We're into July, the House is going to go back in in the fall, and I'm wondering if there's actually ample time for the Auditor General or the regulations to be properly prepared.

Is there any rush on the bill?

Leader of the Opposition: A couple of things, the Auditor General does not have to do anything upon commencement of the bill, at least for now until commencement of the bill. And I think that's perfectly ample time – that's six months from now, so I think that's perfectly ample time to develop the regulations.

They are very clearly laid out in section 12 what the parameters are for them.

Nathan Hood: If I can add on to that, the way the regulations are written right now, so (a) is specifying additional advertising mediums that are not included under section 3.

That won't be in regulations unless your government feels like there are mediums that we haven't included within our legislation which you feel should be covered under legislation.

(b) deals with additional advertising standards. So again, if government feels there are standards that we have not included in this legislation, but which it wishes to apply to its advertising, it may do so in the regulations but it's not required.

(c) respecting the process for providing a notice to a head of office under section 5, including determining when the notice may be deemed to have been received by the head of office.

That's more of one that would be required. That, I wouldn't think would take much time.

(d) defining terms used but not defined in this Act. Again, if there are words that

government feels are unclear in the legislation they can define those in regulations but are not required.

And then (e) respecting any matter that the Lieutenant Governor in Council considers necessary or advisable to carry out the intent and purposes of this Act.

Again, up to the discretion of government to determine what that looks like.

Chair: The hon. Minister of Fisheries and Communities.

Mr. Fox: Thanks, Chair.

I want to go back to one point. And I think it's relevant to this. What's the opportunity or chance before we go any further on this to get a letter from the Auditor General?

Leader of the Opposition: I think we had that question. It was the will of the committee of the whole that we carry on debate of this House.

I will absolutely write an E-mail to the Auditor General to confirm this, but clearly the –

Mr. Fox: Okay, with that, Chair?

Chair: The hon. Minister of Fisheries and Communities.

Mr. Fox: Thank you.

So with that, are you prepared to table a letter from the Auditor General prior to this bill going to third reading?

Leader of the Opposition: Yes.

Mr. Fox: Thank you.

Chair: If there are no further questions, section 13. Commencement.

Shall this section carry? Carried.

Shall the bill carry? Carried.

Leader of the Opposition: I move the title.

Chair: *Government Advertising Standards Act.*

Shall it carry? Carried.

Leader of the Opposition: I move the enacting clause.

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

Shall it carry? Carried.

Leader of the Opposition: Madam Chair, I move that the Speaker take the chair, and the Chair report the bill agreed to with amendment.

Chair: Shall it carry? Carried.

Mr. Speaker, as Chair of a Committee of the Whole House, having had under consideration a bill to be intituled *Government Advertising Standards Act*, I beg leave to report that the committee has gone through the said bill and has agreed to same with amendment. I move that the report of the committee be adopted.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Belvedere.

Ms. Bell: Mr. Speaker, I move that Motion No. 21 be now read.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy.

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Talking to the amendment, yes.

Mr. Myers: So I believe when we last left off I was speaking on an amendment to an amendment. That's where we kind of lie today.

I'm going to go back to talk about what I talked about to begin with.

What I said the other day, and I still say is, I support the spirit of the motion no matter how it ends up. I'm okay with the direction we're going with the two amendments we have to the original ask.

As I said before that, it's probably high time that we are more forward-thinking when it comes to this topic, which is contraception for anybody who is following along with us and know what we're talking about. I think it's good opportunity for the Assembly here to show leadership on this file.

As I said the other day, back when I was younger, in my teen years, it was a taboo topic so nobody talked about it. It was the worst kept secret probably on Earth.

Is probably had created a lot of unhealthy situations and teen pregnancies and, of course, later on probably lots of sexually transmitted diseases were passed along because of lack of use of certain kind of contraceptives.

I do agree with the spirit of the motion, I can't remember the exact procedure to get us back to the original motion I think we're too deep now. I'll definitely vote on the amended amendment in a positive fashion to get us back to the main amendment so we can get back to the desks. So we can get this to a vote.

I had said the other day too – I know some of its popping back in my head, I had notes and I lost them. I did say the other day this is something that could also be well suited for a topic at committee.

It doesn't have to be an extensive exploration at committee but it would be nice to be able to provide a report back to the House in the fall with, expert opinions, guidance councilors, people in the community that, health care professionals and such the sort that would be good to have in front of committee to give some advice and opinion from what they see in their day-to-day operation. I don't know the rest of you, but it's not something I deal with on a daily basis as a politician. I wouldn't be an area of expert by any stretch of the imagination.

I think it's a good opportunity to bring some people before a committee and say you come back to the House you kind of bolden your motion here by bringing extra information back and saying this is what the experts are saying and here are recommendations that are clear from a committee who has worked hard all summer

to bring back to this House and say this is the things that we want.

I have found over the years outside of Public Accounts, which I was always frustrated to have to have to serve on – the rest of the committees were usually pretty – everybody was on the same page trying to get to a good solution based on the witnesses that were brought in front of committee.

With the new committee structure I think it's an exciting opportunity to kind of even strengthen that further and even more so on Public Accounts, which was the most frustrating committee for a long time.

That would be my only suggestion moving forward is to keep the topic kind of on the front burner all summer long. I'd love to hear what some of the experts out there have to say. It's been a long time since I've been a teenager. I don't feel like it, but certainly when you do the math backwards it's been a long time.

An Hon. Member: A long time.

Mr. Myers: So yeah, thank you.

An Hon. Member: Long, long time.

Mr. Myers: So I might be kind of out of touch with what's going on in the teen world, but I would certainly love to hear from people who deal with it on a daily basis.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I certainly support the amended amendment, and I will be interested to see what others have to say about it.

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

No? If not, I'll call the question.

All those in favour of the amendment to the amendment, signify by saying 'aye.'

Some Hon. Members: Aye!

Speaker: All those opposed signify by saying nay.

Passed.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: Now, anyone wishing to speak to the amendment as amended?

No one wishing to speak to the amendment as amended?

I'll call the question.

Some Hon. Members: Question.

Speaker: We have to pass the amendment to the amendment.

All those in favour, signify by saying 'aye.'

Some Hon. Members: Aye!

Speaker: All those against say 'nay.'

The amendment as amended passed.

Is there anyone willing to speak to the motion?

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

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I wanted to thank the members who brought this motion forward and the members, because I think it is an important motion.

Contraception is a topic that sometimes can be difficult to talk about and it's something that is extremely important that we do approach with our children. I'm the father of a 12-year-old and a soon to be 10-year-old. The 12-year-old is a girl and the almost 10-year-old is a boy, and one thing that strikes me when we are talking about contraception – and perhaps this was mentioned earlier as well – is how the onus seems to always fall on the woman to have contraception all the time. I know I think about that with a young daughter and a young son, and I think it's important that in the spirit of this motion with making contraception available to people so that they can choose to prevent pregnancy if they so choose, that we also focus on making sure that males play their role in getting the contraception, using the contraception and preventing let's face it, what can be unwanted pregnancies, and in some cases contraception can also help with

sexually transmitted diseases and that sort of thing.

I wanted to make that comment, that it's the responsibility of both boys and girls, men and women really. It's not a topic that I've done a lot of research on – but hopefully and perhaps there already is some development in that area – but contraception for males will be more prevalent in the future so that, men can take control of that area just as – and take responsibility for contraception and in the same way we have expected women to over the years.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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

It is a pleasure to rise and to speak to this motion. I want to thank the Member from Charlottetown-Victoria Park bringing it forward.

I, like the hon. member, at one time was a father of young children and I remember the discussions, the awkward discussions around this topic, and it's not easy. It's not easy for any parent.

There are countries, there are cultures where it seems to be just a lot more natural and a sort of normal part of conversation in society and in families. That's not the case here in North America, and I think we're working hard to overcome that.

When I think of some of Scandinavian countries where sex ed – that's another motion we've discussed in the past – obviously intimately related to the motion before us tonight. They are so much further ahead in terms of their comfort and their willingness to talk about these issues.

I'd also like to follow up on what the minister just said about the fact that women are always having to take one for the team. That's the way it's been for so long. But I am aware that there are male contraceptive pills that are being developed now. Which are – I'm not sure how long the pill has been available for women, but it's many decades and it's about time that there was an option

available to, sort of make – yes, there are surgical options, minister, of course, but to have that pill available for younger men is, I think, a really valuable addition.

I'm not sure whether those are commercially available yet or whether they are still in the RND stage, but I have read reports on that and studies.

I just wanted to follow up on what the minister said, and it is one of those areas where there is a great inequity in terms of taking responsibility for yourself.

So, again, I stand in the absolute complete support of this motion. I thank the member for bringing it forward, and I look forward to the vote.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Any other members wish to speak to the motion? If not, I'll call on the mover of the motion to close debate.

The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Victoria Park.

Ms. Bernard: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I genuinely appreciate all the discussion that was had around this bill, its exactly these conversations that make all the difference. Can you imagine how ever many years ago having this very discussion in the Legislative Assembly, it just wouldn't happen and I think we've talked about this topic several times already.

So the normalization that does for our youth and children is incredible, not that I suspect many of them are listening, but they might be and I can appreciate the comments from both ministers about it being difficult to remember being a teenager and going through this exploration and development, so it's absolutely crucial that we do this.

As a councilor, I deal with youth with their sexualities on a daily basis. In most of my rules and my life, I found myself working with, working for, caring for, advocating for, and nurturing children and youth. It's the ones from which I view the world and have made it my life's mission to do so. Keeping our youth and children safe, even if they think they don't need it, I a responsibility

that lies with us as adults and this legislature to support healthy development, I see a ripple effect from what we do in here into the rest of the world and its very exciting. So I hope I can count on your support for this motion.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: I'll call the question. All those in favour of the motion as amended, please say 'aye.'

Some Hon. Members: Aye.

Speaker: All those opposing the motion as amended, please say 'nay.'

Motion passed.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Chair: The hon. Member from Evangeline-Miscouche.

Mr. Gallant: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I move seconded by the hon. Member from O'Leary-Inverness that Motion No.29 be no read.

Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk: Motion No. 29

The hon. Member from O'Leary-Inverness moves seconded by the hon. member from Cornwall-Meadowbank the following motion.

WHEREAS, cattle livestock represents in excess of \$29 million in annual farm cash receipts;

AND WHEREAS, there are in excess of 16,000 cattle processed on Prince Edward Island each year at the Atlantic Beef Products plant and other provincial abattoirs;

AND WHEREAS, Atlantic Beef Products is the only federally inspected meat plant in Atlantic Canada;

AND WHEREAS, sexting of semen in the dairy industry may improve beef breed opportunities;

AND WHEREAS, Prince Edward Island soils are in need of the micro nutrients provided by cattle manure to help improve soil fertility and sustainability;

AND WHEREAS, Prince Edward Island does not have the incinerator facilities to dispose of SRDM eligible cattle materials or components;

AND WHEREAS, there is a need for a price assurance program which would accommodate a forward contracting arrangement with Atlantic Beef Products or a price insurance scheme similar to what is offered in other provinces;

AND WHEREAS, there is unutilized pasture land on Prince Edward Island including former community pasture properties;

AND WHEREAS, there is a need to develop a livestock strategy that encompasses all stakeholders;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly urges Government to facilitate the development of a cattle livestock strategy in consultation with industry stakeholders.

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

Mr. Henderson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

This does give me great pleasure to have the opportunity as the former minister of agriculture and a former beef producer in the Province of Prince Edward Island to bring forward this particular motion and have some debate and discussion on this very important issue when it comes to, in my opinion, what could be the potential expansion in the agriculture sector here on Prince Edward Island. As well as to provide economic opportunity that could be derived from the cattle industry that could expand and grow.

I think more importantly than anything, it's really about trying to deal with our soil structures in Prince Edward Island and make sure that our organic matters are at a comparable level to be sustainable to produce crops and I think one of the few

ways that you can really do that is the incorporation of manures into our soil.

For hundreds of years we've had a very strong livestock sector here in the province but you know, things have declined somewhat significantly since that fateful day in 2003 when the outbreak of Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy or BSE, how's that for trying to get that one out?

It was a pretty fateful day as my own personal experience as the captain at that time, I remember I had just brought in a cattle trailer full of feeders at the time. I think there was I don't know, 40 or 50 head of cattle that was brought I think about a week later, the price of mad cow was found and the price just dropped. The sad part was that it never rebounded. I got out of cattle in 2005, I kind of wish I had got out of it right at the time but when I sold those cattle a year later, I never got the money I even paid for them as feeders, so as a beef producer I had to go the full year with no income and then still pay debts and things like that nature on the cattle and produce and work through that period of time.

It was a pretty impactful situation for me and I was a small, tiny producer. I was running about 100 head of cattle at the time and a feedlot and for that, that would be small in Prince Edward Island standards at that time. We had a very strong, vibrant feedlot industry here in the province and those farmers were certainly more impacted than I was.

But when we look at from my experiences growing up, until 2005 I always had cattle from about age seven or eight, my grandfather gave me a calf one time and that's how it started off. Then two and three and four, even when I was in high school I probably had about twenty head of cattle, that was one of my duties was to make sure I was looking after them and working with my grandfather with putting up hay and doing enough for my portion of the feed bill and things of that nature.

So we started off as bit of a calf business, I would sell my feeders to various feed lots. Eventually expand it from cow calf into keeping my feeders over and then selling them once again to bigger feedlots like

Arthur Cousin's and Junior Baglole, they were big farmers at the time. Warren Ellis was another; I remember selling cattle to them. Those fellows were producing high-quality beef in Prince Edward Island.

So then as I revolved in the business in 2000, I decided to get into the business a little bit bigger and I decided to go into the feedlot business. I went up to this hundred head of cattle, so I'm still paying off barn debts and things of that nature but at the end of the day it was an interesting experience to get into that sector, it was very unfortunate beyond anything that I could possibly control, that BSE hit Canada and borders got shut down and prices went out.

I've always sort of said as a beef producer, I've never shipped an animal that wasn't grade A and I never left a potato in the ground, but sometimes that still doesn't quite work in trying to make it a valuable entity. So that's just some of the realities in my experience in the industry and I think it's very appropriate that on today, we're having a bit of a debate in the legislature on the livestock sector strategy, because I believe today is actually Cow Appreciation Day.

So the lovely bovine gets its day in the sun and its going to actually participate here in the PEI legislature and also for every cow, that means somebody needs to have a good barbeque somewhere along the line and it is barbeque season and our cattle industry is there to provide good high quality food products for people who choose the beef as an opportunity, there's hamburgers, steaks and spare ribs and the list goes on.

Anyways, It's very interesting that according to the PEI censuses data, between 1996 and 2016, the number of cattle on PEI declined from approximately 16,000 head to 9,000 head. That's a pretty significant reduction in the amount of cattle here on Prince Edward Island and invariably, that comes with the decline on manures that are going to be incorporated into our soil.

So it's not a mystery or a secret here to what's happened in some of our cases in our soil. It's a case where we don't have the manure that's produced in Prince Edward Island, and it's obviously too costly of a product to import in. So I think that, you know, as a former minister of agriculture,

it's something that I see has had a significant impact on our province here in Prince Edward Island.

But, currently there does seem to be a bit of a small resurgence in the cattle industry. The cattle industry more recently has had pretty fair prices. Prices kind of have gone up and down as tends to be the nature of the business. I think right now it's about \$2.40 a pound, maybe a little less than that, and that was approximately the same as it was about this time last year.

And, you know, we're still trying to reacquaint ourselves in the marketplace. I think we recently have just got the Japanese market back. I think there was a trade deal with the Trans-Pacific Partnership that will open up places like Korea and Japan, Philippines, some of those places, and that's an opportunity for our beef producers in Canada to start to take advantage of that.

But when that happens that there's going to be a lot of beef exported maybe from western provinces to the Pacific countries, that's going to open up opportunities for Prince Edward Island here. I keep saying we have one of the only federally inspected beef plants in Atlantic Canada here in Borden. That plant has really turned the corner. It gave me great pride not too awfully long ago to acknowledge that the beef plant is now in the black. It's making money.

I think that's something that's very recognizable to the – and should be acknowledged, the hard work that the cattle industry did to turn that around, as well as to talk about the management.

Government had kind of gotten involved to see what we could do to turn the losses around from that plant. They were significant when we took over as government at that time back in 2007. A concerted effort by the government of the day was to turn that plant into the black and they achieved that a few years back, and they continue to show profits; and I know, as the minister of agriculture probably acknowledged, it makes a significant difference in your budget if you don't have to support a beef plant in that regard.

Now I think it's important that we as legislators and as the department of

agriculture, they start to look at ways that we can make that – kind of reinvest those monies that we were putting in to support the plant into maybe growing our industry more and make that plant even more profitable down the road and then yet also reap some of the benefits, as I mentioned in the motion that was mentioned there.

I think when we certainly look at some of the things that the beef plant has done, it's been processing products there since 2004. Obviously, I got out of the industry in 2005. I did ship some cattle to the beef plant. I also shipped – used to ship a lot of cattle to Better Beef in Ontario as well.

I think now that the beef plant has somewhat turned the corner, one of the biggest impediments that I feel the beef plant has to change over time is we need to get some sense of price assurance to our producers. It's sometimes hard as a producer to take the risks and go to the livestock markets and maybe (Indistinct) the Atlantic stockyards, purchase feeders, purchase those feeders from local farmers, and you've got to feed them and go through the whole process and whether it's six months to a year later you're selling them and the price takes a drop, it can have a pretty big impact on where you're going.

In the beef plant in Borden, one of the arrangements that was made in that plant was the price was always to be seven cents back of the Ontario price, and although that's part of the agreement, I kind of wonder as we move forward if the plant could work out an arrangement to get new markets and create new opportunities, whether they can separate themselves from that seven cents back, because that would make a significant difference.

I know that there's – I've had (Indistinct) opportunity to possibly look at forward contracting and some of those types of things to see what that could do, and even though now we've got opportunities with the CETA arrangement in Europe, I think we're actually the nearest beef plant to Europe, and when you see some of the situations that are happening in England with Brexit, I think there's opportunities that can be had there for trade, to grow and expand our market, and maybe become somewhat more independent in our arrangement, and I think

that – I know the beef plant would be very interested in considering those potential options if the sector was there that can produce the products. Today we can't even produce enough beef to feed Atlantic Canada.

So there's opportunities that are in front of us, and I think it's incumbent upon us as a Legislature here to see what we can do to develop those markets and that's where a livestock strategy is so important. If we're going to grow and recover this industry and incorporate manures – and the other part of it would be if we're looking at that side of it, then we have to also look at the forage industry here.

I know the hon. minister of agriculture is a dairy producer. He knows what the importance of forage is; but what that does to our potato industry, good forages incorporate more, once again, of the organic matter into our soil. We can do a number of different options that go around that. We can probably expand our rotations, which I think could be a potential opportunity.

When I was minister of agriculture, I'd stopped in to see Chris Rennie. He was a potato producer up in the Alberton-Bloomfield riding, and he and his brother have a fairly big potato operation, and their father used to be quite a big feed lot operator. I would rank him as one of the better ones in Prince Edward Island, and I had sold cattle to him, too, over the years. One of the things that they noticed is they see some of the impacts that they haven't incorporated manure into their soils for some time or in any expansive amount, and they are seeing the impacts of that now.

They are looking at, with planned limits and some of the realities that are out there for their operation, they would like to bring some family members in. The possibility might exist to open up their – some of those buildings, put some cattle in them, and that's an opportunity to generate more income for that farm, create an expanded operation and benefit their potato operation. That's the type of mindset I think that we need to have out there when it comes to the cattle industry, but at the agricultural industry as well.

The Atlantic Beef Products plant in Borden is the only federally inspected meat plant in Atlantic Canada, and it has been instrumental, certainly, in saving the livestock industry here on Prince Edward Island. If that plant hadn't of been there, I shudder to think if there would be any livestock sector left here.

But not only that, we do have some local provincially inspected plants, and (Indistinct) when I was Minister of Health and Wellness that falls under that particular department, and they also struggling with getting enough product and cattle into their operations. So we certainly need to make sure that we're putting the building blocks in place that we can allow this industry to once again expand.

I certainly want to commend Russ Mallard. Russ is the CEO of the Atlantic Beef Products plant in Borden, and I'm sure the minister has been down there and has talked to him. I'd been through the plant a number of times previous to when I was minister but they are doing a wonderful job down there. There are lots of employment opportunities. I'm sure the MLA from Borden-Kinkora would understand that there are certainly work opportunities at that beef plant.

So once again, I think they've reorganized the plant, but now they're at a state I'm told that they need to expand. They need about 200 animals more a week to go through that plant. They have the potential capacity for a slaughterhouse capacity for that. They have to make some alterations and changes to their plant, which I'm told that they're in the process of doing to expand their cooling capacity. So they need to be able to store those animals, cool them down, and have them hang long enough that the meat becomes tender and then ship it on out to the marketplace.

When we talk about needing 200 more animals a week, that's a lot of cattle. If you go to the beef plant, they certainly have many different brands that they use. That's something that they've – that was part of their big turnaround, I believe, is that they focused on a number of brands. One of their brands – they have a number of them there. There's PEI Certified Beef. There's a Blue Dot Reserve Beef. There's Island View Farms Beef, and True Beef.

Those are the different brands, and each of those particular brands all have a certain level of care that's provided. So if I was looking at the certified beef, which is kind of their number one brand – or not their number one, but their main biggest seller – it's a premium triple-A beef. It's locally raised. It is handled humanely. It has select feeds so there's consistency in the product. There are select breeds and sizes, no hormones, and it's antibiotic-free within the last 100 days of the animal's life.

So that's a very positive effort by the cattleman's association of Prince Edward Island. They've worked that out to try to make sure that they're doing it properly and consistently and it's very important that the marketplace provides a good, consistent product, so if you're a restaurant or you're a consumer going to the grocery store or the O'Leary Farmer's Co-op and when you buy a steak, you know that steak's going to taste the very same as it's always tasted.

If you get hamburger, same thing, it's going to be very consistent. If you go down to the Blue Dot Reserve product, the difference there is traceability. They can actually trace the animal from its birth, from the pasture, right to the plate, all the different owners that were in that. Every animal gets a tag and they've got different varieties of tags, but sometimes they can do scanners and read the exact history of that animal.

I've said to the cattlemen's association, there's sometimes some of our farmers have struggled with all of the documentation that's sometimes occurring in our industry, but the consumer now wants to know all their products. They want to know how they were raised, they want to know where they came from, and they want to know all the steps to when it arrives at their restaurant door or at their fridge at home, before it goes to the frying pan or the barbeque.

You can go to the Island View Farms. That's AA and AAA product. It's – all producer or farmers verify that those cattle were produced on environmentally sustainable farms, smaller and environmentally sustainable farms, and practices have been implemented. That's the type of stuff that these farmers are doing and they are smaller farms but they can do that traceability, they can make sure that that's

done and guarantee that that product is done and any purchaser of those products can determine where the farm is that this stuff has come from. Then we have our True Beef; that also comes from smaller farms, and it's all CFIA-inspected and that can go to off-Island and different locations. So that's the type of things that our cattle industry is doing.

Our Prince Edward Island soils are certainly in need of our micronutrients and I think that's the key. We put lots of fertilizers on our land, whether it's nitrogen, phosphorous, potash and different various combinations; we can mix in zinc and we can do all kinds of different elements there, but there's nothing that can beat manure for the micronutrients that will be incorporated into our soil.

When we're focusing on that, that's going to, once again, enhance that soil. I can guarantee you if you spread a load of manure on a piece of land on Prince Edward Island, you will see an impact from that. The grass will grow taller or the crops will grow better and I think that's very important that we look at. So certainly, soil fertility and management of cattle and manure is important when it comes to improving our crops and our ability to be a sustainably agricultural-oriented province.

As a result, increased beef production can complement our crop production here on Prince Edward Island, and manure is very organic and it's a very organic type of input into soil fertility. I'm not saying that the manure is certified organic because it depends on what was fed to the animals, but it still has an organic component of the way it is incorporated into our soil.

Then there's our unutilized pastures here on Prince Edward Island. The government has talked about land banks. We have lots of land that we have community pastures in now and they're extremely underutilized. I drive by community pastures in Ellerslie in my district, Poplar Grove, and there's no cattle in them at all. The fences are falling down, they're growing up bushes and some fields are in potato production.

If I look at just around my area – and I know the hon. Minister of Social Services and Families would be well aware, he was quite

active involved with the old LDC Corporation and managed a number of these properties and what went on with them – but we have community pastures in Lot 16, Northam, in my district we have the one in Ellerslie which is utilized and Northam is too. Poplar Grove, there's nothing going on in those particular properties from a beef or cattle perspective. Burton, there's a fairly large community pasture up there with some cattle. I believe one of the security people out there has some cattle up there. Wellington, the hon. Member from Evangeline-Miscouche there's a community pasture there. Loretta, fairly large community pasture there, once again probably underutilized. Those community pastures are under a management arrangement; each of these community pastures have a little committee or a board and the government sort of owns the properties but they're managed by those particular groups.

I've always sort of said that our PEI-branded beef is a superior product in the industry. I remember when I was minister of health, I was out to Vancouver and I was at a restaurant there and they had a number of different beef on the menu and I did ask the question: Which one would you recommend as the best beef here? There was Alberta beef, British Columbia beef, local beef, (Indistinct) PEI – you probably never heard of it, but PEI beef, that's the one we think is the best one here on the menu.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McNeilly: The best beef. Where's the beef? Where is it?

Mr. Henderson: I said I'm from Prince Edward Island and I probably might have had a hand in raising that beef at one time –

Mr. McNeilly: It's your cow.

Mr. Henderson: – but that's an example, though, that that is recognized in Vancouver, that some of the best beef in Canada comes from Prince Edward Island.

So in addition to our underutilized pasture, there's other issues that need to be addressed in improving livestock production, and once again the minister of agriculture, as a dairy farmer, understands some of the challenges

the dairy industry has when it comes to getting rid of their calves, their bull calves especially.

Obviously, if they're purebred and they've got some genetic contributions, they probably would retain them; but in most cases, our bull calves go off to the veal market in Quebec. With technology today and in the motion, I think the clerk had mentioned that what are you talking about sexting in cattle? No it's not the texting thing on sexting –

Some Hon. Members: [Laughter]

Mr. McNeilly: Holy cow, what are you (Indistinct)

Mr. Henderson: – but the technology has now evolved where you can predetermine the sex outcome of semen for breeding your cattle or your embryos.

With that, you're going to see the dairy producers – and I know the minister of agriculture is one of our superior dairy producers in Prince Edward Island – they are picking their top cows and making sure that those cattle are calving to female or heifer calves.

So now you look at: What do you do with the bottom end of your cattle herd? You could breed them to dairy breeds, but the opportunity is there to maybe put embryo transfers in that are beef breeds or to breed your cattle to beef breed and crossbreed them with the dairy herd, which I think opens up a whole opportunity to keep those cattle and retain them here to be produced and raised and keep that manure on PEI versus shipping those calves off to Quebec and losing the manure and the value that comes with that.

I think that's the type of issues that we have to make sure that we're thinking about when we see the future of this industry and how Prince Edward Island, which is a superior forage-growing province, and how we can develop that. So when I talked a little bit about the issues of price insurance, I asked the minister earlier when he was putting his budget estimates on about a price insurance scheme. He didn't like the word scheme.

Mr. McNeilly: No, he didn't like it.

Mr. Henderson: But the reality is we need to come up with a plan that gives some sense of price assurance for our cattle industry. If farmers are going to invest and younger farmers want to get into the beef industry, Mr. Speaker, they need to have some sense of security to do that. We provide – the PEI Grain Elevator Corporation provides contracting to produce grade. There's a number of provinces in Canada that do have a price assurance program through their crop insurance program.

So I think there is an opportunity to see what we can do to provide that guarantee to our producers. I would urge the minister to facilitate that discussion. I was just kind of getting started at it as minister and I think that the beef plant would be receptive to that. So if the Western provinces can do it, I don't think there's a reason why we couldn't do it. I certainly – I know there's some beef producers, there's a couple beef producers on your crop insurance board, and I'm sure they can provide some sense of expertise to the discussion, or set a discussion about a forward contract in arrangement with our industry.

We certainly need a very vibrant beef industry here on Prince Edward Island. We go to the Easter beef show to bring cattle into downtown Charlottetown and there's certainly – the community seems to gather around, it seems to be a good celebration. I also believe that this is a great opportunity for our new entering farmers. You can start off with three cows, four cows, ten cows, you can pick and choose the size of your operation and you can go after certain markets.

That's kind of how I started. I got into selling – peddling beef by the sides and quarters. There was an MLA in this Legislature that kind of got me started. His name was Bob Campbell. He used to do that.

And seemed like – so I bought a few cattle from him one time and started kind of doing the same and – but, you know, as time evolves people weren't as interested in making as big of purchase in cattle so he didn't see the people buying the half beef anymore or a quarter anymore.

So things evolve and things change, and we have to understand that, but I think our beef plant can now provide those products to our local places.

We certainly have that opportunity to expand and improve our environment by incorporating more cattle into our sector here. I think we can extend our crop rotations. That's great. That's something that is very good that we're all saying we can look at that opportunity. We can expand our forage industry here and we can look at the replenishing of micronutrients in our soil.

And I think when you look at what the opportunities could be for the dairy industry, I think there's certainly great supports that could be had there. Also, I think in the strategy I think we have to look at – I see the minister and his department they just put a tender out for their dead stock pickup. It's not part of the industry we need to talk about, but it is a component of what we need to consider here.

You know, the tender has just closed recently. I don't know what the outcome or who is successful, but I do think that there it is a possibility of things that we can look at around the energy from waste plant.

Right now on Prince Edward Island we have to take the specified – what's it called? The Specified Risk Material Disposal service, those products have to go to Quebec to be disposed of.

Could we adapt the energy from waste plant to dispose of those products? There's opportunities there. And it would save the beef plant a significant amount of money, and it would be an opportunity, once again, to keep that money in Prince Edward Island and to keep that service here.

You know, I wonder if Island Waste Management, could they be involved? There's no reason why – they have an expertise. Maybe there's some discussions that can had there. I'm hopeful when the minister makes his announcement on who the tender and how that's all going to work, but if they don't have some solutions or they haven't found, maybe that's part of a livestock sector strategy and how we can work from that.

Let's see. What have we got? Oh, yes.

Just to give you an example in my particular riding, I only have – I'm left with 10 beef farmers left in this province and two remaining feed lots many in my district. Those are all things that are really important to keep those farmers going and try to expand that.

And yet we can't forget about Burger Love.

Mr. McNeilly: Oh yes.

Mr. Henderson: It's one of the big things that over 100 restaurants participate, and they do a great job in providing a good promotion of our beef industry.

Islanders get behind that. It becomes a great restaurant opportunity, and I think there's other groups out there – there's the Irish Dexter Cattle industry in Prince Edward Island. A fellow by the name of Mike Lafortune out in North Milton did a great job to create a new organic. I think he's the only certified organic beef producer on Prince Edward Island. I was so impressed as minister to go visit his farm and see his operation.

And I see there's – in the MLA for Tyne Valley-Sherbrooke, there's Irish Dexter Cattle farm now in that particular area. I'm sure she has been there many times.

Once again in general terms, it's good to see that industry expanding.

With that, I'm very proud to move this particular motion and look forward to a seconder.

Mr. McNeilly: Oh, wow.

Speaker: I will ask the Member from Cornwall-Meadowbank to second debate.

Mr. MacDonald: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm not sure what's left to say.

Some Hon. Members: [laughter]

Mr. MacDonald: You know, we have prepared notes and I kept crossing mine out as he was reading so there's not a whole lot,

but the beef industry is an important industry.

I know growing up in the Cornwall area I can name likely at least five farms: the MacPhail farm, Godfrey farms, the Duncan farms, the MacKinley farms, and the Sanderson farm is likely one of the beef operations in PEI with close to 1,000 head.

So, it is really important and as the hon. member was reading I was looking at the open markets, and the difference in prices and he mentioned a couple of them. back in 2015, I think it was the price was \$2.95 and today it's \$2.33 listed on the open market.

So we can see the changes in that, the fluctuation. And the mad cow disease, it certainly was something that really decimated our beef industry, and it is making a comeback.

I had the opportunity to travel to China with Russ Mallard of the Atlantic Beef plant and we were over there with a couple of gentlemen and one of them was actually looking to establish a wagyu beef here that they could ship to Asia.

There is all kinds of opportunity and potential, but I really feel that we have to lend a hand as a province and as the government to ensure that we give every opportunity to these beef farmers to expose exactly what we do have here because the certified beef, you know, cattle are raised without use of added hormones. Cattle are never treated by antibiotics within is 100 days of the market. All farmers who raise cattle for Prince Edward Island certified beef have completed humane handling courses.

AAA or higher grade beef processed by Atlantic beef products. All animals are traceable from birth, as the hon. member said. Antibiotic free the last 100 days, I said that, I guess. Highest quality grass, grain, and potato selective feeds are fed to our cattle and I had the hon. member when he was minister of agriculture out to the Sanderson farm and I remember talking to Johnny Sanderson and I think the hon. member's father was –

An Hon. Member: It was me, actually.

Mr. MacDonald: Oh, it was you that sold them cows.

So there is a real spinoff here to the economy. It's an extremely important sector and I think we should endorse it every opportunity we get. We are called Canada's Food Island.

I know the department of agriculture is actually working on a day to recognize food for farming and maybe it's even a week that they're working on right now. I know when we left government that's where it was at, under this minister.

So I think it's extremely important and I would like to second this motion, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Land.

Mr. Thompson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I am truly impressed with the information that was given out here tonight. I too was stroking off stuff that I was going to say. As a cattle breeder myself I know the importance of this. It's the balance that is missing on this island right now in agriculture. We're missing that balance. We – I've never heard manure spoken so much in one night as tonight in the Legislature.

Some Hon. Members: [Laughter]

Mr. Thompson: It's what the soil needs and it's the balance that we're missing. The time is now. I know I would like – you just can't have the cow born instantly and be to market so it's going to take time. I wish we had started a little sooner, but we will get at it.

I am also a board member of the Canadian genetic evaluation board and I want to talk about genomics in the cattle breeding right now, just quickly I know the hour is coming.

Right now efficiency is a big word in the science of breeding cattle. So we can breed a cow that is the most efficient to get that calf from birth to market leaving the smallest footprint on this earth. So with climate change, science is in the agriculture business greater than ever. I just want to point that

out. I also met with the organic committee or association yesterday, actually, and we talked about building the organic beef herd to try to get more future farmers involved in that and I pushed the efficiency, the genomics part of that, I really did.

The dairy farmers have an opportunity to add added value to their male calves. We have that opportunity with the federal government giving away all the market and stuffs we need, we need to find other options and the beef plant is doing a tremendous job. I'm going for a tour of the beef plant in July, and I'm looking forward to that and we hope to have that value added product all the way.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature urges government to support development of the cattle livestock strategy in consultation with the industry stakeholders.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Hon. members, the hour has been called.

I'll call on Member from Morell-Donagh and the opposition –

Mr. Deagle: (Indistinct) opposition.

Speaker: Sorry, Government House Leader.

[Laughter]

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

That's the Tory time machine over there, I think.

I move, seconded by the hon. Minister of Social Development and Housing, that this House adjourn until July 10th, at 2 p.m.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Thank you, hon. members. See you in the afternoon.

The Legislature adjourned until Wednesday, July 10th at 2:00 p.m.