

# PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY



Speaker: Hon. Colin LaVie

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MATTERS OF PRIVILEGE AND RECOGNITION OF GUESTS .....	1027
STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS .....	1030
TIGNISH-PALMER ROAD (Role as an MLA-Tignish-Palmer Road) .....	1030
CHARLOTTETOWN-WEST ROYALTY (Provincial Budget) .....	1030
CHARLOTTETOWN-WINSLOE (Government Promises) .....	1031
RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS TAKEN AS NOTICE .....	1031
AGRICULTURE AND LAND (Farmers and cropping expenses) .....	1031
ORAL QUESTIONS .....	1032
CHARLOTTETOWN-VICTORIA PARK (Barriers for women in government) .....	1032
MERMAID-STRATFORD (Positive change for all Island women) .....	1033
CHARLOTTETOWN-BELVEDERE (Operational funds for PEI Coalition for Women in Government) .....	1033
SUMMERSIDE-WILMOT (Mandate for Minister of Status of Women) .....	1034
LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION (Private member re: Partnership for Growth) .....	1034
LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION (Balance advice from Partnership for Growth group) .....	1035
LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION (Protecting interest of Islanders re: Partnership for Growth) .....	1035
LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION (Balance advice from Partnership for Growth group (further) .....	1037
LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION (Partnership for Growth and economic plan deadline) .....	1037
O'LEARY-INVERNESS (Increased funding to watershed groups) .....	1038
O'LEARY-INVERNESS (Implementation of funds for livestock strategy) .....	1038
O'LEARY-INVERNESS (Government contingency fund) .....	1038
LEADER OF THE THIRD PARTY (Elimination of free drivers' licenses) .....	1039
LEADER OF THE THIRD PARTY (Changes to excise tax on fuel) .....	1040
LEADER OF THE THIRD PARTY (Government contingency fund (further) .....	1040
MONTAGUE-KILMUIR (Rate of vaping by Island youth) .....	1040
MONTAGUE-KILMUIR (Rules for use of vaping on PEI) .....	1041
MONTAGUE-KILMUIR (Increase of minimum age to purchase vaping products) .....	1041
CHARLOTTETOWN-VICTORIA PARK (Implementation of universal half-day kindergarten) .....	1042
CHARLOTTETOWN-VICTORIA PARK (Information/plans for half-day universal kindergarten program) .....	1043

CHARLOTTETOWN-VICTORIA PARK (Early childhood educators re: program).....	1043
STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS .....	1044
TRANSPORTATION, INFRASTRUCTURE AND ENERGY (Winter Warming).....	1044
TABLING OF DOCUMENTS.....	1045
ORDERS OF THE DAY (GOVERNMENT) .....	1046
ESTIMATES .....	1046
FINANCE .....	1046
COMMITTEE .....	1065
SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES .....	1065
SECOND READING AND COMMITTEE .....	1065
BILL 11 – Appropriation Act (Current Expenditures) 2019.....	1065
BILL 15 – Supplementary Appropriation Act 2019 .....	1067
THIRD READING .....	1068
BILL 5 – An Act to Amend the Regulated Health Professions Act .....	1068
BILL 6 – An Act to Amend the Drug Cost Assistance Act	
BILL 7 – An Act to Amend the Highway Traffic Act	
BILL 8 – An Act to Amend the Victims of Crime Act	
BILL 9 – An Act to Amend the Summary Proceedings Act	
BILL 10 – An Act to Amend the Trespass to Property Act	
BILL 13 – An Act to Repeal the Gulf Trust Corporation Act	
BILL 14 – An Act to Repeal the Bailable of Proceedings Act	
BILL 12 – An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act	
BILL 11 – Appropriation Act (Current Expenditures) 2019	
BILL 15 – Supplementary Appropriation Act 2019	
ROYAL ASSENT.....	1069
BILL 5 – An Act to Amend the Regulated Health Professions Act .....	1069
BILL 6 – An Act to Amend the Drug Assistance Cost Act	
BILL 7 – An Act to Amend the Highway Traffic Act	
BILL 8 – An Act to Amend the Victims of Crime Act	
BILL 9 – An Act to Amend the Summary Proceedings Act	
BILL 10 – An Act to Amend the Trespass to Property Act	
BILL 12 – An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act	
BILL 13 – An Act to Repeal the Gulf Trust Corporation Act	
BILL 14 – An Act to Repeal the Available Proceedings Act	
BILL 15 – Supplementary Appropriation Act	
BILL 101 – Government Advertising Standards Act	
BILL 102 – An Act to Amend the Climate Leadership Act	
BILL 104 – An Act to Amend the Employment Standards Act	
BILL 105 – An Act to Amend the Rental of Residential Property Act	
ADJOURNED.....	1070

The Legislature sat at 10:00 a.m.

Matters of Privilege and Recognition of  
Guests

**Speaker:** I missed you.

The hon. Premier.

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

It certainly is a great honour to be back in the Legislature this morning having spent the last few days away representing – a great privilege of representing the province at the Council of Federation meetings in Saskatoon.

To echo your comments, Mr. Speaker, that you left us with an individual each territorial leader and premier remarked on the wonderful campaign that we all ran here in Prince Edward Island and the collaboration that we're working through here in the Legislature.

So not only are Islanders proud and should we be proud in this Legislature, but all Canadians are watching and we're setting a very good example. It certainly is a great privilege for me to pass that back on to here.

I, too, want to welcome those into the public gallery. I see His Worship, Mayor Rowan Caseley from the town of Kensington, is here.

I understand our Clerk has some special guests here in the Legislature this morning, so it's a proud day for him. I hope you enjoy seeing your dad at work. He works really hard in here, and he keeps us all in line.

I will be heading up to the Summerside Lobster Carnival tomorrow evening as a guest of His Worship, Mayor Basil Stewart, and to take in the running of the Governor's Plate which is the first jewel of the Island's racing crown which will take place Saturday night. I have no doubt the Leader of the Third Party will be there. I have yet to be at a racetrack on Prince Edward Island when he wasn't there, so I assume he will be there. I know the Minister of Finance and the Deputy Premier will certainly be there, and likely many, many others so it's great.

I also have a great – just to boast, as a proud dad, I get to go to the Watermark tonight to see *Boeing, Boeing*. It's opening, and of course, my son, Jake, is one of the leads in that so really excited about that.

I'm going on about nine minutes sleep over the last two days, but I promised him I would stay awake and engage in that wonderful theatre, the Watermark and what it is. This is his second year there.

I encourage everyone to take the time this summer to get out to all of the wonderful theatres that we have across Prince Edward Island. There's so much talent on display that we all should be very proud of.

I, too, if what I've been following from afar is true that this could possibly be the final day sitting I would like to thank all of those who have it made it possible all of the staff, the security, the pages, and all of the individuals in this Legislature.

I think we all cut our teeth in here a little bit for the first time. Certainly, for me, it's been a wonderful experience and I really enjoyed working with all of those in here to develop what I think is good policy and good government for the people of Prince Edward Island.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

I'd also like to welcome everybody here today. I'd like to welcome the Premier back to the province. You're looking good on a nine-minute's sleep, Premier, I must say.

Thank you for representing us at the meetings. A very important role, of course, and I'm sure you made many good contacts with the other premiers of the other provinces across country, so thank you for that.

I'd like to welcome people to the gallery. I see George Hunter; Peter Meggs, Darragh Mogan; Peter Rukavina; His Worship Rowan Caseley; the Clerk's family; it's so

lovely to see everybody. It's just nice to see folks in the gallery.

I want to thank, as the Premier just did, all of the staff that make the Legislature work as flawlessly as it does. The clerks, the pages, the Speaker himself, the folks in security and in audiovisual, everybody who contributes to the Legislature being the professional and well-oiled machine that it is.

I'd also like to send out a shout-out to the staff in the office of the opposition – the official opposition. A group of, as we are here in the Legislature, largely a group of new people who came together and really supported us extraordinarily well. You never see them, but you hear their words expressed through our caucus here. They're a fabulous, lovely, gorgeous group of people. I want to express on behalf of the caucus of our appreciation for the work they do every day. Thank you.

I, too, will be at the Lobster Carnival tomorrow night. I'm going to scrape the rust off my trumpet and play with a group that I occasionally play within the tent there from 8:00 until 10:00 tomorrow night: The Groove Company.

So I'm really looking forward to that, and I'm sure I'll wander over to the track afterwards and watch the Governor's Plate and join the big crowds there for what is the biggest week in the summer in Summerside.

I wish everybody a wonderful, delightful summer here on our lovely island, and thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

Right off the bat, I'll make it unanimous: all three leaders of the three political parties will be in Summerside –

**Some Hon. Members:** [Laughter]

**Mr. Mitchell:** – tomorrow night to celebrate the lobster carnival and the Governor's Plate, so it'll be really good to be there.

On behalf of our entire third party caucus this morning, I would like to welcome a lot of familiar faces to our gallery. I know they've been mentioned, but I can't let it go without renaming a lot of the people that are here: Peter Meggs is here; Peter Rukavina, a tremendous advocate for autism in Prince Edward Island; a good friend of mine, Rowan Caseley, whom I got to know when I had the municipalities portfolio, and just a complete gentleman to work with, so it's great to have Mayor Rowan back in the House.

The family of the Clerk, wonderful to have you in here, I had my two granddaughters in here last Friday, always a pleasure to see the young children on Friday mornings in the gallery; and of course, my really good friend Wayne MacMillan is back again, as he often is on Friday mornings, and George Hunter made the trek down again, so it's always great to see all of you here as well.

As our third party caucus, we, too, as this may become the last day, would like to thank all the staff, clerks, pages, security who have made this a really good session in the Legislature; and to you, Mr. Speaker, I certainly want to thank you. Quite honestly, Mr. Speaker, I think you had a lot to do with the wonderful decorum of the House. You are a very firm but fair Speaker, and I think that shows.

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

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

**Mr. Mitchell:** And I, too, would like to thank the staff of the third party office. As the Leader of the Opposition says, our staff is working away in the office, nobody gets to see them, but they're very busy and all their work gets reflected right off the floor of the House so I do want to thank all of the people that are working for us in our offices.

As this may be the last day, it will be a chance to get out to see all our constituents in all our communities, but I do also want to say: I want to thank all the Members of the House. The debate has been wonderful on the floor of the Legislature this session, and I look forward to the fall session so we can get back at that.

But to all that are viewing from home today, I hope you enjoy the debate that may go on today on our budget, and I assure you that we will all be out in our communities very soon to listen to your needs; and if anybody in Summerside has any, tomorrow night is a get chance to get three ears.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

Today is a bit of an emotional day in the offices of Health and Wellness. Margaret Creamer is retiring after just a little over 40 years of exemplary service to the people of Prince Edward Island. Margaret began her career in 1978 as a temp at the department of fisheries. Over her career, she has worked in various departments such as fisheries, tourism, Public Service Commission, the women's secretariat, and lastly, health and wellness.

Margaret will be greatly missed, not only by her coworkers, but more importantly by her second family that she has gotten to know and we've gotten to know her over the years. I spoke to Margaret this morning and she has made a commitment to me. She has committed to occasionally stopping back into the office and replenishing the candy dish on her desk that has become a staple for her coworkers, and I thank her for that.

I would like to extend congratulations to Margaret. I hope she enjoys her retirement and stays in touch.

I would also like to just mention there's a very important event taking place at Government House this afternoon. It is the annual paramedic exemplary service awards, and I'm looking forward to attending that. I know some of my colleagues from across the floor will be there as well.

Last but not least, I just want to send out congratulations to all candidates that are running in the deferred election, which will take place on this Monday, and especially to Natalie Jameson. I know she's been out working hard, knocking at the doors, and she's very engaged with the constituents.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

It really is a pleasure to rise today and welcome everyone watching from District 18 Rustico-Emerald, as well as everyone to the gallery. It's great to see a full gallery, lots of familiar faces.

In District 18 Rustico-Emerald, people are extremely busy this time of year, with the farmers, the fishers, the tourism, they're out there working really hard and we should never forget that they're the ones who are driving our economy. They're the ones who are bringing in the dollars from off-Island and really allowing the taxes to be paid so that we can continue our good work in here and we can't forget when we're spending those taxpayer dollars how diligent we have to be, so I want to give a shout out to them.

In District 18 Rustico-Emerald, there's all kinds of arts and culture events that go on over the summer, especially in music, but I wanted to point out and give a shout-out to the River Clyde Pageant crew. They're already sold out. It's on July 27th, 28th and August 2nd to 4<sup>th</sup>, right in New Glasgow, my backyard. I have a lot of friends and neighbours of mine who participate, and not only is it an arts and culture event, but they bring great attention to the environment, in particular our waterways and the Clyde River.

So I wanted to thank Megan Stewart, one of the founders, as well as Emily Wells at the mill for all her support, but especially Ker Wells, who has played a big role and has been very ill, so I just wanted to recognize them for all the great work they do, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

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

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

Very quickly say hello to the people in the gallery, and a resident of District 14,

Darragh Mogan, is here. I want to let everybody know that Darragh served his life to give back to veterans, dedicated himself for many years at Veterans Affairs and he continues to work hard in the community in District 14 in watershed groups and I wanted to welcome him into the gallery.

Thank you.

**Speaker:** Thank you, hon. Members.

I just want to rise and welcome everyone to the gallery also, and those that are watching from home.

There's three people in the gallery I really want to recognize and our Clerk, Joey Jeffrey, his wife Jennifer is in the gallery and his two daughters Gracie and Claire are here with us today and they're going to see dad in action here after a bit and they want to see how hard dad really works, and he does work hard because he not only looks after his own at home but he also looks after the adults here, so dad's a real good guy and I hope you enjoy the proceedings here today.

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

#### Statements by Members

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

#### **Role as an MLA-Tignish-Palmer Road**

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

Since 2011, I've had the honour of being elected as my district's representative in this House three times. I've learned many lessons over the course of my career as a member of this Legislative Assembly. Perhaps the most important lesson I have learned is this: It is very important for members to follow through on their commitments.

Sometimes, of course, this can be difficult. I believe constituents understand those situations and they simply expect members to genuinely and energetically attempt to follow through on said commitments. To my mind, that is a vital part of the bargain between electors and their representatives, and faith in our democracy partly depends on the sincerity of that relationship.

During the recent election, the governing Conservatives made a series of commitments and voters accepted those commitments at face value. They believed that, 1) immediate rental assistance would be provided to tenants; 2) increased assistance would be offered to post-secondary students; and 3) small businesses would be helped by rapid tax reductions.

I have heard a degree of disappointment from many Islanders that so much of the bargain proposed by the Conservatives has been neglected and ignored.

Thank you.

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

#### **Provincial Budget**

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

Over the past several weeks, this Assembly has spent a fair amount of time examining our provincial budget. In many ways, this budget is a disappointment. There was an opportunity to be bold, embark on new ideas, but that did not happen. There was no activity tax credit, no further commitment to women's wellness.

The fact of the matter this year, the total provincial revenues are up \$156 million over last year, and let me just put that into perspective: 156 million works out to more than a thousand dollars for every child, woman and man in Prince Edward Island. Frankly, that provides the kind of financial flexibility required for government to fulfill its election commitment to Islanders.

The immediate Rental Assistance Program that was proposed by the Conservatives, that was 4.9 million; the enhanced assistance to post-secondary students, flat. The Conservatives said that would be 1.4 million. The reduction of a small business tax, again the Conservatives said that would be \$6 million.

So, there are three promises that would have cost \$12.3 million and that would have left government with nearly \$144 million in additional revenue. There was plenty of room for the government to meet its commitment to Islanders and the resources

were there to help tenants, small business operators and students.

Once again, I am disappointed in the way the government has so quickly abandoned its stated commitments to the voters of Prince Edward Island.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### Government Promises

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

During the sitting, we've talked a great deal about the commitments made by the governing Conservatives and their lack of action in keeping many of those promises.

**Mr. Myers:** (Indistinct) you guys a Snickers bar.

**Mr. Mitchell:** I understand that at times it is difficult to be all things to all people. But, this is the challenge of governing.

In this case, the governing Conservatives were left with a very strong set of books and as the Member from Charlottetown-West Royalty said earlier, revenues are up \$156 million over last year.

So there is ample flexibility for government to respect its promises and follow through on its commitments to Islanders,

Furthermore, this government has also reserved an \$18 million contingency fund with which it could fulfill some more of its promises.

In fact, three of the most notable promises made by this government could be kept simply by using the contingency fund.

As the Member from Charlottetown-West Royalty said earlier, the commitments made to tenants, post-secondary students and small businesses would cost an estimated \$12.3 million which is substantially less than the money in the contingency fund.

I would remind members on that side of the House that they have repeatedly said the Island's housing situation is a crisis, and is a

crisis not the absolute best time to use a contingency fund? Isn't that the very definition of a crisis?

I would urge government to reconsider its priorities. If you want to run a surplus, you can use the contingency fund. The money is there thanks to the strong books that were left by the previous government.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

### Responses to Questions Taken as Notice

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

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

Yesterday, July 11<sup>th</sup>, I took a question in notice: What percentage of farmers use the Finance PEI operating credit to cover annual cropping expense?

Finance PEI is a Crown Corporation under the Ministry of Economic Growth, Tourism and Culture. It administrates financing programs to help assist businesses across PEI often working with other financial institutions, to help businesses secure necessary working capital, to grow and expand their operations.

Finance PEI priority sectors for financing are small businesses, manufacturing and processing, information technology, renewable energy, agriculture, fisheries, aquaculture and tourism operations.

Finance PEI has more than 1,000 clients in the loan portfolio of approximately \$2 million. The finance loan portfolio is primarily lending to businesses to assist infrastructure. This includes acquisitions of land, equipment, facilities – which are fully repayable and secure by assets and farm businesses.

As of March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2019, Finance PEI had \$27 million in capital term loans with farmers financing land, equipment and infrastructure and an additional \$3.5 million in working capital loans with Island farmers for working capital.

It should be noted that the farm operation typically works with chartered banks to obtain the necessary financing for planting

crops. These financial situations provide the farm with their general operating bank account, as well as operating line of credits, which typically is secured by crop and inventory and receivables.

Finance PEI annual report can be found on the website [financepei.ca](http://financepei.ca) under the reports and publications.

Thank you.

### Questions by Members

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

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

Yesterday I asked the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women about a request to provide the PEI Coalition for Women in Government with long-term operating funding to help support their work, to break down barriers that women face when seeking public office.

### **Barriers for women in government**

I also described to her and this whole Legislature my own trepidation and some negative reactions I received when I decided to become a candidate. The minister said in response and I quote: As a woman, I understand the barriers that are there, perceived barriers in some ways in my mind, but barriers nonetheless, for some people.

To the minister, could you please elaborate on what you meant by that comment?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister Responsible for the Status of Women.

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

I, in no way, meant to belittle your experience getting here, but in my own mind and I think with the barriers that you faced, a lot of them maybe were perceived because you were successful in making it to the Legislature and I know the important work of the PEI Coalition for Women in Government to show women that some of these barriers are perceived. If you make up your mind to do what you want to do, to work hard and achieve a goal that it is possible.

Through the PEI Coalition for Women in Government, they help with that.

In no means was I belittling your experience or any other women's experience. It's just my personal opinion that it's a tool in the toolbox for women to help with all of those barriers.

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

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

To be quite frank I was surprised and offended and saddened by the minister's comments yesterday.

I am one of those women that she flippantly dismissed as "some people who perceive barriers" as are all the women in the green caucus. We have all experienced barriers and double standards and these barriers are not simply figments of our imagination. The minister doesn't have to take our word for it; there is significant research and data on this issue.

Question to the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women: Do you believe that women face systemic barriers or is it all in our heads?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister Responsible for the Status of Women.

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

I'm not saying that it's all in your heads, what I said was: some of the barriers that we do face are perceived. We all have different experiences, our journeys here are different. I ran four times to get where I'm at, I worked hard, I had a goal, I persisted with that goal and I succeeded.

I'm just saying that we all have different journeys, some people think that they have barriers in place and it doesn't matter what career you go for, there are barriers if that's the way you look at it. It's as simple as that.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Mermaid-Stratford.

**Ms. Beaton:** The minister also said: it takes a different person to do what we're doing and everyone in this House can agree to that

and you have to be a strong individual who can stand up for your rights. We all need to do that.

I caution language that can be construed as blaming women who experience systemic barriers, for not being strong enough to sit in this Legislature. Indeed, the ministers' entire statement is based on the premise that the Legislature is just fine the way that it is and what we really need is to find stronger women.

I'm a single mother with a nine-year-old and that comes with its own list of barriers, perceived or not. I certainly belong here. This House needs to represent all Islanders.

### **Positive change for all Island women**

Question to the minister: will you advocate for positive change for all Island women?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister Responsible for the Status of Women.

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

I, in no way, meant to offend any of my colleagues across the floor. I've been out campaigning with our female candidate in District 9 who is working very hard to get here as well. We all had the same number of women running basically in our districts, it's not up to me or you to who people decide to support, we all have a different journey, we all have different paths. I'm just stating how I feel as person.

Yeah, there are barriers, there are barriers for everyone in this House regardless of what you're doing and I'm just saying that was my experience, you have different experiences, we have different paths. In no way was I belittling anyone across the floor or any woman. I just look at it as: if you decide you want to do something, you can do it. There are supports through the PEI Coalition for Women in Government to help you get there.

But I like to turn it around and make it a positive thing saying: the coalition is there. It's not just about barriers; it's about their supporting women to get them where they want to be. It's as simple as that. We all have different perspectives. You might not

agree with what I have to say, but that doesn't mean that my opinion doesn't count either.

So, thank you.

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

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

In response to the original question my colleague asked about funding for the PEI Coalition for Women in Government, the minister said and I quote: There are a number of asks across the province. As the Minister of Finance we decided where the funding should go and what the priorities are. We talk health, we talk education, everything is important and I will stand by that. We will do our very best to fund all the NGOs that we possibly can.

But the question was asked to her as the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women, not as the finance minister. It is her job to advocate in Executive Council for the priorities of all women. In her answer, she gave no indication that she felt any special responsibility to represent the women of PEI; not just the women in this Legislature, but the women of PEI.

### **Operational funds for PEI Coalition for Women in Government**

A question to the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women: What arguments did you make in Executive Council to support the requests for long-term operational funds for the coalition?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister Responsible for the Status of Women.

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

I didn't realize that the fact that I am the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women was going to become an issue for the women across the floor. I bring my own perspective to this job and I'll continue to do that.

And if you're that much in support of women, maybe you'd like to go out and help campaign with Natalie Jameson for the District 9 election on Monday.

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

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

One of the things that was most apparent on election night was that the Green Party elected five times as many women as the other parties. I think part of that is because our party recognizes some of the systemic barriers that women face and try to put systems in place to help candidates overcome those.

I'd love to see government doing something similar and I absolutely realize that a lack of women in caucus presents some challenges for government and the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women doesn't seem to be as familiar with some of the research on some of the issues that women face.

#### **Mandate for Minister of Status of Women**

I ask the Premier: What is the mandate for the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women?

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier King:** Well, Mr. Speaker, it's the job of the Deputy Premier, the Minister of Finance and the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women to set a high goal and set a high target and she does that every day. She is a hard working individual who takes a back seat to nobody who stands up for herself and doesn't need anybody to stand up here and I'm half offended that I have to get up and try to look like I'm defending when she doesn't need that. She's up here – she has an opinion and she sharing that opinion.

We work very hard in here to attract female candidates; we worked extremely hard. We had seven; we lost six of them in the election. Am I supposed to tell the people of PEI that they made the wrong choice? There's two women and two men running in the District 9 deferred election; am I supposed to say they're only supposed to vote for one gender or the other? We have to allow democracy to work.

We work had every day to put the best we can to put systems in place to knock down

the barriers to make this place the most inclusive it can be. At the top of that leadership is the Deputy Premier, the Minister of Finance and the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women. And I'm glad to have her at my right wing.

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

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

I'd like to return again to the issue of the Member from the Morell-Donagh's special assignment with the Partnership for Growth and the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

A couple of weeks ago I brought up the issue as to whether the work of the Member from Morell-Donagh would be FOIPPable. The very next day the member told the House that had a gov.pe.ca email address for the Partnership for Growth work. I then submitted a written question asking when that gov.pe.ca account was created and I thank the Minister of Finance for the very prompt answer I got back. In fact, I'll take this opportunity to once again, thank government for the prompt responses, both to Questions Taken as Notice and also to the written questions.

It turns out that the account was requested the same day that I asked the FOIPP question in the House and it was up and running the very next day.

#### **Private member re: Partnership for Growth**

Question to the Premier: Do you think that this shows perhaps you haven't considered the full implications of putting a private member in charge of this process?

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier King:** Well as I have answered this question many times in this Legislature throughout this session, the idea is to work with a group of individuals from across Prince Edward Island, now up to 21-22 member groups, to put together a plan, a strategic vision that we can build for the economy of Prince Edward Island. I put in charge of that, to get the discussion started,

to get the discussion going, the Government House Leader and the Member from Morell-Donagh, who is one of the talented and gifted individuals that I have the pleasure to work with.

In no way are we trying to have some type of sinister plan to keep information from everything. The hon. member has told me, whatever emails you want; he will give them to you. He now has an email set up that you can FOIPP at any time, nobody is trying to hide anything from you and I don't know why you continue down this path.

I don't quite understand the question, why you think this is such a sinister move, we all agreed to it in the lead up to the election – we all agreed to do what we are doing. I don't understand what the challenge is here.

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

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

Last week the Premier took exception to my characterizing the Partnership for Growth group as a lobby group and he said and I quote: I see them individually as duty bound by the lobbyist act, that they have to lobby individually, but I see them when they come together in this group for this strategic partnership, I see them as partners with government and I'm very happy to lead a government that wants to work with all Island groups to build a strong economy.

### **Balance advice from Partnership for Growth group**

Once again to the Premier: Do you really believe that an organization that exists to represent the interests of private sector business can provide you with balanced advice on economic wellbeing and true prosperity?

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier King:** If the question is: do I believe the individuals who make up these group are in a great position to provide great advice to develop a strong economy on Prince Edward Island then the answer to that is yes, everyday and twice on Sunday. Yes I do.

I feel very privileged to work with them and I'm very honoured that they have come together and all three parties in the lead up to the election agreed to work with them. As the party that won the most seats that has formed a minority government, we've honoured that commitment and we're trying to collect information from all of these individuals.

As I understand from my colleague from Morell-Donagh, that group is growing and it's growing and more people are being invited to provide direction to this government, to this Legislature and to this province. I couldn't be more grateful for the fact that they've come together to do that and I feel like we're in very good hands with those individuals.

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

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

After our debate last week, a well known Island lawyer and *Jeopardy* champion, I might add, tweeted the following thing and I quote: admittedly, 21 ducks all flocked together don't create one giant duck – you'll have to restrain yourself here Mr. Speaker – but their individual status as ducks and the fact that the flocks collective interests and motivations are those of a giant duck, can't be questioned.

He went on to say: and if you're a fish, or a snail or a worm, you may not want the giant duck to have special or privileged access to whoever sets all the rules for your pond.

Since I can't address a question to the [partnersforgrowth.gov.pe.ca](mailto:partnersforgrowth.gov.pe.ca) email address, I'll ask the Premier.

### **Protecting interest of Islanders re: Partnership for Growth**

What is your plan Mr. Premier? I know you like a good story and an allegory, what is your plan to protect the interests of the fish and the snails and the worms?

**Mr. McNeilly:** The birds and the bees, too.

**Mr. MacEwen:** Here it comes. Here it comes.

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier King:** Well that's quite the analogy, I must say and of course the *Jeopardy* champion is a very bright and accomplished individual.

What I would continue to say is that a group has come together and approached the government – has approached all three parties, which all three parties committed to during the election, all four parties actually, to do exactly what we're doing.

What they're doing is trying to provide some input and trying to provide some direction as a go-forward plan to make sure our economy is strong.

These are groups that are from all across Prince Edward Island, they're represented from the Evangeline region, they're represented from the eastern region, they're represented from the city and when the Charlottetown group comes in to lobby for their own specific interests, that is a different issue.

When they all come together to provide a broad vision, the partners in this province with the Islanders and with the government and as I continue to say: I'm very glad to have them and I feel like we're in good hands.

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

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

Last Friday in Question Period, the Premier said: From my understanding, the 21 groups that have worked to develop the strategic partnership group have worked with 50 community groups from all across the Province of Prince Edward Island. They are collaborating. They are working and trying to bring more people involved, essentially what you just said there.

So basically, Mr. Premier, you will allow the ducks to decide who should participate in this process.

As the local lawyer, also *Jeopardy* champion, said on Twitter: There's nothing wrong with being a duck. Ducks are

legitimate members of the larger pond ecosystem, but they're only a part of it. They are not the whole. A pond run entirely based on duck values and interests is not a pond that's sustainable.

Aren't you concerned, Mr. Premier, that by giving so much power to the ducks that the fish and the snails and the worms will be left out? Or perhaps worse, even eaten by the ducks?

**An Hon. Member:** (Indistinct) the Mighty Ducks.

**Speaker:** The hon. hon. Premier.

**Premier King:** Mr. Speaker, I'm going on a nine-minute sleep and I'm getting hard to follow along with the analogies here.

**An Hon. Member:** You're not alone.

**Premier King:** But, what I continue to say is, there's a group that's offering to give us input and to offer some insights into the direction that government can choose. This isn't just a blank slate where they can just come in and write government policy. They are offering direction, and isn't that what we should be doing in a collaborative government? Isn't that what we should be doing?

Listening to Prince Edward Islanders who are on the frontlines every day; who could give better direction on potential policy going forward than the people doing it every day?

I've heard for the extent of this Question Period and the extent of this legislative session: Why don't you listen to the nurses and the doctors on the frontlines? Why don't you listen to the teachers and the TAs and all of those on the frontlines in education? Heaven forbid, we're asking the people on the frontlines, who drive the economy of this every day, and now we shouldn't do that?

So I'm confused, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

In the Legislature, the Premier also stated and I quote: I don't know why the Leader of the Opposition is being so opposed to this process when you committed to the partnership of growth during the election, that you would do the very same thing – and you've sort of reiterated that statement today.

Actually, that's not entirely accurate. In our letter in response to the partnership's demands we stated – and this is from our letter back to the partnership and I quote: A Green government would commit to the creation of an economic plan. Reflective of our inclusive view of the economy, this plan would be developed, not only with the private sector, but with the community sector, with municipalities, Indigenous communities, post-secondary institutions and so on. We believe this plan should not be rushed. It should be developed with care. We would take the time necessary to achieve a plan that views the economy not in a silo, but as integrated with all other facets of Island life.

#### **Balance advice from Partnership for Growth group (further)**

A question to the Premier: In hindsight, don't you think that you should have taken time to consider the broader context rather than immediately promise to do whatever the partnership asked of you?

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier King:** Mr. Speaker, quite ironically that's exactly what this process is actually doing. It's actually what they're doing. The group is getting broader. It's getting broader and it's getting broader, and there are people coming together from all across Prince Edward Island who want to provide input just as the Leader of the Opposition has suggested.

I think I'm standing up here saying we agree. This is what we're doing. This is exactly what we're doing and I look forward to the process as it rolls out. We committed to rolling it out within six months and we have done that, and now the process is working through under the experienced and expert leadership of the Government House Leader and the Member from Morell-Donagh.

As I say, when you bring this collection of Islanders together, I think we're in good hands and I can't wait to see what comes from it.

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

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

I realize we're trying really hard to disagree agreeably here, Premier, and perhaps – I wasn't going to say anything more about ducks but maybe birds of a feather do indeed flock together.

Let's look at that six month timeline that you just described, Mr. Premier. Today is July the 11<sup>th</sup>, so two months since you formed the Cabinet, which was on May the 9<sup>th</sup>, and in that time the Government House Leader has had several meetings with the Partnership for Growth and they are formulating their terms of reference.

So that leaves four months to finalize the terms of reference, to strike a commission, to conduct consultations with all the fish and the snails and the worms and to report back to this Legislature, and to have a spirited debate, as you have said. Then after all of that, you're going to finalize an economic plan.

#### **Partnership for Growth and economic plan deadline**

Premier: Do you think you can actually achieve all of those things by November the 9<sup>th</sup>?

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier King:** Mr. Speaker, I think the Leader of the Opposition is a little bit confused talking about ducks and feathers and worms, and I think he's missing the point.

We committed to within the first six months of our mandate to begin to work with the Partnership for Growth which is exactly what we've done. Now they're working on a terms of reference, now they're working on how they can broaden this group and I even understand from the leader they're going to meet with all the leaders.

You'll have your own input to be able to put forward direction and isn't that what we're supposed to be doing here in a collaborative government, getting the input from the Leader of the Opposition and his party, getting the input of the Leader of the Third Party and his party and getting the input of all Islanders. Isn't that what we're supposed to be doing?

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

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

During the recent budget consultations with the third party, the third party requested increased funding over what was committed in past years directly for our 70-some watershed groups across Prince Edward Island.

#### **Increased funding to watershed groups**

Premier, did you convey instructions to your Minister of Environment, Water and Climate Change to increase funding directly to watershed groups as requested by the third party?

**Premier King:** Well I feel missed here this week and I feel very glad to be back –

**Ms. Compton:** Oh you were.

**Premier King:** Look, as we've continued to say throughout this session – and I went through this point by point with the Clerk of the Executive Council and my chief of staff while we were away travelling – 87% of the budget that we tabled in this Legislature was put together in draft form by the Member from Cornwall-Meadowbank and I would say he did a marvelous job with that and deserves credit for what he's done, not constant criticism from his colleagues over why he did it.

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

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

**Mr. Henderson:** But it is the other 13% that we have some issues with.

[Laughter]

**Mr. Henderson:** The third party also requested funding for a livestock strategy and during the budget collaborative process with the party leaders, yet during questioning to the Minister of Agriculture and Land during in his budget estimates, we see no budget allocation for this purpose.

#### **Implementation of funds for livestock strategy**

Premier, did you convey instructions to your Minister of Agriculture and Land to find funds for the implementation for the livestock strategy?

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier King:** Mr. Speaker, in response to the question, we're funding the maritime strategy as the hon. member knows and as the hon. House leader said, that it was conveyed to your House leader far in advance that that wasn't one we were going to be able to get at this year.

Three parties were working together, we asked for your input, from the hon. House leader from the Green Party, 10 initiatives came forward, we touched all 10, we didn't get it to the full extent that they wanted but we touched all 10.

The inputs that came from the third party, we implemented, you've got 87% in there, you're doing pretty well I would have to say.

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

**Mr. Henderson:** Premier, one of the biggest issues here, you keep talking about the issue of collaboration, we hear it everywhere you go, you say: collaboration, when it comes to your model of government for PEI.

Yet, it seems that on the opposition side, both sides over here, all it is it seems to be words with no action.

We know that government has set aside an \$18 million contingency slush fund.

#### **Government contingency fund**

Question to the Premier: Will you direct your Minister of Finance to use the

governments \$18 million contingency fund and provide the requested funds by this party – and I’m thinking might even be supported by other parties here – to fund our watershed groups and to provide a livestock strategy and fulfill your commitment on the words of collaboration, which you boast about on every occasion to the parties on this side of the Legislature.

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier King:** I boast about collaboration because in six weeks the most collaborative Legislature in the history of this building is in action.

Collaboration is when you sit across the table and you say: what do you want in the budget? You tabled 12 budgets and never asked any party what they wanted in the budget. Not once.

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

**Premier King:** That’s not collaboration, this is collaboration, when you sit here and you say: listen, collaboration is give me your ideas, give me your issues, give me your initiatives, it doesn’t mean you get them all. That wouldn’t be collaboration would it? That would be all your way and we’ve seen that for 12 years.

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

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

I have a question to the Premier, who, with all this talk of ducks is very plucky today.

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

**Mr. Mitchell:** And he’s talking like he has a majority on that side of the House as well.

I would like to welcome the Premier back and trust his meetings this week were very productive.

During the Premier’s absence, there were several matters raised by his Cabinet members that are quite frankly, very confusing to us over on this side of the House.

### **Elimination of free drivers’ licenses**

For example, the minister of environment appeared to be opposed to his own budget. He raised the idea of eliminating the free drivers’ licenses and retrieving the revenue for other spending.

Premier, do you agree with this approach?

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier King:** What a great question to be welcomed back to, Mr. Speaker.

I would say that if we are going to be serious about the reduction of carbon, and we all are because you all went out when the microphone was there and said you believe in it and you went from 1.4 to 1.2.

**An Hon. Member:** Where were you?

**Premier King:** So you have to – I (Indistinct) right here from the start right here and you can ask the Member from Summerside-Wilmot – absolutely. I’ll tell you what, this is what it comes down to, you can continue to pay people to drive or you can continue to put initiatives in place to reduce carbon.

This Legislature ratified a bill brought forward by the opposition party to be more aggressive with our reduction targets and you can’t continue to do that under the former plan that you’ve done. So yes, we are looking at taking that money and diverting it from making it easier for people to drive and to reward those who take initiatives to reduce carbon, which all Prince Edward Islanders want.

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

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

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

Islanders will certainly be confused by that because it wasn’t in the PC platform.

The same minister also seemed to be warm to the idea of raising the excise tax on fuel. But to be frank, the minister of the environment appears to have the ability to contradict himself very easily.

**Changes to excise tax on fuel**

Question to the Premier: Are you considering any changes to the excise tax on fuel next year?

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier King:** Mr. Speaker, I would say at this time, no.

But, one of the things we have to look at as a responsible Legislature is how we go about reducing the targets, which you all voted for. How do you go about reducing the targets from 1.4 to 1.2?

I think a standing committee is going to meet on that and figure out ways of how we do that and as the minister said; everything has to be on the table because we have to be serious about how we go about doing this.

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

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

Members of the Cabinet also suggested this past week of recreating the Island Community Fund, ending assessments for our Island students, and a brand new move toward carbon neutrality.

**Mr. Trivers:** (Indistinct) get your facts straight.

**Mr. Mitchell:** But, we also discussed a \$17 million contingency fund that was kept by the government.

**An Hon. Member:** Slush fund.

**Mr. MacEwen:** It's yours.

**Government contingency fund (further)**

**Mr. Mitchell:** Will the Premier be using those contingency funds to pay for any of those contradictions, and many of them that were raised in the House this week while you were away?

**Mr. McNeilly:** Yeah, a lot (Indistinct)

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier King:** Well Mr. Speaker, as the member would know, a contingency fund is there in case you need something. It's a responsible measure put in place by the wonderful Member from Cornwall-Meadowbank, who must be cringing sitting there listening to his colleagues run him down for wonderful work, three straight budgets which he can put his hand on in surplus, and you're running him down. I can't believe it. I don't know – come over former minister, come over where you're welcome and appreciated. It would be so wonderful to have you over here.

A contingency fund is for a contingency if you need it. You can't go out and spend it. One of your members is calling it a slush fund. You're calling it a contingency fund – it's a responsible form to make sure that the Island is in good hands, and thanks to the former minister – the Member from Cornwall-Meadowbank, the Island is in good financial situation.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

**Mr. MacEwen:** Here are some good questions coming.

**Mr. Deagle:** Well Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure how I go after all of this excitement.

Premier, you got a break from me this time. I'm not at you.

For many years, I've been active in minor hockey and soccer, as both a coach and referee. One thing I have noticed in recent years is what seems to be a dramatic increase in vaping by Island youth. There's been a significant and troubling increase in youth vaping in Canada.

A study public in the British medical journal found that those 16 to 19-years-old, vaping has increased by a stunning 74% from 2017 to 2018.

**Rate of vaping by Island youth**

A question to the health minister: Do you have any figures on the rate of vaping by Island youth as we do with regular smoking?

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

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

I am, as well, quite concerned about the increase in vaping within our youth population.

Just recently, there was a report done, a study that showed that upwards of 26% of our high school students admitted to vaping and I find that extremely troubling.

Thank you.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

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

E-cigarettes were originally targeted for adult smokers who have not been able to quit and I know that vaping is seen by some as a way to reduce direct tobacco use but I feel it seems to be geared or targeted towards teens.

This study also found that cigarette smoking among 16-19-year-olds during the same time period increased by 45%.

Minister, does this disturbing trend disturb you and what are the current rules around the use of vaping on Prince Edward Island?

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

### **Rules for use of vaping on PEI**

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

Again, as I said previously, it's very alarming, the rapid increase of our youth participating in vaping. As the hon. member said, you only have to be around high schools, public places where youth gather and you can see this trend.

The research isn't completely in yet on the harmful effects of vaping but we know that the ultrafine particles that are consumed through this process are getting deep into the lung tissues of our youth and any individual that does participate in this.

I am greatly concerned about this; the Canadian Cancer Society as well is doing

research on it and advocating the many programs to try to greatly reduce this practice.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

Being around the rink and the soccer fields all the time, I've seen youth first hand that have started vaping and it really has become an epidemic, I believe. The results of this study regarding youth trends is a tremendous concern given the progress that has been made in recent years to reduce youth smoking. We need to avoid a new generation of teenagers being addicted to nicotine through vaping products.

### **Increase of minimum age to purchase vaping products**

Minister, will you take action on this and look at increasing the minimum age to purchase vaping products to 21 or perhaps we can take leadership and even look at banning the sale of vaping products on Prince Edward Island?

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

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

At this point in time, we are working closely with the office of the public health officer, we're not quite at the stage yet where we would either increase the age or outright ban it. I remember not that long ago here in the Legislative Assembly when I was on the other side of the floor, we were bringing measures forward to prohibit flavoured tobacco products, which we had great success here in the House in doing so.

Currently the legal age for obtaining these products is 19, this government has invested money into the cessation programs and one of those particular measures is we are increasing the – if you want to take it as a mystery shopping program, so that we can better go into the retail outlets to ensure that our retailers are abiding by the laws of

Prince Edward Island and they're not selling vaping products to minors.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

The idea for a universal half-day preschool for four-year-olds is the result of recommendations by the Margret and Wallace McCain foundation and Chances who completed a six year research project to document the impact of expanding access to a range of quality integrated early childhood services focused on at risk families.

### **Implementation of universal half-day kindergarten**

Question to the Premier: could you please confirm and let the House know if there are any other factors to make this an election promise?

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier King:** Well as the hon. member has alluded to, I mean the extensive study was taken by what I would say are two tremendous organizations who are committed to doing the best we can for children.

The conversations that I've had, not just with the Margaret and Wallace McCain foundation but those in the industry is that the earlier that we can get our kids into a system where they can do some (Indistinct) based learning on a small level like a part day, the better chance for success going forward. That's why we have committed to working with chances and others to do this.

These are experts in my mind, these are the people who do this every day and it's something that we're really trying to do cautiously at the beginning. There was a major push to do a full day, which we didn't think was the right step going forward. But we do think with currently 80-82% of four-year-olds are already in some kind of care that we thought that this was a logical step. It's a way to help families get to part of their day for the daycare services that some families need.

One of the issues that I heard on the campaign trail from many young parents were: Would it be mandatory? I said: Absolutely not. If you felt it wasn't the best thing for your child that you certainly would be within your right to hold them back or find other opportunities. But we really wanted to try to do the very best we can to give our kids that start they need going forward. I think there's a lot of details to be worked out going forward for sure. But that was the basis of the commitment that we had made.

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

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

You beat me to one of my questions so I'm just going to jump to it just to clarify.

You're saying this is not a mandatory program?

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier King:** Yeah, I think, Mr. Speaker, what we had committed to going forward was to try to this year work with the professionals within the industries and some of the experts to actually build what the program could look like, what expansions that other facilities might need.

We already have a number of these early childhood education facilities across Prince Edward Island, so we think that's the best place to implement this. But we want to make sure we have their input as well, so that's why we didn't rush to do it for this year. We wanted to have a year to work with the professionals to figure out what is the best going forward.

But I don't think – I mean my youngest is now 12, I don't think when he was four, this might have been the perfect thing for him. Our middle child, I think it would have been wonderful for her, but I think all kids are different, all children are different and I think the parents have to have a final say within that.

I don't think the idea would be to make it mandatory. As I say, I think if you have a hesitation that maybe you could find other options or you could make the best decision

for yourself. I do see it evolving going forward and I would hope as many people take the opportunity to get a good start here. But no, I don't think the best interest is to make it mandatory.

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

**Ms. Bernard:** I appreciate that because one of my concerns was, the fact that as a parent, I would have never have chosen that for my children and that we take away that choice for parents and that's not okay.

The other part before I get to my question is on – we can't afford to feed the kids that are in the system now. We've got work to do in our school system, so my fear is taking this money to burden an already burdened system is problematic. I recognize that the government is on the data collection phase of this proposed project.

My hope is that if this government is going to go ahead with putting our four-year-olds in a half day universal pre-school program that the implementation of such a program is done so extremely cautiously with care and concern.

We must consider the ripple effects and the possibility of other problems resulting from such an implementation. There must be research done, jurisdictional scans complete; there must be consultation with parents and educators at all levels.

### **Information/plans for half-day universal kindergarten program**

Question to the Minister of Education and Lifelong Learning: Can you please provide us with any information or plans you have so far in terms of this program?

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

**Mr. Trivers:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker and thanks for the question.

Obviously, we are the very beginning stages of moving forward. One thing we really do need to be cognizant of is that there are several issues in early learning. We talked about the early childhood educators, making

sure we have enough of them as well as the earned wage – good for the work they do.

Really, the thing we have to be cognizant of is, we have one of the best early childhood development systems in Canada. I believe we are actually ranked number one.

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

**Mr. Trivers:** As we move forward we want to make sure we're not impacting that.

The first step really is to get this special advisor to the Premier in place who's going to be leading this work. We're very close to that right now. I don't think I can make any announcements today, but thank you.

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

**Ms. Bernard:** I always hear that we have the best early years programs and I hope people are looking at that with the lens of well being, because when you're working in early childhood it's – anyway – okay.

The official opposition has spoken to many early childhood educators and daycare owners. All of them area already struggling to maintain enough staff and cannot imagine staffing a program such as this. Their core issues are around wages and staff retention, local access to educational programming that advance early childhood educators and care for our special needs children.

### **Early childhood educators re: program**

Question to the Minister of Education and Lifelong Learning: Can you please inform the House what you heard from early childhood educators when you consulted with them about this program?

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

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

The early childhood educators I've talked to, I'm getting a similar message to what the member across just brought forward.

There are some major challenges here with people entering the program and staying in

the program. There are challenges with ECEs that are moving to become educational assistants, and it has to do sometimes with wages. These are all parts of the areas we need to address and that's one of the things that we're going to be doing as part of the first 1,000 days and the pre-k development.

I do have a nice table – it's an early childhood education report from 2017 that looks at all of the provinces across Canada and it outlines the specific areas where PEI did come out on top and I can share that with the member as well.

**Speaker:** Thank you, members.

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

[End of Question Period]

#### Statements by Ministers

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

#### **Winter Warming**

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

It may be mid-July, and cold weather is far from our minds, but now is the time to get ready to save money on energy this winter.

efficiencyPEI has a variety of rebates available to all Islanders. However, we know that Islanders on a low-to-moderate income may need some extra help making their homes more energy efficient and winter-ready, and we are here to help.

efficiencyPEI's Winter Warming incentives are available to Islanders – including renters - with a total household income of \$50,000 or less.

These Islanders can have an efficiencyPEI tradesperson complete a number of air sealing measures free of charge. This includes caulking and sealing of electrical fixtures.

Winter Warming also includes free energy efficient items and services such as: heat pump installation, installation of a programmable thermostat, low-flow showerheads, free vouchers for cleaning

your heating systems, putting in LED light bulbs and other electricity savings measures.

During the visit, the efficiencyPEI tradesperson will sit down with the homeowner or renter to discuss even more energy efficiency options.

Measures like these can have a big impact on the amount of heat lost and improve the comfort of Islanders.

Losing less heat means Islanders save money on energy costs, while helping the environment and reducing emissions.

Anyone interested in reducing their energy costs this winter should get in touch with efficiencyPEI.

More information is available at [efficiencypei.ca](http://efficiencypei.ca), at the efficiencyPEI's office at 69 Belvedere Avenue in Charlottetown, at the efficiencyPEI office at 120 Heather Moyse Drive in Summerside, or at any Access PEI location across the Island.

Small changes can go a long way toward making our homes more comfortable, affordable and environmentally friendly.

This program can help make a big difference in the lives of people who need the most help.

Today, I would like to challenge all members of this Assembly to reach out to the people in your district who you know are struggling and can benefit from this type of work. You know your districts and the needs within your district, so I want each of you to get the word out to those people about the assistance that can be tapped into.

We will all be better off for it.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

This is a fantastic program and it's a great example of how transitioning to a low-carbon economy can both help us achieve our greenhouse gas emission targets and

benefit Islanders here economically so it's a fantastic program and it's going to be up to us to make sure that as many Islanders as possible take advantage of that.

Efficiency is the most important first step. After that, we have to find a way to transition our energy supply and whatnot.

So speaking of how efficiency can help us with our new greenhouse gas targets, I would encourage the minister to have a close look at on-demand transit to help with rural access to transit.

Other jurisdictions have implemented smart app-based technology that uses real-time requests for transit to more efficiently map out transit stops. The results have been very promising with great coverage, less mileage and greatly increased ridership.

There are local members of the tech sector here in PEI developing their own exciting ride sharing and smart transit tech. Let's get them involved in the conversation.

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

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

I, too, also want to commend the minister for continuing this particular program.

efficiencyPEI has a number of programs and provides assistance for the purchase of additional home insulation, home equipment such as heat pumps and energy-efficient wood furnaces, and the list goes on.

These programs are aimed at making homes more energy efficient which ultimately helps homeowners, but also helps our greater society in reaching out targets for greenhouse – certainly a win-win for everybody.

The Home Energy Audit Program is something that is also great in helping identify the needs that many homeowners do and help try to achieve these particular gains, and the fact that a lot of these services are actually free or very low-cost for some households that are low-income is really encouraging.

So I certainly commend the minister for forwarding this, and I support that

wholeheartedly. But I do also want to commend the previous minister, as well as the federal government, for also contributing some of the funds towards this and these initiatives.

Presenting and Receiving Petitions

#### Tabling of Documents

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

**Mr. Trivers:** Mr. Speaker, by leave of the House, I beg leave to table answers from post-secondary and Skills PEI divisions of the budget that were asked during estimates and I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Agriculture and Land, Justice and Public Safety and Attorney General, that the said document be now received and do lie on the Table.

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

The hon. Minister of Education and Lifelong Learning.

**Mr. Trivers:** Mr. Speaker, by leave of the House, I beg leave to table the Early Childhood Education Report from 2017, it's a national report, there's a score out of 15 for each province, PEI is the highest at 11 out of 15 and I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Economic Growth, Tourism and Culture, 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:** Mr. Speaker, by leave of the House, I beg leave to table answers to questions from July 9th by the Member from Mermaid-Stratford 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 Economic Growth, Tourism and Culture

**Mr. MacKay:** Mr. Speaker, by leave of the House, I beg leave to table the Workers Compensation Board of PEI 2018 Annual

Report and I move, seconded by the Honourable Member from Morell-Donagh, that the said document be now received and do lie on the Table.

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

The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Land.

**Mr. Thompson:** Mr. Speaker, by leave of the House, I beg leave to table the Department of Agriculture and Land response to budget estimate questions of July 10<sup>th</sup>, 2019 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. Member from Charlottetown-Belvedere.

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

Mr. Speaker, by leave of the House, I beg leave to table a question to the Department of Social Development and Housing requesting GBA analysis conducted by the province in relation to the decision to fund shelters for men and women on PEI and I move, seconded by the Honourable Member from Charlottetown-Victoria Park, that the said document be now received and do lie on the Table.

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

The hon. Minister of Social Development and Housing.

**Mr. Hudson:** Mr. Speaker, by leave of the House, I beg leave to table information and documentation which I committed to bring back to the House during my budget presentation last evening, July 11, and I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy, that the said document be now received and do lie on the Table.

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

Reports by Committees

Introduction of Government Bills

Orders of the Day (Government)

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

**Ms. Compton:** Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. Premier, that the 1<sup>st</sup> order of the day be now read.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Hon. members, we are on page 72, the Department of Finance, and we will start with – do you have a request to bring someone on to the floor?

**Ms. Compton:** In just a few minutes. Yes.

**Chair:** Okay, request to bring a stranger onto the floor?

**Some Hon. Members:** Granted.

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

**Vicki Hamilton:** Vicki Hamilton, Chief Financial Officer for the Department of Finance.

**Chair:** Thank you very much, Vicki.

I understand, minister, you have an opening statement?

**Ms. Compton:** I just have a few words to say.

I just want to thank the department for welcoming me into the Minister of Finance role, and all of the staff that we've got have been very gracious to ensure that I'm doing and saying what I need to do. I appreciate that very much, and I just want to thank them for their support.

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

**Chair:** Thank you minister.

**Ms. Compton:** And the former minister, yes.

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

**Ms. Compton:** I am.

**Chair:** I'd like to start, like I said, we're going to start off on page 72.

Administration

General.

Total General: 472,800.

Shall it carry? Carried.

Debt and Investment Management.

Total Debt and Investment Management: 488,200.

**Leader of the Opposition:** Question.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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

First question is, welcome minister, by the way.

**Ms. Compton:** Thank you.

**Leader of the Opposition:** Is the pension fund fully funded?

**Ms. Compton:** Is the pension fund fully funded?

**Leader of the Opposition:** I know there have been times in the past where we have had to put extra money into the pension fund.

**Ms. Compton:** It's not actually in this section, but – so it's in employee benefits.  
**Leader of the Opposition:** Okay, I'll ask then. I do have other questions, I hope, I think on this section.

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

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

I know typically government side has been really quick to get back with responses to oral questions taken as notice.

But the questions I asked yesterday about assets that we have regarding fossil fuels, I'm wondering whether you've had an opportunity to look into that?

**Ms. Compton:** My department is aware, but because we sat through and we were here late last night, they're aware and they will definitely get them back, yes.

**Leader of the Opposition:** Okay. That's great.

Chair?

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

**Leader of the Opposition:** Again, I'll ask the question, maybe you've had an opportunity to speak to some staff as to whether we actually have policies in place in your department regarding ethical and sustainable investing, whether there is a policy in place there?

**Ms. Compton:** If you'll just bare with me for a minute here.

We don't have a policy in place at this time. Some of the individual investment managers do provide reporting on the spaces but it's not a requirement right now with the master trust, which is where all the investments would be.

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

**Leader of the Opposition:** Thanks, Chair.

Do you have any historical data over the last; well let's say since 2015, as to what the

performance of the fossil fuel investments that we hold are?

**Ms. Compton:** I'm leaning on my stranger here.

It's not actually broken down that way but we do have it by investor category. So the performance has been, just for the master trust in general and then by the different investment managers.

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

**Leader of the Opposition:** All right so we don't actually – somewhere obviously that information will be held within the department as to what the individual investments – how they're performing.

**Ms. Compton:** So we don't actually get that from the investors, it's not broken down that way, so I'm assuming they would be in an investment portfolio, they wouldn't be broken down per category. Maybe it's something we can look into and bring it back.

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

**Leader of the Opposition:** Thanks.

I'm assuming that all of these investment managers are constantly reviewing the investments that they have and can you tell us what the sort of approximate percentage of turnover, selling one investment and buying a new one is from year-to-year? Is that 10% of the value?

**Vicki Hamilton:** We don't have that information currently, but we can ask.

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

**Leader of the Opposition:** I'd appreciate that.

Thanks, you can move on, Chair.  
Thank you.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Mermaid-Stratford.

**Ms. Beaton:** Thank you, Chair.

Minister, can you let me know what our borrowing rate is? I believe there's two different ones. There's one on our debt –

**Ms. Compton:** It's not actually in this section, but if you want me to –

**Vicki Hamilton:** When we get to interest charges on debt, that's where that information falls. This section just relates to the staff that manage the master trust fund and the day-to-day banking of the government.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Mermaid-Stratford.

**Ms. Beaton:** Okay, then I do have a (Indistinct)

I'm going to hold my next question as well. Can you explain – you may push me to the next section as well, I'm not sure. But can you explain the process by which the government tenders its debt? Would that be in that in that section as well, or is under this debt and investment management sections?

**Vicki Hamilton:** That would be under interest charges on debt.

**Ms. Beaton:** Interest charges on debt, okay. I will hold those two.

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

**Ms. Bell:** This may be in that section as well in terms of how we apportion our debt or how we make those decisions, that also happens under interest charges and debt?

We'll move those ones to that section.

Thank you.

**Speaker:** Shall this section carry? Carried.

**Chair:** Pensions and Benefits.

Total Pensions and Benefits: 1,274,800.  
Shall it carry? Carried.

Total Administration: 2,235,800.

Shall it carry? Carried.

Economics, Statistics and Federal Fiscal Relations

Total Economics, Statistics and Federal Fiscal Relations: 9,035,400.  
Shall it carry?

The hon. Member from Summerside-South Drive.

**Mr. Howard:** The dollars that come in from the federal government to the province, this division includes grants for income and sales tax credits and rebates – are there any funds that have come in that are sitting there unused waiting for programs that are yet unannounced and the like?

**Vicki Hamilton:** No.

**Mr. Howard:** No.

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

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

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Mermaid-Stratford.

**Ms. Beaton:** Would you mind going back for a second to the pension – or no, sorry, are we in economic stats?

**Chair:** Yes we are.

**Ms. Beaton:** We are, okay.

This division is responsible for grants, I believe, is that correct?

**Ms. Compton:** For, sorry?

**Ms. Beaton:** For grants. For all of the grants, I think, it's \$8 million. Just wondering why is this year's estimates for the low-and-modest income household credits slightly down from last year's estimate.

**Vicki Hamilton:** So it's based on as people file their tax returns. It's an automatic calculation, that, whether you qualify then you automatically get the payment. So as people earn more money, than the eligibility criteria drops or they receive less of the funding. That's a good news story for us, people are making more money.

**Ms. Compton:** The economy is doing better, so more people are working and making more money, so then the eligibility – the number who are eligible drops, which is great. That's what we want. So that's what happened.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Mermaid-Stratford.

**Ms. Beaton:** Do you have a trend? Do you have an idea, was that a trend? Was that the same last year?

**Vicki Hamilton:** I don't have last year's budget and forecast with me today.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Mermaid-Stratford.

**Ms. Beaton:** If we're seeing that more people are working, is it foreseeable that we could raise the threshold so that Islanders could earn more? That's not really a place that we'd want to probably want to see a savings, right? It's a good news story, but maybe that good news story should be put into actually raising the threshold.

**Vicki Hamilton:** We did raise the threshold when HST went up. We increased the amount that the low-and-modest income earners received as a rebate at the time that the HST went up, but we haven't looked at any additional changes to that program.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Mermaid-Stratford.

**Ms. Beaton:** Could I ask that the department do that, to do a review to see if there is room to actually raise that threshold then if – what economic value there would be to low income –

**Ms. Compton:** We can look into that and see where we'd be for next year.

**Ms. Beaton:** Yeah, that would be good, thank you.

So will this division be coordinating the province's input – sorry I'm having problems with these progressive lenses I don't know where to look, sorry. I'm getting dizzy – so will the division be coordinating the provinces input as an intervener into the

Saskatchewan legal challenge for the federal carbon tax?

**Ms. Compton:** Could you repeat that?

**Ms. Beaton:** Yeah, sure. Will this division be coordinating the province's input as the intervener in Saskatchewan's legal challenge of the federal carbon tax?

**Ms. Compton:** I can't answer that. I – Premier, do you know?

**Chair:** We have in intervention from the Premier.

**Premier King:** What is the question?

**Ms. Compton:** Wondering if my department will act as intervener with Saskatchewan in the carbon tax.

**Premier King:** It's the department of justice, yeah.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Mermaid-Stratford.

**Ms. Beaton:** I think that's it then for this department.

**Chair:** The hon. Premier, intervention.

**Premier King:** It's just the legal maneuver to have the option to intervene. We're under no obligation as of yet to intervene, it's just holding the opportunity to do so should we decide as the decision rolls forward and the impact the decision roll forward.

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

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

There's a federal fund, \$180 billion fund that's only about 11% subscribed according to Senator Percy Downe. We've already gotten our allocation from that, as I understand it. Would this department be the kind of folks who could go and try to access some more of that funding so we could get at this transition we'd like to go at?

**Vicki Hamilton:** Yeah, possibly. The money is there and I'm assuming Senator Downe would know how we could do that,

but I don't know if it's something we can do as a province.

**Mr. Howard:** Thank you.

**Chair:** Shall this section carry? Carried. Total Economics, Statistics and Federal Fiscal Relations: 9,035,400.

Shall it carry? Carried.

Office of the Comptroller.

Financial/Accounting/Procurement

Total Financial/Accounting/Procurement: 1,483,700.

Shall it carry? Carried.

Total Office of the Comptroller: 1,483,700.

Shall it carry? Carried.

Taxation and Property Records

Administration

Total administration, 4,233,000.

The hon. Member from Mermaid-Stratford.

**Ms. Beaton:** So the debt expenditure forecast was much higher than the estimate last year, what happened there?

**Ms. Compton:** There were a number of debts that had been carried – bad debt that had been carried over, carried over, so we dealt with them this fiscal year.

It's a one-time thing and we're trying to keep on top of the bad debt. A lot of it would be through property tax, I'm guessing? But we did – we captured revenues of 950,000 through that – obtaining the property and reselling and divesting of it.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Mermaid-Stratford.

**Ms. Beaton:** Is the total written off? Was it written off as bad debt, essentially?

**Ms. Compton:** Yes, but we had captured property and assets, too, \$950,000. So it wasn't a write-off per se; write-off, but not.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Mermaid-Stratford.

**Ms. Beaton:** So foreseeably that would be a lot of tax sales then that we would – or have we already completed that? If it's properties –

**Vicki Hamilton:** So the way this works is there are two components. This is the allowance for (Indistinct) accounts on properties on an annual basis that we accrue against our revenue for uncollectability, and then the revenue that the minister is referring to is an offset that for credits for money that we received after we've made an allowance or a write-off of a debt.

But we have to record – we can't net them in the books, so we have a larger expenditure, but we also have a larger revenue.

This is a one-time – it was a one-time clean up all the way back to 2007. So on a go-forward basis, we had a large increase in expense and a large increase in revenue, but it will be standard on a go-forward basis.

**Ms. Beaton:** Okay, thank you.

**Ms. Compton:** Much better at explaining.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Mermaid-Stratford.

**Ms. Beaton:** There's still two versions of the corporate registry searchable online, when are those two registries going to be merged?

**Ms. Compton:** That's justice.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Mermaid-Stratford.

**Ms. Beaton:** (Indistinct) a written question.

So has finance done any year by year projections or analysis to see what levels of funding will be available for programs and services if the government commits to its plan to reduce the small business tax?

**Ms. Compton:** We'll have to get back to you on that.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Mermaid-Stratford.

**Ms. Beaton:** Okay, because I'd also like to know if the government feels that if it does decrease the small business tax as per the platform, do you feel that you'd be able to maintain the level of services that we currently have as we do that? Okay? So that would be the other – when we do a tax cut, can we maintain the level of services, services equal taxes, taxes equals services –

**Ms. Compton:** Across government, you mean?

**Ms. Beaton:** As it pertains to small business tax. When you reduce the small business tax as per your plan in the platform, what analysis has been done of whether we can maintain that or what impacts are there going to be against other services and programming?

**Ms. Compton:** It could be an overall budget thing that we would look at, and we'll have to study the impact, you know, decide where we're going to put the dollars. There hasn't been a formal study done to my knowledge (Indistinct).

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Mermaid-Stratford.

**Ms. Beaton:** All right, and so we have a sense of how much a reduction of this small business tax would affect our total debt or debt interest payments?

**Ms. Compton:** So by reducing it to 3%, it's 7.5 million, and then to 2.5%, it's 10 million, and to 2%, it's 12.5 million.

**Ms. Beaton:** So it's about 2.5 million per 0.05%?

**Ms. Compton:** Yes.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Mermaid-Stratford.

**Ms. Beaton:** Last question for this section.

Have there been questions about municipalities sharing some of the tax revenue from cannabis sales with (Indistinct)?

**Ms. Compton:** Not to my knowledge.

**Ms. Beaton:** Okay, sorry one more –

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Mermaid-Stratford.

**Ms. Beaton:** I know that there's been – that there's something that the Federation of PEI Municipalities has been calling out recently and just especially when it comes to growing municipalities and the ability to keep up with the growth.

So I'm just – I guess my question is: Has there been any discussions with the Federation of PEI Municipalities, that if we have a community that is high growth, is there any financial grant or revenue sharing there that could be looked at?

**Ms. Compton:** Not by myself, no, not by our department.

**Ms. Beaton:** Okay.

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

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

Has this department done any analysis on making use of local improvement charges to allow Islanders make modifications to their home and have them financed through their property tax payments and whatnot?

**Ms. Compton:** We don't do grants under taxation.

**Mr. Howard:** No, but –

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

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

This department is responsible for property taxes, correct?

**Ms. Compton:** Yes.

**Mr. Howard:** Yes, so local improvement charges would be attached to those property taxes.

So has there been any analysis on any of the departments on – like there's a program over in the Halifax Regional Municipality where homes can put energy efficient equipment

upgrades on their homes, and finance it through their property taxes.

That seems like a good way for the province to ensure themselves against bad debts that they've fallen into in the past or said things. Has there been any analysis on that?

**Ms. Compton:** Not that I'm aware of. I guess it'd be something I'd have to discuss with environment, I would assume or through energy.

Again, it would come out of general revenue, wouldn't really be just taxation.

If it was a rebate it would fall as a grant from another department.

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

**Mr. Howard:** No, I'm not talking about a rebate. I'm talking about financing improvements so essentially a loan that goes onto the property tax, local improvement charges.

So, yeah, I would love – if there has been any research or analysis done in that program, I would love to see what that is and I'd encourage the department to have a look at it to protect us against bad debts for such things.

**Ms. Compton:** Okay, thank you.

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

**Mr. Henderson:** Minister, when it comes to property taxes, what's the limit that you – of arrears before you put a property up for tax sale? I'm pretty sure there is a number on that.

**Vicki Hamilton:** I don't have the specific policy in my book, but they do reach out, they do follow-up calls, and try to work out payment plans and whatnot before taking the property.

**Mr. Henderson:** But at what point in time is that property – How much of the arrears have to be before you actually put it up to tax sale? I mean, I get that you go after people whenever they don't pay, but –

**Ms. Compton:** I'm speaking maybe out of turn, but I think it's by the timeframe, not the amount. So if you're in arrears for a certain number of years or certain number – I could be wrong, but we'll check it out.

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

**Mr. Henderson:** Here's my point, I guess, and it's more of a suggestion to you. What I understand, it has to be a certain number, I think it's like \$700 or \$800 or something like that.

The problem tends to be for properties that are smaller properties that are up for arrears, it takes a long time for them to get to that amount of arrears, and then what happens is the property is overvalued almost at the tax sale point I guess is what I'm trying to say.

It might help you in your debt by putting those properties that are certainly smaller sizes as a percentage of their value to say now that property should go up for sale.

The other thing it does is that if the properties are up for sale a little bit sooner, not only does it determine whether you're going to get your money back or not, but also for farmers and things of that nature. They have the ability to maybe go after that property and bring it into their farm, so you make better productive use of it, which also can generate more revenue in general terms.

I think it's just a theme that maybe you've got it figured out, but my understanding is that it's a higher amount and sometimes the comment I get is that the property is up for tax sale is not worth that.

I've encountered that with a few constituents that that was a factor and they said well it's a waste to everybody then.

**Ms. Compton:** Thank you, minister, and I'll bring that back to taxation and we can look into it.

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

**Mr. Henderson:** Yes, I just think if they can develop a more firmer policy to that and it's more known by the public, then people may be keeping more of an eye on these things

and, like I say, it just makes the properties – I can think of one property that was in bad condition and it was a small – maybe an acre lot and that building had gotten deteriorated state and like I say in the end the value of the thing wasn't worth what the tax arrears were on it.

**Ms. Compton:** We understand that.

**Mr. Henderson:** Thanks.

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

**Mr. MacDonald:** Just a general question on what percentage of our revenue is from transfer payments approximately?

**Ms. Compton:** So federal funding is \$667,205,700.

**Mr. MacDonald:** So in the past few days – and the Premier might want to joust in on this one – there's been a lot of talk through other premiers, Premier Ford, Premier Kenney, and the Premier from Quebec in reference to doing some constitutional changes to the transfer payments, and per capita we do very well in transfer payments, obviously if it's near 40% of our overall revenue.

I guess as being a former finance minister, I have grave concerns about where we're positioning ourselves against these other provinces because if, for example, the government ever changed, what – it would be detrimental to Prince Edward Island if some of these transfer payments ever changed, so I guess I'm just kind of – maybe you want to chime in and see where that's at because it seems to be a growing issue with Alberta's economy the way it is.

I think 13 or 11 billion went to Quebec and 18 billion in total went over to the rest across Canada. Some provinces didn't get it, and you've got some pretty loud mouths at the table that are being very boisterous on this issue.

**Chair:** Intervention by the hon. Premier.

**Premier King:** Obviously, one of the most spirited discussions at the council meetings are around this. I think what I observed was that I think Alberta is trying to make it an

issue to force Quebec to allow the pipeline to flow through, so essentially threatening to try to change or to lead the change to the equalization format by having what they are threatening is a referendum in Alberta to see if people want them to continue to pay equalization.

I mean, all of the Atlantic Provinces are just as you say, Manitoba, so that it's kind of – the three territorial governments are all committed to maintaining the equalization structure, seeing it enhanced. Obviously we do best with base, plus per capita, obviously it's a little bit more favourable to Prince Edward Island.

The big issue – not to digress too much, but the big discussion around some of the home care and some of the targeted programs that the federal government had been releasing lately, Prince Edward Island as an example, do better because it's based on a base funding plus per capita after that; and there was a big discussion from some of those louder provinces, as the member would say, where they would like to see all of those rolled into the health transfer, which provinces like us don't want to do.

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

**Premier King:** But it is a big fear, yeah.

**Mr. MacDonald:** So I guess, Premier, in regards to that, what are you going to do as an action item to ensure that that doesn't happen and to stand up for Islanders? We never really heard anything about it from those meetings, but all of a sudden you're hearing the Fords and you're hearing the Kenneys and you're hearing the Premier of Quebec starting to joust about this.

Are you going to collaborate with your Atlantic counterparts to ensure that we do take a stand on this and fight back? Because it is – it would be detrimental to this department, I can tell you that, and Islanders.

**Chair:** The hon. Premier, intervention?

**Premier King:** Obviously as the Council of Atlantic Premiers, we meet each day prior to the council meetings to sort of discuss our joint strategies to find what synergies we

have. This was one that we had put forward, but we also have the support of the three territorial leaders, of the Premier of Manitoba who is more aligned politically with the Premier of Alberta than some others, but they, too, understand the importance of this system.

So I feel – your point is well taken, that we have to keep positioning ourselves for this, but I do feel like some of these other provinces, where what they're calling the "Conservative Resistance" for lack of a better word, are trying to make this more of a national issue for the election to sort of try to change the outcome of the election, more so than they are really trying to, at this point, change the system. That's my view.

**Chair:** Shall this section carry? Carried.

Total Taxation and Property Records:  
4,233,000.

Shall it carry? Carried.

Treasury Board Secretariat

Administration

Total Administration: 854,500.

Shall it carry?

The hon. Member from Mermaid-Stratford.

**Ms. Beaton:** Does the increase in salaries equal to any new positions?

**Vicki Hamilton:** Yes. We had one retirement and we had a little bit of a restructuring, so we have new two analysts and one retiree. That's the net difference.

**Ms. Beaton:** Okay, thank you.

**Chair:** Shall the section carry? Carried.  
Corporate Finance

Total Corporate Finance: 4,998,600.

Shall it carry?

The hon. Member from Mermaid-Stratford.

**Ms. Beaton:** Does Crown agencies here include all Crown corporations?

**Vicki Hamilton:** Not all.

**Ms. Beaton:** Okay.

**Vicki Hamilton:** Not all. Some agencies we provide financial support to through this shared service and other entities, like Health PEI has their own accounting staff and liquor commission has their own staff and we do support – PEI Energy Corporation is one that does fall under this category, but some Crowns have their own accounting services.

**Ms. Beaton:** So I assume then that the ones that do fall under this, that they are arm's length from government and they would manage their own finances internally; is that accurate?

**Vicki Hamilton:** Yes.

**Ms. Beaton:** Yes? Okay. What kinds of supports does this section provide the Crown corporations?

**Vicki Hamilton:** It's just the financial and administrative accounting duties. So that – we did this restructuring several years ago and it works really well, so that there's a bit of cross-training and ability if somebody is out, because normally there's only one person doing that particular job. So we have a more cohesive group that we can help if somebody has to be off for any particular reason that we can share resources. That's really the mandate of this section, why it was created this way.

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

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

**Mr. MacDonald:** I'm just curious; I know we've seen in the public that there was a \$500,000 loss to the Cannabis Management Corporation. What percentage of HST did we get back for general revenue for government? Or what amount?

**Vicki Hamilton:** There was about 7 million in sales, so that would equate to –

**Mr. MacDonald:** Seven hundred thousand?

**Vicki Hamilton:** Seven hundred thousand.

**Mr. MacDonald:** And how much did we get in from the federal government on the amount of – I think it's 10%, if I remember correctly – per gram sold?

**Vicki Hamilton:** The excise tax? So the payments are delayed, and by the time the feds process and give us those payments, but the estimated final number for '18/'19 year is approximately 1.1 million in excise tax.

**Mr. MacDonald:** So we're in around 1.8 million in general revenue in government at this point.

**Vicki Hamilton:** Exactly. That offsets the loss for the first year.

**Mr. MacDonald:** Thank you.

**Chair:** Shall the section carry? Carried.

Information Technology Shared Services

Total Information Technology Shared Services: 31,988,500.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

**Leader of the Opposition:** Thanks, Chair.

Is there a government-wide license for the Corel office suite?

**Vicki Hamilton:** There's individual licenses, I believe, and we are in the process of switching completely to the Microsoft Office suite.

**Leader of the Opposition:** Really glad to hear that, because we're paying twice for essentially the same service. So any idea of how many people within government are still using Corel?

**Vicki Hamilton:** We do have a capital project underway to do that conversion because there were several people in pockets that were still only using WordPerfect versus Word. Not sure of the numbers. I think – don't quote me – but it's around 1,000, I think.

**Leader of the Opposition:** Oh, okay.

**Vicki Hamilton:** But that project has been ongoing for some time, and we're converting them. The issue lies in some of

the systems that they use, that they were created to work in conjunction with WordPerfect, so there's some macro work and whatnot to switch the forms to be from WordPerfect to Word, but that is underway.

**Leader of the Opposition:** Any sense of how long before that's completed and we are all operating on the same system?

**Vicki Hamilton:** I believe it's this fiscal for sure, yeah.

**Leader of the Opposition:** Okay, great.

Thank you, Chair.

**Chair:** Shall the section carry? Carried.

Total Treasury Board Secretariat:  
37,841,600.

Shall it carry? Carried.

Total Department of Finance: 54,829,500.

Shall it –

The hon. Member from Summerside-South Drive.

**Mr. Howard:** Looking through here, and I'm quite familiar with the Community Economic Development Business and I don't see where it would fall under here. Can you guys tell me where I would find that? That's encouraging Islanders to invest in Island companies and the like, 35% tax credit when they do so from the province, RRSP-eligible, big program that Royal Star Fisheries made use of quite extensively.

**Ms. Compton:** I think it would be Economic Growth.

**Mr. Howard:** Sorry?

**Ms. Compton:** Would it be in Economic Growth, Minister?

**Mr. Howard:** It was the Minister of Finance that had to sign off on them. I run one as well called Solar Island.

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

**Ms. Compton:** We don't have any details on that, so we can get back to you on it.

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

**Mr. Howard:** Okay, so it's nowhere in this budget?

**Ms. Compton:** We'll get back to you.

**Chair:** Shall this section carry? Carried.

Total Department of Finance: 54,829,500.

Shall it carry? Carried.

Interministerial Women's Secretariat

Total Interministerial Women's Secretariat:  
661,200.

**Ms. Bell:** Question.

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

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

So the grants for the IWS administers were increased in 2018/19 by 100,000, and then that increase is being maintained into this year? Is that correct, minister?

**Ms. Compton:** Yes, that's correct.

**Ms. Bell:** So there's a total spend for grants for 239,000 this year. Are the grants still going to be project-based as they have been in the past on an annual – like an application competitive basis?

**Ms. Compton:** That's the plan as of now.

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

**Ms. Bell:** Is there any future plan to add any other funding to this department for other opportunities that may be more than just – there's been a small project-based grants?

**Ms. Compton:** It's definitely a possibility. It's something that I am looking into and to see how we can work with the secretariat to improve what they're doing and help with what they're doing.

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

**Ms. Bell:** I mean not that the operational budget for the legislatively required advisory council has remained static. Has there been any discussion with them about whether their needs are changing to change that budget?

**Ms. Compton:** No, there has not been.

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

**Ms. Bell:** No further questions.

**Chair:** Shall the section carry? Carried.

Total Interministerial Women's Secretariat: 661,200.

Shall it carry? Carried.

Employee Benefits

Total Employee Benefits: 60,081,800.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

**Leader of the Opposition:** Thanks, Chair.

I believe this is where my earlier question about whether the fund is fully-funded, if you could answer that?

Thanks.

**Vicki Hamilton:** And it is, yes.

So the question was whether the pension fund is fully-funded?

**Ms. Compton:** Yes.

**Leader of the Opposition:** Oh, it is. I'm sorry; I thought you were – My apologies.

Thank you, that's good.

**Chair:** Shall the section carry? Carried.

General Government

Miscellaneous General

Total Miscellaneous General: 250,000.

Shall it carry? Carried.

Grants

Total Grants: 2,000,000.

Shall it carry? Carried.

Government Insurance Program

Total Government Insurance Program: 1,979,000.

Shall it carry? Carried.

Contingency Fund and Salary Negotiations

Total Contingency Fund and Salary Negotiations: 17,652,700.

The hon. Member from O'Leary-Inverness.

**Mr. Henderson:** Are there any outstanding negotiations with unions coming forward in the coming fiscal year, and which ones and how many?

**Vicki Hamilton:** We still have two that haven't been finalized, and that's for UPSE and the excluded.

Because it hasn't been finalized, the money doesn't get dispersed to the departments. So we do an estimate and we put the contingency in here and then budgets are reallocated once the contracts are negotiated.

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

**Mr. Henderson:** How – I mean, you got \$17.6 million contingency fund. How big should a contingency fund really be? I mean, I'm assuming that would be more than enough to cover those negotiations.

**Mr. MacKay:** (Indistinct)

**Some Hon. Members:** [Laughter]

**Mr. Henderson:** That's a bunch, too.

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

**Mr. Henderson:** Yes, that's right.

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

**Ms. Compton:** That went to pay off the debt, I'll remind you.

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

**Vicki Hamilton:** So this is for unforeseen events. I think the Premier referred to that earlier today, but any negotiations or potential funding requirements that aren't finalized that we can't distribute to a particular department is housed here.

Of course, there are – We set aside funds, hoping that you don't have to use them because it's a contingency, right?

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

**Mr. Henderson:** No, I get the concept of a contingency fund. I mean, you should have a contingency fund. I sort of wonder though if you're not tipping your hat a bit to the negotiations, if they know how much is in the contingency fund. Is that a –

**Vicki Hamilton:** Well it's not just negotiations. That's why we don't have that as a one line on its own, because that would impede negotiation process if the unions knew what we were estimating as a cost, so it's grouped with other things –

**Ms. Compton:** Like more snow removal, floods, a bridge goes out. I mean there are a number of things that could happen that would affect that.

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

**Mr. Henderson:** So your contingency fund is about 7 to \$8 million more than last year. Well I guess 7 million.

So I don't think – and I'm not asking you to give me direct numbers, so you're mentioning – I'm assuming that that would be comparable to every year as far as snow and bridges and floods and things of that nature. That's still quite a sizeable amount, so what would be some of the things that you'd be looking at?

**Ms. Compton:** One thing we can look at is the severe crop that we had last year, the weather that we had, and that's something we're looking at as well. So there's a number of things.

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

**Mr. Henderson:** So, AgriRecovery is one of those things that you'd be looking at?

**Ms. Compton:** Yes.

**Mr. Henderson:** So when it comes to issues around some of these other promises that we made, especially like I say I brought up in Question Period there around watersheds and livestock strategy now, they're in the budget briefings and maybe once again there was a bit of a miscommunication here, but you'd identified that there was a livestock – money for a livestock strategy, but yet when we questioned the minister, there was none.

So I'm just wondering is that part of this? There was also a comment about the Maritime Beef Strategy –

**Chair:** Intervention by the hon. Minister of Agriculture and Land.

**Mr. Thompson:** We financed the Maritime Beef Strategy. We met with the cattle producers yesterday, actually, and they are happy to be working with the Maritime Beef Strategy at this time.

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

**Mr. Henderson:** Once again, I'm assuming the minister across, but the minister here and the Premier, as well would know there's a difference between livestock and beef.

He's a dairy farmer. There's a quite a different significance in what the components would be of that, and also the other component of a livestock strategy is taking all of those types of manures and incorporating them into – so to me, I guess I was kind of focusing on a strategy that was more around livestock and an all encompassing issues like dead stock and some of those types of issues and how we dispose of that.

The Beef Strategy is more focused on beef and forages and things of that nature. So I guess that's where I'm kind of coming from.

I do feel a little bit shortchanged, I guess, in this whole process in when we talk about the collaboration.

I would say that the Premier obviously gets the difference between ducks and worms, but may not know the difference between horses and cattle. I'm not certain.

**Some Hon. Members:** Oh!

**Ms. Compton:** (Indistinct)

**Mr. Henderson:** You know, beef and dairy.

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

**Mr. Henderson:** (Indistinct education in the Stampede there on it.

Anyway, I guess that's where I'm kind of coming from.

Is there any sense that this contingency fund could include things like; improved funding for the watershed groups or for a livestock strategy?

**Ms. Compton:** I guess anything's possible. We have to look at what our possible emergencies will be going forward in the year and take it then into consideration. Decide what we're comfortable with with what we have as a contingency fund.

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

**Mr. Henderson:** Well that's helpful in a respect. So what's it take then to get that – at what point in time does that – you get a sense that you're not going to use all your contingency fund for those catastrophic weather events and things of that nature to do that – because from my end, it's a big factor here in my decision on whether I'm going to support this budget or not.

It is helpful to know that there's at least a process to say that these things could be funded, versus it's not going to be even for another year.

**Ms. Compton:** So, you know, as things become known each department will look at that and put forward forecast of what they'll need. The money is there. Aren't we lucky that we have it and not – thank you very much for where we've been left as far as financially. We're not looking at a deficit, and that's our focus.

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

**Mr. Henderson:** So and also once again, say I would say support that concept if you're at least not in surplus, but that changes the dynamic. I think we want to be fiscally prudent no matter how we look at it.

But I guess if you're telling me that you'll allow me to advocate to the minister of agriculture and the minister of environment on those two particular items, if the contingency fund permits that, then that changes the dynamics. So if you're receptive to that, then that's a very helpful answer from my end.

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

**Ms. Compton:** Feel free to advocate.

**An Hon. Member:** He wants manure.

**Mr. Henderson:** I want more manure!

**Ms. Compton:** Feel free to advocate with any of the ministers.

**Mr. Henderson:** Well, no, but –

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

**Ms. Compton:** And I'm not being facetious, I mean, it's serious. We want to make sure that we have enough in the contingency fund for unforeseen things that we have no control over at all and we'll review it.

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

**Mr. Henderson:** You know, I guess that's what I'm trying to say, though, is that providing the contingency (Indistinct) – like, as I look at that, that's a very large contingency fund. It's \$7 million more than last year. There's been a couple of initiatives that our party has advocated for, and we didn't feel we quite got what we thought we were inquiring.

Now yes, as I go forward in future, as a critic of those portfolios, I'm going to be a lot more clear and a lot more defined but – you know.

**Ms. Compton:** The one thing that I can – well, maybe I can't say it, but I'll say it anyway because I got the go-ahead from the Premier – throw you under the bus – 6.2 million is what we've committed to the AgriRecovery if we need it, but we're waiting for the feds to let us know because we've committed up to a certain percentage, right?

So that 6.2 will immediately come out of our slush fund, if you want to call it that, but –

**Premier King:** It's not a slush fund.

**Ms. Compton:** – isn't that important? It's not a slush fund. It's a contingency fund. We're not taking it lightly. We're very concerned with keeping a surplus and we want to have the funds there, so if AgriRecovery is 6.2 million, then that money is there.

**Mr. Henderson:** Yes, and I kind of knew those numbers, too, but – and like I said, I appreciate that and I appreciate that information and that is good funding for agriculture, but it's based on a loss that these farmers have incurred, right?

So we're still on a level playing field, I guess, as far as that goes. So, I, once again, go back to saying if, like I said, if there's at least still money in that contingency fund that there'd be priorities like a little more funding – and I'm not even saying a number for the amount of money for a watershed – and a true implication that you're going to implement a livestock strategy, not a beef strategy, so I just – the Premier clarified that.

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

**Ms. Compton:** No, no, and –

**Mr. Henderson:** So that's where I'm kind of looking at. If those things are there, that eases my mind somewhat, minister.

**Ms. Compton:** Yeah, that is what the money is for, and we will look at it very seriously moving forward –

**Mr. Henderson:** And I will –

**Ms. Compton:** – as to how much we feel we're comfortable having a contingency

fund. I'm sure my department will inform me as to where I should feel comfortable.

**Mr. Henderson:** So I will give due notice to the minister of environment and the Minister of Agriculture and Land that those are two things that I would hope that they would be fairly high priorities should there be money in the surplus. Then you go after your Minister of Finance, and if you need any support or help from me to do that, let me know.

**Mr. Thompson:** You just pass this budget (Indistinct) –

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

**Mr. MacDonald:** Last year, we – the nurses union and the teachers – so we went through that process and the contracts were finalized. What was that cost to the province on an annual basis? Does anybody know?

**Ms. Compton:** We don't have that with us but we can get that.

**Mr. MacDonald:** So I guess what I'm saying is the increase on the contingency fund this year was due part to UPSE negotiations, and I know you're going to say infrastructure, but I think if I remember correctly, TIE has an extra \$40 million in their infrastructure budget, so it wouldn't necessarily be utilized for that.

I guess I'm going to say you're a pretty safe bet that there's going to be lots of money left to do projects with an \$18 million contingency fund, and I think quite honestly, even last year with our contingency fund was likely one of the largest ones that this province ever had, and by increasing it by over six million, this is likely the largest it's ever had.

Anyway, that's all. I was wondering if it was a real –

**Ms. Compton:** Stay tuned, member.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Mermaid-Stratford.

**Ms. Beaton:** Thank you, Chair.

I was just a little confused about something that was just said about the 6.2 million for the AgriInsurance.

**Some Hon. Members:** It's AgriRecovery.

**Ms. Compton:** It's AgriRecovery.

**Ms. Beaton:** AgriRecovery, thank you, okay.

Thank you.

**Chair:** Shall the section carry? Carried.

Total General Government: 21,881,700.

Shall it carry? Carried.

Interest Charges on Debt

Interest

Total Interest: 109,603,100.

The hon. Member from Mermaid-Stratford.

**Ms. Beaton:** So our debt interest payments are rising to 128 million this year, correct?

**Vicki Hamilton:** Yes.

**Ms. Beaton:** Yes. Do we have a sense of what our debt interest payments will be for 2021?

**Ms. Compton:** We don't have it with us, no.

**Vicki Hamilton:** But we can get that.

**Ms. Compton:** Yeah, we can (Indistinct)

**Vicki Hamilton:** We do have a rolling forecast.

**Ms. Beaton:** Okay.

**Vicki Hamilton:** I just don't have it with me here.

**Ms. Beaton:** Thank you.

**Mr. MacDonald:** (Indistinct)

**Ms. Beaton:** And a question on what is the interest payment that we pay on our debt? What's the rate that we pay on our debt?

**Ms. Compton:** Various rates.

**Vicki Hamilton:** We've issued numerous different debt over the years, and they all have different rates. So they range from – and different periods of time. We have ten-year issuances, 40-year issuances. Just looking at the list, they range from 2.3% all the way up to 8.5%. That schedule can be found in the Public Accounts document.

**Ms. Beaton:** Public Accounts, okay, I'll look that up.

So my question: There was an announcement earlier about how great the economy is doing and that the bond rating could be improved, which along with that would come an improvement on the rate that we can get for our interest. So is there plans right now – have you been doing any assessments right now as to which of our current debt might be reinvested at better rates?

**Ms. Compton:** It would depend on the maturity of it rolling over.

**Vicki Hamilton:** We have 100 million coming due the end of September, and so for instance, that rate at a ten-year rate was 4.25%, that issuance. Currently based on our bond rating, a ten-year money would only be 2.3%.

**Ms. Beaton:** So foreseeably, in September, when that 100 million comes due, we would be looking at renegotiating the rates, and we could almost be cutting it in half?

**Vicki Hamilton:** Yes, and even longer term if we decide to go longer term. Currently the 30-year rate is only 2.75. If our bond rating changes, if they make a decision prior to us having to do an issuance, then we could even, as I indicated, have a lower interest rate.

**Ms. Beaton:** So that's really positive.

**Vicki Hamilton:** Yes, very positive.

**Ms. Beaton:** That's a really good success story for us.

I have a question on the tendering of our debt. When we put our debts out to tender, can you just explain that process and how

we would – how we do that, just to help me out here for a second.

**Vicki Hamilton:** I don't have the details of the process. I do have – so with the capital markets we would go out to the markets, and that's where I got those numbers for you, so based on government's bond rating that these are the market rate that they would sell our debentures for.

So those particular quotes I got from RBC, and I'm not sure what their process is to go out and – I think it's a flat rate. It's so much percentage on top of the government bond rate based on our bond rating.

**Ms. Beaton:** Okay.

And when we go out to tender, do we put any type of – I don't know how to call it – would we favour, if anybody came back to tender, was actually using, say, the Credit Union, for instance, to – as an investor, where those funds would actually remain here in the province and allow somebody else that's lending to Islanders to actually benefit from those funds as well. Has there been any kind of analysis on what impact we would have if any of our debt was invested locally?

**Vicki Hamilton:** I haven't seen that.

**Ms. Compton:** That's something that the hon. minister of education has been advocating for, so I know he'll be bringing it to my attention, for sure (Indistinct) more local, you know – if it's possible; but you know we're looking at very big numbers here and –

**Ms. Beaton:** Yeah.

**Ms. Compton:** – so –

**Ms. Beaton:** Yeah, and it doesn't have to be – I'm not talking the whole thing.

**Ms. Compton:** No, no, yeah.

**Ms. Beaton:** I'm talking about a slice of the pie, because even if it's a little bit more expensive too, like, instead of taking the best deal that's the lowest amount, understanding the economic spinoffs if we took something that was a little bit more and put in, I don't know, maybe a fraction of a

percentage be invested back into Island markets so that we can actually support Islanders better. That would be my – I think my request to look at that and how we can tender that out to try to benefit a buy local strategy for finance, right?

**Ms. Compton:** I totally understand that, and it's something that I'll bring forward. I don't know how we could implement that, but (Indistinct) an idea that we've talked about in (Indistinct) before.

**Ms. Beaton:** Okay, perfect.

I think – so have we ever considered apportioning some of our debt – I just asked that question. No, I'm good.

**Chair:** Shall the section carry? Carried.

Promissory Notes for Pension Funds

Total Promissory Notes for Pension Funds:  
18,415,100.

Shall it carry? Carried.

Total Interest Charges on Debt:  
128,018,200.

Shall it carry? Carried.

Shall the budget carry? Carried.

**Ms. Compton:** Mr. Chair, I move the Speaker take the chair and the Chair and make report to Mr. Speaker.

Shall it carry? Carried.

**Chair:** Mr. Speaker, as Chair of a Committee of the Whole House, I wish to report that the committee has gone into supply to be granted to Her Majesty and has come to certain resolutions, which I am pleased to report to the House whenever it should be pleased to receive same.

**Ms. Compton:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Premier, that the report of the Committee be now received.

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

**Chair:** Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of the Committee be now adopted.

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

**Mr. Myers:** Good job Chair.

**Mr. Perry:** Thank you.

**Premier King:** Well done.

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

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

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

I move by the hon. Premier, that the 2<sup>nd</sup> order of the day be now read.

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

**Clerk:** Order No. 2, Consideration of the Supplementary Estimates, in Committee.

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

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

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

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

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

**Chair (Perry):** The House is now in a Committee of the Whole House to take into consideration the grant of supplementary supply to Her Majesty.

**Ms. Compton:** Mr. Chair, I move the speaker –

**Chair:** No.

**Ms. Compton:** That's the wrong one, that's the wrong one.

**Chair:** Okay, we're going right into it; we have a schedule A, that's the 2017 –

Permission to bring a stranger onto the floor?

**Some Hon. Members:** Granted.

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

**Jim Miles:** Jim Miles, Executive Director of Fiscal Management for the Department of Finance.

**Chair:** Thank you very much.

Hon. members, we are going to start with Schedule A.

2017-2018 Supplementary Estimates and Summary by Department

Communities, Land and Environment: 2,100.

Education, Early Learning and Culture: 1,250,000.

Family and Human Services: 6,800.

Total capital expenditures: 1,258,900.

**Ms. Bell:** Question.

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

**Ms. Bell:** What school construction or renovation was covered under these supplementaries?

**Ms. Compton:** These are the costs related to the Three Oaks Senior High and the delays, design and planning during the 2016-2017.

**Ms. Bell:** Okay, good.

Thank you.

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

B - Current

Education, Early Learning and Culture: 4,690,000.

Family and Human Services: 371,200.

Total Current Expenditure: 5,061,200.

Shall it carry? Carried.

Grand Total: 6,320,100.

Shall it carry? Carried.

Schedule B, 2018-2019 Supplementary Estimates, Summary by Department

Tourism PEI: 477,000.

Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy: 1,600,000.

Total Capital Expenditures: 2,077,000.

Shall it carry? Carried.

B - Current

Communities, Land and Environment: 21,900,000.

Tourism Prince Edward Island: 185,900.

Executive Council: 244,700.

Family and Human Services: 6,870,900.

Regional and Regional Development: 500,000.

Employment Development Agency: 94,200.

Interministerial Women's Secretariat: 100,000.

Workforce and Advanced Learning: 3,603,000.

Legislative Assembly: 700,000.

Total Current Expenditure: 34,198,700.

Shall it carry? Carried.

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

**Leader of the Opposition:** The monies in community land and environment, it says that's for two things. Additional costs to municipalities and then the climate change secretariat.

Can you give us breakdown of those two, please?

**Jim Miles:** The additional cost for the municipalities was 19,825,000 and the reason that happened was because when we went to a tax credit system for refunding

municipalities, we reduced it from property tax, and we eliminated grants.

The proper accounting treatment for it is to show the gross amount in property tax, so the gross amount is a grant. So that's why that 19,825,000 is there.

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

**Leader of the Opposition:** Thank you and that's all, sorry.

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

**Ms. Bell:** In the family and human services line, can you advise how much of that total is specifically for the accessibility support program?

**Ms. Compton:** It's 5,671,600 for social programs.

**Ms. Bell:** So we don't have a breakdown specifically for accessibility?

**Ms. Compton:** Yes. 303,100.

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

**Ms. Bell:** Okay and how much of that was for NGO's?

**Ms. Compton:** 1.2 million.

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

**Ms. Bell:** I'm good, thank you.

**Chair:** Shall total current expenditures carry? Carried.

Grand Total: 36,275,700.

Shall it carry? Carried.

Shall the supplementary estimates carry? Carried.

**Ms. Compton:** Mr. Speaker, I move the Speaker take the chair, and that the Chair make report to Mr. Speaker.

**Chair:** Mr. Speaker, as chair of a Committee of the Whole House, I wish to report that the committee has gone into

supplementary supply to be granted to Her Majesty and has come to certain resolutions thereon, which said resolutions I am directed to report to the House whenever it should be pleased to receive same.

**Ms. Compton:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. Premier, that the report of the Committee be now received.

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

**Chair:** Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of the Committee be now adopted.

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

The hon. Minister of Finance.

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

I move, seconded by the hon. Premier, that Bill No. 11 be read – second reading? Is that what I'm saying? Sorry, Order No. 14 be read a second time.

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

**Clerk:** Order No. 14, *Appropriation Act (Current Expenditures) 2019*, Bill No. 11, ordered for second reading.

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

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

I move, seconded by the hon. Premier, that the (Indistinct) bill be read a second time.

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

**Clerk:** Bill No. 11, *Appropriation Act (Current Expenditures) 2019*, read a second time.

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

**Ms. Compton:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the hon. Premier, that this House now resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole House to take into consideration the grant of supplementary supply to her majesty.

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

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

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

**Chair (Perry):** The House is now in a Committee of the Whole House to take into consideration a bill to be intituled *Appropriation Act (Current Expenditures) 2019*. Is it the pleasure of the committee that the bill be now read clause by clause?

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

**Chair:** Do you have someone to come on the floor?

**Ms. Compton:** (Indistinct)

**Chair:** Okay.

1. There may be paid out of the Operating Fund, a sum not exceeding in the whole Two Billion, and Sixty-Seven Million, One Hundred and Forty-Five Thousand Dollars (\$2,067,145,000) to be applied toward defraying the several current charges and expenses of the Public Service, not otherwise provided for, for the Fiscal Year ending March 31, 2020, as set forth in the Schedule.

2. There may be paid out of the Operating Fund toward defraying the several current charges and expenses of the Public Service, not otherwise provided for, from the expiration of the Fiscal Year ending March 31, 2020, until the passing of the Current Estimates for the Fiscal Year ending March 31, 2021, a sum sufficient based on the Current Estimates for the Fiscal Year ending March 31, 2020.

Shall it carry? Carried.

Shall the bill carry? Carried.

Shall the schedule carry?

Question from Cornwall-Meadowbank.

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

I thought as a former finance minister I just wanted to make a statement, if that was all right with the Chair. Over the past, our government, our priorities were always fairly straightforward. We worked hard to diversify our economy so that Islanders would have more job choices. We spent

years working to reduce the cost of post-secondary education and training.

We worked with our primary industries because we knew it was a vital to support traditional sectors like agriculture, fisheries and tourism; and of course, we did our very best to keep up with changing health care needs which challenge every jurisdiction in Canada. It was about social progress and fiscal responsibility.

Between the hard work of Islanders and the work of previous government, a solid foundation for progress has been built. Our province's economy has grown considerably and that means new opportunities for thousands of Islanders. As the potential for individuals to excel has grown in tandem with lower costs for higher education, and I want to point out an important part of that record.

In addition to fostering growth, the former administration has also helped protect our Island from threats that can unexpectedly appear. We all know the world is changing rapidly. We know that change is unpredictable. For evidence of that just take a look south of our national border. I believe that hard work over the last 12 years has helped us to shield those threats by focusing on fundamentals like fiscal management and job creation.

To conclude, Mr. Chair, the word 'collaboration' has been used a great deal in recent days, and in many ways, working together is a laudable goal; however, we cannot allow the idea of collaboration to drown the need for legitimate debate, and ultimately we will want to hear a more defined vision of where this new government wants to go.

Over the past dozen years, the former administration followed a path of social progress and fiscal responsibility. It was a long road but the decisions taken brought us to the point of surplus finances and one of the strongest records of economic growth in Canada. So while I am pleased that so much of today's budget was built on the work of the last government and Islanders' backs, I think it is also fair to say that Islanders have asked for new vision, and I certainly will look forward to seeing that in the coming months.

Thank you.

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

**Premier King:** Well said.

**Ms. Compton:** I move the title.

**Chair:** *Appropriation Act (Current Expenditures) 2019.*

Shall it carry? Carried.

**Ms. Compton:** I move the enacting clause.

**Chair:** We, Her Majesty's dutiful and loyal servants, as the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Prince Edward Island, towards appropriating the several supplies raised for the exigencies of Her Majesty's Government and for other purposes hereinafter mentioned, do humbly beseech that it be enacted: Be it therefore enacted by the Lieutenant Governor and the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Prince Edward Island as follows.

Shall it carry? Carried

**Ms. Compton:** Mr. 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 intituled *Appropriation Act (Current Expenditures) 2019*, 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?

**Ms. Bell:** Standing vote?

**Leader of the Opposition:** Standing vote?

**Speaker:** Hon. Members, ask for a standing vote.

Sergeant-at-Arms, ring the bell.

[The bells were rung]

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

**Mr. Henderson:** Mr. Speaker, the third party is ready for the vote.

**Ms. Lund:** Mr. Speaker, the official opposition is ready for the vote.

**Mr. Deagle:** Mr. Speaker, government's ready for the vote.

**Speaker:** All those opposing the report of the committee, please stand.

**Clerk:** The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir, the hon. Member from Morell-Donagh, the hon. Premier, the hon. Minister of Finance and Deputy Premier, 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 Economic Growth, Tourism and Culture, the hon. Minister of Education and Lifelong Learning and Minister of Environment, Water and Climate Change, the hon. Minister of Agriculture and Land and Minister of Justice and Public Safety, the hon. Minister of Social Development and Housing, 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 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, and the hon. Member from Tyne Valley-Sherbrooke.

**Speaker:** Hon. members, the report of the committees has carried.

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

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

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

I move, seconded by the hon. Premier, that the 15<sup>th</sup> order of the day be now read.

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

**Clerk Assistant (Doiron):** Order No. 15, *Supplementary Appropriation Act 2019*, Bill No. 15, ordered for second reading.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Premier, that the said bill be now read a second time.

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

**Clerk Assistant:** *Supplementary Appropriation Act 2019*, Bill No.15, read a second time.

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

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

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

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

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

**Chair:** The House is now in a Committee of the Whole House to take into consideration a bill to be intituled *Supplementary Appropriation Act 2019*. Is it the pleasure of the committee that the bill be now read clause by clause?

**An Hon. Member:** Carry the bill.

**Chair:** Shall the bill carry? Carried.

Shall section (a) carry? Carried.

Shall section (b) carry? Carried.

**Ms. Compton:** I move the title.

**Chair:** *Supplementary Appropriation Act 2019*.

**Ms. Compton:** I move the enacting clause.

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

**Ms. Compton:** 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. Compton:** Mr. Chair, I move the Speaker take the chair and 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 intituled *Supplementary Appropriation Act 2019*, 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? Carried.

The hon. Minister of Finance.

**Ms. Compton:** Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. Premier, that the following orders be now read: 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 13, 14, 15 be now read.

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

[The following bills were ordered for third reading]

**Clerk:** Order No. 3, *An Act to Amend the Regulated Health Professions Act* (Bill No. 5);

Order No. 4, *An Act to Amend the Drug Cost Assistance Act* (Bill No. 6);

Order No. 5, *An Act to Amend the Highway Traffic Act* (Bill No. 7);

Order No. 6, *An Act to Amend the Victims of Crime Act* (Bill No. 8);

Order No. 7, *An Act to Amend the Summary Proceedings Act* (Bill No. 9);

Order No. 8, *An Act to Amend the Trespass to Property Act* (Bill No. 10);

Order No. 9, *An Act to Repeal the Gulf Trust Corporation Act* (Bill No. 13);

Order No. 10, *An Act to Repeal the Bailable of Proceedings Act* (Bill No. 14);

Order No. 13, *An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act* (Bill No. 12);

Order No. 14, *Appropriation Act (Current Expenditures) 2019* (Bill No. 11);

Order No. 15, *Supplementary Appropriation Act 2019* (Bill No. 15).

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

**Ms. Compton:** Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Premier, that the said bills be now read a third time.

**Speaker:** Hon. members, we need unanimous consent to read the bills a third time. Do we have it?

**Some Hon. Members:** Yes.

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

[The following bills were read a third time]

**Clerk:** *An Act to Amend the Regulated Health Professions Act* (Bill No. 5);

*An Act to Amend the Drug Cost Assistance Act* (Bill No. 6);

*An Act to Amend the Highway Traffic Act* (Bill No. 7);

*An Act to Amend the Victims of Crime Act* (Bill No. 8);

*An Act to Amend the Summary Proceedings Act* (Bill No. 9);

*An Act to Amend the Trespass to Property Act* (Bill No. 10);

*An Act to Repeal the Gulf Trust Corporation Act* (Bill No. 13);

*An Act to Repeal the Bailable Proceedings Act* (Bill No. 14);

*An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act* (Bill No. 12);

*Appropriation Act (Current Expenditures) 2019* (Bill No. 11); and

*Supplementary Appropriation Act 2019* (Bill No. 15).

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

**Ms. Compton:** Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, this concludes the business for this session.

**Clerk:** No, you have ask for them to be carried.

**Ms. Compton:** Oh, sorry.

Mr. Speaker, request that these bills do now pass.

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

Hon. members, these bills introduced by leave of the House, read a first time, read a second time, committed to a Committee of the Whole House, reported agreed to without amendment, read a third time and it is now moved that the bills do now pass.

All those in favour signify by saying ‘aye.’

**Some Hon. Members:** Aye!

**Speaker:** Contrary, ‘nay.’

Carried.

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

The hon. Minister of Finance.

**Ms. Compton:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and I can finally say this concludes the business for this session.

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

[Recess]

**Speaker:** Hon. Members, I am now advised that the hon. Lieutenant Governor has arrived at the Coles Building. I will now leave the chair and invite Her Honour, the Lieutenant Governor, to join us in the Chamber to receive the House and its address and reply to the Speech from the

Throne and to grant Royal Assent to the various bills passed by the House.

**Speaker:** We, Her Majesty’s dutiful and loyal subjects of the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Prince Edward at this time in session assembled, beg leave to offer our humble thanks for the gracious speech with which Your Honour was pleased to open the present session.

**Her Honour Lieutenant Governor Antoinette Perry:** Mr. Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly, it is a pleasure for me to be with you to receive your Address in Reply to the Speech From the Throne, with which I opened the present session of the Legislative Assembly.

I thank you for your careful consideration which you have given to the matters contained in the speech, as well as for the address which you have just presented to me.

**Speaker:** Thank you.

**Her Honour Lieutenant Governor Antoinette Perry:** My pleasure.

**Clerk:** Your Honour, the Legislative Assembly has passed certain Bills during this, the 1<sup>st</sup> Session of the 66th General Assembly and now begs your Honour’s consideration of the grant of Royal Assent for the following Bills:

*An Act to Amend the Regulated Health Professions Act*, (Bill No. 5);

*An Act to Amend the Drug Assistance Cost Act*, (Bill No. 6);

*An Act to Amend the Highway Traffic Act* (Bill No. 7);

*An Act to Amend the Victims of Crime Act* (Bill No. 8);

*An Act to Amend the Summary Proceedings Act* (Bill No. 9);

*An Act to Amend the Trespass to Property Act* (Bill No. 10);

*An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act* (Bill No. 12);

*An Act to Repeal the Gulf Trust Corporation Act (Bill No. 13);*

*An Act to Repeal the Available Proceedings Act (Bill No.14);*

*Supplementary Appropriation Act (Bill No. 15);*  
*Government Advertising Standards Act (Bill No. 101);*

*An Act to Amend the Climate Leadership Act (Bill No. 102);*

*An Act to Amend the Employment Standards Act (Bill No. 104); and*

*An Act to Amend the Rental of Residential Property Act (Bill No. 105.*

**Her Honour Lieutenant Governor**

**Antoinette Perry:** In Her Majesty's name, I assent to these Bills.

**Speaker:** May it please Your Honour, we, Her Majesty's loyal and dutiful subjects of the Legislative Assembly of Prince Edward Island in session assembled, approach Your Honour at the close of our labours with sentiments of unfeigned devotion and loyalty to Her Majesty's person and government. We do humbly beg for Your Honour's acceptance of a bill to be intituled *Appropriation Act (Current Expenditures) 2019*, thus placing at the disposal of the Crown, the means by which government can be made efficient for the service and welfare of the province.

**Clerk:** Her Honour, the Honourable Lieutenant Governor, doth thank Her Majesty's loyal and dutiful subjects, accepts their benevolence, and assents to this Bill in Her Majesty's name.

**Her Honour Lieutenant Governor**

**Antoinette Perry:** I wish to commend all hon. members for the conscientious manner in which you have conducted your deliberations at this point of the 1<sup>st</sup> Session of the 66<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of Prince Edward Island. I pray at this time, that until the Legislative Assembly again meets, each of you enjoy good health and prosperity and that peace and freedom for all people shall be more nearly achieved.

*Alors je vous souhaite un temps de repos, de paix et de renouvellement d'esprit pour reprendre vos tâches dans la prochaine session.*

I therefore wish you a time of relaxation, peace and renewal so that you are able to resume your work in the next session.

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

**Mr. MacEwen:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. Premier, that this House adjourn and stand to the call of the Speaker.

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

That's it, members. Enjoy yourself and have a great summer.

The Legislature adjourned until the call of the Speaker.