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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
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PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS AND ORAL QUESTION PERIOD  
(PRELIMINARY PROCEEDINGS)

FOR

FRIDAY, 21 JUNE 2019



Responses to Questions Taken as Notice

Questions by Members

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

**Leader of the Opposition:** Today, as we've already heard, is National Indigenous People's day. It is a day when we should all stop to recognize and celebrate the culture, the history, the diversity and the many contributions of First Nations, Inuit and Métis people to our country. But this is also a day for those of us who are settler peoples to reflect on the harms of the past and how we can personally support reconciliation.

One of the most shameful and heartbreaking policies implemented by the Crown was the Indian Residential School system that ran from the 1870's to the mid 1990's. The mid 1990's, where Indigenous children were forcibly removed from their families' and sent to residential schools. In June 2015, the truth and reconciliation commission released a report that included 94 calls to action to help advance the process of reconciliation.

**Progress of TRCs call to action**

A question to the Premier and Minister Responsible for Indigenous Affairs: Could you provide this House with an update on PEI's progress to implementing the TRC calls to action.

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier King:** Mr. Speaker, I would echo the comments of the Leader of the Opposition. It's probably one of the darkest days in our Canadian society as we reflect on those terrible atrocities.

Where as I said in my opening statement, I worked with the Mi'kmaq confederacy for five years, many of those during the time of the reconciliation commission and to sit in and listen to the stories, not just of those families who were actually attending residential schools but the trickledown effect and how that has spiraled into the families of today.

With the House's indulgence, I would actually like to get my department to prepare

a document that I can table here, if not by end of day today, certainly by Tuesday.

To give you a full update on that, I would be less than honest if I told you that I know exactly where we're at with those recommendations, but I will bring those back with the House's indulgent.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Leader of the Opposition:** Thank you very much; I really appreciate that response Mr. Premier.

Just a couple of weeks ago we also received the final report on the National Inquiry into Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls. This report contained 231 calls to action. The Premier has already spoken eloquently on this report earlier this week and I have absolute confidence in his commitment to work collaboratively with all levels of government, with the Mi'kmaq First Nations and Indigenous community and community partners on these calls to justice as he promised.

**Department and calls to action**

A question to the Premier: Could you provide us with more information on which department within government will be responsible for overseeing the implementation of these calls to action?

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier King:** Well, I thank the leader very much for the questions. These are very important questions, and I do welcome them.

As the minister responsible for Indigenous affairs, the office through the Executive Council office would be the spearhead of this, but as you pointed out, not just today but in your address to this earlier in the week, the recommendations in this committee or in this report actually touch most of the departments somehow in some way, shape, or form throughout our government.

So it would be the intention of my department through Executive Council, through the responsibilities of the Indigenous affairs responsibilities that I have as Premier to begin to shepherd this process.

But it also includes working with individuals like Lisa Cooper in the Native Council of Prince Edward Island, and the Mi'kmaq Confederacy of Prince Edward Island because the answers are not always inside of a government department. We need to have a reflection of what the realities are, what we can do to actually make a difference here, and I think we have to begin that process immediately.

To answer the leader's question, I believe that has to start with me.

Thank you.

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

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

One of the issues in the past and one that has created stasis in this issue is that they tend to cross departmental boundaries. Between the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the National Inquiry into Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls, we have been tasked with addressing over 300 calls to action affecting a number of departments. Acting effectively on all of those calls to action will require an enormous amount of collaboration between multiple levels of government, and many departments within the PEI government.

A question to the Premier: Have you considered assigning responsibility within a single department – and I know you just said it starts with you and your responsibility as Indigenous affairs minister, I get that – but would you assign responsibility within a single department in order to coordinate, and when necessary, direct action to ensure that all of our obligations are met?

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier King:** Well, Mr. Speaker, I would suggest that that is a fantastic suggestion. I think one of the challenges we face as the

minister who is responsible for Indigenous affairs, but also Francophone and Acadian affairs in this province, we don't have big enough departments to actually take on the serious nature of this work.

We do end up being understaffed, and we do end up allowing things to fall through the cracks. I think that is a fantastic suggestion.

As a matter of fact, I'd like to maybe discuss who you think would be a good person to lead that. I would hate to think that this fantastic report dealing with so many important issues that we need to deal with would not get dealt with her on Prince Edward Island.

So think it is a fantastic idea and I'd welcome the discussion.

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

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

Before I ask my final question, many of us would have listened to the political panel this morning on CBC. One of the contributors there said a breath of fresh air has come through this Legislature. I think that's a perfect example of that. I really appreciate your response to that.

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

**Leader of the Opposition:** Mr. Speaker, I believe that there should not only be clear lines of accountability within government, but also reporting mechanisms to ensure that the implementation of these calls to action is both timely and effective.

In addition, it's important for people to see that we are working to address the harms of the past.

#### **Annual report on TRC and MMIWG calls to action**

Would the Premier commit to having an annual report prepared by Indigenous affairs that will outline progress this province has made across all departments on both the TRC and the MMIWG calls to action?

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

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

Once again, I think that is an absolutely wonderful suggestion. I think that is something that we should actually be very, very interested to commit to and I think it's a good idea. I would commit to the House that we would do that.

I think the one thing – many things that the Leader of the Opposition and I agree on is consultation. When we talk about consultation – we've had this discussion on a personal level, consultation is more than just telling somebody what you're doing, it's actually reaching out and it's hearing others, it's listening to others for ideas and actually getting that community and other interests to make sure we do things right.

I think it's a wonderful idea and I do really welcome – I think if there is a breath of fresh air in here, I think all Islanders are breathing that in. I think it's fantastic, those are good suggestions, and I look forward to working with the Leader of the Opposition and all members of this Legislature to make those things happen.

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

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

During the last election, we heard calls for the next government to develop an economic plan for the province and each party was on board to develop a plan.

### **Economic plan for government**

Question to the Minister of Economic Growth, Tourism and Culture: When can we expect to see this economic plan?

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

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

Thank you hon. member.

Over the last six weeks as I've been getting briefings in and finding out what the department staff is working on, their abilities – so (Indistinct) some ideas, we've

had open discussion pretty well every day on a lot of issues, this as being one of them.

The department is working on it as we speak, I don't have a timeframe when we'll have it, obviously a lot is going to happen here over the summer and we're hoping we'll have something for the fall.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

Thanks for the response. Whether it is doing well or doing poorly, the economy is something that affects all Islanders.

While it's great that government has said it wants to work with a partnership for growth on the economic plan, the truth is, there are so many other stakeholders that need to be part of its development.

Question to the minister: who specifically will be consulted as part of the development of this economic plan?

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

**Mr. MacKay:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker and thank you member.

As of yesterday, my fellow colleague from Morell-Donagh had met with the PEI Partnership for Growth, he's the one that has the lead on it – very capable MLA and I expect good things from him.

I think everybody can have a part of it. This is the starting stages, the public is involved, the industry is involved, this is where some good ideas are going to come to light. Feel free if there's some suggestions that might have been missed that want to be a part of it, I certainly think it can brought to the table and we can pass it on.

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

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

Thank you for the response, I welcome the opportunity.

It is important that we avoid viewing the economy through a narrow lens and instead, view it holistically.

### **Economic plan re: well-being of people and environment**

Question to the minister: How will you ensure that this economic plan goes beyond simple economic indicators and considers factors like the well-being of our people and our environment?

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

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

Obviously I think it comes down to the public and industry, ourselves as leaders here, this is the starting stages of a great opportunity, I think it's something that is going to get legs and we're going to get to the next level.

I'm certainly looking forward to it; I know the industry is looking forward to it. Like I say, any input you might have as well feel free to bring it across. We've got a very capable MLA that's going to be leading this; I have a lot of faith in my colleague from Morell-Donagh and industry leaders as well, so I'm really excited for the opportunity.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Hammarlund:** Thank you.

I think it's good that the industry is connected in there but during the election we spoke about the importance of the community sector – a significant employer of Island women and how that sector contributes to the overall well-being of Islanders and their communities.

### **Economic plan and community sector**

Question to the minister: How will the economic plan include and support the community sector.

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

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

I don't have that answer for you right now member, I can certainly go back to my department and discuss it with my colleague from Morell to see what discussions have happened around that and I don't mind taking it back to you on Tuesday.

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

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

It is well-known that purchasing local will benefit local economy.

Question to the minister: Will your plan include increasing local purchasing, such as suggested by the centre for local prosperity?

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

**Mr. MacKay:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker and thank you member.

Certainly, when we can go local and buy local, that is a number one priority. This is something that we're pushing, the previous government has started some of that in the past and we've had some great conversations around our table as well. There's some great ideas floating around, certainly we're in the starting stages. Definitely, I think that's a number one priority for sure that will be discussed.

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

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

With climate change, the frequency and intensity of storms will increase substantially.

When non-arable land is converted to arable land by removing trees, head rows, and terraces, or disturbing wetlands, storm water runoff changes can adversely impact watersheds, ponds and ditches.

### **Impact on watershed and ponds**

Question to the Minister of Environment, Water and Climate Change: What repercussions are there when watersheds, ponds, or ditches are negatively impacted?

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

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

That's a great question. I think in that area, this is one where the impacts of climate change are most visible to Islanders. For example, we have farmers that maybe have been following the existing regulations to a T, and then the transportation infrastructure might not be able to handle some of the water that's coming in these extreme weather events.

Because of that, some of the, I'll say, items that are in their land may get to a waterway and it's really no fault of their own. They're doing everything that they need to do. That's a great example of where bad things can happen and this is why adaptation is really one of the key components of our Climate Change Action Plan. It's something we need to continue to improve on and we need to consider the costs of going into the future.

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

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

Interesting that you say that because my next question is to the Minister of Environment, Water and Climate Change.

When a wetland or watershed has been impacted by storm runoff, who is responsible to repair those damages?

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

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

Member, that was one of the first questions I had when I became minister and started meeting with the department.

One, in my own district out in Rustico-Emerald, and I think across the Island, we see, in particular, sediment that is coming off and going into waterways and wetlands.

In some cases, it's completely filling a wetland in.

Right now I have to say that the responsibility is not pinned on any individual and not even on government, per say. When a wetland fills in, sometimes there's a private individual puts up the money to dig it out. Sometimes the government does, but that is an area where we're going to have to work to improve. We need new regulations. We need a plan going forward and like I said, I brought that up with the department and we've already had one discussion on that.

We need to work very closely with the department of agriculture on that, but I think it's one of the key areas we need to address.

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

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

I couldn't agree more.

When a watershed has been damaged by runoff, it can take years to reverse that impact and many times, you can't reverse that impact. This is an imminent problem that we have. You don't have to go very far to see ditch after ditch, field after field, where this problem exists. I think education is also a very big piece of this.

### Review of policies on watersheds

My question is to the Minister of Environment, Water and Climate Change: Will the minister review all relevant policies around this issue?

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

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

In terms of reviewing all policies around this issue – I mean, it is an extremely important issue. What I've done is I've asked the department to, first of all, get an understanding of what policies are in place. I guess that is a review.

It does go across multiple departments and that's one of the challenges with climate change, of course, because it impacts so

many areas and that's why we have a climate change secretariat that is inter-departmental.

I want to give you an example of one of those regulations. Right now in fact, when you look at a field or tilled land, it's allowed to lose three tonnes per year of material and that's within the allowable limit. So that would be an example of something that we have to look closely at.

Farmers, of course, directly are impacted by this and we hear – use the term 'stewards of the land' – I mean that land is their livelihood and they are taking measures already. There's a really great report by the Federation of Agriculture that was prepared with the government and it's how to best – best management practices for land.

I'll give that to you as well.

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

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

Farmers are constantly under pressure to have more yields of their crops, to follow certain measures and I would ask that those negative impacts to watersheds not be put on the shoulders of farmers.

I think that we actually have to ensure that many people take responsibility for that because it isn't just our farmers. Our farmers are actually being pressured by other areas that are outside the realm of them – and they are stewards of the land. Farmers do actually want to protect their land and work hard on their land.

They actually put aggregates in to their land to build up the biomass and to ensure that they get to have high yields. There is extenuating outside pressures to them.

#### **Assistance for farmers to protect their land**

Question: What are we going to do to help the farmers to ensure that they are able to produce?

**Speaker:** Minister of Environment, Water and Climate Change.

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

I agree completely. This is not a problem that should be borne by farmers and corporations or anyone who has large land holdings. This is a problem that stretches from beginning to end. Our department of transportation works with watershed groups for example to prepare sediment traps and to put in gabion cages and do those sorts of things to help farmers. That's not being funded directly by farmers.

I'll give you an example of a situation, so this is where you might have three land owners on a sloped piece of land. One at the top, one in the middle and one at the bottom and the problem lies with untilled land at the top of the slope – but really when the sediment comes off, it's at the bottom. This water is rushing down from the untilled land and comes off the bottom into the waterway – the land.

The problem has to be addressed where the lands not coming off. You might even end up with a situation where the farmer at the bottom gets fined and it is actually the land owner at the top that needs to make the changes.

Anyway, thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

On June 19<sup>th</sup> the Minister of Health and Wellness said the work will be underway on a new Hillsborough Hospital in three years.

#### **Timeline for work on new Hillsborough Hospital**

Will the minister please explain why it will take this long to begin work on a new hospital?

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

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

Hon. member, thank you very much for that very important question. Obviously this is an area of my portfolio I take very seriously.

Mental health and addictions here on PEI, as we've known for many years, has reached a crisis level and I'm so fortunate that the Premier has entrusted me with such an important portfolio to advance issues around mental health and addictions.

You are correct when I talked about the new campus that is going to replace Hillsborough Hospital; it's paramount that we do that.

What I have asked my staff internally is to expedite the process as far as the consultation work goes so we can establish this in a more expedited manner.

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

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

On June 7<sup>th</sup>, CBC reported quotes from the minister saying he hoped to have the work on the Hillsborough Hospital completed in three years.

That is a remarkable turnaround, within a 12 day period, not even two weeks the minister delayed startup on the project by more than 1,000 days.

What changed?

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

**Mr. Aylward:** Certainly nothing changed.

What I was referring to, and may have misspoke somewhat, I apologize for that.

My intention was always, as our government is to do this project right the first time and we can't do that if we are simply moving forward to put shovels in the ground without consulting with all the stakeholders. So that's why I'm saying instead of five years time, I want to see three years where we are starting the actual process for the construction of this facility.

But, before we do that process, before we actually put the shovels in the ground, we need to know what the stake holders want and we need to ensure what this camp is to look like and the needs around it.

There are many other components around this; just here in the Legislature the other day I announced the expansion of Lacey House. I announced that we're going to get the structured housing RFP out as well as Lacey House hopefully towards the end of the summer by the very latest, so that we can get those parts, those components started earlier than five years and what the previous government had said.

There is a process in place and at this point in time, we're moving forward with a good work plan and I feel that the people we currently have in charge of that project are the right people to have in charge and that they are doing due diligence and holding that consultation.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. McNeilly:** Thanks a lot for the answer and I'm glad the Minister of Health and Wellness mentioned shovels in the ground.

I'm just trying to reiterate a point that these things do take time and we're here as all members to support and to build strong work on mental health together.

During the election, the Premier and then candidate, promised shovels in the ground as you mentioned, on April 24<sup>th</sup>. Does that show that there's a little bit of out of touch with the seriousness of this problem?

I'm tabling three documents today to reiterate my points.

The question I want to ask finally, was this just rhetoric? Or is this another case of moving targets with little accountability?

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

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

Well again, I go back to the last eight years of my work in this Legislative Assembly and of course, in the communities and my track record around mental health and addiction. So, to reference any of the work

that I have done or I'm going to do in the future, as rhetoric, I take offense to that. I'm sorry, but I do.

This is far too serious of an issue to put that kind of language into a complex situation that we have here on Prince Edward Island around mental health and addictions. Again, yes we had in our platform that we were going to move this project forward faster and that's what we're doing. We're expediting the process with regards to the consultation process, so instead of five years, we're looking at three years. In addition to that we're actually going to have the shovels in the ground much sooner around Lacey House and the structured housing component.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** The hon. member from Cornwall-Meadowbank.

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

This is a question for the Minister of Education and Lifelong Learning.

In November 2018 the province announced a healthy school food pilot in nine schools. A substantial amount of work has been done with parents, educators and students to provide school lunches. The program was to provide healthy, locally produced food and it was recognized to be a leader in the country.

My question is for the Minister of Education and Lifelong Learning.

### **Delay of healthy school food pilot project**

Is this program now being delayed, cancelled, or changed?

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

**Mr. Trivers:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker and thank you member for that great question.

Again, when I became Minister of Education and Lifelong Learning I really wanted to find out what was going on with the school food project because that's one of the areas I care very deeply about. I found out that indeed there was some fantastic

work and that pilot project was planned in nine schools.

Unfortunately, due to the timing of the election, there were grave concerns on whether we would be able to meet these September timelines and with the contracted provider of food for the six of the nine schools if we didn't meet the program and we didn't sign with them,, then we would end up with no food at all in these schools. So we had to make the tough decision for those six schools for sure, to delay it.

But then I met with the Home and School Federation and I told them about the situation, as one of the main proponents of the school food program. I thought they were going to be very, very disappointed in me. They said: Minister, we would rather do it right than do it right now.

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

**Mr. MacDonald:** I think we're starting to see a trend, Mr. Speaker.

This process started back in 2015 – included public meetings with work done by hundreds of students, teachers, farmers, administration, and the Federation of Home and School. The cooperation with these groups has been unprecedented in this type of situation.

As I understand, there may be different school lunch program payment models that may be used including pay-what-you-can. We all know poor diet is associated with poor school performance. I've heard the minister talk about the Breakfast Program when I was on that side of the House, how concerned he was. This is one of the most important programs that could be involved in the school system for some time, and some time to come.

### **Delaying of the Breakfast Program**

Minister: Why are you delaying this program?

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

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

I agree 100%, and I will stand here and I say it is one of the most important things we can do. It's so critical that our children have the proper nutrition, and I mean in some cases they have food at all in order to function.

That's why we are moving ahead with this.

It's really unfortunate with how the former administration, the timing of when they decided to call the election. It's impacted this program, it's impacted the hiring teachers in our schools, and it's been a real, real pain to deal with.

I'm really looking forward to changes in the timing of when the Legislature sits so that perhaps this won't happen in the future and maybe we can get budgets approved prior to even the end of the fiscal year so that we can do proper planning and we can move forward and we won't be interrupted by delays like calling an election before a budget is tabled.

Thank you.

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

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

It's obvious. It's obvious to the House. It's obvious to the public. We're backpedaling. We're backpedaling on Hillsborough Hospital. We're backpedaling on small business corporation tax.

We haven't heard about the personal income exemption yet. That's going to cost \$22 million. The small business corporation tax is \$7 million. This school program could go up to \$7 million. It's obvious the \$35 million surplus is dwindling, and there is panic, and we're cutting programs.

Is there a delay in providing the lunch program due to financial reason?

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

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

I mean, I am getting questions here from the Member from Cornwall-Meadowbank. He is the former minister of finance. I want to commend him for some of the great work he

did. At one point, they actually had a whopping \$75 million surplus. Some would argue if that's a result of good planning, I'm not sure.

I can assure you that right now we have an excellent, topnotch, one of the best finance ministers you are going to see in the province right now. I think when the budget is rolled out you're going to see that things like the school food program are moving ahead.

If you look at the Speech from the Throne, you will see a myriad of great, great initiatives that are going to go ahead. I can hardly wait to see what we're going to do in the department of education and early learning when that budget is tabled.

Let's bring it on.

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

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

Over the past number of years the government has started the practice of spraying brine on provincial highways and it's a concern that I have heard from a number of people out in my area that they're not particularly big fans of this.

#### **Use of brine on PEI highways**

Question for the minister of transportation: Can you explain why is brine used on Island roads? Is it a financial or an environmental decision?

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

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

I certainly do not think it is an environmental reason that they're doing it.

There are two different kinds of brine programs that highways use. The first program is when they pre-spray the roads and they call that anti-icing, and they do that up to 24 hours before a major weather event. The idea is that when the snow starts hitting it that it activates and it keeps it from sticking to the road, and then it's easier for the plows to plow off that first run-through.

The second one is where they spray the salt just prior to it being put on. It's a very small amount of brine gets sprayed on the salt and it helps the salt stick to the road. I think they had calculated they were losing 30% of the salt off the sides of the road before they sprayed it, and now they are down to between 5 and 7% loss off the side of the road after spraying it.

So I would say that the second one definitely is financial.

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

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

Some of the concerns I've heard relate to its effectiveness and the corrosive damage perhaps on vehicles.

Another question to the transportation minister: Does the department have any data or evidence to support the use of brine on roads as being more effective?

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

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

In the second type of brine where the salt is sprayed, yes we would, and we're obviously saving money on salt because we're not losing as much off on the side of the road and we can apply it appropriately and not have to worry about it bouncing off.

The other brine, the pre spray, I'm not sure if there's any evidence that supports the use of it.

Thanks.

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

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

Well, I guess if there's really – for that particular spray, if there's really no use for it, I'm not sure why we're using it. I've gotten many – we just came out of a long winter and sometimes you see the trucks spraying it and you can't understand why it's being done.

### Review of brine used on Island roads

Question for the minister: Will you commit to reviewing or even perhaps cancelling the use of brine mixtures on Island roads if there's little evidence to support their continued use?

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

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

Tuesday evening when I left the Legislature here I stopped in to visit some of the mechanics who are working over at the government garage here. They have a night shift and I wanted to stop in and see how they were doing and they had a plow truck that was up on the hoist and I asked them about brine. They took me underneath the truck to show me the wiring harness, how it is basically rotting away and we talked about some of the additional costs that could be incurred from a program like this.

I don't know that we need to review it. I've talked to plow operators who aren't convinced it works. I've talked to mechanics right across Prince Edward Island as I go around touring some of the facilities that we have and they are convinced it's costing them more work and it's costing government money. So, I would say if what you're hearing from your constituents is similar to what I'm hearing from my staff, then I'll say we are going to cancel the program.

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

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

Every day Islanders access critical social services and programs from local community organizations for everything from health, education, arts and culture, employment and the environment.

Just a few we may be familiar with include the Boys and Girls Club that provides safe and healthy programming for kids, Pat and the Elephant who provides accessible transit services for people across the entire province, Hospice PEI who provide palliative care, the PEI Food Exchange who increase food security for themselves and others, PFLAG helping parents to help

themselves and their family members understand and accept their LGBTQ children, and the Cooper Institute who provides education, resources and training to facilitate sustainable community development, human rights, poverty reduction, participatory democracy, diversity, and inclusion.

### **Operational funding to community organizations**

A question for the Minister of Social Development and Housing: How much operational funding support does your department provide to these organizations?

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

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

I do appreciate the question.

As far as non-governmental organization funding, there are – if my memory serves me correctly – there are over 30 different organizations that receive funding as NGOs from our department. There are basically three different categories, if you like, of funding that is provided dependent upon what would be considered the priority or the highest needs that are required there.

With regard to this specific question, though, that the member has posed, I'll be honest – I'll have to take the question under notice and bring back to the House.

Thank you.

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

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

There is often government investment made in capital expenditures like a new van for Pat and the Elephant or project-based funding like that allocated via the community training grants that we heard about yesterday, but these are not operational funds that can be used to run an organization and allow it to focus on doing it's critical, mandated work.

Employees must be paid. Bills must be paid. Rent must be paid.

I ask again, minister: What operational, long-term funding does your department provide to non-profit organizations?

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

**Mr. Hudson:** Again, as I just answered previously, Mr. Speaker, I do not have the information right at my fingertips and I will take the question under notice and bring it back to the House.

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

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

On PEI, the non-profit sector, also known as the third sector after public and private, is an economic driver, a community builder, and a job-creation engine. This sector has more employees than –

On PEI the non-profit sector, also known as the third sector after public and private is an economic driver, a community builder and a job creation engine. This sector has more employees than aerospace, bioscience and IT combined. Over 6,000 paid employees in 1,000 non-profit organizations, as well as about 53,000 volunteers. This sector is one that is growing, both in economic impact and in the number of jobs it creates.

The throne speech presented last week made specific mention of investment and support for small business and the bioscience, for example, here on PEI, but no mention or commitment for the third sector.

A question for the hon. minister: How does this government plan to support this critical, economic sector?

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

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

I was just provided with the information with regard to one of the previous questions, that our department does provide \$10

million in supports for non-profits on an annual basis.

With regard to the last question, I think of the hon. member, certainly we look at the number of NGO's that we do have across this province, all of them providing a tremendous service. One of the one's that I'm extremely familiar with is Transportation West.

One of the things that we had in the throne speech and that we're putting forward in our platform is regarding a transportation system province-wide. But I can speak to the great work done by Transportation West. It's not only the operational, as the member has pointed out, but it's also the capital aspects that are required by NGO's and we do certainly realize that in our department and do address it.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

Well \$10 million sounds like a lot of money until you talk about the fact that there are 1,000 organizations employing 6,000 people, in which case it sounds like a bit of a rounding error. Much of the critical work of this sector is provided by organizations that cannot plan long-term. They do not have confirmed reoccurring investment and its investment, it's not funding, it's investment and critical work.

So despite doing the essential work that cannot and should not be done by government, non-profits are working for and with, the most vulnerable and at-risk Islander's and they must use valuable resources and staff time fundraising, holding charity fundraisers, bake sales, auctions, fun nights, whatever that may be, even Toonie drives. So they have to do this fundraising just to pay their light bills and payroll, instead of actually delivering the work that they're mandated to do.

### **Priorities for investing in community organizations**

A question for the minister: How will your department determine priorities for investing in community organizations?

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

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

Again, thank the member for the question. Again, we certainly realize the tremendous work that NGO's do right across this province. You look at whether it's Inclusions East, whether its Community Connections, whether it's – and again as I've mentioned, Transportation West, Pat and the Elephant, we do realize the great work and the support they provide and in the majority of cases these NGO's, where is there target at? It is to most vulnerable on PEI. On a go-forward basis, certainly as we bring forward our budget, which I cannot speak in detail to obviously, but there will be certainly details with regard to funding provided to NGO's.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

The community sector network of Prince Edward Island was recently established as an incorporated organization, with a vision to have a vibrant, valued and collaborative community sector for PEI by ensuring that this significant sector has a coordinated voice, resources and recognition. This exciting work must be matched by commitment from government to coordinate and communicate through a single point of contact with the appropriate delegated authority.

### **Full-time staff member for community sector network**

A question for the minister: Will you commit to a full-time staff person and adequate resources to work with the community sector network of PEI and ensure its success.

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

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

I do thank the member for that suggestion.

As I mentioned yesterday, our government has continuously indicated that we want to work with all sectors; we want to work with the opposition. I do appreciate the suggestion that the member has brought forward.

I would be more than willing to have a discussion with her on that suggestion and we'll put that offer to the member.

Thank you.

[End of Question Period]