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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
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RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS AND ORAL QUESTION PERIOD  
(PRELIMINARY PROCEEDINGS)

FOR

TUESDAY, 25 JUNE 2019



Responses to Questions Taken as Notice

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

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

Last week, the Member from Montague-Kilmuir asked me about the Sorreys Bridge and I have an update.

The bridge was last inspected in 2017. The overall condition is poor and it fits into what we would call our high-risk category. Another inspection will happen this year and currently, we expect the structure will be replaced in 2020.

Thank you.

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

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

On Friday, the hon. Opposition House Leader asked me about how many community organizations my department provides operational funding for. I have that information with me and will table it.

But, I also want to clarify my remarks from Friday. I mentioned that my department supported NGOs to the tune of \$10 million last year. It was actually \$12.4 million.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

Last week, the hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton asked how the economic plan being prepared by the Partnership for Growth will include and support the community sector.

I'd like to take this opportunity to remind the member, and all members of the House, that the Partnership for Growth is being led by the private sector, not government. We are simply a partner.

However, I know that the hon. House leader and Member from Morell-Donagh, who also happens to be government's lead on this

project, spoke in one of the first meetings of the Partnership last week.

During his remarks, he emphasized the importance of diverse representation at the table and he challenged the Partnership to see who was missing from the discussion and make every attempt to include them.

I strongly agree with the Member from Charlottetown-Brighton – we need a wide range of voices around that table, but we are in no position to dictate to the Partnership who should be included in the discussion as we are only a member of the Partnership.

It is being led by the private sector with the guidance from the Charlottetown Area Chamber of Commerce.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier King:** Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition asked me two questions on Friday that I have endeavored to bring the answers back to.

The first one was a list of what the province has done with regards to the implementation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and that answer has proven a little bit more difficult to find because it has spread over so many departments, which leads to the second part of the question which he asked about appointing someone as a direct point person within government to be responsible for the implementation of the murdered and missing women and girls report, which I'd like to do.

I'd like to sit down with both the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the Third Party. We've identified somebody within government who would be a perfect person for this and I would like to find out what would be the best way to go about setting this up so we can report back here annually and make sure that information is shared.

I will get the first answer to that question here tomorrow, I sincerely hope.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Questions by Members

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

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

I just want to start by thanking all the ministers for their prompt and fulsome replies to questions from last week.

The *Rental of Residential Property Act* was proclaimed in 1989 and except for a few minor adjustments; there have been really no major changes to the legislation in now what is now almost three decades.

Consultations by a legislative standing committee about 10 years ago heard from both landlords and tenants that the act does not address situations that they face in a fair and equitable manner.

A review of the act was carried out by IRAC in 2006, resulting in 37 recommendations for amendments to the act.

Last year, government released its Housing Action Plan to address the housing crisis on Prince Edward Island and one of the actions of that plan was a review of the *Rental of Residential Property Act*, which as I understand, is currently under review once again by IRAC.

#### **Update of review of *Rental of Residential Property Act***

A question to the Minister of Education and Lifelong Learning: Could you update the House on the status of that review?

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

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

In fact I just had a meeting with IRAC the other day and that was one of the topics of conversation. They basically said that the review is underway and unfortunately, I don't have a timeline for the Leader of the Opposition on when that will be done, but I will get back to him with that.

Thank you.

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

**Leader of the Opposition:** Thank you, I'll expect that tomorrow minister.

Thank you very much.

The *Rental of Residential Property Act* has been the subject of scrutiny by both tenants and landlords and it's clear that Islanders have a lot to say about this important piece of legislation.

#### **Public engagement process for review of act**

Question to the same minister: What will the public engagement process be like for this legislation for the review?

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

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

In fact that was one of the subjects we also talked about and really, what was our first meeting with IRAC as a new minister. In fact, the direction that I gave was that you need to have a broad engagement with stake holders and we brought up a few of the stake holders that might be part of that. I asked really to be included as part of that planning process and make sure that we include the people that are impacted because they're the ones who need to have that input into the review process.

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

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

On Friday, the minister tabled two annual reports from IRAC and one of the concerning trends from the most recent report is the substantial increase – nearly 40% actually – in formal applications to the director of residential rental property, relating to the termination of rental agreements.

Our party has tabled amendments to the *Rental of Residential Property Act*, which I hope you will debate tonight, that would provide tenants with more time to appeal an

eviction for reasons under Section 15, which include very specific things, like renovations and the conversion of premises into non-residential uses.

**Support of minister to *Rental of Residential Property Act***

A question to the Premier: Can we expect your support for this piece of legislation?

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier King:** Well, Mr. Speaker, thank you very much for the question and I am looking forward to the discussion their tonight. I do believe that a lot has changed in this regard and it's time to have these rules and regulations updated.

I think the issues were dealing with today are vastly different than 2006 whenever that review would have taken place. I'm interested to take in that debate tonight. I do think changes have to be made. From what I've read of the motion so far, I don't have any problem with supporting that. I think it's a very reasonable amendment to the motion that we give a little bit more time to appeal the eviction and I would be subject to how the debate goes tonight. I would be looking to support that.

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

**Leader of the Opposition:** Thank you. Really glad to hear that, Premier.

Of course, review of an act is one thing, but implementing the recommendations that result from such a review is quite another. Our amendment – which is really just a very small – although an important part of the act is clearly only part of what needs to be done – an act that requires a major overhaul.

**Commitment of enacting recommendations**

Again, a question to the Premier: Will your government commit to enacting the recommendations of this most recent review of the act?

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

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

I think we have to obviously see what the recommendations are and I hope that they're good recommendations and if there is a process that is outlined by the minister that is inclusive and actually brings in viewpoints from a broad selection of Islanders, I think that's a very good chance that we would get positive recommendations.

The frustration I have is now as the Premier of this province is, nobody seems to want to take on the full responsibility for the housing situation. IRAC says this isn't my problem; tourism doesn't want to touch it. So I think we do need to work a little bit harder to make some recommendations here as to how we actually address this crisis, not just for today but for tomorrow.

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

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

As we move towards a carbon neutral economy, as committed to in the throne speech, we need to consider how we might achieve certain targets. The electrification of transport may seemingly be one of our most challenging due to the large amounts of infrastructure changes required. For instance, I usually drive an electric car but I can't take it to work anymore because there's no charger here for me to use.

Mind you, I've been driving electric since 2012 and ranges have extended considerably, such that I could likely easily drive to Charlottetown and back with a similar purchase nowadays.

However, knowing there will be a place to plug in is essential to reducing range anxiety and increase of locations electric vehicle accessibility.

We have a small amount of level three chargers going in soon that will recharge a vehicle in 30 minutes, which is a good thing – but those are of little use in many situations as they are not where everyone needs to go.

Many level two chargers would be a much more useful solution for commuters like myself.

### **Installation of level two chargers**

Question to the Minister: Will you be installing level two chargers across PEI at strategic locations?

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

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

Yes, we will.

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

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

Initially, strategic locations for level two chargers could be where electric vehicle owner's drive and park, it just makes sense.

Does the minister have any data on where we might best place our charging infrastructure?

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

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

I don't know if we have any data, I mean, we know the travelling patterns. We know down east that we have significant traffic off the ferry which would be car traffic; we know we have significant traffic from the Magdalene Islands which would be car traffic.

We have the locations kind of picked out for the first round of phase two chargers but we're looking at a spot in Souris, we're looking at a spot in Montague, we're looking at having this spread right across Prince Edward Island so that we can reduce, as you say, the range anxiety.

This is only step one, so while we're bringing in the level three chargers in yes, you'll be able to park downtown here very soon close to this building because we think it's important that you're able to. We think it's important that – we have a fleet of our own vehicles that are electric and it's

important to us as a province to be able to charge our own vehicles.

Next, we will continue to add chargers across Prince Edward Island each year until we have what is an adequate number, which at this point, we're probably not even close to.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Howard:** Access to chargers is another issue we'll have to address.

Having a charger exist is not enough; you need to be able to access it when you need to charge.

For instance, you can arrive at a charger only to find a non-electric vehicle is blocking access or another electric vehicle is plugged in.

### **Access to electric chargers**

Are there any considerations for this being discussed within government?

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

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

I guess this is probably a common problem anytime you have a parking spot that's dedicated for anything other than general parking. I'm sure that if you listen to other groups as far as people with disabilities go, they would say that they had the same problem with the blue parking spots all across Prince Edward Island.

I know it's been a part of discussion here in the Legislature before: how we would better utilize those parking spots and if we should have a fine structure.

When it comes to the spots, they're going to be clearly marked – like clearly, clearly marked that this is what they're for.

We are going to do a campaign to let Islanders know that, not only we have them, where they are, but what the expectations are as far as parking goes and amount of

time to park one and what the cost will be, those types of things.

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

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

Electric bikes are another emerging trend. These can be used to get around outside of winter months. This combination of active transportation and small scale electrification will become more prevalent.

### **Uptake of electric bikes**

Are there any plans to encourage the uptake of electric bikes?

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

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

At this point we haven't even gotten a program off the ground to help people get into electric cars, so we're working towards that. As we talked about in House here last week, I believe our solar option is stage one to living a sustainable lifestyle and as I've said to you in private discussions, I believe that electric vehicles is clearly stage two – something that I'm committed to work towards, it's something that our government is committed to work towards and I'll take any recommendations you have seriously and I'll bring them back to our efficiency people and to our energy people and make sure that they get on the agenda.

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

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

The active transportation network's bike lanes and regulations will be sufficient to encourage the safe use of these of these types of active transportation. The range extension that **electric assist affords** means it would become much easier to bike into town from rural areas – meaning we will see an uptake in bicycles on our highways.

### **Improvements to highway infrastructure for bicycle traffic**

Can we expect to see any improvements to highway planning infrastructure that will accommodate the inclusion of more bicycle traffic?

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

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

So we have a sustainable transportation committee – the Minister of Environment, Water and Climate Change; him and I set that up not that long ago. We have a strategy that we're about to unveil that's going to cover a number of topics, one of them will be active transportation links and how we plan to deal with them moving forward in the future, so yes, it's on our agenda.

I realize there hasn't been a lot done in the province in the last 100 years as far as bicycle goes. Prior to that probably there was. At this point, since there are some vehicles on the road there's been very little done to accommodate any other type of vehicle on the road.

Yes, it's something that we're looking at. It's something that's in our planning, and it's something that we're going to try to get to as we build new highway structures across Prince Edward Island.

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

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

PEI doctors are currently paid under two types of models: salary and fee-for-service. In 2017, changes were made to the fee for service model.

### **Models of pay for doctors**

Question to the Minister of Health and Wellness: Are you familiar with these changes?

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

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

If the hon. member could be just a little bit more specific with regards to which changes she's referring to.

Over the last number of years, of course, there's been a lot of modifications around model of care, not only with doctors, but also with our nursing staff, with our paramedics, and many other medical healthcare professionals here on PEI.

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

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

It's my understanding that before the new fee structure took effect, doctors were paid \$28 for seeing a walk-in clinic patient for less than 10 minutes and \$35 for a visit more than 10 minutes.

Under the new structure, doctors now earn \$25 per walk-in patient regardless of the length of visit. At the same time, physicians seeing their own patients saw their earnings for a basic office visit go from \$28 to \$35.84.

### **Changes in fee-for-service structure for Island doctors**

Question to the Minister of Health and Wellness: Do you agree with these changes in the fee-for-service structure?

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

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

When you talk about healthcare it's a very complex issue. Of course, when we're dealing with medical professionals such as doctors and the way they're compensated, there's many aspects with regards to how that works.

With regards to changes in the fee structure, at current policy and current review, things are moving forward as they are.

But you know we're in interesting times right now. We are entering into negotiations very soon around our new master agreement, and if there are certainly issues around that, then I would welcome the hon.

member to bring them forward and we can certainly have a discussion around incorporating those discussions in the negotiations of the master agreement.

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

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

Going door to door during the election, one of the most common concerns I heard in my area was about the long wait times at the walk-in clinic in Summerside, both for walk-in and family practice patients.

Family practice patients are often not able to make an appointment in a timely manner and must attend the walk-in hours to see their family doctor. Additionally, individuals reported being limited to one concern per visit, which does not allow for a holistic understanding of one's health and wellbeing.

### **Tracking of patient experiences**

Question to the Minister of Health and Wellness: Does government track or evaluate wait times and patient experiences for walk-in and family practice clinics, and, if so, how have they changed since the new fee structures were implemented?

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

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

Currently, the data that is collected – we know how many patients are going to the various walk-in clinics. We can mind that data through the billings structures.

I've also heard concerns from Islanders with regards to going to a clinic to see a physician and only being able to talk about one ailment or one issue that they may be concerned with. Frankly, I'm concerned about that as well.

The wait times that we're experiencing here right now, it hasn't happened over night. It's been ongoing now for quite a few years. We know that we have issues around our emergency rooms. We have walk-in clinics, of course, that are extremely busy.

What we've said as a government, clearly stated in our platform, clearly stated in our throne speech, is that we are prepared to invest into primary care so that we can get more doctors here on the Island and that we can make wait times decrease so that Islanders can get the medical advice in a more timely fashion.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

In a CBC article, the president of the Medical Society stated that the changes to the fee-for-service model were to encourage family physicians to see their own patients instead of the patient going to the walk-in clinic.

#### **Evaluation in changes to fee-for-service model**

Question the Minister of Health and Wellness: Has there been any evaluation to find out if this intended purpose has been achieved?

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

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

I don't have the answer on that. I would certainly be more than willing to bring that information back as soon as possible.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

Both salary and fee-for-service models have been shown to have downfalls in terms of access to timely and effective family practice care. As such, other provinces are now looking at blended models that include a mix of patient-based, capitation payments and volume-based payments through fifer service.

#### **Exploration of blended capitation models**

Question to the hon. Minister of Health and Wellness: Is your department willing to explore blended capitation models as an option for doctor remuneration on Prince Edward Island.

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

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

As a new government and especially as the new hon. minister responsible for health and wellness, I've clearly stated all along that look, we're looking at providing health care here on Prince Edward Island in potentially a new, collaborative way.

When we talk about health care, we talk about delivery of health care to Islanders, everything is on the table. We're constantly having discussions within our department. Right now, we did evaluate an EMR, electronic medical records, and we found by talking to the doctors that pilot simply wasn't working.

So you know what we did? We ended that and we're going back out to tender to find a product that's actually going to work better for the doctors so that they can see their doctors in a more timely fashion and that we can collect that data that we need.

So sorry I'm taking a little bit longer, but yes, everything is on the table.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

Prince Edward Island is divided into two employment insurance economic regions, Charlottetown and Prince Edward Island excluding Charlottetown.

These are based on employment rates and there is quite a discrepancy in the hours and weeks required between the two zones. While this is a federal issue, it is having huge impacts on residents of Charlottetown.

#### **Employment insurance zones**

Question to the hon. Premier: What is your government's position on the two employment insurance zones on PEI?

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier King:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and thank you very much for the question.

It is a question that we have probably all have heard a lot about in the most recent provincial campaign.

The previous government had written a letter of support to support one EI zone in Prince Edward Island providing that it was actually at the lower requirement of hours needed, which would be the outside of Charlottetown component and that would be the official stance that I would have.

I would have no reason to not support that. I think it's easier for Prince Edward Island if we have one zone, but as I mentioned yesterday when I met with the mayors of Charlottetown, Stratford and Cornwall, as we advocate for this, make sure in the same vein when we advocate for one zone, that we make sure it is for the lower requirement number so that everyone in Prince Edward Island is treated fairly.

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

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

I appreciate that.

So you kind of gave us an indication of your plans moving forward on this.

Would you provide the House with an update in six months to let us know how that goes?

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

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

As the hon. Member from Charlottetown-Victoria Park pointed out, it is in fact a federal jurisdiction. I expect with a federal election in the offing this fall that that will be continue to be something that will gain a little bit more momentum going forward.

It was a commitment that many of those running in the election last time had committed to it, but as yet they have not been able to make the required change that is needed.

From a lobby prospective, we will continue to lead that charge here and absolutely I would loved to report back here in six months that something positive has happened but that's going to require an election to be held and some decisions to be made following that, but I will certainly come back in six months with any information that I have.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member of Evangeline-Miscouche.

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

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

A \$10 million renovation and expansion to the Bell Aliant Centre and École-sur-Mer in Summerside will take place this year.

However, there remains a pressing need in other French language schools like École Evangeline.

### **Structural problems at École Evangeline**

Minister: Are you aware of the structural problems at École Evangeline?

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

**Mr. Trivers:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker and I thank the hon. Member from Evangeline-Miscouche for the question.

*Merci beaucoup.*

Thank you very much.

In fact, I'm very well aware of those concerns as the member knows. Those concerns have been brought up for many years now and with the school being built back in the 1960s, it's important that some changes are made.

I'm pleased to say that tomorrow we're meeting with *la Commission scolaire de*

*langue française* and hope to discuss some of the priorities and see where that lies, including Ecole-sur-Mer, in some of the project there.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Evangeline-Miscouche, your first supplementary.

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

Ecole Evangeline was built, as the minister said, in the 1960s and it's showing its age.

The two main options appear to be renovation of the existing school, or to build a new school.

#### **Options for Ecole Evangeline school**

Has the minister had any discussions with the Department of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy to what option would be preferred?

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

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

Indeed, that's a really good point. Those are some tough decisions that will have to be made about Ecole Evangeline – build new or renovate – and then of course, with École-sur-Mer so close by, there are students that have gone from Ecole-sur-Mer to Evangeline and Evangeline to Ecole-sur-Mer. As I mentioned, meeting with the CLSF tomorrow, we want to look at all of those options and see what is the best way forward; Gilles Benoit is the new president.

Really, in our new roles here in government, we haven't had an opportunity to meet as a group to talk about our infrastructure either, so those will all be on the table.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Evangeline-Miscouche, your second supplementary.

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

Hon. minister, I'm sure you're aware that the French Language School Board had indicated renovations or some kind of look at the Evangeline school was a priority for them last year.

#### **Ensuring of funding for Ecole Evangeline**

Would the minister – would you be prepared to include this in your capital budget and ensure Evangeline school is given consideration by Cabinet in the next funding year?

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

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

There's nothing I would love to do more than to stand here right now and be able to make a promise like that, but until I talk with my Cabinet colleagues and talk with Treasury Board, I can't stand here today and say I can commit to that.

I do know there was \$55,000 worth of repairs made to the roof of Ecole Evangeline last fall, which is small, but at least that addressed that priority. Again, talking with *la Commission scolaire de langue française* tomorrow – I'm hoping to get an idea of exactly what their priorities are and if Ecole Evangeline is still at the top of their list.

Thank you.

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

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

My question today is for the Minister of Agriculture and Land.

The 2019 potato crop is in on Prince Edward Island and inevitably, that comes with bills that come probably about a month later. Many of those bills are rather expensive; costs for fertilizer, fuel, wages and so forth.

The federal AgriRecovery fund is a federal disaster relief initiative to help producers with extraordinary costs of activities necessary for farmers to recover following a natural disaster; the federal government cost-shared this initiative with the provincial governments.

Prior to the recent provincial election, the PEI department of agriculture made application to the federal government to have Prince Edward Island participate in this program.

**Status on AgriRecovery application**

Could the minister provide this Legislature with a status of the AgriRecovery application?

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

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

That's a great question.

As a farmer myself, I know that Mother Nature can be very cruel and she was very cruel to our potato farmers last fall. This all adds extra burdens to our farmers and as you say, their bills are starting to pile up right now.

I commend the minister of agriculture for putting the application forward for this AgriRecovery fund, which triggers a disaster year. It's a Canadian-federal program and we did get accepted for it and our government, as soon as we got in, that was our first line of business. Mr. Premier and I sat down and had discussions with everyone involved and our assessment has gone to the federal government and now we're waiting back for their answer.

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

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

PEI potato farmers did have a challenging 2018 fall season with over 7,000 acres of not-harvested potatoes and concerns about the impacts that that will have on a virus-free potato 2019 crop.

There are many volunteers could possibly emerge – when farmers have to comply with crop rotations.

**Availability of AgriRecovery to PEI growers**

It's good to know that the minister is saying that has been accepted but does the minister have any indication of when and how much funding will be available to PEI growers this season?

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

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

I know the importance of the timing of this and we are constantly in conversations with our federal counterparts to get an answer and we're patiently waiting. We expect an answer any day on when the timeline will be.

Over 8,200 Islanders are directly employed in the potato industry, so it is an important part of our society and our primary industry.

Thank you.

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

**Mr. Henderson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Obviously there certainly were other commodities too, that were also impacted on issues pertaining to weather last year and once again, it's encouraging to know that they have been approved for funding, but we still don't seem to have a lot of details here.

I'm told that these details are out there but what are the qualifications for farmers to tap into this particular fund and will other commodities be eligible for funding?

**An Hon. Member:** Good question.

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

**Mr. Thompson:** To answer your question, yes.

Other commodities, these did trigger the AgriRecovery, some horticultural did and those details will be coming out with the assessment as soon as we hear, which should be very soon, I hope.

Thank you.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member of Morell-Donagh.

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

I know when I was elected in 2015 I started asking a lot of questions about the school psychological assessments and actually, I know the entire opposition before me had asked the government many times about this.

I've got a bit of a different angle for Question Period but we're certainly not going to let up now.

### **Update on waitlist for psychological assessments**

I'm wondering if the Minister of Education and Lifelong Learning can give me an update on the waitlist for these assessments?

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

**Mr. Trivers:** Okay. Well thank you member that is a very good question.

The waitlists are something we're still working to address and working to get down and it's something that – if you want to know the details of the numbers on list, I don't have them at my fingertips and I'll get back to you with that. You can believe that of course, in the department it's something that we're looking to reduce the numbers on as quickly as we can.

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

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

I know the third party over there is looking for some credit and you know what, I'll give them some credit. It ballooned under their watch to about 400 people on the waitlist in about three and a half years. They brought in some new psychologists which would help reduce it and they took our advise and started hiring privately as well, which brought it back down – I think in January this year it was back down to about a two-and-a-half- year waitlist.

There was a constituent about mine contacted me this weekend that recently it was back up to approximately three years.

**An Hon. Member:** (Indistinct) in six weeks you did this?

**Mr. MacEwen:** It's from January until the election actually –

**An Hon. Member:** Oh.

**Mr. MacEwen:** I'm wondering if the minister can confirm if that's true or not?

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

**Mr. Trivers:** Well thank you member.

As I said, I don't have the number at my fingertips to confirm that, but I will get back to you on that. I can say it is something that we're looking at addressing and trying to improve on and today is budget day and you never know what might come up.

Thank you.

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

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

It's easy to get caught up in these numbers and these lists but we want to see action. I hope that this current government does what we said we'd do for a long time and try and address this problem. We need to get these waitlists down.

There's people that are in Grade 3 that are waiting until they're in Grade 6. It's a serious situation. If we've got to go back out to the private sector and hire them again, I would encourage the minister to do that.

### **Commitment to reduce waitlist**

Will the minister commit today to getting that list down as quickly as possible?

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

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

It's hard to disagree with an argument like that and I will go back to my deputy minister and I will go back to the Department of Education and Lifelong Learning and that is one thing we will set as one of our priorities.

Thank you.

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

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

Many people have approached me with suggestions for the use of the land formally occupied by the Prince Edward Home.

One *Guardian* Letter to the Editor suggestion was for a botanical greenhouse. Brighton residents have suggested affordable housing or expanding the Victoria Park.

### **Plans for land of the old Prince Edward Home**

I would like to ask the Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy: What are the plans for the use of this magnificent piece of land?

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

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

So at this point, we are just coming to the end of phase one of demolition. There's another second phase of demolition for the newer part of the building, which will probably start in the next month or so.

That won't be completed until sometime in November, and, at that point, we plan on putting grass seed there.

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

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

The land in question is arguably one of the most prominent in the city.

Question to the minister: What steps are being taken or will be taken to consult city residents on the use of the land?

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

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

So at this point, we don't have any plans to use the land for anything.

We plan to plant grass there, and hopefully by next summer we'll have grass. So I'm not sure if we need to consult anybody to do

that, but the plan at this point is we're going to plant grass there.

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

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

Thanks for the response.

So are you saying you're not going to consult the citizens on the suggested use? You're just going to plant grass?

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

**Mr. Hammarlund:** (Indistinct) because you can do many other things like affordable housing, for one, that keeps coming up.

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

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

Planting grass is part of our project right now for demolition of the project.

So we have demolished the piece that was built in the 30s. The section of the building that was built in the 60s, we're finishing the mitigation on it now, and when the mitigation part of it is done we are going to tear that down. The contract basically says when the site is all cleaned up, put topsoil down, and plant grass.

I'm not saying we won't consult. I'm saying we don't have any plans.

So if there's a time that somebody thought that we needed to do something there, then we would have to consult just by virtue of the way government does business, and the way you have to do business when you come to the City of Charlottetown to do business.

It's been expressed to me that maybe the City of Charlottetown is interested in doing something there. At this point, there's been no formal discussion with me. If they were to take it on, then it would be their responsibility to consult with the local residents.

But at this point, the plan is to get the building out of there. We're going to put topsoil down, and we're going to seed it out. As per the arrangements, we have to tear the building down.

If there's further discussion down the road, then of course we'll include anybody in that needs to be included into it.

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

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

Thanks for the response.

I think planting grass is an excellent solution in the short run, but we all know that whatever you're planning, be it the affordable housing or any other construction; it's going to take a long time for the planning process.

#### **Consultation process re: land**

Don't you think the consultation process should start now?

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

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

The consultation process would start now if we had plans, but as I said, we don't have plans.

The building has sat there vacant for a number of years. It's been, quite frankly, an eyesore. It's been a place that we didn't know if it was safe for children to be around, and people were smashing windows and breaking in. It was important to us to get the building out there.

So we started that process and, like I said, we got the first part of the building down, which is the part that was built in the 30s. They're mitigating the rest of the part, taking out the pieces that they can salvage whether it's metals that the contractor can sell or any mitigation of any dangerous goods that were in there which was all part of the mitigation plan.

Then we will take that part down, and we will return – so the idea is at this point we're returning it to its original use, which was grass. I know I keep saying we're going to plant grass there, but we're planting grass there at this point.

If there is a discussion to have, or if there's social housing that needs to be built and people think it should be built there, then that certainly wouldn't fall under the responsibility of the Department of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy. That would fall under either somebody else's department here or the City of Charlottetown, or perhaps a private developer.

At this point that's not in the plans for that site. I'm not saying it can't be, I'm not saying it won't be, but I'm saying from my perspective in our department, our responsibility is to get the building down, get it on dump trucks, ship it out and return it to its original state. Any other discussion, we'd be willing to have, but all our input would be at this point would be the land. The land resides with us, any moneys that would be needed to do it, or any planning that would be needed to do it, or any community outreach that needed to do it, would have to be done through the proper department.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

I know the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women's head is probably spinning right now so I don't like to do this, but, women represent half of our population, yet are grossly underrepresented when it comes to governance. Increased political involvement by women, better corporate performance and more inclusive organizational cultures are all benefits that arise when women get involved in their community by joining a board.

#### **Status of Island corporate directors**

A question to the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women: What percentage of Island corporate directors are women?

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

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

I don't have that at my fingertips but I would be happy to bring it back to you.

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

**Ms. Bernard:** Other jurisdictions require corporations to work toward improving gender balance on boards. Several European countries require a minimum percentage of women to serve on each board. In places like Ontario, corporations must report on things like the number of women on their boards, their policies for gender representation and their nomination and selection process for directors.

### **Representation of women on boards**

A question for the hon. Minister Responsible for the Status of Women: How will your government encourage better representation of women on boards?

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

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

I can say, one way that we're showing it in government is now Executive Council actually has gender balance, so that make a difference for this government. I will be encouraging all boards to have gender balance moving forward.

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

**Ms. Bernard:** Currently it is difficult to find accurate and up-to-date information on the representation of women on boards.

A question to the hon. minister: Will you commit to regular reporting on the prevalence of women on corporate boards and including this information in the next Women in PEI: A Statistical Review?

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

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

I will be happy to commit to that.

[End of Question Period]