

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY



Speaker: Hon. Francis (Buck) Watts

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The Legislature sat at 10:00 a.m.

Matters of Privilege and Recognition of
Guests

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Welcome to colleagues on this last day of our sitting week.

Special welcome to the representatives who are here from the PEI Presbyterian Child Committee of the United Church Women who are here in conjunction with the universal children's day of the United Nations. I'll have something more to say about that later.

We want, of course on behalf of all Members of the House, to congratulate you and your good wife, Marg, on your 50th anniversary and wish you many more. You've been great friends and neighbours to us.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, when we get together to celebrate your next significant anniversary date on your 60th and 70th, we look forward to you continuing in the role that you now serve.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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

A pleasure to rise today and welcome everybody here in the gallery. I guess it is our last day and especially to you on your special day today.

I'd just like to thank the United Church Women's group for what they've done and what they presented us today. It's a great gesture and it does bring this matter to heart, and it will make us take pause and think about it.

I also want to mention something that took place yesterday and I never had a chance to speak to it. It's something that I've seen over the years. We paid tribute and made a motion towards grandmothers. I think that was very fitting. I've seen over the past number of years where grandmothers are all children have, in some cases, where parents aren't available to take care of their children and that's passed on to grandmothers and it's a big responsibility. I can remember a lot of times back in the past where I turned to my grandmother for guidance and questions and I cherish those moments and times.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I, too, would like to pass on my congratulations on your 50 years with your wife. Wonderful stuff.

I'd also like to welcome the United Church Women's group who kindly gave each MLA, I believe, a doll this morning. I will keep mine on my desk and look at it to remind me of the poverty that we have in our community. Thank you for doing that.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Biggar: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'd like to welcome everyone here in the gallery and thank them. Also the United Church Women for their work that they do in raising awareness around poverty for sure.

I'd like to welcome Eddie Lund to the gallery as well. He never fails us in his attendance here.

I'd also like to congratulate our clerks at the Table. Marian Johnston and Emily Doiron yesterday made history in the Legislature here of Prince Edward Island being the first

time that two women have sat at the Clerks' Table in this Legislature of Prince Edward Island.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Biggar: Finally, Mr. Speaker, to wish my sister Lorraine Robinson of Tyne Valley a happy birthday.

She'll be celebrating this weekend and I expect we'll have a cup of tea together.

Thank you.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness and Family and Human Services.

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

I rise to welcome all our guests to the gallery and the group from the United Church and their advocacy for child poverty. We look forward to doing great things in the next months and years to come to continue to improve the quality of life for all Islanders, in particular, children in our communities.

I also want to acknowledge that tomorrow is Sports Day in Canada, a national event. Unfortunately we'll not be sitting tomorrow, but want to acknowledge the day and the volunteers that are doing activities. I will have the opportunity to be participating in an activity at Birchwood Intermediate School and to celebrate sport in our country and the great things it does in communities all across Prince Edward Island.

Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Belfast-Murray River.

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would also like to congratulate you and your partner on 50 years of marriage. Congratulations.

Welcome everyone here to the gallery, the ladies from the United Church and the dolls that they've given out to us, thank you very much, recognition of child poverty. It will

definitely be a lens that we look through moving forward.

It's a busy weekend coming up. We have lots of craft fairs, Christmas fairs, coming up. Busy weekend in our district. I want to give a shout-out to the Belfast Lions Club, they're having their 27th annual cash draw, a very successful fundraiser for the group. Once again it's sold out this year, so I want to congratulate them on their hard work.

I also want to send a shout-out to Gary Clow. He's a great community person down in Cambridge. He's going through some health issues and there's a benefit for him Sunday night at 7:00 p.m. at the Cambridge Hall.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

Mr. LaVie: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Glad to have everyone back in the House and all those that are in the gallery, especially to those in Souris-Elmira District 1.

Tonight I get the privilege— and it's a passion of mine — to attend the annual awards banquet for the Souris Fire Department. I spent 35 years in the fire department as a volunteer and the last 13 years as fire chief, and it's something that's dear to my heart. I'm the fourth generation as fire chief there.

There's a young gentleman out there today. I would like to wish him a happy birthday. I won't give his age out because it would be my son, Shawn LaVie, and if I give his age out it will probably tell the House, give them an idea how old I am. I would like to wish Shawn a happy birthday today.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

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

I, too, would like to congratulate you on your 50 years and I look forward to visiting with you and your good wife Margie tonight with your many friends.

I would also like to welcome everybody in the gallery here today. A special welcome to Glenda Frizzell, an old neighbour of mine, and I compliment you and your group on what your message is today.

I would also like to welcome the Member from Alberton-Roseville's family here today. Karen is in the gallery with us today.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Alberton-Roseville.

Mr. Murphy: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's a pleasure to rise, and first of all I would like to congratulate you on your anniversary, and I would like to welcome the ladies from the United Church to the public gallery, and I would like to specifically point out Corina Bolo. She's a resident of North Port. Her and her husband Peter are great, community-minded people and I actually had the pleasure of working with them a couple of times selling newspapers on Main Street in Alberton for the Raise a Reader project.

I would like to also welcome, of course, two special ladies in my life: my wife Karen and my daughter Lila. It's Lila's second visit here to the Legislature. Welcome.

I would also like to welcome all of the good people of Alberton-Roseville that are home watching on t.v. or on the Internet.

I would also like to extend my condolences to the Champion family to the passing of their loved one, Gordon Champion. I knew Champ quite well. He was into my coffee shop there in Alberton quite a bit and he will be sadly missed.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I do want to give a shout-out to everyone watching from District 18 Rustico-Emerald.

I, too, want to welcome the United Church women to the gallery. I think it's a great cause they have doing the work with child poverty, and I know that the doll that I received I will keep on my desk. It looks a lot like Meaghan Blanchard who is originally from District 18 Rustico-Emerald, and I think she actually sings at some events that help out with child poverty and those sorts of issues. Often we give so much thanks that we live in Canada, especially with the events around the world, but it's obvious there is a lot of work to do at home and we need to focus sometimes on our own communities a little more.

I just wanted to wish Phyllis Weeks a happy 50th birthday and encourage anyone that wants to go to the New London Community Complex tonight, they can see my band, Party Mix, playing as they chase the ace.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Georgetown-St. Peters.

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I want to welcome everybody to the gallery here today and those that are following along at home, in particular all those great folks from District 2.

A busy weekend up and about down in my neck of the woods, I know on Saturday night the Kings Playhouse and Destination Georgetown Peninsula Ltd. has their black-tie fundraiser that I will be attending. There are great things going on in Georgetown and there's a great group of people leading the charge down there so I look forward to it.

I would like to give a special shout-out to a friend of mine, Karen Deagle, who turns 50 today, a big milestone in Karen's life, and I wish her well.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Henderson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I, too, want to congratulate you and your lovely wife on your 50th anniversary coming up, and I do note that the years have been well to you, very kind to you. I think your hair is even getting darker as you get older.

I will also welcome all these people to the gallery, especially Lila Murphy, too. It's great to see her here and supporting her father, the hon. Member from Alberton-Roseville.

On a sadder note, I want to acknowledge the passing of the man of 1,000 songs, the passing of Ron Hynes in his 64th year. He was a great performer in Atlantic Canada. I had the opportunity to see him on a number of occasions. In fact, the second song that I learned to play on the guitar, and is a three-chorder, is "Sonny's Dream." I just wanted to acknowledge that.

I want to mention that the O'Leary firemen's craft fair is today and tomorrow at the O'Leary Legion so there are lots of great things there for people to pick up for Christmas,

My final comment is that I want to wish a happy birthday to my mom. She's 75 years old tomorrow and I'm sure she's watching today on EastLink and online, so I wish her all the best. Happy birthday, mom.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid.

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to wish you and your lovely wife a happy anniversary this weekend.

Thank you to the group for child poverty who are joining us here today.

I'd like to say congratulations to Tanya and Quentin Gillis. For those of you who drove

through Morrell this past summer and partook in the Wiked Fries food truck, you'd be happy to hear that they've moved into the old Crosskeys location in Morrell and it's a new restaurant called Holy Cow. Tanya is actually a health inspector with the province, so I guarantee you it's probably the cleanest restaurant in PEI as well, so congratulations to them.

The minister from across mentioned yesterday about the early bird tournament. I would just like to say good luck to all the kids and parents who are taking part in the hockey tournament in the Charlottetown and Sherwood area today. I believe Kings County novice AA is just about to start their game against Pownal today and I'll be checking the updates online through the proceedings today to see how my son, Rylan, is getting along.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

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

I want to put a big shout-out to all of the members of my district, and I have two of them in the riding here are in the House with us here today, Wade and Leo Czank. The hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid talked about his young fellow being a hockey player. Well, Leo is on his way to the NHL. He's got a fantastic routine. He goes out and he scores a goal and he plays on the same team as my grand-nephew, so absolutely awesome.

I want to put a shout-out to the UCW ladies and especially a good friend of mine, Myrna Wicks. She and her husband Jim were actually, I'd say, the mother and father of Habitat for Humanity here in PEI. They both have an absolute heart of gold and it's good to see her and the rest of the ladies in the House. She takes on many projects and again, she's here with another one.

I want to say hello to the Murphys for sure, good to see them down here, and to a good friend, Eddie Lund, as well.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McIsaac: The potato board is having their annual meeting today so I want to wish each and every one of them a fantastic time. The Premier, actually, is going to be the guest speaker too so that will be great.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

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

I would be remiss, too, if I didn't extend congratulations to you and your lovely bride on the celebration of your 50th wedding anniversary. I'm slowly getting towards that milestone, but I've got just a few more years to get to if she'll keep me.

I would also like to, of course, welcome the ladies from the United Church here, and thank you very much from the bottom of my heart for the advocacy work that you're doing and that you are going to continue to do. I know it's just a starting point, but we had a great presentation by one of your members in our caucus room this morning and I thank you for that.

I would also like to welcome Chris van Ouwerkerk here with us today. Chris is a great constituent of mine in Stratford-Kinlock. He also ran against me in the last two elections as the candidate of record for the NDP. Chris is a great young man who is currently studying law and, I would have to say, probably produces the best jerky here in all of PEI. If you have a chance to sample it I would highly suggest you do so.

In closing, I would also like to tell everyone that I had the extreme pleasure of commuting from Stratford to Charlottetown this morning. I took the T3 transit and it was a great experience, as it always is. The bus is clean. The drivers are very courteous. It's a very affordable means to commute from Stratford to Charlottetown or from Cornwall, for that matter. I do encourage anyone that has the access to the transit

system to please think about using it. It's a great way to help our environment and to support others that might not be able to.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Member from Evangeline-Miscouche.

Mr. Gallant: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I, too, would like to congratulate you on your 50th anniversary, to you and Margie.

I would also like to thank the ladies from the United Church Women (Indistinct) for giving us those dolls this morning. It was a very fitting symbol of your cause and we must remember the little people.

I would also like to welcome the Murphys to the public gallery, and say a hello to everyone back in Evangeline-Miscouche, and I wish everyone a wonderful weekend.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: I suppose I shouldn't let this occasion go by without saying a few words and wishing Margie a happy anniversary on this day, and I hope to be seeing here later on today or later on this evening. At least that's what the plan is.

Also, I'd like offer a happy 49th wedding anniversary this weekend to my good friend George Dalton from Summerside. George was at our wedding 50 years ago today and that day he bought an engagement ring for his girlfriend, Estelle DesRoche, and they were married exactly one year later to the day. George and Estelle, happy anniversary.

Anyway, another note of interest. Fifty years ago today Their Highnesses, Queen Elizabeth and Prince Phillip celebrated their 18th wedding anniversary.

So, congratulations to them today on their 68th wedding anniversary.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Statements by Members

Speaker: The hon. Member from Evangeline-Miscouche.

Recognition of Acadians of the Year

Mr. Gallant: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's a privilege to stand in the House today and recognize three leaders in the Acadian community.

During the closing ceremony of the 113th Agriculture Exhibition and Acadian Festival, Zakk Cormier received the Young Acadian of the Year, and Edmund and Zita Gallant were named the 2015 Acadians of the Year.

Since a young age Zakk Cormier was deeply interested in music. He is the son of Dennis and Élise Cormier of Saint-Raphael, and grew up in an environment which allowed him to develop and refine his musical talent.

Zakk is dedicated to his craft and spends many hours practicing. He now can play more than 10 different instruments. Zakk preformed throughout the Acadian festival, and in particular played the role of the young Eddy Arsenault at the closing ceremony. He promotes the learning of music to children and was actively involved in teaching beginners the violin in grades 5 and 6.

For the first time since its establishment, the Acadian of the Year was given to a couple. Edmund and Zita Gallant, both former teachers who have been very busy since their retirement. Their extensive involvement in the community is a direct reflection of why they deserve this recognition. From organizing concerts at the Chez-Nous Nursing Home to sitting on various community boards and organizations, Edmund and Zita continue to celebrate their Acadian heritage by giving back to others.

It is crucial that we continue to recognize exemplary Acadians. The rich culture and heritage of the Acadian people should continue to be celebrated through this festival and these awards.

I want to take this time to congratulate these deserving Islanders, thank them for their dedication to their communities, and look forward to seeing their future accomplishments.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Alberton-Roseville.

Emily Wells Annual Taste Our Island Award

Mr. Murphy: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's a pleasure for me to rise today to recognize and congratulate Emily Wells on recently receiving the ninth Annual Taste our Island Award. She received this award along with the Mill Restaurant located in New Glasgow, which she owns. Emily also has a sister restaurant in Charlottetown called Local 343.

Emily is known for using her talents to support charities such as Farmers Helping Farmers and school breakfast programs. This fall the Local 343 restaurant featured Saturday soup specials with proceeds directed to supporting school breakfast programs in each county.

Emily is a daughter of the Alberton area and has grown up in the town and is a graduate of Westisle Composite High School. A graduate of the Culinary Institute of Canada, Emily has been involved in the Culinary Institute for 27 years. Prior to starting her own restaurant she was executive chef at Dune Café Studio Gallery in Brackley Beach.

The Taste Our Island Award recognizes Island chefs and restaurants that produce superb food and service and promote locally grown products. This year there were nine finalists for the award. The top prize is a full-page advertisement in the PEI Visitors Guide which is valued at over \$9,000.

Emily represents the commitment to excellence that is making Prince Edward Island a top culinary destination. I'm sure I speak for all Members of the House in

extending well deserved congratulations to Emily and her staff at the Mill Restaurant.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Belfast-Murray River.

National Child Day

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm pleased to rise today to recognize National Child Day, which is celebrated in Canada on November 20th each year.

National Child Day has been celebrated across Canada since 1993 to commemorate the United Nations adoption of two documents centred on child rights, the first being the United Nations' Declaration of the Rights of the Child on November 20th, 1959, and the second, the United Nations' Convention on the Rights of the Child on November 20th, 1989.

By ratifying the United Nations' Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1991 Canada made a commitment to ensure that all children are treated with dignity and respect. This commitment involves the opportunity for children to have a voice, to be protected from harm, and to be provided with their basic needs and every opportunity to reach their full potential.

I would also like to take the opportunity today to recognize the work of the national United Church Women and the members of our provincial United Church who have visited our offices earlier today.

These women have taken the opportunity on National Child Day to promote their campaign, the Child Well-Being Initiative, which is a four-year initiative of national UCW aimed at increasing awareness of child poverty in our country.

The UCW wants our politicians, nationally and provincially, to address the fact that Canada is 24th of 35 industrialized nations with a 14% rate of child poverty. It also notes that the rate of child poverty in Aboriginal communities is even higher.

I would also note as well that the report for the MacKillop Centre for Social Justice and the Coalition for a Poverty Eradication Strategy for PEI found 17.5% of children on the Island living in poverty in 2012 compared to 13.8% in 1989.

Today members of the UCW presented our members with unique, one-of-a-kind dolls, lovingly made by their members as a reminder that this government and all our officials need to address this serious issue of such a high rate of child poverty in a very prosperous country like Canada.

I want to commend their efforts and I wish them very much success in their campaign.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Responses to Questions Taken as Notice

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Communities, Land and Environment.

Environmental Advisory Council report (further)

Mr. Mitchell: Mr. Speaker, yesterday during my response to questions from the hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald I indicated that the report by the Environmental Advisory Council would be fully reflected in the draft of PEI's new water act.

I did, however, neglect to clarify that the EAC report will indeed be made public when it is prepared and would be posted online with all the other presentations that will make up the big part of that report.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier's letter to Auditor General (further)

Premier MacLauchlan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Yesterday in Question Period the hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock asked if I would table for the House correspondence with the Auditor General pursuant to the

Order in Council establishing or creating a special assignment under the audit act to look into certain matters that have been discussed and (Indistinct) part of the questions.

I undertook to do so and I informed the House that there was no such letter. The Order in Council was adopted on March 10th, 2015 and would have been relayed in the normal course to the Auditor General. It wouldn't have been necessary for there to be a letter from the Premier.

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

Atlantic Gateway and TIE minister (further)

Ms. Biggar: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Yesterday during Question Period the hon. Member from Belfast-Murray River referenced Gateways and Border Crossings Fund. Just an update on that.

That particular fund was under the old Building Canada Fund which has now expired and we have a new Building Canada Fund. The funds that ran that particular fund were \$2 billion nationally spread over seven years. They're basically all expended at the moment. It was a totally federally funded project. We did use some of that fund, \$8 million of it to fund the highway alignment and also the Charlottetown airport extension. Some improvements were made to the Confederation Bridge as well under that fund.

Again, it was \$2 billion nationally over seven years. There's a little bit left there, I believe, for a marketing piece but we are operating now under the new Building Canada Fund and I'd be happy to get a copy of that for the hon. member.

Thank you.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness and Family and Human Services.

Psychiatrist's salary and audit (further)

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

I rise to table specific details for the Leader of the Third Party in respect to his questions around billing practices and audit protocol with physicians here in the Province of Prince Edward Island which are conducted by Health PEI, and the work that they do and how we continue to strengthen our audit practices in the Province of Prince Edward Island after following recommendations in 2009 from our Auditor General.

Thank you.

Questions by Members

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Inequality and children

Leader of the Opposition: Good morning, Mr. Speaker.

Question to the Premier. Today is national day of the child where issues affecting our children are top of mind. The PEI United Church Women are advocating for government to address some inequality that has a negative effect on our children. What is the government doing to address this?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker.

Thank you for the question.

One of the first things that we did after coming to government was to increase the allowances for families who are recipients of social assistance, both the food and the housing allowance. Further, we increased the funding for the breakfast food, the breakfast program in the schools, by \$200,000.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Number of and appointments to provincial agencies

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you.

New question to the Premier. How many agencies, boards and commissions do we

currently have in the Province of Prince Edward Island?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, I don't have the precise number for such bodies, and that would – depending on how you defines them it could include a number of agencies that are created by this House under legislation.

But if we're talking just statutory bodies, let me say it's on the order of 160 but I can bring that precise number back to the House, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: I don't know where the Premier is getting 160, but our research, we have over 70 agencies, boards, commissions, that type of group in operation.

Do you have any idea how many positions that encompasses or takes in?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, I think the best thing to do on this is to bring an answer back to the House and table something because it really does become a question of definition as to what's included.

What I will bring back to the House is the number of bodies that exist under legislation that's been created by this House and then the number of posts that are involved in filling the roles of those bodies.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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

To the Premier: How many positions have you filled of these agencies, boards, and commissions since you have taken office?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, I don't have a precise number on that but what I can tell the House is that we do have a number of vacancies or we have a number of positions where the prior appointment has gone past the intended date.

The reason for that is that our government's commitment to openness and transparency and to engagement was to take our time, put in place a process that is known as Engage PEI that has been unveiled publicly and that is open to people throughout the community to put forward their names to be considered for service on these bodies.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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

Can the Premier explain to the House how his Engage PEI appointment process differs from the Participate PEI appointment process that was used previously?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, under the Engage PEI process people can apply online, they can put their name forward.

They are asked to have support from a couple of members of the community so there's an opportunity to get a feel for the extent to which people are involved in the community. We are actively promoting the opportunity and the desire on the part of government for there to be a wide representation and for people to take part in the affairs of government and to bring a variety of perspectives.

Let me say I appreciate the question because it's another opportunity to let people know about Engage PEI.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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

The application basically is the same. Our research has found the employment process the same, even the frequently asked questions online are the same, except for the name change from 'participate' to 'engage.'

Is this just not an exercise in rebranding of the process?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, this is a commitment on the part of our government to have participation and to have input and perspectives from citizens from a wide range of points in our province, and to bring their experience and to assist in the work of bodies that have been established under legislation by this Legislature.

We're doing what a government is supposed to do and we welcome that participation, and we thank all members of the House for making sure that people know about the opportunity to have their names put forward and to contribute.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Rewarding of defeated candidates

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

Question to the Premier. The Premier may suggest that this is some kind of change but we still some see some defeated candidates, and I have knowledge of this, and well-connected Islanders being rewarded by their employments.

How is that any different from the predecessor and how he operated?

Premier MacLauchlan: I'm sorry, I just didn't hear the finishing of the question

Speaker: Could you repeat the question, hon. Leader of the Opposition?

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

What we're seeing now appears to be the exact same as what we've seen in the past – people being rewarded, and in some cases to candidates that have been defeated. How is this any different than what your predecessor has done in the past?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, there have been a modest number of appointments made.

As I said, we actually have taken our time to bring forward this process so in fact there would be a public and a widely publicized opportunity for citizens throughout the province to come step forward to let people know or let it be known that they're interested in serving, and that's exactly what we've done.

The modest number of appointments that have been made are in situations where names have come forward, for example, through self governing bodies or autonomous bodies or bodies that in effect have their own nominating process. That might be the pharmacists or it might be the University of Prince Edward Island or it might be other professional bodies. But in fact, we have not taken any energy or not put any priority on filling spots with people of any political stripe. We're coming forward with an Engage PEI process and I say again, I encourage all members of this House to encourage people to put their names forward. Frankly I don't think it helps in encouraging people to take part in the political process or the democratic process in this province to be suggesting that it's got anything to do with political stripe.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Agencies review

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

Okay, that's fine. Let's switch for a minute. I said earlier that that we roughly got over 70 boards in the province for a population of about 135,000 people. If I look at the Province of New Brunswick and I look at

the Province of Nova Scotia, they half the boards and commissions with far more population than we have.

Will you commit at looking at reviewing our boards and commissions to what other provinces have done to bring them in line?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, let me first of all remind all members that whatever boards and commissions exist is because they exist under the authority of this Legislature under legislation that's been passed kind of over the years.

We have two initiatives underway now. One is called Assessing Red Tape. That is actively underway. In fact I heard it being complimented in the public media this morning. Then in a second part we have an initiative, together with New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, that is aimed directly at levelling the playing field in terms of the regulatory requirements or the regulatory burden on firms or citizens in our three provinces with the aim of enabling or creating a platform whereby our economies can prosper well together. So in fact, we are very committed to the point that the Leader of the Opposition raises.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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

Final question. It's great that we're acknowledging the red tape and the burden that does play in our society and small business and (Indistinct) like that. Will you commit in this review of red tape and the way that it's processed to also commit to reviewing our boards and commissions and those bodies to bring them in line with other provinces and possibly reduce red tape with that?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to say that this is very much the spirit in which we approach government.

Yesterday I brought forward a HUB model and I was criticized by the opposition for not

creating an additional office. I guess we'll continue to do our best to create horizontal collaborations to do the best with what we've got, and indeed if we feel that there are bodies that are in some way duplicating or no longer required, we'll absolutely be happy to let the Legislature know and bring forward amendments accordingly.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque.

VLT removal and placement re: private establishments

Mr. MacKay: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Question today to the finance minister: Who decides the placement and removal of all video lottery terminals from private establishments?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. Roach: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

That's the Atlantic Lottery Corporation.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque.

Mr. MacKay: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

What criteria is used to decide when video lottery terminals are removed from an establishment?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. Roach: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

That criteria is established by the Atlantic Lottery Corporation, and too – I don't have the in depth details but I believe it goes something like this: they review each terminal, they see I guess the amount that it's being used, the value of it, and they then determine whether or not it stays or it's moved to another location.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque.

Mr. MacKay: These machines are important revenue source for groups like Legions and Lions Clubs. Does the minister think their community impact should be considered before a decision is made to remove these machines?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. Roach: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

When the Atlantic Lottery Corporation is going to do something with a VLT we are contacted and advised and we do get in contact with the organization or the establishment where they are located.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque.

VLT loss and Summerside Cabinet minister

Mr. MacKay: Mr. Speaker, the St. Eleanors Lions Club may close its doors because they lost all five of their VLTs.

This will impact dozens of community groups who use this space as well as the Lions Club itself. Minister, would you agree that a lack of a Summerside Cabinet minister can explain why this poor decision was allowed to proceed?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. Roach: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

In all of the documents and all of the reviews that I've been involved with, the one thing that's not on the list is whether there's an MLA or a Cabinet minister involved. I don't see that as having any relevance whatsoever.

All our work with the Atlantic Lottery Corporation is based on good business and it's looked at from a business perspective.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

VLTs and ALC

Speaker: The hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque.

Mr. MacKay: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Minister, have you or any of your colleagues from the Summerside area raised this issue with ALC?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. Roach: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We have in fact, in this particular situation, had conversation with ALC and with the organization.

Thank you.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque.

Mr. MacKay: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

This summer the Legion in the minister's own home community had a VLT forcibly removed. Does the minister support this move?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. Roach: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I believe, in this instance, I think that the ALC had gone in earlier and removed one of the machines in hopes that the performance issues with the remaining ones would improve and that was not the case.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque.

Mr. MacKay: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Does the minister think that taking VLTs out of Legions and service clubs supports our veterans and community groups?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. Roach: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I think that what they do, in fact, when a machine is removed from one location because it's underperforming, it would in all likelihood go to another location where it would perform and would be monitored. All funds that are received by this province from the Atlantic Lottery Corporation go to assist

all organizations in Prince Edward Island through our budgetary process.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

VLTs and GeoSweep

Speaker: The hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque.

Mr. MacKay: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Minister, are the massive losses in GeoSweep to blame for the ripping out of these VLTs from important community spaces?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. Roach: Mr. Speaker, the short answer is no.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque.

Harness racing and Red Shores

Mr. MacKay: Mr. Speaker, I've been getting a lot of calls from people in the harness racing industry concerned about the future of this industry.

Is the minister aware of any plans to restructure operations at Red Shores in Summerside?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. Roach: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We work very closely with the harness racing industry and with Red Shores. I can assure the member and this House that we are extremely supportive of the harness racing industry in a major way in Summerside.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque.

Mr. MacKay: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Harness racing is a \$50 million industry creating jobs and spinoffs in rural and urban communities. Does the minister support any plans to downsize operations at Red Shores in Summerside?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. Roach: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

If the member has information on plans of downsizing operations in Summerside I'd certainly like to see it because I have not been made aware of any plans to downsize the industry in Summerside.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque.

Mr. MacKay: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The operation at Red Shores in Summerside is an important revenue source for the city of Summerside, so let's clear the air here. Is the minister confirming that there are no plans by ALC or the province to restructure, downsize, or close Red Shores racing in Summerside?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. Trivers: On the record.

Mr. Roach: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

If they're wishing it for the record I'll give it for the record. I have had absolutely no discussions with anyone, either staff, Red Shores Summerside racetrack, or anyone else, with respect to downsizing operations, or in any way removing operations at the Summerside raceway.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque.

Mr. MacKay: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I just want to clarify something. Harness racing in Summerside, this government has no plans to shut down harness racing in Summerside? Yes or no. (Indistinct).

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. Roach: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I've had the opportunity to attend both facilities in Charlottetown and in Summerside to review the operations and

have had discussions with raceway officials at both locations about the Red Shores operations and the raceway. In none of those discussions, including staff, have we had any discussion with respect to closing or reducing operations in either facility.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Greenhouse gas emission target

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The Paris Climate Change Conference is coming up shortly where governments from around the world will hopefully agree on the measures needed to keep average global temperature rise below the 2 degrees Celsius mark, I'm told variously by scientists, which we need to do to avoid catastrophic consequences.

A question to the Premier: When you accompany the Canadian delegation in Paris, are you prepared to agree to a binding greenhouse gas emission target and to accept the will of the international community on this matter?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, on Monday, November 23rd, I will take part in a First Ministers' conference in Ottawa, the first in seven years.

There will be two subjects on the agenda; one being the reception of refugee families from Syria, the other, which I believe has been assigned a larger amount of time, including to hear from scientists on this subject, in preparation for the Paris conference.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Given that Prince Edward Island is uniquely vulnerable to climate change, particularly when it comes to sea level rise, in these negotiations with the premiers and our prime minister, will the

Premier of Prince Edward Island be advocating for a specific emission target? If so, what will that target be?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, I can confirm for the House that at the end of August of this year there were meetings of the New England Governors and the eastern Canadian premiers at which we, together, undertook to aim to have reductions between 35 and 45% in our greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 relative to 2005 baseline.

That's an ambitious undertaking and one that we did not agree to lightly and it will be a benchmark against which we'd be prepared to consider what's being said around the table next Monday.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Provincial investment in fossil fuel companies

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As their values plummet, there's a growing global movement for governments and institutions to divest from fossil fuels because of the very situation we're talking about.

Could the Premier inform the House how much the Government of Prince Edward Island and its various funds and Crown corporations currently has invested in fossil fuel companies?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, that's something on which I'd have to do some homework and bring a response back to the House, but I'd be happy to do that, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Lewis Point.

Subsidized housing

Ms. Casey: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

My question today is directed to the Minister of Health and Wellness and Family and Human Services.

Yesterday the Minister of Health and Wellness and Family and Human Services tabled a report prepared by the PEI Community Advisory Board on homelessness. The report outlined various government initiatives to reduce homelessness on Prince Edward Island.

The minister also stated that since 2013 the province invested in housing through 60 new rent supplements. During the recent election campaign I spoke to many concerned residents regarding the availability of subsidized housing in the Charlottetown area.

Minister, would you kindly give this House an update on the availability of subsidized housing in the Charlottetown area? Are you satisfied with the current service level? What is being done to ensure that Islanders who are in need of this service have timely access?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness and Family and Human Services.

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

A great question. As the Minister of Health and Wellness and Family and Human Services we are extremely committed in our recent mandate letters from the Premier of this province. We have a clear focus on renewal of a housing strategy.

To respond to the question as minister, I feel that we've made inroads since 2007. We've increased the number of seniors units in this province by approximately 375. We've increased the number of rent supplements across the Island by approximately 190. I recognize that we have waitlists that are unacceptable and I'm very much looking forward to making sure that we continue to build a renewed focused and a housing strategy, and was extremely pleased to hear that under the new federal government's commitment of \$10 billion dollars in infrastructure that they will designate a third of that towards social, which will be a very robust housing mandate in partnership with

the provinces and the territories in this country.

Thank you.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Lewis Point, first supplementary.

Ms. Casey: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Minister, as you let us know about the new federal government's 10-year investment in social infrastructure, have you spoken with the new federal minister responsible for this plan and will you be asking for an investment in subsidized housing for the Charlottetown area?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness and Family and Human Services.

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

In my formal life as an educator and school councillor I worked very closely with families and saw firsthand the impact that lack of appropriate safe housing has on our children in our communities across Prince Edward Island.

We are currently lining up a conversation with the federal minister responsible. We spent time last week in discussions with the federal health minister. I am very optimistic that the stars are lining up in respect to our province's mandate on a renewed housing strategy and the mandate by our new federal government to continue to expand, increase the volume of rent supplements, and increase the number of affordable seniors housing units here in the Province of Prince Edward Island.

Thank you.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Summerside-St. Eleanors.

New energy strategy re: renewable sources

Ms. Mundy: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

A question for the Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy. Recently the minister made a very exciting

announcement at one of the standing committees on energy and infrastructure. She said that the province has begun work on a new energy strategy. I'm very interested in the whole field of renewable energy, it's an area where we should all be pursuing. If a country the size of Denmark who, in their energy strategy, have declared to be independent of fossil fuels by 2050, then PEI, due to its size, could easily be a world leader in renewable energy if it so chooses.

My question: Will the minister please tell the House whether she expects this new strategy to include some discussion on renewable energy sources such as solar power and tidal energy?

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

Ms. Biggar: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you for the question, hon. member.

PEI is the leader in wind energy across the country. We've been recognized in the efforts that we've done that way. Significant progress has been made in renewable energy in terms of biomass. I'd like to point out, too, that through the Office of Energy Efficiency we've spent more than \$15 million dollars in grants and loans to conserve energy for people on PEI.

We will be exploring a number of initiatives across renewable energy sources. I think it's very important that we do that. We will be exploring and we actually have engaged, in terms of tidal power, Acadia University to do some study on our tidal data, so that's in progress as well. There are a number of initiatives that we will be moving forward with around encouraging more renewable energy in Prince Edward Island.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Summerside-St. Eleanors, first supplementary.

New energy strategy release date and public input

Ms. Mundy: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you for that, minister.

As you know, a growing number of Islanders are very interested in this area and

very committed to environmental sustainability in our province, so I have a two-part question: First, when do you expect the strategy to be released?; and second, will the strategy be a focus for public engagement and consultation?

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

Ms. Biggar: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. member, you mentioned Denmark, I believe, in your comments. I had the opportunity last night to have a conversation with our new federal energy minister, Jim Carr, who had just arrived back from Paris, I might add. I had a conversation with him about his national energy strategy as part of his mandate, and part of our mandate here on Prince Edward Island is to work in partnership with that. I see that as a great opportunity, I think, too. We're unique in our size that we could certainly work towards a goal of using renewable energy to become 100% self-sufficient. I see that as a goal in the future, certainly.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Biggar: On the second part of your question, hon. member, we are working towards an RFP going out by the end of this year. We expect to have that process occur over the winter where we will engage primary stakeholders and secondary stakeholders in the whole process through public consultation and through engagement.

Speaker: Now we will call on the hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Watershed Alliance funding

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

This is a question for the Minister of Communities, Land and Environment. Minister, in your election platform you announced the total increase of \$250,000 in funding to our watershed groups. This fiscal year your budget showed an increase to watershed groups of only \$180,000.

Can you tell the House what the Watershed Alliance actually received?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Communities, Land and Environment.

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

As the hon. member knows, and we've had several questions on the floor of the Legislature regarding funding for the watershed areas of Prince Edward Island, that we did initially add \$180,000 to what they would receive in dollars, and this year there'll be an additional \$70,000 for a grand total of \$250,000.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Minister, I'm trying to figure out how this all adds up because when I talk to the Watershed Alliance I find they've only received \$140,000 dollars so far perhaps, and the bulk was used by two watershed groups to replace lost federal funding. In effect, there was really a zero increase to watershed budgets.

Will you ensure that the watershed groups get the total amount of money that you promised in this House earlier this year plus the money that was not brought forward?

Thank you.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Communities, Land and Environment.

Mr. Mitchell: Yes, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and certainly appreciate the question.

I know that I've met with many of the watershed groups all across Prince Edward Island. Yes, there was a couple of groups that had received no funding from the federal government last year.

Our commitment to the watershed funding is solid. The watershed groups did receive all that funding last year. There was an additional \$41,000 that is still with the federation Watershed Alliance that is trying to establish the best way to spend those dollars. We are going to be working very collaboratively with the Watershed Alliance to see where the best use of that funding will

be for the next season that they have to work in and they'll be a big part of helping us to decide how we disperse that \$1.2 million.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Another question for the minister. Just to be clear, how much money can the watershed groups expect to receive the next fiscal year?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Communities, Land and Environment.

Mr. Mitchell: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Currently we are discussing that with the Watershed Alliance. As I said, they have a \$41,000 amount currently right now that they're looking how the best way to spend that money is. Over the coming months we will be working further together to establish the best way to disperse it all. The formula from past seasons they felt is not as effective as it could be, and we are certainly working in a very collaborative, approachable way with them to decide what would be the best way as we move forward to into their coming season.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

In the House you said that you would increase the amount to \$250,000 in subsequent years. Those were your words.

I know you're working with the Watershed Alliance groups to determine the level of funding, but based on that statement, will you assure our watershed groups that they will receive their \$250,000 increase in funding for the 2016-2017 fiscal year?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Communities, Land and Environment.

Mr. Mitchell: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I can commit that the total funding that we have established with the Watershed

Alliance group will be there for them this year. It is a bit of a process to decide the best way to break those dollars out.

There are approximately 23 watersheds all across Prince Edward Island doing extremely good work in all regions of the Island. We want to make sure that they have the proper dollars to carry on with projects that they've either started so far or are looking forward to building in the future.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's interesting you're talking about now project-based funding. I'm just wondering where you're going with that.

Minister, during the last session of the Legislature you said you'd be meeting with the PEI Watershed Alliance, and you mentioned that again today, to discuss concerns about the dispersal of watershed funding and to determine the best practice going forward.

The Watershed Alliance has been seeking a multi-year funding arrangement so they know what money's available, committed money, and they can confidently plan ahead.

Has a new funding formula been initiated that commits money for multiple years, committed money?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Communities, Land and Environment.

Mr. Mitchell: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We are working with the alliance to provide predictable, sustainable funding. We had made a discussion point that we will get together somewhere over the winter months – either January or February, whichever is more convenient to them – we will sit down for a full day, discuss what their vision is, where they need assistance. We're more than willing to continue on with that.

Thank you.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Minister, a stated goal of the new watershed strategy was to provide watershed groups with stable and adequate multi-year funding through a transparent funding process, of course.

Can you outline to the House when this new multi-year formula will be rolled out? You mentioned meeting with them this winter. Does that mean it will be ready in the spring?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Communities, Land and Environment

Mr. Mitchell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I expect the Watershed Alliance to play a significantly important part in this dispersal of these dollars. This is the group that has the best understanding of what needs to be done in these watersheds all across Prince Edward Island. They're the group that has the most experience working with those individuals they have involved in their groups and we certainly want to support their vision and be able to supply those predicable dollars as we move forward.

Mr. Speaker, thank you.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, minister.

Again, just to reinforce the point, each year the watershed groups face uncertainty as to how much funding will be approved and this has hindered their ability to proceed on projects. In fact, some cases they went ahead, they took the gamble, they spent the money – for example, by hiring a student – and then they didn't receive the funding.

Also, timing is of key importance because they need to hire these students in the spring. In April, typically.

Will you assure these groups that funding will be confirmed and forthcoming in a timely manner for hiring to take place so projects can get underway before the summer is half over?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Communities, Land and Environment.

Mr. Mitchell: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As I said earlier, I am totally committed to working with the watershed groups and alliance. I know ours is not the only funding these groups do receive. They are able to apply for programs and grants through the federal government, through other departments of provincial government, and many of them also use private sector.

I understand that it's hard for them to determine exactly how many dollars they're going to have from year to year, but we're working very diligently on trying to provide that the provincial dollars that will be available to them will be predictable and sustainable, multi-year.

Thank you.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald, final question.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Minister, that's great news and we'll definitely hold you to that.

Minister, in the spring 2015 session of this House you agreed that watershed groups add 10 times the value of every dollar they receive, 10 to one return.

Given how important sustainability and stewardship of the environment is to Islanders and this massive return on investment, why are you only committing to an increase of \$250,000 per year?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Communities, Land and Environment.

Mr. Mitchell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We understand in our meetings with the watershed groups that they have a lot of work to do and it takes a lot of funds. We've committed that 250,000 extra year over year now, and we'll continue to work on ways that we can enhance programs, find other dollars to assist them when they need to.

As I said, there are other programs they can apply for within government. Transportation and infrastructure has programs. Federal

government has programs. We will work with them to try to assist them in any way to get the funding they need to perform their work.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Statements by Ministers

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

National Child Day

Premier MacLauchlan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise to recognize National Child Day and that children across the province, and around the world, are celebrating National Child Day today with parades and special celebrations.

This morning children from early learning and child care centres in Charlottetown marched through the street to celebrate children's rights.

As we've recognized earlier we have in the gallery and met, prior to the commencement of our session, with representatives of the PEI presbyterial United Church Women's child poverty committee.

There are similar events happening in communities across the province where children can take some time to celebrate being children and to learn about their rights.

In 1989 the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child became the first legally binding international convention to affirm human rights for all children.

Each year on November 20th we celebrate National Child Day, and indeed universal child day, in honour of this important milestone. We recognize the rights of children and we celebrate children as active participants in our communities. We celebrate the rights that we take for granted here in Prince Edward Island, such as a child's right to have a name and an identity.

We ask ourselves: How can we help our Island children to have better lives?

We must work together to ensure that all Island children are safe, respected, and able to fulfill their full potential.

Every child deserves a healthy start in life. No child should suffer through poverty or abuse. Every child must have the opportunity to grow and reach their potential.

Later this afternoon the very first National Child Day children's rights forum will take place here in Charlottetown.

We appreciate the efforts that are being made throughout our community to support children and to advocate for their enhanced support and opportunities. Those who work with children will be meeting to start a discussion on children's rights and they will discuss how we can all do better.

We look forward to hearing the ideas from those discussions and certainly hope that we can all take some concrete steps in improving the lives of children.

I hope that all members of this Assembly will join me in thanking everyone, including those represented in the gallery today, who work with children and on behalf of children across the Island. We thank everyone who is working to protect children's rights in our province.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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

I wholeheartedly support this. Over a number of years, over close to 30 years, I've dealt with kids in some very vulnerable positions and seen what children have to put up with or what's available to them within their homes and the school system and society.

They're at risk and they continue to be at risk. We must take every step that we can to improve the lives of our children and give

them the same opportunities that we've been graced with today.

I can't stress that if nobody protects the children, if we don't stand for the children and protect them, who's going to?

I must commend you on what you're doing and the passion you have for it. At the end of the day we must be together on this. I think we are and I think we agree that it's one of the most important issues out there.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

I've always looked at politics as succession planning on a community scale. Of course, those who succeed us are our children. Politicians, for such a long time, have said great words and made lovely promises. There have been a lot of symbolic gestures around children and child poverty, perhaps most elegantly the desire to eliminate child poverty by the year 2000. Obviously we missed that mark by a long way.

While it's wonderful that we sit here in this House and talk about this, it's time to move from promises and symbolism to action. Just yesterday, the country of Wales in the United Kingdom passed a well-being for future generations act. I have on the Table to be brought up next week a *Well-being Measurement Act* here for Prince Edward Island. It's about keeping a scorecard and a report card so that governments are held accountable for such things as eliminating child poverty.

I absolutely commend the work you're doing and I welcome the Premier's statement, but it's time for us to move beyond words to action.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Workforce and Advanced Learning.

International Education Week

Mr. R. Brown: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

This week marks International Education Week. It is celebrated worldwide each year to showcase the impact international education has in preparing Canada for the world and supports our country's efforts to engage effectively on the international stage.

We are proud of the contributions international students make to our campus environment in Prince Edward Island. International students bring diversity, worldviews, and a wealth of research expertise to our classrooms, enriching the educational experience of our faculty and students alike. When these students return home with the knowledge of the people of Prince Edward Island, the products of Prince Edward Island and the PEI way of life, I strongly believe this helps Prince Edward Island's international trade and thus provides employment for a lot of Islanders.

I'd like to especially recognize UPEI, Holland College and Collège Acadie today as they have expended great energy in enhancing efforts to attract international students to campuses in record numbers to the province.

UPEI's current international enrollment stands at an all-time high of 795 students from 67 countries. Holland College has a record of 138 international students from 16 countries. This is a testament to the quality of education and growing reputation our schools have developed to be viewed by international students as a top Canadian destination.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid.

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I fully support the minister with this statement. Just this past Monday I was able to join the minister and president Alaa of UPEI and the president of the Canadian University of Dubai to tour the new engineering building and AVC at UPEI.

There are some great things happening. Let's keep the collaboration going.

We know that the association of newcomers has had their budget reduced, I think, with some federal funding this past year. I think we need to keep the supports there for the organizations that support newcomers. Because when these students come we're showcasing our Island and it's important to want to convince them to stay here long-term after they finish their studies.

I support, absolutely, the minister and let's keep the supports for our newcomers association going.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We all know that in diversity lies strength, whether we're talking about the economy or the environment or society in general. When we include others in our community it just makes it better. Inclusion strengthens our community, it improves Prince Edward Island. It's a lovely statement and I thank you for it, minister.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness and Family and Human Services.

Skip the Waiting Room

Mr. Currie: Mr. Speaker, today I am pleased to recognize an innovative new pilot project that is making it easier for Islanders to access services at walk-in clinics.

The Skip the Waiting Room system was developed by a young Islander, Mark Richardson, with assistance from the Skills PEI Ignition Fund which helps Islanders grow an idea or business. The Department of Health and Wellness is pleased to support the implementation of the pilot with funding of \$40,000 over the next 12 months.

Skip the Waiting Room enables clinic staff to allocate a portion of their time to clients who registered for an appointment online. Clients can go online and quickly and securely register for an appointment at the clinic. Later in the day they receive a call or text from the clinic when it is appropriate for them to depart for their appointment.

This makes it much more convenient for Islanders to access health services, whether they are mothers at home with young children, seniors who need someone to be with them at the clinic, or people who need to see a doctor but have difficulty getting away from work.

It is important to note that only a small portion of the clinic appointments are given to online registrations. These appointments are tentatively scheduled and later confirmed at the end of the clinic so as not to impact people who have been waiting at the clinic.

Skip the Waiting Room is now being piloted at the Downtown Walk-in Clinic in Charlottetown. If it improves access, we will be making it available to other clinics across Prince Edward Island.

I'd like to acknowledge Mark Richardson who is with us in the gallery today and congratulate him on his excellent initiative and idea which can make a real difference for Islanders when they are ill.

The project is an excellent example of how technology is improving access to health services and we look forward to making more of these opportunities available to Islanders in the near future.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

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

I'd also like to congratulate Mr. Richardson for a great initiative. I can only assume that this idea was borne out of necessity more than anything else. As anyone knows, if you attend a clinic or go to a pharmacy to get a

prescription renewed or just to do some shopping, you'll see quite often the walk-in clinics are literally full, wall to wall, door to door.

As I said, this is a great initiative, as many Islanders do have a hard time getting in to see their family physician if they do, in fact, have a family physician.

We have a minister that tells us quite frequently that 95% of Islanders now have a family doctor. Recently at the Health PEI AGM the CEO, Dr. Richard Wedge, actually announced it was 87% now.

But obviously we're also aware that if there was a survey done in these waiting rooms of walk-in clinics, many of the patients would tell you that they don't have a family doctor, they're not on a list any more.

Mr. LaVie: Family doctor (Indistinct).

Mr. Aylward: So we do have to question these numbers. But I do like to commend Mr. Richardson –

Mr. LaVie: (Indistinct) ambulance.

Mr. Aylward: – because Islanders do have busy lives, especially Islanders with small children or seniors that are trying to get in to see a doctor.

Mr. LaVie: No doctors.

Mr. Aylward: Mr. Richardson coming up with such a great initiative as this to help Islanders access –

Mr. LaVie: No ambulance.

Mr. Aylward: – medical care, I think is a wonderful thing.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

I would also like to pass on my congratulations to Mr. Richardson. Great job.

Of course, technology can be a beautiful thing. When it's utilized to increase convenience and to improve efficiencies within any system, then we're doing a good job. We all know that we have to reduce our wait times in emergency rooms and this is just one tool that might help us accomplish this.

Congratulations, Mr. Richardson. Great job.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Presenting and Receiving Petitions

Tabling of Documents.

Reports by Committees

Introduction of Government Bills

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce a bill to be intituled *An Act to Amend the Summary Proceedings Act* and I move, seconded by the Honourable Member from Charlottetown-Lewis Point, that the same be now received and read a first time.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk: *An Act to Amend the Summary Proceedings Act*, Bill No. 28, read a first time.

Speaker: Can we have a brief explanation, hon. Premier?

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, these amendments to the *Summary Proceedings Act* will bring forward enforcement fees to replace a current default fee, and also deal with the disposition of fines under the *Highway Traffic Act*.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Government Motions

Orders of the Day (Government)

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

Mr. McIsaac: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. Minister of Finance, that the 23rd order of the day be now read.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk: Order No. 23, *Appropriation Act (Capital Expenditures) 2016*, Bill No. 24, ordered for second reading.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

Mr. McIsaac: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Finance, that the said bill be now read a second time.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk: *Appropriation Act (Capital Expenditures) 2016*, Bill No. 24, read a second time.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

Mr. McIsaac: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Finance, that this House do now resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole House to take into consideration the said bill.

Speaker: I will now call on the hon. Member from Evangeline-Miscouche to take the Chair.

Chair (Gallant): The House is now in a Committee of the Whole House to take into consideration a bill to be intituled *Appropriation Act (Capital Expenditures) 2016*. Is it the pleasure of the committee that the bill be now read clause by clause?

Some Hon. Members: Yes.

Chair: Bill No. 24, *Appropriation Act (Capital Expenditures) 2016*.

May it please Your Honour, we, Her Majesty's dutiful and loyal servants, 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 the 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:

1. There may be paid out of the Operating Fund, a sum not exceeding in the whole –

Mr. Aylward: Chair?

Chair: Yes?

Mr. Aylward: I'm sorry, Chair.

I have some members that are asking if you could increase the volume a little bit.

Chair: Okay.

Mr. Aylward: We're having a hard time hearing you. Thank you.

Chair: 1. There may be paid out of the Operating Fund, a sum not exceeding in the whole Seventy-Seven Million, Eight Hundred and Ninety-Five Thousand, Nine Hundred Dollars (\$78,895,900)–

Mr. Trivers: Question.

Chair: Question?

Mr. Trivers: Yes.

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Chair.

That sum of \$77,895,900, does that take into account the infrastructure dollars that the new federal government has allocated as part of their new budget, upcoming?

Ms. Biggar: No.

Mr. Roach: No, it does not.

Mr. Trivers: Okay.

Chair: Okay?

Mr. Trivers: Chair?

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Yes. I'm just wondering how valid these numbers are and how good this capital budget really is since we don't actually have all the facts on the table, Chair.

Mr. Roach: I would suggest that the budget is quite valid, and it's based on dollars that we have right now that have been allocated. I think, as I expressed earlier, should things change in negotiations going forward with the federal government, if we see an improvement, then we might see a change in the budget going forward. But these numbers are quite valid and accounted for.

Mr. Trivers: All right.

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald, do you have a question?

Mr. Trivers: Yes, Chair.

For example, if I look here, total capital improvements, and you could almost go to any page –

Mr. Roach: What page? Could you say what page you're referring to so I can –

Mr. Trivers: Yeah. How about page 12, capital expenditure on Family and Human services? We see a number of \$750,000 across the board, and then if you look on page 13, again we see \$750,000 across the board, right? Then there's numerous cases here where we've got that same number just repeated across the board. It's a round figure and you've got to wonder how much thought went into that number. Are there actual specifics underneath it or is this just a ballpark figure in the air: Oh, that's probably about a \$750,000? I'm just wondering if you can comment on that.

Chair: Excuse me, hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Ms. Biggar: (Indistinct).

Mr. Roach: I would request to bring one of my staff members to the floor, Director Jim Miles.

Ms. Biggar: Agreed.

Mr. Aylward: Agreed.

Mr. Roach: I can't hear you. With respect to the \$750,000 on page 12 that you referred to, that refers to what was forecasted last year, what was actual last year, and if you look at the top on the far left, it will say: 2016 to 2017. That's the budget we're currently talking about.

Mr. Trivers: Yeah.

Mr. Roach: Yes, so the other two \$750,000 that you see, that was last year.

Mr. Trivers: Yeah, so –

Mr. Roach: It's not really going forward. It's the current budget.

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Right, and I'm not sure if this is the right way to look at it, but I look at the forecast as sort of being an actual number, right? So does that mean you actually spent exactly \$750,000 on the dot? I'm trying to understand these estimates.

Mr. Roach: Yes, we would expect to spend that much money by the end of the year, yes.

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Again, I mean, that's one example. On pages 20 and 21 with Tourism PEI is another example where you have these round numbers, right? I'll use page 21 as an example here. You've got provincial parks, \$300,000, Confederation Trail, \$50,000, golf courses, \$400,000, a nice round number of \$750,000.

Have you actually broken down those things into real projects and activities or is this a game? Just a put your thumb in the air: I think we're going to spend this much money. I'm just interested in this budgeting process and how that works.

Mr. Roach: Sure. With respect, as an example to the parks, we have broken it down.

For Red Point Provincial Park a new day-use washroom, \$35,000. For Brudenell park a two-way site conversion, \$10,000 to \$15,000 for each and four camp cabins at \$40,000 each for a total of \$120,000. For Cabot Park two-way site conversion, \$30,000. For Linkletter park two-way site conversion, \$50,000. For Basin Head a steel roof on the gazebo at \$15,000. At Sally's beach a steel roof on the shelter, \$15,000. Brookvale, an Alpine lodge upgrade, windows and roof, 50,000. Equipment, a front mount mower and two carryalls for 35,000.

It's not a round number. There's actually details behind those numbers.

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Chair.

That's great that we have that information, that information is available. As part of an open and transparent process I would expect that information to be published somewhere for scrutiny by the groups that are affected. I can think of several of those items where there must have been a stakeholder group that was engaged and requested those and they would love to look at the Capital Budget and see if their stakeholder request was put in there. I know the Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy has consulted with primary, secondary, tertiary groups, she's talked to them all.

Mr. Roach: I will say that the groups that are affected in this particular one are our government employees who – they come to government and they say: Look, we need a new roof here or our site was busy enough.

An Hon. Member: Chair.

Mr. Roach: If I could finish. If the site was busy enough last year: We could really use, say, another two-way or another three-way, because we had to turn away – so the people that we get the information from to work on this, it's direct.

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would hope that in behind these government employees – I can realize some of them may be task-related to their government role, but in behind those there better be requirements from taxpayers that are being met.

I'll give you an example for it and it's not in the tourism area here. When they built the roundabout at Stanley Bridge, for example, it was a government employee that requested that. I know that for a fact. In fact, I talked to the former MLA – I didn't talk to her, she was at one of the meetings.

Let me step back. First of all, the community was not engaged, no one spoke to them, they found out a roundabout was planned by looking at the tender in the newspaper. There was a huge public outcry at the ensuing meeting. The MLA was talking to the government employee in question and saying: Look, I talked to you on the phone. You said you were going to engage stakeholders, how come you didn't?

I think that this has to be driven by the taxpayers, not by the government employees. Maybe I don't understand the process well enough and this helps you – lets you understand why I'm pushing for an infrastructure summit-type approach as well.

Thank you, Chair.

Ms. Biggar: I'll take that question.

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

Ms. Biggar: (Indistinct) regards to the Stanley Bridge roundabout, there were meetings held with the community.

Mr. Trivers: There were no meetings before the tender was issued.

Ms. Biggar: I will certainly agree to disagree with you on that. There were meetings held with the community to explain what the process was going to be in regard to that.

Chair: Thank you, hon. minister.

The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Chair, I was involved with that process from the very beginning, and I know for a fact that prior to the tender being placed in the newspaper there was no public consultation done.

If there was, I would love you to table some sort of document to that. I worked extensively with the Stanley Bridge Women's Institute and other groups there and nobody knew that was coming except for the government prior to the tender being placed.

If you can show me and direct me in the right place to get information I would love to see that that indeed did occur. If it did occur, then it was really done in a poor fashion because nobody in that community knew that it was coming.

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

Ms. Biggar: I will engage with my staff there and get that information for you, but I can categorically say there was communications with that community in leading up to the planning. We will get that information for you.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Chair.

I'll let you know, Chair, I have eight questions and they're just general questions, mostly to the minister of transportation.

Can you give me any idea how much money was spent on the Herds Point upgrade that was done in capital this year?

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

Ms. Biggar: I'm sorry, hon. member, that in regard to Capital Budget, that's not in the Capital Budget section.

I'm sure we can get you – I know we did a big upgrade on there in regard in support of the oyster fishers of Prince Edward Island.

We improved the road, widened the road, took trees out, put lots of fill on there. I think they're going to find a big difference when they go down there this spring.

Leader of the Opposition: I support you in it.

Ms. Biggar: I know and I thank you for that support. But in terms of what's in the Capital Budget here, hon. member, that's not a part of this particular Capital Budget.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you.

Chair, in this Capital Budget, is there anything in there to deal with the senior building in Kinkora that's been vacant for the last eight or nine years?

Ms. Biggar: No, not in this Capital Budget.

Leader of the Opposition: Do capital budget's only deal, Chair, with the department of transportation going out – is there a fair process in regards to the purchasing of shale in Prince County?

What I've been told is when any project happens in Prince County only one company is allowed to provide shale to the department of DOT. I'm wondering: Is there a proper tendering process, or why is only one company allowed to provide shale?

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

Ms. Biggar: I do know that that went out to a couple of companies, not just one.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Opposition, question?

Ms. Biggar: (Indistinct) that was successful.

Leader of the Opposition: That has been raised by numerous shale – anyway. When we deal with capital projects the equipment rates that we pay to contractors seems to be out of whack compared to other provinces. Is there any review going on within the department to review what we pay these gravel truck operators or back hoe operators within that Capital Budget scheme?

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

Ms. Biggar: Thank you. Hon. member, we have met with the truckers association in regard to the rates on their trucking. In comparison to other provinces there are certain exceptions that they have that truckers in other provinces don't have, so that varies in the price that they do get paid. But we have had numerous meetings face to face with our department with representatives of the truckers association in regard to their rates.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: With that, I'll ask a question. In some provinces when contractors work on their capital projects or major projects off-road vehicles are allowed to use unmarked diesel. When a bulldozer or an excavator or something like that – is there any way that this province could look at that? Like right now they've got to pay the full tax rate where the vehicle is not even licensed for the road, same as an excavator. Is that something we can look at in future budgets?

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

Ms. Biggar: I'll get some information for you on that, hon. member, and we'll be happy to share that with you.

Mr. Roach: Take that under advisement.

Leader of the Opposition: Okay, appreciate that.

Snowplowing. I'm going to refer everything to Capital Budget. When we refer to snowplowing in the wintertime, there's been some concern last year and years before in regards to – and I know we can't dictate what snow falls on the ground. But cattle farmers and dairy farmers are expressing some real concern on the snowplowing on secondary roads. They realize that they cannot be plowed out immediately after a storm, they understand that. But we're wondering if there's any moves in government to upgrade rural snowplow equipment with snow blowers or whatever so we can try to make sure that we get these

cattle farmers open at least 24 hours of a storm.

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

Ms. Biggar: Thank you, hon. Chair.

I know that was a major challenge for our dairy industry. I have about 12 dairy farms in my particular district, so I know it was a big challenge and I thank the farming community for the assistance that they did provide to the department last year during that challenging time.

We have ordered three tandem truck plows for this planning for replacement and for requirements that we may have to have if we get a same snow event that we got last year. We ordered four loaders including plow gear and more blowers at a cost of 460,000 per unit. The tandem truck plows that we ordered are 280,000 per unit. That's actually in the Capital Budget.

We're very aware. Actually, I raised it with my department in regard to the private contractors and see if we could have some communication with them and kind of red flag, if you will, especially some of the smaller dairy farms that don't have the capacity to hold their milk for more than 24 hours. Certainly in tune with that in regard to right across PEI because of my affiliation with the dairy farms in my district for sure.

Thank you for that question.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Appreciate it. Chair, can we just have a very quick overview of what capital projects are being planned in 2016 for department of transportation on the roads?

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

Ms. Biggar: I don't have an extensive list with me, hon. member, but in regard to what you see in the budget there, under the capital improvements for bridges, that includes the Souris bridge, those costs that are in there. It also includes the rain event. Like, \$4.2 million.

But there are a number of projects that we are planning for the upcoming season. I know there's – we've had meetings. But again going back to the comment made by Rustico-Emerald, I don't think it would be prudent of me to announce those projects unless first we have communication with the communities that have been lobbying for them and how it will impact.

Ultimately we're very cognizant of the safety issues and concerns. We're working with those communities that have raised those issues and working towards addressing those, certainly.

Leader of the Opposition: (Indistinct) a question to that, Chair.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: In capital budgets, when we go to a plan B project, are there conditions – there has to be conditions put in place on when the project starts, when it's completed, what has to be done for cleanup, all this kind of stuff. I'm wondering on plan B why the project has been over now for a good year but the contractor that was awarded the contract – there are still two big, huge piles of rock and debris beside that highway that have not been cleaned up. I'm wondering what measures – why isn't this company being made to clean it up?

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

Ms. Biggar: The finance minister is going to take that.

Chair: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. Roach: Yes, Leader of the Opposition, there's still ongoing work there. There still has to be a lot of trail development. The project is not quite finished and some of that material that's there is going to be able to be used in further trail development, but that work will be ongoing in the spring.

Leader of the Opposition: Final question –

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Chair, going forward in capital is there any will, review, or possibility of the basic tax exemption

that's awarded to low-income families can be increased in line with the federal government? That's something I'm hearing from low-income families that are really (Indistinct).

Mr. Roach: With respect to the low-income families we did address that in the springtime to the tune of \$1.7 million. But as we progress and start to see where we're going to reach a balanced budget or possibly a surplus, I think that will then allow us the opportunity to look into those such tax initiatives.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you very much.

Chair: The hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque. Question.

Mr. MacKay: Thank you, Chair.

One question when it comes to capital budget and this is for every (Indistinct). How do the tenders work? Is everything tendered? Work on schools and road and so forth, is everything tendered?

Mr. Roach: Yes. According to Treasury Board rules, Treasury Board policy, there is a very strict regimen that has to be followed in the tendering process.

Mr. MacKay: Chair, is it always lowest tender that gets the bid?

Mr. Roach: Not necessarily. Because a lot of the tenders that come in are rated on performance and those sorts of things.

You might have tenders that are very close, but there's a scoring procedure that takes place within that tendering process. You may be the lowest bidder, but you might score terribly low on how you're going to accomplish the job and whether you have all the necessary staff and equipment available. All of that is taken into account. It doesn't always necessarily mean that it's the lowest bidder.

Mr. MacKay: Okay. I guess a couple concerns on that.

Chair: The hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque.

Mr. MacKay: Thank you, Chair.

From a couple, I guess, stories I've heard through my district alone there were certain projects that had never been tendered out. The phone was picked up and called and they went to work. Obviously it wasn't followed procedure. I can tell them to file a complaint along the way. Everything should be tendered is basically what we're saying.

Mr. Roach: Well, the tender –

Ms. Biggar: Under a certain amount.

Mr. Roach: Yes, under a certain amount.

Mr. MacKay: Oh, okay. What's the certain amount?

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

Ms. Biggar: Fifty thousand.

Chair: The hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque.

Mr. MacKay: One more question, Chair.

I'm just curious here. On page 10, the Capital Budget, the second line down, the budget estimate is 11.3 million and the budget forecast is 6.8 million. Why such a big difference?

Mr. Roach: That's (Indistinct) delays. Like, for example you may have a budget put out for a school and part of it would be done in this year, the other part would be done next year.

Mr. MacKay: Thank you, Chair.

Chair: The hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid.

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Minister, you mentioned a number of all the background details there on a question that the Member from Rustico-Emerald asked. Would it be possible to give copies of that to the opposition, the Leader of the Third Party, and the government members? All the details. Just like what we have in the spring budget to give us some background information.

Mr. Roach: If you have specific questions about a certain piece of the budget, by all means I'll respond to that question.

Mr. MacEwen: Chair.

Chair: The hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid.

Mr. MacEwen: Would it be possible to get copies of that for everybody?

Chair: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. Roach: Like I said, if you want to ask about a specific part of that budget, whether it be in early childhood or learning, or culture, we'd be prepared to answer that question for you.

Chair: The hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid.

Mr. MacEwen: Can I have copies, the background of all the pages, please? We can still ask questions as we go, just have the background information.

Mr. Roach: No, this is what we put out each year.

Mr. MacEwen: No, I understand that.

Mr. Trivers: Open and transparent.

Mr. MacEwen: But –

Chair: The hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid.

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you. In the spring, you were very gracious to give us all the background information on all the lines. As the Member from Rustico-Emerald said there are a lot of 750,000 across the board. It's great to get that information go back and study and come back to the House with.

Mr. Roach: As it was mentioned by the minister for transportation, infrastructure and renewal, there may be details in there that certainly aren't public yet or things that still have to go to tender and those sorts of things. I would not be prepared to kind of release it as a total package.

Chair: The hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid.

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you, Chair.

Minister, the page that the Member from Rustico-Emerald asked about, you read off a good list. Could you give us what is available from each area?

Mr. Roach: I'm here today and more than happy to answer any questions that you may have.

Mr. Trivers: There's a great tool called the Internet you could publish this stuff on. It's great.

Mr. MacEwen: Chair.

Chair: The hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid.

Mr. MacEwen: Okay.

Mr. LaVie: (Indistinct) that's what the Premier asked.

Mr. MacEwen: Agriculture and Fisheries, minister, page 6. Could I have the background details on that page, please?

Mr. Roach: I'm sorry. There was somebody speaking over there. I couldn't hear you.

Mr. MacEwen: No. I apologize.

Mr. LaVie: No, you were speaking.

Mr. MacEwen: Sorry.

Mr. LaVie: (Indistinct).

Mr. MacEwen: The first item, the first department, Agriculture and Fisheries, page 6, can I have the background details on that page?

Mr. Roach: Yes. That was something that we spoke about last year. Our fish and wildlife officers, they are using a 1981 Boston Whaler with a very old trailer. It was something that has been on loan to us from the federal fisheries.

We put budget money in there this year to purchase a new Boston Whaler, a 17-foot, like a 90 horsepower and a dual axle trailer. Those specs went out. There were two bids on it and that's the cost of it, so that's what

it is. It's a new enforcement vessel for fish and wildlife.

Chair: The hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid.

Mr. MacEwen: Sorry. The list that the Member from Rustico-Emerald asked about, could you repeat that background information again?

Mr. Roach: That was on the – you were referring to the parks?

Mr. MacEwen: Page 20, right?

Mr. Trivers: It was 21.

Mr. MacEwen: Twenty-one. Sorry. Yes. Can you list that information again? I apologize. I just didn't get a chance to write it out. I thought you would have had –

Mr. Roach: Sure. It's certainly on Hansard there, as well. That includes –

Mr. MacEwen: I don't have Hansard right now, (Indistinct).

Mr. Roach: That includes, for example, Red Point beach, a new day-use washroom –

Mr. MacEwen: Sorry. Can you just say that a little slower, (Indistinct)?

Mr. Roach: Sure. Red Point, a new day-use washroom, \$35,000.

Mr. MacEwen: Do you have a copy of that right there, minister?

Mr. Roach: I have notes that I'm referring to.

Mr. MacEwen: Is it handwritten notes or is it a printed copy?

Mr. Roach: Well, it's partly both. It's notes that we prepare to come here to the House to answer questions that you may have.

Mr. MacEwen: Yes, okay. Chair?

Mr. Roach: So with respect to the handing out of that particular budget on blank –

Mr. MacEwen: Yes.

Mr. Roach: I mean, there's still a lot of that information that's in there that still has to go through Treasury Board to give approval –

Mr. Trivers: So you don't know when your budget (Indistinct).

Mr. Roach: – before it can be spent.

Mr. MacEwen: Okay.

Mr. Trivers: Is this the approved budget, or is this something just made up we're going to change later on? That's what I'm wondering.

Chair: The hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid has the floor.

Mr. MacEwen: I appreciate your patience, minister, but you don't have two pages there? One with approved and one with not approved that is not available to the general public or to opposition members?

Mr. Roach: There's –

Mr. MacEwen: Do you have anything there that says –

Mr. Roach: There are not two pages, no.

Mr. MacEwen: Okay, so you've got a page there –

Mr. Roach: I can speak in generalities –

Mr. MacEwen: Yes, I understand that.

Mr. Roach: – because there's still a lot of – in fact, the bulk of this budget when it comes time to spend – this gets approved for government that this is the money that government has to deal with for capital expenditures.

The departments still have to go through the formal process of getting approval through Treasury Board to spend those funds to ensure that – for example somebody mentioned tenders to make sure that process is being followed. It's not a matter of approving this budget and everybody, all the minister can just go and spend. There is still tracking of all of those dollars as it goes through the process. This is to approve those dollars to be spent by government in general. Each individual spend, if it requires,

Treasury Board approval, has to go through that process. So it certainly would be premature in some of those details because they may put someone at an advantage or a disadvantage with respect to tendering.

Chair: The hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid.

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you, Chair.

I appreciate you explaining that process, minister. So you talked about Red Point and \$35,000. So that's not approved yet? But yet, you just told our House the \$35,000.

Mr. Roach: That goes to the department -

Mr. MacEwen: Yes.

Mr. Roach: That \$35,000, that could be internal work that's being done by government employees to install those or it could go out to tender.

Ms. Biggar: (Indistinct).

Mr. MacEwen: Absolutely.

Mr. Roach: There are a number of projects there -

Mr. MacEwen: But it's okay to tell us that information. I'm not sure -

Mr. Roach: I don't see anything wrong with telling you that we're putting a washroom in at a bunch of our campgrounds and trying to improve them. I don't see anything wrong with that.

Mr. LaVie: (Indistinct).

Mr. MacEwen: Absolutely, but I'm just trying to point out that you have no problem and I think it's great to tell us there's \$35,000 available. We don't know. Maybe it will come in at \$34,500 and we say \$35,000.

Mr. Roach: Might be (Indistinct).

Mr. MacEwen: That's great, but you have no problem in telling us that. But yet, there's other information there that you have a problem telling us because there might be a competitive disadvantage or tenders and such -

Mr. Roach: Sure -

Mr. MacEwen: So I'm just trying to clarify the difference between \$35,000 at Red Point and something in the \$750,000 in another department.

Mr. Roach: The \$750,000 in another area is something that would probably - well, not probably, it would have to go to tender. It would have to comply with the rules set aside in Treasury Board with the tendering process and it would then have to go through Treasury Board to get approval before those dollars could be spent.

Chair: The hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid.

Mr. Roach: This is an authorized -

Mr. MacEwen: I know the process well and I appreciate you explaining it to the House. I guess I'm just trying to decipher between you're going to list off some things - so, say it's under \$50,000 and it doesn't have to be tendered. You're giving us the approximate budget for it but it might come in less. That's fine. If it's \$200,000 and it's down on the paper in front of you there, does that mean that we're not going to find out that there's a project that's \$200,000 laid out for it and that if it comes under budget or under budget? Is that because that if someone bids on it they know that it's \$200,000? I'm just trying to get -

Mr. Roach: Well -

Mr. MacEwen: I'm not trying to be difficult. I'm just trying to say: What's going to be available to us and what's not?

Mr. Roach: I can give you an example of that.

We're going to be doing work at École François-Buote, Three Oaks, some more work in Souris at École La-Belle-Cloche - those are all projects where there's a large total dollar value that's going to be spent. I can give you the total value that's going to be spread out amongst those schools but in terms of saying: We've set x-amount of dollars aside for this school or x-amount of dollars aside for that school, I think it's more fair to the taxpayers to let the tender go through its process and let the bidders -

and if we say we have, for example, \$10 million set aside for a school, if we say that, I guarantee you the bids would come in at \$10 million.

But if it's not said and we're simply giving a list of what has to be done, that provides a better opportunity for the taxpayers in PEI to possibly get good, competitive bidders out there where they can sharpen their pencils. If it comes in at \$8 million, great, we just saved \$2 million for the taxpayers of PEI.

If that provides more context on why we're not giving exact numbers out, that's it.

Chair: The hon. Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy (Indistinct) shed some light on this.

Ms. Biggar: I could add an example, if you don't mind.

Just as an example in regard to the Souris bridge replacement, for instance. When that went out to tender it came in at a certain amount. However, it was \$800,000 over budget due to extenuating circumstances with the weather and in that regard. That sometimes happens, even though you get a tender in of a certain amount. I'll just give that as an example.

Chair: Thank you, minister.

Mr. LaVie: (Indistinct).

Chair: The hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid, question.

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you, Chair.

I appreciate your patience, minister. This will be my last question for now.

I completely understand what you're explaining. Would we have access to the projects, not the financial implications, under each section?

Mr. Roach: I think I've explained that as best I can, but I'd certainly –

Mr. Trivers: Oh, come on.

Mr. Roach: I'd certainly be open for you to ask questions.

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you.

Chair: The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock, questions.

Mr. Aylward: Thank you very much, Chair.

There was an announcement made back on April 3rd, in fact just the day before the last provincial election was announced, and it pertained to manors. I wonder, could the minister advise us whether or not the tenders have been called for the new manor to be built in Montague?

Mr. Roach: Yes.

Mr. Aylward: They have been tendered?

Mr. Roach: Yes. It has been tendered. The tender's gone out.

Ms. Biggar: Oh no, not (Indistinct).

Mr. Roach: Oh, it's just for the design.

Ms. Biggar: The planning design.

Mr. Roach: The planning design has gone out.

Mr. Aylward: Okay.

Mr. Roach: The process is starting, yes.

Mr. Aylward: When do you anticipate seeing the construction beginning, particularly for the manor in Montague?

Mr. Roach: I think it will see – it's one of the last to be done across the Island. I think the design process goes out this fall. I believe that we should be in a position to go out to tenders in the spring and –

Ms. Biggar: The construction –

Mr. Roach: – the construction to start then.

Mr. Aylward: Okay.

Ms. Biggar: In Tyne Valley.

Mr. Roach: Tyne Valley's the same.

Ms. Biggar: Yeah.

Chair: The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock, question.

Mr. Aylward: Tyne Valley's on the same schedule?

Mr. Roach: Yes.

Mr. Aylward: Thank you.

Now, in the press release that went out it said 12.5 million for Montague, 49 beds, and it's going to be built on the site of the old school. Then Tyne Valley with 6.8 million. It's going to be built out on the Bideford Road. We have just over slightly \$19 million committed to these two projects. What length of time would you anticipate these two manors taking to be completed?

Ms. Biggar: I'll take that.

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

Ms. Biggar: Just in regard to the total envelope that's there, when you look at the envelope of money that's set aside for those projects, that does include purchasing land, if you need to purchase the land, and that was –

Mr. Aylward: I think the land is already owned by the province because the school was situated on it.

Ms. Biggar: I'm referring specifically in general when you talk about these envelopes. In particular, in Tyne Valley, we did have to buy land, hon. member.

Mr. Aylward: What was the cost of that land?

Ms. Biggar: I can get you the final amount on that, but I'm just explaining what the total is in the envelope. Because you include that. You include, as we said, the planning.

Mr. Aylward: And design, construction.

Ms. Biggar: And design and then construction.

Mr. Aylward: Landscaping.

Ms. Biggar: So we do expect –

Mr. Aylward: Electrical. Kitchen equipment. I do understand how construction works.

Ms. Biggar: To elaborate on when we expect construction to start, 2016. It takes approximately one year to build those kinds of facilities.

Mr. Aylward: Thank you very much, minister.

Chair?

Chair: The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

Mr. Aylward: In this envelope potentially we've got budgeted, according to the press release from the Premier back the day before the election was called, \$19 million to construct these two manors, one being in Montague and one being in Tyne Valley.

Yet, when we look at your capital expenditure estimate for 2016-2017, you've only got – and you're already saying that construction is going to begin in 2016. You've only got 2.12 million allocated total for buildings under capital improvements, buildings, on page 23.

Before the minister of transportation jumps in, I do understand that construction of government buildings are stretched over several years at some point in time, but the minister has just said that it would take one year to construct these buildings.

I don't see this being recreating the Queen Elizabeth Hospital where it's going to be a multi-year project, especially when the minister has already alluded to the fact that it's a one-year construction period.

I'm trying to ascertain: Is the building going to be built in 2016? Or is it going to be like the palliative care unit where it's announced over and over again and the billboard is going to go up several times, the photo ops are going to take several times?

Mr. Roach: I would be pleased to answer that question.

Mr. Aylward: That would be wonderful, thank you.

Mr. Roach: I think if you go to page 17, you'll see that in 2016-2017, with respect to the long-term care facilities, that the expenditure that's listed there – then that will also carry on into 2017-2018. Those dollars that were reported on will go forward into 2017-2018 before its completion and the balance will be –

Chair: The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

Mr. Aylward: Thank you, Chair.

So it's not a one-year project like the minister of transportation said, it's actually a three-year project?

Mr. Roach: The dollars are budgeted in this budget. In 2017-2018, for example, we won't be going for additional dollars, it will be dollars that are contained in this budget here. The only thing that changes is the timeframe when the dollars go out. Does that make sense to you?

Mr. Aylward: It does make sense, minister, and thank you very much. But it still mystifies me to a certain point where we have the minister of transportation saying it's a one-year construction process, we have a press release saying as well that the construction will start in early 2016.

I mean, you're the minister responsible for Montague which is getting a 49-bed manor. I would think as the minister of finance and as the MLA representing that district you would be pushing to get this done as quickly as possible. Not to rush the project so it's substandard, but we're talking about a 19-million project for two manors, 12.5 of which – I believe it's 12.5 which is allocated for Montague, and now we're looking at it could be as long as three – who knows how many more years that it's going to take to actually get a new manor in Montague, your district, which currently is utilizing a 50-year-old facility that the manager of the facility even says is extremely tired.

I'm just trying to get a commitment from you when Montague will receive a new manor, when the residents can expect to be moved into a new manor that was promised the day before the last provincial election was called?

Chair: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. Roach: Thank you, Chair.

I'll go back to the earlier point in your question. This manor project rolled out actually years ago was to replace all the manors across Prince Edward Island. As the local MLA I would have liked to have seen the manor replacement take place much earlier, but we have a whole Island, we have a lot of rural PEI, to take care of. It rolled out as budgets prepare. The way that this is on line now is that the design is being completed this fall –

Mr. Aylward: And that's (Indistinct) –

Mr. Roach: – construction will start next spring and the hope is that –

Mr. Aylward: (Indistinct) the design (Indistinct) fiscal year, correct?

Mr. Roach: It's going to be this year, yes.

Mr. Aylward: It's going to come out of the 2.1 million that's allocated this year?

Mr. Roach: Yes.

Mr. Aylward: For the design concept.

Mr. Roach: There's x amount of dollars set aside for the design. That's out there now. We hope to break ground in the spring and the hope is that we're going to be moving the residents in in 2016-2017. It's a large facility. It's not something that you're whack up over the summer.

Chair: The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

Mr. Aylward: Thank you very much, Chair.

Again, I guess I come back to how the numbers are lining up. You just finished saying that the design concept would come out of this fiscal year which was originally budgeted at 2.6 million. Now we're forecasting 4.8 million, which I assume that that number went up partly because of the announcement a day before the last provincial election.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct).

Mr. Aylward: Perhaps I'll just wait, Chair, there seems to be another conversation on the go.

Mr. Roach: No, I'm listening.

Mr. Aylward: All right, what did I just say?

Mr. Roach: You're asking about the way that this process is going out and you want to know when the money is going to be spent and the announcements that were made and how they're marrying up with the funds that are in here. Please continue.

Mr. Aylward: Actually what I just asked was originally in 2015-2016 you had allocated 2.67 million for buildings under capital improvements and then you reforecast for 2015-2016 to go from 2.6 million to 4.8 million.

Is that change in those figures? I mean, we're talking a 2.2 million increase. Is that because of the election announcement that was made for these manors one day before the last provincial election was called?

Chair: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. Roach: You're still on page –

Mr. Aylward: I'm still on page 23.

Mr. Roach: Back to 23. You're on page 23 now.

Mr. Aylward: Correct.

Mr. Roach: Could you point out the numbers you're referring to?

Mr. Aylward: What I'm referring to under capital improvements-buildings, and then the buildings line, 2015-2016 fiscal year, you had budget estimated at 2.6 million. Then you reforecast for 4.8 million.

What I was asking was the increase of 2.2 million from the estimate to the forecast, was that due to the announcement that was made one day before the last provincial election announcing these two manors that were going to be built? Was that 2.2 million, was that necessary for the design and concept of these two manors?

Mr. Roach: That has nothing to do with the two manors. That has to do with the new government garage (Indistinct).

Mr. Aylward: Perfect. All right, thank you.

Chair: The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock, question.

Mr. Aylward: Thank you, Chair.

Is any of the 4.8 million that is now forecast for 2015-2016 being used for concept and design of the two manors?

Mr. Roach: No.

Ms. Biggar: That's not in this.

Mr. Aylward: So it's not.

Mr. Roach: This isn't part of that budget with the manors.

Ms. Biggar: Can I (Indistinct), hon. member?

Chair: The hon. minister of –

Mr. Roach: It's in manors or in the health budget.

Mr. Aylward: But would it not be under capital buildings? Does transportation not cover buildings on Prince Edward Island, regardless?

Mr. Roach: The money would go to the department.

Mr. Aylward: If you're building a new school does it fall under the school budget? The education budget?

Mr. Roach: Yes, it would.

Ms. Biggar: Yes.

Mr. Roach: For major projects. I apologize, that's why I thought you were –

Mr. Aylward: Yeah, and that's why I'm asking the questions.

Mr. Roach: – when you were quoting those numbers, but it makes sense now.

Ms. Biggar: Mr. Chair.

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

Ms. Biggar: Just for clarification, under the Department of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy budget that you're looking at there on page 23, that covers the new government garage. It has nothing to do –

Mr. Aylward: Yeah, I just actually –

Ms. Biggar: I just want to clarify that for the record, though.

Chair: The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

Mr. Aylward: Thank you, Chair.

Not at this time but I'm going to come back to this in a minute.

Chair: All right.

The hon. Member from Georgetown-St. Peters.

Mr. Myers: (Indistinct).

Chair: The hon. Minister of Workforce and Advanced Learning.

Mr. R. Brown: I was watching the news last night or the other night and I noticed the department of transportation has got a new deal with the city of Charlottetown on doing snow removal on some of the main entries.

I know last year it was a difficult time in the city for snow removal and a lot of streets were blocked for a number of months. I just want to thank the minister for her great work and collaboration in working with the city in order to improve snow removal in the city. Because a lot of those roads that you're going to assist here now is entrances and exits from the city, so that's just going to help the commerce and help (Indistinct) rural PEI to city PEI.

Thank you very much.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock, do you want to go ahead of your colleagues on this?

Mr. Aylward: Just a quick question. Thank you, Chair.

When I asked about the tenders for the manors –

Mr. Trivers: (Indistinct)

Chair: You're on the list. You want me to put you ahead of somebody else?

Mr. Trivers: Is there a list?

Chair: There's quite a few names ahead of you, hon. member. You had questions earlier?

Mr. Trivers: I don't know, what's – (Indistinct)

Chair: I think you're out of order, hon. member.

Mr. Trivers: Pardon me?

Chair: I think you're out of order.

Mr. Trivers: All right.

Chair: The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

Mr. Aylward: Chair, as I was saying, I had asked about the tenders for the manor projects earlier and I was advised that indeed they had already been called.

Mr. Roach: Design has been called.

Mr. Aylward: Design has been called. Can you give us a date when the designed tenders went out?

Ms. Biggar: I can get that information (Indistinct).

Mr. Aylward: That would be wonderful if you could bring that back. Thank you.

Chair: The hon. Member from Belfast-Murray River.

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Chair.

I'm looking at page 3, just so we'll clarify that. I'm looking at the five-year capital plan that we've got for long-term care facilities and there's a total there of 10,688,500 and 8,091,900, fairly finite figures if I do say so. I'm guessing, and maybe you can fill me in on this: Are those the totals for the manor

completions for both Tyne Valley and Montague?

Mr. Roach: Yes.

Ms. Compton: So they haven't gone to tender.

Mr. Roach: Part of it has, the design.

Ms. Compton: The design. So, fairly finite numbers. Earlier the minister indicated that if it's going to tender there's a pretty good idea there of what the tender is going to be worth for those two facilities. Moving forward on that, I'm looking, there's no plans –

Mr. Roach: There's a question (Indistinct).

Ms. Compton: Yes. I'm just saying, is there any concern – we talked about finite numbers earlier. Is there any concern about finite numbers for those facilities that haven't gone to tender yet?

Mr. Roach: No, because there will be a number of tenders come out of that. For example, there's a land purchase up west on that property. Although we own the land in Montague there's going to be substantial costs to prepare that land and they'll be separated from those overall figures. The design cost for both will be separated from those figures and then the final tender will go out. Based on the construction itself there would be a tender go out, for example, I believe with respect to equipment, the facilities. You're going to have a number of different tenders going out for portions portioned off out of that, so there really is no finite number for anyone to look at in that process.

Chair: The hon. Member from Belfast-Murray River.

Mr. Roach: I hope that answers you.

Ms. Compton: It does, thank you. Also in those numbers there's nothing else included other than Tyne Valley and Montague? No improvements or renovations to other facilities?

Mr. Roach: No, not under that line item.

Chair: The hon. Member from Belfast-Murray River.

Ms. Compton: Thank you. Also, I'm looking at under the health facilities there is a consistent number. Would that all be capital improvements or are we looking at builds? We're going from 8 million, 7 million, 10 million, 8 million, 13 million, under Health PEI on page 3.

Mr. Roach: Those particular numbers there refer to post-renal transplant program, peritoneal dialysis, and the second item there has to do with – when you talked about the linear accelerator. Before that unit can go in – the wiring in the Queen Elizabeth Hospital won't work, there's not enough capacity there. There are capacity issues. Those are dollars that have to be spent before that unit comes in. That's why those dollars are set aside.

I believe there's also dollars in there for Prince County Hospital with respect to wiring requirements for an HVAC system.

Chair: Hon. member, would you like a response from the minister of health?

Mr. Currie: Yeah, can I –

Chair: Is that okay with you?

Mr. Currie: Just in respect to some of the discussions, just the first commentary on the manors.

As we're all aware in the Assembly, the commitment back in 2007 was a full court press on all replacements of public manors in the province. One of the first manors that we replaced was in Souris, the Colville Manor. If we remember, all of these facilities – not being critical of governments or anything – they just were at the back end of their infrastructure existence. I would say a very robust plan was put in place back in 2007-2008 in respect to replacing all public manors.

The commitment at that time was that all new beds would stay at the same volume for the public manors, but any new beds would be presented to the private sector. Of course, the Member from Belfast-Murray River, you are very well aware of that function in the role in communities across rural Prince

Edward Island because of the number of beds that we have added. There have been RFP processes. As we continue to expand in the number of long-term care beds, everything is shifted to the private sector.

It was a very substantial project replacing all the public majors. We went from Souris to Alberton, to the Prince Edward Home, to the recent two that were at the back end, Riverview, then of course the Tyne Valley project once we made the decision that we were going to be closing the hospital in Tyne Valley.

In respect to the questions around that infrastructure money, the issue right now at the QEH is that it is at full capacity in respect to – that facility is approximately 32 years of age. That facility is at full capacity for its ability to handle any more pressure on its electrical. As a result of the capital investments, it was a top priority that the electrical upgrades would be implemented in order to continue to embrace future expansion. The electrical has to go in and the commitment for the linear accelerator can't be implemented until the electrical gets upgraded to handle the capacity of that new piece of equipment.

In respect to the manors, the positive thing about the manors, if you look at the Colville Manor, if you look at the manor in Montague, these manors are very similar in their design. There is not a lot of repetitiveness in respect to the design build, because these models are already built and in place.

If you look at the roll-out of the capital plan, I think we're moving along fairly progressively. But there's no new beds in the new manors, they're all being replaced. The public manors, all the new beds are going to the private sector.

Chair: The hon. Member from Belfast-Murray River.

Ms. Compton: Just under the five-year capital plan for health facilities. They're very finite numbers for the next five years. Is it possible for opposition to get a listing of what the capital improvements may be for health care and for the health facilities over the next five years?

Mr. Currie: If I could add to that, Mr. Chair.

Chair: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness and Family and Human Services.

Mr. Currie: Part of the pressure on capital budget – if you look at the – health care in the Province of Prince Edward Island has benefitted greatly in respect to the volume of infrastructure spending. If you look at the ambulatory care at the QEH, emergency rooms, cancer treatment, surgical suites, if you look at the investments we've made in new equipment at KCMH, Souris, at Western, and the Community Hospital in O'Leary, if you look at the dialysis investments in Souris, Charlottetown and Prince County Hospital, if you look at the – at the peak I think the capital budget was approximately 141 million when we ramped up infrastructure spending. Now that infrastructure spending is coming down. But there's the unpredictability when issues happen – for example, I'll use the QEH, that it's reached its max as far as its electrical capacity. The issue on fire safety and the fire systems at the Beach Grove Home, for example, is a top priority.

These are initiatives that do come up that have to be addressed that may not be sort of mapped out in the capital plan but they do arise and we do have to have flexibility in that Capital Budget to respond.

Chair: The hon. Member from Belfast-Murray River.

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Chair.

I'm not arguing that it's improving the health of Islanders. It's just that we have very finite numbers for 2018-2019. We've got 10,546,600, fairly finite. It would be very helpful for us to have the list, not necessarily the numbers, but the list of where those dollars are going.

Mr. Roach: Sure.

Ms. Compton: Or projected to go.

Mr. Roach: I can give that to you, where some of that is going to take place.

There is going to be equipment at the QEH hospital, equipment at Prince County

Hospital, acute care millennium update two years, that's required every two years. QEH equipment, cardiologist, electronic synoptic pathology, dialysis at Community Hospital and Western Hospital, dialysis replacement at the Souris Hospital, QEH linear accelerator, provincial renal hemodialysis replacement, dialysis water filtration upgrade at the Western Hospital similar to what just took place at the Souris Hospital.

Mr. LaVie: (Indistinct) taking his time. It's Friday.

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Chair.

Mr. Roach: Dental sterilization equipment for health.

Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Roach: I mean, it goes on.

Ms. Compton: Thank you.

Chair: Further question, hon. Member from Belfast-Murray River.

Ms. Compton: Yes. A more specific question in my district. Just a question as to whether we as a province are paying for a medical centre that is not being used as a medical centre. Still the rent for that facility.

Chair: Is it okay if the minister of health responds?

The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Currie: I think it's a really important point to make on just Capital Budget. If you look at the investment that is in this Capital Budget announcement around peritoneal, that is a result – that investment is approximately for about 15 to 20 Islanders that were – we have our hemodialysis and our renal program here on Prince Edward Island, which is a great program. There are approximately 15 Islanders that were travelling off-Island for that peritoneal dialysis. Because we weren't equipped in the province to be able to manage that level of dialysis care they were travelling to Moncton and Halifax.

The Province of Nova Scotia has made it very clear that they've reached capacity on their peritoneal dialysis for Island patients so

we have to repatriate them back to the province. That's a result of the investment that has to be made. That's the point I'm trying to make, is the flexibility that we need to have. It does change depending on the landscape of health care and the need.

Chair: The hon. Member from Belfast-Murray River.

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Chair.

So unless we're doing hemodialysis in Murray River, I guess that really doesn't answer my question. The question is –

Mr. Currie: There may be some people in eastern Kings that do receive peritoneal dialysis that that will benefit.

Ms. Compton: At the Murray River clinic.

Chair: The hon. Member from Belfast-Murray River, question.

Ms. Compton: Again, we're talking about Capital Budget here. There is a facility in Murray River that was promised a medical centre. We are, as a province, paying the rent on that centre. It's more than half vacant. The question is: Are we still paying that? How long are we paying it? Can we expect a medical centre and when?

Chair: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. Roach: I think I'll be prepared to have discussions and bring those answers back to you.

Ms. Compton: On that note, too, I just want to add that the vacant part of the building was being used to pay for the member's office from your government to the tune of \$35,000 for a number of years. It is vacant, so maybe the village could benefit from that facility if it is available. Especially if the province is paying the bill.

Chair: Any further questions?

The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Like many members in this House, this is my first time through Capital Budget

estimates. I have to tell you, I'm finding this process quite confusing and, dare I say, inefficient. It will be nice if we went through this in a logical ordered manner as we did the regular budget.

I mean, I have questions throughout this document, and some on page 23 have been answered, some on 11 have been answered, some on 17. But it just strikes me that this is not a particularly efficient way of doing it.

Ms. Biggar: That's how the capital budget works.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: I'm sorry?

Ms. Biggar: That's how the capital budget works.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: I guess my first question to the Chair is –

Mr. Trivers: Change is good.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: – is this a typical procedure for going through capital estimates?

An Hon. Member: Yes.

Ms. Biggar: Yes.

Chair: Hon. member, it has in the past.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Okay.

Chair: If you would like to have it changed, maybe that's something that can be revisited down the road.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Yeah. I think it would benefit the House.

Chair: It's not (Indistinct).

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Yeah.

On that note, I do have some questions. Again, some of mine have been answered.

I brought this up yesterday in my response to the minister's statement. It's on school buses. Again, it may seem like a small issue because we're dealing with a relatively small amount of the budget. But there are

some – as with all things, technology has moved forward. These days you can buy electric buses, you can buy buses with composite bodies which, as I said yesterday in my response, would offer long-term savings to the province.

Is there any provision in any of the departments for looking at life-time costing when we make capital purchases like that?

Mr. Roach: I'll make one comment and then I'll pass it over to the Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy for the other.

With respect to – you mentioned electrical buses and that sort of thing. I had the opportunity to speak with the governor of the State of Connecticut. A number of years ago they implemented an electric bus system and tried to run it for one of the cities in the state. I had asked him specifically about how that worked out and it simply didn't. They cancelled the program.

It doesn't mean that we can't continue to look at efficiencies where they can find them. I just wanted to let you know that that was just one piece of information that I had received.

I'll turn it over to the minister.

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

Ms. Biggar: Just to follow up on the electric buses, I do know there was a project that Quebec tried. I think you might have mentioned that, perhaps. I'm not sure. The radius on electric buses are 100 kilometres before you have to recharge them. That's certainly a unique prototype project that we're very interested in under our green infrastructure, to try it as a pilot project maybe within one of the cities, just within the city at some point to see how that works. Because you need to invest in charging stations. The city of Summerside has a lot of charging stations but I think in Charlottetown there might be, too.

Just to get back to how the process goes in purchasing buses in general, that's an Atlantic procurement which, in terms of procurement, goes through our department but the envelope is given then to the

department of education. In order to save money on those purchases we do go through that way and we do save up to \$200,000 by doing that on our bus purchases.

I think also you had some concern about the body parts on buses. We did review that in regard to – a comprehensive review does take place, working with different vendors on new suggestions on how we can improve body safety and all of those things, are always taken into account on a regular basis.

I just wanted to let you know that that is something that is an ongoing thing. We did make changes, in fact, this year to the undercarriage specifications on buses, as part of those discussions, to prevent structural changes, failures. Some of them have experienced that over four or five years. There's a minimum 12-year cycle on the buses. We cycle them that way. I hope that helps answer a little bit.

We're very interested, I would reiterate again, on trying to look at a prototype or project for an electric bus at some point.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: I just want to follow up.

I'm very (Indistinct) of course, minister, and I'm not suggesting that we replace the whole school bus fleet with electric buses. Not at all.

To the minister of finance's story about Connecticut, things have changed so rapidly – I know that was a few years ago so I would not assume that the buses that are available now would have all of the problems that were inherent in the first batch of these electric vehicles.

Mr. Roach: Sure.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: In terms of the distance for run, school buses are a perfect vehicle to be electric because the runs are generally short and there's time between the morning and the afternoon to recharge them. It's a perfect situation. I'm not sure where you get the 100 kilometres from. That's not a number that I've ever read.

Ms. Biggar: That's our research.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: But again, that's something which is changing dramatically, and I think in a very short time (Indistinct).

I was interested in the thought of perhaps doing a prototype so I'm delighted to hear that that's at least on the radar.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Roach: Just to follow up for the Leader of the Third Party, I agree that it is changing rapidly. I am aware, as an example, of three prototype tugboats that are being used out of Rotterdam. The way they operate, it's electric. The only time they turn on their diesel engines is when they're actually moving ships. But they do spend most of their day going from place to place to place. That's where they burn up most of their energy. There's a –

Mr. LaVie: (Indistinct) government car is like that.

Mr. Roach: There's a company in Prince Edward Island that provides a hybrid system to those tugboats. We have three tugboats over there now that go on electricity all day with the exception of when they're actually pushing large ships.

But to your point, that's extremely expensive at this point, major battery packs and that sort of thing, but I think we're certainly moving in the right direction.

Chair: Thank you, minister.

Question from the hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: One quick question, Chair.

When we talk about capital budgets – and municipalities have to budget for things too. Last year we saw money transferred from the province to the cities of Summerside and Charlottetown.

I want to bring up a case in point in the town of Borden. The town of Borden does contract some of their snowplowing out. They're responsible for some of it, some of it is government. Some of these

municipalities have expressed concern: Why weren't they considered to receive extra money? Because they shared the brunt the same as Summerside and Charlottetown.

I think on going forward we must make sure that we look at other municipalities. They have the same restraints.

Mr. Roach: Thank you, Leader of the Opposition. I will certainly take that into consideration.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you.

Mr. Roach: Thank you.

Chair: The hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque.

Mr. MacKay: Thank you, Chair.

Three questions here. First question going back to the seniors' home. How is it determined where these seniors homes are going across Prince Edward Island?

Mr. Roach: I think, as the minister of health and wellness stated, this was a program that went out in 2007 and that was to cover all seniors' homes, senior replacement, all across Prince Edward Island. These last two homes that we referred to here this morning are the last two homes to be finished on that replacement program.

Mr. MacKay: I guess what I'm asking – and going back to 2007, a lot has changed since 2007, and we use my district for an example. There are more seniors in Kensington than ever before and there's a big demand for seniors' homes in Kensington right now. How did they determine that certain areas on Prince Edward Island – how did they determine where the seniors were at?

Mr. Currie: Okay, can you say that – just quickly we'll have him repeat the question again.

Mr. MacKay: I guess my question, minister, is: Who determines where these seniors' homes are going to go on Prince Edward Island?

Mr. Currie: Basically, the commitment that was made was that all public manors were to

be replaced. The public manors were already in existence. All the manors that are being replaced are manors that were built 30 to 40 years ago so the public manors are being replaced.

The process for the additional long-term care beds are based on – there's an RFP process put in but there's wait lists right now. Our wait lists right now are reasonably good, but if you look at – there will be a wait list and people will indicate clearly whether they want to be in the eastern part of the province, they want to be in the Charlottetown area. There's a list with people identifying where they want to stay, so they're transferred according to long-term care beds, wherever.

It's based on the roster of where the pressures and needs are. Of course, because of the population, there's more demand for long-term care beds in the Charlottetown area based on the population. Some of the wait times, for example, in other parts of the province aren't as long to access long-term care beds.

But the decisions to replace the manors were basically just – for example, Colville was replaced as the top priority because we were dealing with fires and the roofs were leaking and there was some pretty serious infrastructure. The public manors were already built, they were just replaced, but the new beds are displaced accordingly to where the pressures and needs are on the demand for long-term care beds.

Chair: The hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque.

Mr. MacKay: Thank you, Chair.

I guess my point is there should be a bit of research done community to community to see because obviously things are changing. We'll go back to my district, for example. There's more seniors in Kensington than there ever was before, whereas there might not be in the western end of the province because we're losing our young and middle-class people.

Mr. Currie: I can reassure the Member from Kensington-Malpeque that that list is constantly evaluated and updated. It's sort of an ongoing process. As seniors move to

acute level of care from four to five they're automatically placed on the list. Of course, they're asked the first question: Where would like to see yourself being?

The list is fairly current and I can get that information and share to the House. They do a good job. It's based on population, of course, and demand, and it's sort of an ongoing evaluation.

Chair: The hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque.

Mr. MacKay: Thank you, Chair.

Going back to the tendering again. Who makes the final decision on the tender? If we have a tender out there for half a million dollars or a million dollars, who makes that final decision who gets that tender?

Mr. Roach: As I explained, it goes through a process, so you would have the list of items that have to be included in the tender. Some of it, for example, may be an engineering component or something like that. That tender would go out with everything listed that is required to complete the project. The tenders would then be gathered up or they'd come in to staff. Staff would evaluate –

Mr. MacKay: So, the department staff?

Mr. Roach: The department staff would evaluate each one of the tenders and of course the numbers are the numbers that they submit. But they would evaluate the performance of the company, whether they met all of the specifications required, or whether some of the materials they were supplying weren't quite to what we asked for. They would be given a rating from zero to 100.

Mr. MacKay: The department makes the call, not the Cabinet?

Mr. Roach: No. The department then would take all of that information with all of what their, I guess, scores would be, plus what the dollar value is. That would then come to Treasury Board. We would ensure that all the requirements for the tendering process were done properly. We would then evaluate it as a Treasury Board. Sometimes there's recommendations. What we would then do

as Treasury Board is review that, and approve or not approve, and depending on the requirement we would either advise Cabinet or bring it to Cabinet for final approval.

Mr. MacKay: Thank you.

Chair: The hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque.

Mr. MacKay: Thank you, Chair.

Last question. I've noticed on the roads here lately over the last couple of months there's trucking companies advertising Prince Edward Island on their trailers. I'm just curious how that took place.

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct).

Mr. MacKay: My question. I've noticed over the last couple of months there's certain trucking companies on Prince Edward Island that are advertising Prince Edward Island tourism. I'm just wondering how many are out there. What's the remuneration that's following that and how did that come to light?

Mr. MacDonald: Basically that was through (Indistinct) Island partnership through agriculture, actually, paid for most of that. There's going to be approximately 12 by next year and there's no cost to the truckers. The truckers have to abide by some rules and regulations that we put in place to do it. The first one was Morley Annear out of Montague and he came forward. We did offer it to two other trucking companies and neither one of them wanted to comply with the criteria.

Mr. MacKay: So what would the trucking company expect for remuneration, I guess?

Mr. MacDonald: No remunerations.

Mr. MacKay: So they're doing it for absolutely nothing?

Mr. MacDonald: That's correct.

Mr. MacKay: That's great to see that they're cooperating like that to take because it would almost devalue the trailer when it goes to sell. For them to do it for nothing is absolutely amazing.

Mr. MacDonald: They can peel that off, it's a wrap, so it's not going to take away from the trailer.

Mr. MacKay: That's astonishing, that's good news.

Chair: Any more questions?

Mr. MacKay: No, that's great.

Chair: The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

Mr. LaVie: Thank you, Chair.

Minister, I see where you got in here 911 upgrades. What's the upgrades to 911?

Mr. Roach: That's to upgrade and approve the mapping software.

Mr. LaVie: Is that every year? Or is that every three years?

Mr. Roach: It depends.

Mr. LaVie: Must be every year.

Mr. Roach: Usually when we find out there's upgrades available it will come forward. It's not necessarily every year, but it usually is.

Chair: The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct).

Mr. LaVie: Thank you, Chair.

Just a couple of more questions. On your bridge upgrades you're putting in 5 million. Is the North Lake bridge – I know two years ago –

Chair: Order, please!

Mr. LaVie: The bridge upgrades, I know the minister prior to you – we renovated the North Lake bridge. I'm wondering if that bridge is due to be replaced.

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

Ms. Biggar: I'll have to check. I will check, hon. member, and get you that information.

It's not something I have right at – or have had a discussion with, so it's the North Lake bridge.

Mr. LaVie: Yeah, I see where there's 5 million here.

Ms. Biggar: Again, we have a number of bridges across the Island that we'll be working on for sure. I can get you that information.

Mr. LaVie: When you're doing the North Lake bridge, can you check on the Naufrage Harbour bridge? Can you check on that bridge, too, to see if that's –

Ms. Biggar: Certainly.

Mr. Roach: Anybody else got a bridge?

Chair: The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

Mr. LaVie: Well, I mean, there's 5 million there over the next few years, so bridges are very important. It's nice to keep on top of the bridges.

Chair: You got a question, hon. member?

Mr. LaVie: Yes.

There was a bridge – actually it's in District 2 – that was burnt last year. Are you aware of that one, the one that burnt and it wasn't replaced? You're not aware of that?

Ms. Biggar: I don't know specifically where it is, hon. member.

Mr. LaVie: It's in District 2, just outside of my district.

Ms. Biggar: We do have a map of money budgeted for small bridge repairs.

Mr. LaVie: I noticed this bridge here, it's completely taken out and it's walled with cage rocks.

Ms. Biggar: Yes, I'm familiar with that.

Mr. LaVie: Oh, you're familiar with it now.

Ms. Biggar: Yeah.

Mr. LaVie: Is that going to be replaced? Is that bridge going to (Indistinct) back in there?

Ms. Biggar: I thought you said it burned.

An Hon. Member: It did.

Mr. LaVie: It did. But that's why you tore it out. So is that bridge going to be replaced?

Ms. Biggar: I'll get that information for you.

Mr. LaVie: Because I know the farmers use it a lot.

Ms. Biggar: Yeah.

Mr. LaVie: It's great for the farmers and also for the emergency vehicles down there, the fire departments and the ambulance.

Chair?

Chair: The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira. Question.

Mr. LaVie: Chair, to the minister. I was talking to the minister of transportation last night. They did the Souris bridge. But on the west side they're coming out of an S turn. You're familiar with the area because you were raised and born up there. But anyway, you're going into an S turn and there was no guardrail put there. Prior to the bridge construction there was a town hall meeting. I asked one question at the town hall meeting and one question only because I knew the engineers made a mistake in St. Peters with sight distance, a major mistake in St. Peters on their bridge. I asked the engineer if there was going to be enough sight distance pulling out of the lower Roller Bay road looking toward the bridge. He said: Absolutely not. We made sure of that.

I took his word for it. I didn't think they'd make the mistake twice in a row. When the community of Souris West contacted him he says: We haven't got enough sight distance. Exactly the question I asked. I hate to see these engineers up in the cities in Toronto and New York and Calgary.

Chair: Hon. member, is there a question?

Mr. LaVie: Yes, there is a question. Can we have a proper guardrail installed at the Souris bridge with the input of the people?

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

Ms. Biggar: It's up to the minister. I can take it after the – I can elaborate after. Do you want to take it?

Mr. LaVie: Take it.

Mr. Roach: I'll certainly take the question. I, in fact, did go up to the actual site with the minister responsible. We took photographs and took sight lines and that sort of thing. We brought it back. I believe the minister has brought it back to her staff for review. That was probably about a month ago. I'll leave the rest of it to the minister.

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

Ms. Biggar: Yeah. Mr. Chair, just to elaborate on that, the Minister of Finance and I did go up to Souris and we met with the mayor there, we went out to the site around the area.

I have instructed my department – but first of all, I would like to categorically state I have the utmost confidence in the engineers that work in the department of transportation. I, in no way, shape or form, would agree that they do not know what they're doing. I want to first of all lend my wholehearted support by the work that my department does in designing bridges and everything else across this province.

Getting back to the rail, as of this morning, that rail should be starting to be installed.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct).

Chair: Order, please! Order, please!

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct).

Chair: The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

Mr. Myers: Let's work together.

Chair: Order, please!

The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

You have a question?

Mr. LaVie: Thank you, Chair.

To the minister on the floor, yes, I am aware of the work going on at the guardrail this morning. I did get a call from the community of Souris West, went outside to answer my phone. They created a problem on that turn.

Minister, as a first responder, there was an accident – not even accidents – collisions on that turn. Now we've created a ramp for them to land in the river. We created a problem on this turn.

Mr. Myers: Yes. The bridge rises up.

Mr. LaVie: Yes. The bridge rises up. The last collision was a motorcycle hitting the fence. Today he's paralyzed. The only thing that's different now, he'll shoot over the fence and land in the river.

I just want to make sure when you do this guardrail, make sure it's done right. Do it right.

On the east side, you did a perfect job when I asked for the guardrail on the east side. Perfect. Exactly what the people wanted.

When you do it on the west side, please do it right. That's all I'm asking.

Chair: Is there a question?

Mr. LaVie: I'm going to be going home this evening and I'll be checking.

Mr. Myers: This afternoon.

Mr. LaVie: This evening. I have meetings all day. I'll be checking this rail out. Please make sure it's done right. I know we have trust in our engineers. I believe in that. But when you make one mistake, we don't want to make the second one.

Chair: Thank you, hon. member.

Mr. LaVie: You learn from our mistakes.

Chair: Are there any further questions –

Mr. LaVie: That's how we learn. Will you make sure that this guardrail is done right at the west side of the Souris bridge?

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

Ms. Biggar: All of the safety measures and sight distances in regard to extending that particular rail are being taken into account to ensure, first of all, the guardrail that's being extended and also to ensure that there's sight distance coming out of that intersection at the end of that bridge.

Chair: Thank you, minister.

Any further questions?

Mr. LaVie: Yes.

Chair: The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

Mr. LaVie: Thank you, Chair.

To the minister on the floor. Or to the minister across the floor, whoever wants to take it. As a first responder I get lots of calls, you know, are highways, collisions. The first person they look at is: Colin, can you get your government to do something about this? Colin, can you get the government to do something about this? I said: Listen, guys, I'm in opposition, I'll do what I can. We had a motorcycle accident earlier in the spring because of a pothole in the road. I told her in my opening statements that we've got to do something with the potholes and she was doing them the next morning. But we shouldn't have to wait. But I don't want to be called – like, when this bridge was under construction, under construction the first 24 hours, we had an accident on it. Where this government was told there was going to be accidents on it because of poor lighting and poor signage. You were told. We had three accidents on that bridge while it was in construction.

Minister, I don't want to be called on a Saturday or a Friday night, early in the morning, to an accident over the guardrail. Will you please assure there will be no accidents on this turn?

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

Ms. Biggar: Just to comment, hon. member, nobody wants any accidents to happen on Prince Edward Island. Everything that we can do –

Mr. LaVie: Collision.

Ms. Biggar: Or collisions. Anything or everything that we can do, we will certainly work towards ensuring public safety on projects, on the roads, and we'll continue to do that.

Chair: We will now give the floor to the hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Chair.

I do want to apologize for my earlier outburst. That won't happen again.

Chair: Accepted. Thank you.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you for your patience as well, minister on the floor, for explaining the capital budgeting process. I do understand now why there are round numbers and why you can't do those.

It does concern me, though, that you have the projects and priorities on your list. Even without dollar amounts I think it would be really useful for the taxpayers of Prince Edward Island to see what those projects and their priorities are. I was wondering, I just ask once again: Would you consider publishing those lists?

Mr. Roach: That's something that I'll bring back to staff and discuss to ensure that we're not making any commitments that we can't keep. But I will bring that back to staff and have that discussion.

Mr. Trivers: So –

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Chair.

Mr. Roach: I'll commit to –

Mr. Trivers: So at this time I guess the only way to find out then is to go through it page by page.

On page 9, looking at the 250,000 worth of laboratory equipment, what is under that line item?

Mr. Roach: That's the replacement of a mass spectrometer.

Mr. Trivers: Excellent.

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald. Question.

Mr. Trivers: Yes. On page 10 – I suppose maybe you could help me out again. Should we be looking at page 11 if we want to go to get the list of priorities and projects?

Mr. Roach: Sure.

Mr. Trivers: All right. We'll look at page 11. It looks like page 10 is a summary. For trades training capital, equipment, 250,000. What's your list there?

Mr. Roach: That's just annual upgrades to anything to do with trades in all of our schools.

Mr. Trivers: Okay, great. Classroom technology, 2.25 million.

Mr. Roach: That's going to help us set the schools up for the Wi-Fi. Everything that has to go in for the schools.

Mr. Trivers: That's a great initiative, the Wi-Fi initiative. School construction and renovations, 9.29 million.

Mr. Roach: That's for some work that's going to be done at Three Oaks, work that's going to be done at École la belle Cloche in Rollo Bay, and it's for work that's going to be done at École-sur-Mer.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you. For capital repairs, the 1.2 million.

Mr. Roach: That's an amount that they allow for all of the schools across Prince Edward Island so that if issues come up we have a budget there that we can go in. I think we've heard about some issues this

week in the Legislature. That's monies to go in and look after those sorts of things.

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you. Moving right along to capital improvements - culture. We're looking at culture, infrastructure. Museum and heritage sites, 150,000. What are you spending that money on or planning to spend the money on?

Mr. Roach: That's for maintenance on the three main sites, Beaconsfield, Orwell, that sort of thing.

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: I think we've already had some questions about the bus replacement, but again, just for the record, how many school buses are we looking a – 2 million?

Mr. Roach: Twenty-one school buses.

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Chair.

I would like to just continue with page 13.

Chair: Okay, go ahead, hon. member.

Mr. Trivers: Housing unit renovations, 750,000. How does that break down? I know I have housing units in my district and they often need repairs. I'm wondering if there is schedule for any units in particular.

Mr. Roach: That has to do with repairs. We have actually 1,100 units across the province and that has to do with fixing roofs, replacing windows, replacing doors, replacing boilers, those sorts of things.

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Are those repairs done on request by residents, is that how that works?

Mr. Roach: No, we would have inspectors that would inspect those residences, as well, and it may also come in a form of a request by a resident.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you.

Chair: Would you like some further comment from the minister of health?

Mr. Trivers: Yes, please.

Mr. Currie: Basically what the minister alluded to. Every year there is sort of a – in the Department of Family and Human Services they have a housing division and they have inspectors and maintenance people that go out and sort of evaluate. We have a high volume of affordable seniors housing units across the province and they prioritize based on – for example, last we invested, I think, close to approximately 850,000. It could range from siding to windows, to a range of maintenance needs in all these facilities.

The requests do come from the residents who live in the facilities, but of course, they're prioritized depending on the age and the need and what was invested in that facility. I know that it'll range from year to year. But as we share that we're looking forward to more opportunity in partnership with the federal government in respect to what – we're keeping our fingers crossed what we can do – not only for appropriate maintenance, but also more access to more units for seniors, particularly in the affordable category.

Ms. Casey: Call the hour.

Chair: The hour has been called.

Mr. Roach: Mr. Chair, I move that the Speaker take the chair, and the Chair report progress and beg leave to sit again.

Chair: Shall it carry? Carried.

Mr. Speaker, as Chair of a Committee of the Whole House, having had under consideration a bill to be intituled *Appropriation Act (Capital Expenditures) 2016*, I beg leave to report that the committee has made some progress and begs leave to sit again. I move that the report of the committee be adopted.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Minister of Communities, Land and Environment.

Mr. Mitchell: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. Member from Evangeline-Miscouche, that this House adjourn until Tuesday, November 24th, at 2:00 p.m.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Have a great weekend.

The Legislature adjourned until tomorrow, Tuesday, at 2:00 p.m.