

# PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY



Speaker: Hon. Francis (Buck) Watts

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The Legislature sat at 2:00 p.m.

Matters of Privilege and Recognition of  
Guests

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

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

I want to welcome everyone to the gallery, especially Eddie. It's good to see him here again.

I want to note, too, I was coming in today – they're starting on the land. Can see they're out testing to see if it's too soft or not, and also they're getting the traps ready for the fishing season so that's absolutely awesome.

I do want to note, too, I see a lot of daffodils on today. It is cancer awareness month and it's good to see the support for that. Today, April 7<sup>th</sup>, is a very special day. It's no-housework day so I hope everybody left that message at home before they came here and it's a day to forget about the daily routine and relax for the day, or you can treat someone today, take them out for a meal or whatever. I would suggest it is just an excellent time to go out and support Burger Love in doing that.

**An Hon. Member:** It's also (Indistinct) day.

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

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

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

Welcome everybody today. Welcome everybody on EastLink especially in District 19, and also our friends in the gallery. I can guarantee they're not going to be out looking at the land in District 19 today because it's frozen harder than anything up there so they're not going to be doing any of that.

Thank you.

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Education, Early Learning and Culture.

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

I rise today and want to acknowledge our guests in the gallery, a special hello to a constituent of mine, Kenneth Murnaghan, who does great work for the brain injury association, and always grateful to hear from Kenny.

I just want to say what a pleasure it is to be back here in the Assembly and how proud I am to have the opportunity to be part of the conversations here in the Assembly as a Member from District 11 Charlottetown-Parkdale, an area where I spent most of my life growing up and working. What a privilege it is to be here to carry the discussions, and also to have the opportunity – and yesterday our government made an announcement, and the collaboration between both parties over the last number of years – and I want to shout-out to the Member from West Royalty-Springvale and the Member from Stratford-Kinlock in respect to the work on the parking. It was sort of a (Indistinct) – it was amazing how many people were trying to take credit for that announcement over the last 24 hours –

**Mr. LaVie:** Taking credit.

**Mr. Currie:** - when I was – had to tow the party line for a number of years but it's all good. It's all good, Islanders, and I just want to – just one big shout-out today to a teacher at Birchwood Intermediate School who is leading a group of students. They are called the Micro-Library Mobile Team. They are restocking books. If anybody has been around the city and even in parts of rural Prince Edward Island, these small little retrievable libraries are popping up. They are the tiny lending libraries that are located in communities, and a lot of them in the city of Charlottetown. So a special hello and a congratulations to Ms. Squires and her team who were out in the cold weather and inspiring active citizenship in communities across Prince Edward Island.

Thank you.

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

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

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

It's a pleasure to rise in the House here again today. Welcome back, everybody, I'll say hello to everybody in the gallery. As the Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries said, there is a lot of traps being hauled. If you're out and about, if you go down to the wharf, you better be careful because you'll be asked to help out pretty quick.

I just wanted to say hello to my father Donnie and my sister Misty who have wrapped up teaching classes at UPEI this week, and say good luck to all of the students that are starting their exams that are coming up.

Finally I just want to send best wishes to Jimmy Dunn, the dean of Fort Augustus, who had a slight accident there. He is recovering and the community is looking forward to having him back around the area.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

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

It is a pleasure to be back in the House again today.

I wanted to mention the central coastal tourism partnership. They do a great job up on the North Shore here on the Island and they have been holding some roundtables. One thing that came out of it was a tourism expo that was held yesterday afternoon in North Rustico. They combined with the Watermark Theatre and they had local business owners come together and share with each other and it was just a great event, so I want to give some kudos to them.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

It's a pleasure for me to rise in this House today as well and bring greetings to constituents in Stratford-Kinlock and to all Islanders indeed.

I would also like to recognize some individuals in the gallery today. We have Mr. Dennis Halliday here in the back row, Kenneth Murnaghan, of course, who I have known since our younger years. It's great to have you with us today.

I would be remiss as well if I didn't acknowledge all of the wonderful individuals who came out to my fundraising breakfast this morning at Phinley's Diner & Dairy Bar in District 6 Stratford-Kinlock. We had an amazing turnout. In fact, it was the largest turnout we have had since I was elected back in 2011. I would just like to thank everyone for their continued support and also helping to support a local business in my district. Also a huge thank you to my district executive for all of their hard work on organizing this event and selling the tickets.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

I, too, would like to welcome everyone here: Eddie Lund, Lorne Yeo, and Kenny Murnaghan to the gallery. I'd also like to shout-out to say hello to all the people in West Royalty-Springvale. I appreciate their support and I look forward to a great session on their behalf.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

I, too, am pleased to rise today and welcome all to the public gallery. Of course, it was mentioned that Eddie Lund is back again with us. Lorne Yeo is in the crowd today, as

he was yesterday. Yesterday morning I had an opportunity to spend some time with Lorne. Lorne is a conservation advocate for wildlife on Prince Edward Island. It was great to be at a breakfast yesterday and have some really great discussion on good things that are happening on PEI.

Kenny Murnaghan is in attendance in the audience today. I'm not sure if the draw was held yet, but Ken was out plugging some tickets for a baby barn draw for the Brain Injury Association of Prince Edward Island, so I'm not sure – I don't think it happened yet because I haven't had the phone call saying I've won. So if anyone has an opportunity to support that great cause Ken probably has tickets in his pockets today. Also, I would, indeed, like to say hello to all residents of the Sherwood area that are watching today, especially those fine residents, including my mom, that are living at the Mount in Sherwood. I do hope they are having a great day over there.

One final thing I would like to bring to the attention of this House and, in fact, all Islanders, is a young lady from my area. Her name is Siobhan Armstrong. Siobhan recently wrote, performed, added all the harmonies, added all the musicals, to a song that she wrote entirely focused on the beauty of PEI and that has been entered into the CBC Searchlight songwriting competition. I know Siobhan would appreciate if all Islanders would give her a vote at [cbcmusicsearchlight.ca](http://cbcmusicsearchlight.ca). Just go into the entry sign, give Siobhan a good solid vote. I'm asking the minister of tourism if he'll take a look at the sign and we might be able to use it as promotion of PEI as well.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

Welcome everyone back to the House today. Welcome everyone in the gallery, especially Dennis Halliday from our district, District 4. I want to say hello to everyone out in District 4 Belfast-Murray River. It's a great honour to be representing them again in the House during this sitting.

A big shout-out to Southern Kings Consolidated and Belfast Consolidated, the two elementary schools in my district, wonderful schools that perform to a very high standard as far as testing goes. Just shows you what smaller schools can do for this province.

I hope that everyone has a great day and I thank you very much, 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 people into the gallery here today and of course those who are following along at home via EastLink or the Internet.

The opportunity this morning, down in the St. Peters complex to attend an opening. The Red Cross is in the process of opening a health equipment loan program to run what was the old school in St. Peters, and I think it's a wonderful addition not only to that community, but to eastern Prince Edward Island to have that. I know that it coincides with some of government's goals to help people stay in their own homes longer. It's certainly less expensive to have them there.

I want to give a shout-out to a couple of the people who would have contributed to make that happen for sure, Jimmy MacAulay and Mary Burg, who are both pillars of the community in St. Peters. Without them that facility would have met the wrecking ball, of course. The community is very fortunate to have them and they're very fortunate to have that facility.

I'd also like to give a shout-out – I know this weekend – I think starting tonight – the Pee Wee AAA Atlantics are in Charlottetown. Charlottetown is the host. Some great hockey for people who are interested in getting out and seeing the stars of tomorrow, the 11- and 12-year-olds. I know a friend of mine, Mark Arsenault, his son Brett is playing. I wish those guys luck and everyone who participates in that tournament luck this weekend.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

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

I, too, would like to give a shout-out to the people in Souris-Elmira District 1. I had the opportunity to take a drive east to the farthest port in Prince Edward Island, that's North Lake. I see there are lots of traps getting on the wharf. There are no boats in the water up there yet, but there's lots of gear getting out on the wharf. The fishermen are out.

I'd like to say hello to a good friend of mine, and probably a really good friend to most of us in here today, inside the rail and outside the rail. If anybody ever had a pair of skates or put a pair of skates on their feet they'd probably know this gentleman, or even in the harness racing industry. This gentleman is Don Fitzpatrick. Better known as Fitzy. I met Fitzy 36 years ago when I started sharpening skates and he was a great help to me. He gave me lots of tricks to the trade and I still use them today. I know he was good to me with supplying me with stones and diamond dressers. A real good guy all the way around, helped everyone out.

Today I even deal with Chuckie's Sports Excellence and he helped Chuckie out quite a bit in his day, and everybody knows Chuckie. Chuckie's supposed to – the honourable Charles Keaton, if anybody wants to know any better.

Anyway, behind every good man like Don Fitzpatrick there's a woman. And how can I forget about his wife Pearl? Pearl, a very nice lady she is, and a fine couple they are.

So just to give a big shout-out to Don and what he did for me over the years and still continues to do so. When I'm in visiting Chuckie, Don is there sometimes. He helped me out along the way and I want to show my appreciation to Don and his wife Pearl.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Speaker:** Thank you for that member's statement, hon. member.

The hon. Member from Summerside-Wilmot.

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

It's a pleasure to rise this afternoon in the House and welcome those to the gallery. I see Eddie and Lorne and Kenny are here. It's always a pleasure to see familiar faces in our gallery.

Also to say hello to all those that may be viewing at home, via the Internet, in District 21 who have been great supporters of myself over the last nine years. I fully recognize the privilege to be in this Legislative Assembly and have the responsibility of making sure that their needs are represented to the fullest of my capacity.

I also noted that today is the international day of the beaver. I know that that's an issue that is very near and dear to the Minister of Workforce and Advanced Learning. I want to recognize that and to wish all of my colleagues here in the Legislature a wonderful day.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

I'd like to welcome everyone. It's an honour and a privilege to stand and to welcome everyone that's in the House today.

Today I'd like to recognize a CBC reporter, Pat Martel. If anyone has listened to the story, I heard it roughly about a month ago, about a fine, honest Prince Edward Island citizen by the name of John Lister – a very colourful character, 90 years old. He's still out in the farm. He still runs his own place by himself. But I remember a month ago when I first heard Pat doing a story on Mr. Lister, I smiled all the way to work. It was great.

This morning I had the privilege of listening to a follow-up to that. What Pat did went viral right across the country, and in fact went to a number of other places around the world. If anyone hasn't listened to it, I'd invite you to go to the CBC radio website

and play it and listen to him. Because not only does it say something about a fantastic Islander, it bodes well for Prince Edward Island as well. It just shows what great, wonderful characters and citizens that we have living, and seniors, on this Island.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Alberton-Roseville.

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

A pleasure to rise and welcome all the guests in the public gallery.

Of course, I'd like to say hello to all the good people of Alberton-Roseville. Especially my little girl Lila is home from school today, she had an appointment, and Karen. I'm sure they're probably watching.

I'd like to also take a moment to just speak a little bit about the great calibre of people that we have in West Prince. I attended a benefit there in Elmsdale at the community centre on Monday night for one of our residents there, Jackie Gallant. The place was full, and it was just heartwarming to see so many people come out and support someone when they need that help, and it's just everyday life in West Prince.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### Statements by Members

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

#### **Chase the Ace**

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

I rise today to speak about a phenomenon that swept Western Prince Edward Island last year, Chase the Ace in Tignish.

During its 11-month streak, the successful fundraiser drew more than 2,500 people right across Prince Edward Island, filling rooms at the Tignish legion and at the Tignish Credit Union Arena. The fundraiser

brought in thousands of dollars to local businesses and resulted in wonderful gifts to the legion and the volunteer fire department of the community.

All eyes were on the Tignish contest until Keaton Noye of Tyne Valley drew the lucky card and left with over \$700,000. Noye took his winnings and split it between himself and 17 lucky co-workers.

This good-will gesture did not stop with Mr. Noye. After receiving their portion of the fundraising effort, an impressive \$490,000, the Tignish legion decided to invest that back into the community by handing out more than \$80,000 to 19 different community organizations. The legion has also committed another \$20,000 to school scholarships, air cadet sponsorship, hospital support, as well as continuing with their other regular donations and projects.

With their building in need of some repairs and having struggled to keep their doors open in the past, instead of focusing on themselves the legion looked outwards to help others.

I hope members of this House will join me today in congratulating the Tignish Chase the Ace organizers and the Tignish Royal Canadian Legion on paying their gifts forward to the benefit of many in their area.

Thank you.

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

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

#### **PEI Crime Stoppers and Kevin Baillie**

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

As a former RCMP officer, I'm pleased to rise today to speak about an important organization and their recognition of a dedicated community member in my district, the Prince Edward Island Crime Stoppers and Staff Sergeant Kevin Baillie.

The PEI Crime Stoppers have been encouraging members of the community to assist law enforcement agencies in the fight against crime for 27 years. This past year's operations saw PEI Crime Stoppers

receiving 443 tips from the public, assisting Island law enforcement in solving 46 crimes and making 26 arrests.

PEI Crime Stoppers has named Staff Sergeant Kevin Baillie RCMP Officer of the Year. He was selected for going above and beyond his regular duties during the past year. Kevin's leadership has made Kings County a better place to live. I want to thank Kevin for his commitment and dedication to serving the public. This award is well deserved.

PEI Crime Stoppers and exceptional officers like Staff Sergeant Kevin Baillie are valuable resources in our justice system.

I would like to urge all members of this House to thank all members of law enforcement both on the Island and across Canada who zealously protect the rights of others and help to ensure our communities are safe.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

#### **North Rustico fire department – Alison Larkin**

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

It is truly a privilege of mine to rise today and recognize Alison Larkin who just last month became the first female fire chief in Prince Edward Island when she took charge of the North Rustico fire department.

Alison grew up in Rustico with the hopes of pursuing a career in health which eventually led to her becoming a paramedic. Alison is capable and ambitious, hoping to lead her 25-member volunteer fire crew for at least the next five years, which would break from the recent tradition of six different chiefs holding the position over the past decade.

Alison brings a tremendous amount of qualities to her new job at North Rustico Fire Chief. She has been a paramedic since 2009 and she has been a volunteer firefighter for the last nine years.

Alison, at the young age of 27, is a level-two firefighter and is the first female on PEI to achieve that level. Her knowledge and experience is an undisputed asset to the department.

Alison is one of only 65 female firefighters in the province out of about 1,000 volunteer firefighters in total.

Alison believes female firefighters bring a certain level of sensitivity to the job, and Alison says she never has any trouble with the physical demands of the job and believes women are more than capable to be a very effective firefighter.

Alison has accomplished much with her determination, hard work and perseverance. She is to be admired for her service to the community, both as fire chief and a paramedic.

I know she will continue to do great things in the future. And I, along with all the Members of the Legislative Assembly, wish her the very best.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

#### **Diversity**

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

The world is evolving and we must change with it, and the community of Prince Edward Island is changing also. It is our challenge and our opportunity to collectively embrace this evolution and, in so doing, create a better PEI.

We can do this with each choice and every action that we all take every day. Those of us privileged enough to sit in this Legislature have a special responsibility to colour this transformation.

Our Island home has seen many cultural shifts over its storied history, from the original Mi'kmaq inhabitants through European settlers to today, where we have a more diverse population than ever before.



With the arrival of the Buddhist community in Little Sands and, more recently, the Amish, and the influx of immigrants from countries where Prince Edward Island would have been as familiar to them as Baalbek and Abu Hamam are to us.

With diversity comes strength, whether we are talking about an economy, an ecosystem or a community. Our ever-expanding cultural variety is both a blessing and a test. Will we rise to that challenge and welcome these new neighbours with genuine warmth and legendary Island hospitality? I say a resounding yes. And I ask all members of this House to join me in extending a heartfelt welcome to all of our new friends.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Responses to Questions Taken as Notice

Questions by Members

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

**Richard Homburg loans and benefits**

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

A lot of Islanders are asking questions about what's become known as the Homburg heist, a misadventure of poor decisions and close to \$40 million going out the door with little results or controls in place.

Question to the acting Premier. We know the former Premier was wined and dined by Richard Homburg. He even got a flight on Homburg's jet, I understand. Did you ever get a ride in the private jet?

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

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

No, I have not.

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

**Mr. Myers:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Homburg heist just came to light here in the last year or so, the true details of what

had happened, and it happened through the auditor's report. We knew that there was something up for a long time. If you go back a few years we ask quite a few questions about it.

Question to the acting Premier again: How many members of Cabinet got first-class treatment by Homburg?

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

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

None that I'm aware of.

Thank you very much.

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

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

It seems kind of funny that I know that the former Premier has been rumoured to fly on the jet and go golfing in a private golf course and travel around in a Bentley and such.

Eight members of your current caucus had a hand in that Homburg heist decision.

**Mr. LaVie:** Or a Chevette.

**Mr. Myers:** Sat around either the Treasury Board table or the Cabinet table.

Question to the acting Premier: Does it seem fair to you that none of the rest of you got first-class treatment?

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

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

When it comes to lending we take that very seriously. We look at each and every loan that goes out there, looking at both the benefits of what it will be to our province and the cost to doing the business.

In this case, there was a lot of thought and preparation put into that. It has cost –

**Mr. Trivers:** I can imagine (Indistinct).

**Mr. McIsaac:** It has caused – it has achieved many jobs. We want to keep that business open over there. We will continue to invest with Islanders and in the Island to make sure that our economy grows on a regular basis.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

For a long time we've been trying to get to the bottom of this Homburg heist. Islanders have been asking: What is the cost of flying in a private jet? Now we know – \$40 million it costs to fly in Richard Homburg's private jet. That's taxpayers' dollars.

Question to the acting Premier again: Did any members of Cabinet get any other benefits before the trigger was pulled on the Homburg heist like dinners at Sims, rounds of high-end golf, theatre tickets, a ride in his Bentley?

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

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

I don't know of any of those benefits, I'll be quite honest with you. But I will say it is important that we do look at investment in this province. We want to drive our economy. When we have businesses like this that want to come in here we seriously take a look at that. If the loan looks like it will grow our economy, employ our people, we will certainly look at that.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

It's common knowledge that this government, since you've been elected in 2007, has been horrible for business. You shut down industry after industry here on Prince Edward Island.

**Mr. LaVie:** Hog industry.

**Mr. Myers:** The hog industry, the crab industry. It seems every industry that had anything to do with the former government you shut down.

**Mr. LaVie:** Ocean Choice.

**Mr. Myers:** So we find out that the Homburg heist cost Islanders \$40 million. From my understanding, it was a plane ride is what it was all about, somebody who wanted desperately to be on that jet.

Question again to the acting Premier: Was all this schmoozing a way to shortcut the process in order to get the loan approvals?

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

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

I can tell you, the time I spent on Treasury Board, any of the loans or whatever that came through there were given due diligence. I'm sure in this case it was. As far as the jet or whatever those benefits you're talking about, I have no knowledge of that.

We look at investment in the province. We want to grow the economy in this province and create jobs for the Islanders here.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

The Auditor General said that the normal rules, in fact, were not followed. The rules weren't followed for the Homburg heist.

Of course, you'd have rules, and they apply to every other person who wants to do business in Prince Edward Island. But there was something funny went on here, there was something secretive, and there was some backroom deal went on.

Question again to the acting Premier: Is it the new normal to get \$40 million from government in this manner?

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

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

Openness and transparency is what our Premier has talked about. That's what we will be doing, and we have been doing with regards to this loan and many others. We will continue along that path.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

The Homburg heist. It seems to be all about a 40 million ride on someone's private jet.

Question to the acting Premier: What advice would you give people looking to do business with government who didn't own a private jet?

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

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

We are a very open government here and an open province. Anyone who wants to get into any business here, come ahead, invest in our province. We have workers here that are ready to go to work. We have lots of brain power here as well that will work with the people who want to come here. We're very open and we want to grow our economy. So it's an open province here. Come and invest in our province and we will work with you.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

The stack of rules that were either broken or ignored by this government are in fact higher than the Homburg hotel.

### Loan portfolio

Question again to the acting Premier: How many more boondoggles like this do you have stashed away in your \$386 million loan portfolio?

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

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

Again, we look at investment for our province as a very positive thing. If we can grow our economy, we want to grow our population as well. We're open for anyone who wants to come here with business that has a good program, a good plan, a good business. We'll work with that company.

**Mr. Trivers:** As long as it's in Charlottetown.

**Mr. McIsaac:** And we'll get the –

**Mr. Trivers:** (Indistinct) hotels.

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

**Mr. McIsaac:** – workers for them and work in that way because we really want to grow our economy in this province, and we'll continue on that line.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

### Problem loan definition

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

Yesterday during question period the minister of economic development was questioned on what this government considered to be a problem loan. He was unable to answer because the AG found that this government doesn't in fact have a definition.

Question to the minister of economic development. You've had a day to confer with your staff about this. What constitutes a problem loan, and why does your government have no definition?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Economic Development and Tourism.

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

Hearing the banter back and forth, we can get back in the time machine as we've done several times.

**Mr. Trivers:** I see people across there that were there. (Indistinct) looks pretty similar to me.

**Mr. MacDonald:** I challenge the opposition to find anything since May election last year to find anything that we're doing out of proper protocol with our loan portfolio.

Mr. Speaker, Dyne Holdings Ltd., as that's what we're talking about, has been going on for – 1970s is actually when it started –

**Mr. Trivers:** (Indistinct) just one of those shell (Indistinct) companies (Indistinct)

**Mr. MacDonald:** – and then again in 1989.

**Mr. Trivers:** – for Homburg. (Indistinct).

**Mr. MacDonald:** We believe in everything that the Auditor General has done –

**Speaker:** Let the minister answer the question.

**Mr. MacDonald:** We believe in everything that the Auditor General has done. We'll be tabling some documents here today to say what is our process and what we're doing moving forward.

We lend out – and I heard the comment over there about everything's done in Charlottetown. Out of our loan portfolio over \$190 million is done in rural PEI. I continue to hear that time and time again –

**Mr. Trivers:** (Indistinct).

**Mr. MacDonald:** But as I travel as a minister to make these news announcement it's continuously outside the cities of Charlottetown and Summerside. We have a large loan portfolio and –

**Mr. LaVie:** Shut the snow crab fishery down.

**Mr. MacDonald:** – we're going to do our due diligence to drive the economy of Prince Edward Island –

**Mr. Trivers:** (Indistinct) open and transparent.

**Mr. LaVie:** (Indistinct)!

**Mr. MacDonald:** – and continue to provide employment in rural PEI and continue to create economic benefits for the citizens of PEI.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Myers:** Just a little refresher here. I guess the question that I asked that didn't get answered was: Did you have time to get the definition and why don't you have a definition? I guess we know that you didn't bother to go back and follow up on this even though I know you knew this was coming again today.

The minister is silent on the government policy when it comes to a problem loan (Indistinct) account. Now I'm going to go back to one of the members that sit in front of you, the hon. Minister of Workforce and Advanced Learning, as a matter of fact. In 2007 he was in front of a standing committee and this is what he said: An impaired loan is a loan in arrears in excess of 120 days or where, in management's opinion, it's no longer a reasonable assurance as to the timely collections of the full amount of the principle and interest.

That's what he said. He could have answered that question for you. Question to the minister.

This definition was used by the lending agencies in Prince Edward Island right up until 2010. Can you tell this House why the government stopped using that definition?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Economic Development and Tourism.

**Mr. MacDonald:** Mr. Speaker, interesting enough – I mean, 850 files we have out over Prince Edward Island through our lending portfolio, through IPI, through IIDI, through Finance PEI. We lend everything from agriculture – 128 clients, \$7 million – fisheries, 662 clients at \$7 million. These are small businesses, large businesses,

manufacturers. We are doing our due diligence to drive the economy of Prince Edward Island and we'll be tabling a document today that will inform the opposition and the Auditor General, who it's already been sent to, about the new policies and practices in place.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### **Understanding Bad Debt motion re: EDT minister**

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

It's actually unthinkable that this government has no idea what a problem loan is. I have a motion here, it's called Understanding Bad Debt, and we're going to table it here today, and I think it's very important that this minister sticks around for it.

For years and years this government has had a definition on the books as to what a problem loan is. Until the AG covered it just recently lots of people didn't notice it didn't exist anymore.

Question to the minister: Will you agree today to debate this motion on the floor of the Legislature?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Economic Development and Tourism.

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

I believe right now we're having a pretty good debate on everything in relation to our loan portfolio and our lending process –

**Mr. MacKay:** So much for being open and transparent.

**Mr. Trivers:** If we knew what was in it.

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

You can ask any question as you want, as you are today. We'll be tabling a document today that covers all the AG requirements, and moving forward we'll continue to work with the AG. We think she has great credibility and it'll only reveal that we are

being transparent and we are being collaborative and we're being a good government.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### **IIDI business plan**

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

Yesterday the Minister of Economic Development and Tourism said that rather than tracking loan outcomes he prefers to look at business plans and see what catches his eye. I'm just wondering if the Homburg heist would have caught his eye if he was in Cabinet back then.

In October of 2008 there was a business plan submitted to Island Investment Development Inc. requesting \$30 million of taxpayers' money. Can the Minister of Economic Development and Tourism tell me who submitted that business plan?

**Mr. MacDonald:** Can you repeat the question (Indistinct)?

**Ms. Compton:** Can the minister please tell me who submitted that business plan to IIDI?

**Ms. MacDonald:** (Indistinct). The part before that.

**Ms. Compton:** Mr. Speaker, in October 2008 there was a business plan submitted to Island Investment Development Inc. requesting \$30 million of taxpayers' money. Would the minister please tell me who submitted that business plan?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Economic Development and Tourism.

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

In October 2008 the Executive Council authorized Prince Edward Island Century 2000 Fund to provide Dyne with term loans totalling \$32.8 million.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**An Hon. Member:** Homburg.

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

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

The business plan was submitted by Richard Homburg. He was looking for \$30 million of taxpayers' money. Minister, what were the projects that were included in that business plan that Mr. Homburg submitted?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Economic Development and Tourism.

**Mr. MacDonald:** Actually, the total project was \$44.3 million and it included construction of the Homburg Financial Tower in the Holman Grand Hotel.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

We are hearing a different number all the time and it keeps growing. Thank you for sharing that with us. We know it was the Homburg tower. It was the Homburg hotel, Confederation Court Mall.

Minister, what percentage of project financing was Mr. Homburg looking for from public money from IIDI?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Economic Development and Tourism.

**Mr. MacDonald:** To the best of my knowledge, Mr. Speaker, at the time back in 2008, \$14 million, I believe, or a little more than \$14 million is what he was looking for from government for this investment.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

That's what he was putting in, sorry.

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

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

That's not really what I asked. I asked what percentage of public money he was looking for for the total project. It was 75% is what

you're saying. We'll learn later that that's not the case.

To the minister: Yes or no? When IIDI assessed this loan request they raised several significant issues. Yes or no answer, please.

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Economic Development and Tourism.

**Mr. MacDonald:** Mr. Speaker, we're talking about an era of 2008 and maybe even previous to that, and significant transactions in between then and now prior to my time as minister, so for me to give you an honest answer would be inappropriate.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

We see the minister is having a hard time keeping the story straight and it is quite a tangled web. The Auditor General's report in 2016 stated several significant issues were raised by IIDI. Minister, surely you've read the report or had someone read it to you. Can you please list for the House the several significant issues that were raised by your staff?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Economic Development and Tourism.

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

There are 10 issues with this file, mainly, that the Auditor General recorded on. I know the opposition has a copy of it so I'm not going to stand up here for 15 minutes and read them, but let me tell you this.

Downtown Charlottetown in the mid-1980s needed an upgrade and the Holman Grand and Dyne Holdings Ltd. had been around for a long time. The development has been the core of Charlottetown and what we refer to as dizzy block. We continue to build anything that's going to refurbish the downtown core. We looked at Sam the Record Man, we looked at the corner where Starbucks is and places like that –

**Mr. Trivers:** Nobody on the Island (Indistinct) –

**Mr. MacDonald:** - that were looking at financing all the time.

The Holman Grand Hotel, as minister of tourism, over \$1.2 million in wages is coming out of that property right now. There's only 30-some people working full-time and 30-some people working part-time.

Our investment are – we're looking and doing due diligence, we're working with the AG on our report. I'll be tabling it again today. Everything is transparent and collaborative. I know that the opposition keeps getting into a time machine and going back to 2008. That's eight years ago that they're asking questions on. I know they keep digging, but everything's aboveboard with this government of the day.

Thank you.

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

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

The minister talks about a time machine. When he signed up to run for this party and take the seat that he now represents he took over this mess, so he has to answer for it. I would like to mention the fact that just earlier he mentioned it would be inappropriate to be honest with me. I've got a concern with that so I don't know if I should ask any more questions.

Minister, do you believe these concerns should have been enough to stop this government from initially loaning Mr. Homburg such a large amount of hard-earned taxpayer money?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Economic Development and Tourism.

**Mr. MacDonald:** Mr. Speaker, the economic climate of the day back in 2008 is – you know, it's forever for me to stand up here and make a decision based on what the climate of the day was back in 2008, and those decisions that were being made by government, by CADAC, by the city of Charlottetown and the province, of course.

For me to answer that question would be unfair to the people that made those decisions at that time, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

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

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

We're talking about a loan here. It's a big file for the government. It's over \$40 million, it's a huge concern. Many Islanders are struggling, trying to pay the bills.

We look at Family and Human Services. Minister, what could you do with \$40 million? Your portfolio is not even that amount of money, I don't think, so what could you do if you had \$40 million?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Economic Development and Tourism.

**Mr. Trivers:** Minister of Family and Human Services.

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

We have over \$380 million –

**Mr. Trivers:** Question was to the hon. Minister of Family and Human Services. Wrong minister.

**Mr. MacDonald:** – in circulation on Prince Edward Island. It's a little more than \$40 million.

**Mr. Trivers:** (Indistinct) Family and Human Services now, too? (Indistinct).

**Mr. MacDonald:** Was the question addressed to me, Mr. Speaker?

**Some Hon. Members:** No.

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

**Speaker:** Okay –

**Mr. MacDonald:** Anyway, Mr. Speaker, I can answer the question.

We're always looking at ways. We're a government that is transparent to date –

**Mr. Trivers:** You're not going to answer the question anyway.

**Mr. MacDonald:** – we’re working really hard for Islanders. We’ve seen growth in our economy through tourism, we’ve seen growth in our economy through jobs, we’ve seen growth in our economy through the Royal Bank of Canada.

We’re continuing to move forward this economy. We’re leading the country in several aspects, and we’re going to continue to do that, and we’re going to continue to do that and be transparent because that’s what we campaigned on and that’s why we were elected, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

**Speaker:** We’ll now go to a question from the hon. Leader of the Third Party.

### **Labour shortage in agriculture**

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

Over the last number of years we’ve heard increasing reports of labour shortages in the agricultural sector.

A question to the Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries: What is this government doing to encourage Islanders to work in the agricultural sector?

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

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

That’s an excellent question because we’re coming into the busy season right now. As you know, in our agricultural sector we employ over 3,800 people throughout the busy summer months. In fisheries we’re up 8,600 people. We do need people here, we do need our Islanders working, and that’s what we focus on first and foremost. We work with the minister from Workforce and Advanced Learning. We work with the fish plants and with the farmers to assist them in whatever way we can.

There are good jobs here, both seasonal and long-term, and we are working with all the players in that to ensure that we get our locals working first and foremost.

Thank you very much.

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

### **Farm labourers and *Employment Standards Act***

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

So this government is doing everything it can to make sure that as many Islanders as possible are employed in the agricultural and fisheries sector.

Section 2 of the *Employment Standards Act* exempts farm labourers from all of the protections provided in the act except those relating to payment and protection of pay.

Could the minister please explain why farm labourers are largely exempt from the *Employment Standards Act*?

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

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

That’s a very serious question. We look at that sort of thing for sure, and we will be working on things like that. We brought in the – introduced – through the Workers Compensation Board now, so that they – if you hire farm workers, as such, you have to apply through the farm workers compensation. So now they are covered. It’s good support for the farmers themselves, and also for the employees so that they are insured, covered, should there be something like that happen in the workplace.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

I’m talking about things beyond workers compensation and injuries here. This exemption from the *Employment Standards Act*, sends, to me, a rather negative message to farm labourers. It’s that they are an inferior class of workers, they’re not worthy of full protection.

Given the labour shortage in the agricultural sector, could the minister again explain how



this exemption could possibly be an incentive for Islanders to work in the agricultural and fishing sectors?

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

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

I think the workers compensation piece is a really important one. We are looking for workers here, first and foremost from our Island. We are, unfortunately, that we have to take in some temporary foreign workers, but when we do we really appreciate them as well.

We have great jobs here, both seasonal and long-term. I think we need to be positive about that. The workers compensation piece was a first step in that. We look very strongly towards supporting our farmers and our workers on the farm, our fishers and those in the fish plant working there, and we will continue to do that, and do whatever is needed to ensure that we complement the fishers and farmers and build programs that will be good for everyone involved.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

### **Labour shortages in agriculture and fisheries**

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

With spring fast approaching, with our farmers heading to the land and our fishers to the sea to prepare for another season of food production for Prince Edward Island and for the planet, really, my question is for the Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

Mr. Minister, it is known that there has been a challenge in recruiting and keeping workers to the agriculture and fisheries sectors. I'm wanting to know if you can explain to the House today what measures have been taken for the upcoming season and what steps are being taken to secure those workers, and how those efforts are going for this upcoming season?

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

**Mr. McIsaac:** Very good question, again, Madame Member.

Again, it's big employment in our province. Agriculture and fisheries, they're our number one and number two industries here. We need to have workers for that.

As I mentioned to the Leader of the Third Party, agriculture employs 3,800 people, both seasonal and long-term, fisheries 8,600. We need workers here and we want workers here. We're working with the Minister of Workplace and Advanced Learning. We're working with the fish plants. We're working with the farmers, the PEI Federation of Agriculture, whatever programs we can to make sure that we have the workers here, we have our Islanders employed. I think every MLA around here is likely getting calls looking for help from some people who do not have employment at the present time. We want those people working. We have great jobs in agriculture and in fishery, so make sure that they know about that.

We need to a better job of selling that fact, too. We heard it at the Premier's economic forum and we heard it from the fish plant. They offer really good jobs on the Island and we need to get that word out.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** First supplementary from the hon. Member from Summerside-Wilmot.

### **Harvest Connection Program and AF minister**

**Ms. Sherry:** Mr. Minister, I'm not sure if you're aware of the Harvest Connection Program that is offered in the Province of Nova Scotia. The program is set-up for individuals who are in receipt of social assistance programs in that province in order to encourage them to go to the agriculture sector to work for the harvest. In turn, they receive up to \$3,000 in pay and it does not impact their monthly rate of social assistance that they receive from the province.

It's a great incentive, Mr. Minister, to get those who are in need of making some extra

money the opportunity for work. It also, in our case, would help us secure workers perhaps in the fishery and agriculture sectors here in Prince Edward Island.

My question to the minister is: Would you see yourself, as the Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries, supporting such a program here on Prince Edward Island?

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

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

Again, the hon. member brings up a great question. I am aware of the harvest program (Indistinct) in Nova Scotia. I've heard of it through the Federation of Agriculture. They looked at this program as well. We're looking at it in our department. We will take that back and we'll be working with the Department of Family and Human Services to see what can happen there. It's a good program. We need the workers. They're allowed to get \$3,000, as the member said, without affecting their social services benefits, so it's a program that we should look at.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

### School water tests

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

My question today is to the Minister of Education, Early Learning and Culture. Mr. Minister, your department periodically conducts water tests at Island schools. I have two schools in my district, École Évangéline and Miscouche Consolidated School.

Could the minister please advise the House of the results of the 2014 water tests at the École Évangéline and whether these results met national standards?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Education, Early Learning and Culture.

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

Water testing is something that we take very seriously in the 62 Island schools, both in the English Language School Board and the French Language School Board. Bacteria is tested in all of the 62 schools four times a year, and we also rely on the Department of Communities, Land and Environment who does a more robust pesticide monitoring program.

The most recent pesticide test at École Évangéline came back that the water was fit for consumption and met all Canadian drinking water quality standards.

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

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

I just have one supplementary question. Some believe that the water tests should be conducted at schools more than once per year. Will the minister review the schools' water testing policy and consider having water tests in schools conducted more than once a year, and online?

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Education, Early Learning and Culture.

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

In respect to the pesticide testing that's done by Department of Communities, Land and Environment is online. Currently, we're in discussions with the English Language School Board and the French Language School Board to post all water testing in the 62 Island schools.

I want to reiterate, if you look at the issue that arose at École Saint-Augustin, there was a replacement, a new school, which there was a replacement to reverse, implement the – reverse the osmosis water treatment system at a cost of approximately \$45,000.

We take the assessments and evaluation of drinking water in our Island schools very seriously and we'll continue to work with the Ministry of Communities, Land and Environment to continue to make sure the

quality of drinking water in Island schools is of the utmost high standard.

Thank you.

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

Hon. member, I must apologize to directing your question to the wrong minister. I didn't realize that, but I want to thank the minister for answering the question anyway.

**Mr. Trivers:** He didn't answer the question anyway, don't worry.

**Speaker:** Oh, yes he did.

### Treasury Board process for loan request

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

**Speaker:** You might not have liked it, but –

**Ms. Compton:** Mr. Speaker, Treasury Board rules state: For ease of interpretation, a Crown Corporation may be read as a sponsoring agency when it supports a loan or loan guarantee from government on behalf of a third party.

In the Homburg heist we know that IIDI was the sponsoring agency. Minister, can you outline the process contained in Treasury Board rules for a loan request?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Economic Development and Tourism.

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

From my understanding, we have a board of directors where a loan would be presented to the board of directors and then the loan would be pushed up the line to Treasury Board. If it required Executive Council review for approval, then it would be pushed up to Executive Council.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

Let me get this straight. Joe or Jane General Public comes to IIDI and their department

will look at a business plan that they have and recommend that it's good or bad, then that's pushed up to the board. Then if it's over \$1 million it goes to Executive Council. Would you agree that that's the process, minister?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Economic Development and Tourism.

**Mr. MacDonald:** Yes, ma'am.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### Richard Homburg loan and IIDI

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

Minister, did IIDI support the loan request as outlined in the business plan presented? And why did your government not follow the rules when presenting a loan, giving Mr. Homburg over \$40 million?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Economic Development and Tourism.

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

Again –

**Mr. LaVie:** (Indistinct).

**Mr. MacDonald:** Mr. Speaker?

Thank you.

**Speaker:** Go ahead.

**Mr. MacDonald:** Mr. Speaker, our government has done our due diligence as based in our platform.

We've appointed a first ethics integrity commissioner. We're publicly posting for the first time ministerial mandate letters. We're establishing new requirements for Cabinet ministers to publicly release detailed copies. We're extending conflict of interest requirements.

Everything that we have done to date has been transparent. We will continue to be transparent. We can't go back in time and change anything that has happened. We're a

new government that is a year old and we're continuing –

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

**Mr. MacDonald:** We're continuing to take the advice of the Auditor General and moving our loan portfolio forward.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

In some ways I guess I feel bad for the current minister. He really needs a mop to clean up the mess that was left behind.

Minister, under Treasury Board rules how can IIDI sponsor a loan request that they did not support?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Economic Development and Tourism.

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

In reference to the specific loan that the opposition continues to talk about, this loan is in good standing. This loan is in the best shape it's ever been in, in the history of this loan dating back to the 1980s.

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

**Mr. MacDonald:** We have more security on this loan, Mr. Speaker.

We have audited security. We have \$38 point some million dollars in security on a 32 point some million dollar loan.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Speaker:** Okay, let's have some order here.

Order, please!

The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

**Richard Homburg loan and Cabinet**

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

Under Treasury Board rules the sponsoring agency has to actually agree to submit the request to Treasury Board for consideration. These are your government rules. In this case, the AG's report shockingly found –

**Some Hon. Members:** Shockingly.

**Mr. Trivers:** Shockingly. The loan application was not presented to the IIDI board of directors for approval until after the Executive Council had provided approval.

**An Hon. Member:** No!

**Mr. Trivers:** Yes. Minister – and this is the Minister of Economic Development and Tourism, for the record – how did this loan request end up at Cabinet before the IIDI board of directors had approved it?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Economic Development and Tourism.

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

I'll reiterate, Dyne Holdings Ltd. owns several key properties on Prince Edward Island. We have security, really good security, on several key properties in Prince Edward Island and also two in Nova Scotia. We have good security. The loan is in good standing at the present time. I can't get into the time machine with the opposition. I can only work with the future.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

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

The government has already written down \$10 million of this loan that is supposedly in good standing. That's over 25% of the loan. I mean, \$10 million is the same amount that's owed by deadbeat parents in child support payments. Just imagine if that money was still here in this government.

The process under Treasury Board rules is quite clear. The board of directors would consider loan applications after receiving advice from staff and forward recommendations onto Cabinet then as a sponsoring agency.

In this case, Cabinet approved the loan and issued an Order in Council prior to the IIDI board even reviewing it.

**Mr. LaVie:** Oh, now we're getting the truth.

**Mr. Trivers:** Why? Why was the proper process under the rules not followed for this \$44 million loan request?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Economic Development and Tourism.

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

Just to clarify, write-down is not write-off.

**Mr. Myers:** No, it's the first step (Indistinct).

**Some Hon. Members:** (Indistinct) –

**Mr. MacDonald:** When a loan is written down it has not been written off. I just wanted to clarify that with the hon. member.

**Mr. Aylward:** Get this guy a dictionary. He doesn't know any definitions.

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

**Mr. Myers:** Somebody help him.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

**Mr. Trivers:** Minister, why did Cabinet choose to loan \$44 million of hard-earned taxpayer dollars for a broken business plan that IIDI staff rejected and that the IIDI board had not even seen?

Thank you.

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Economic Development and Tourism.

**Mr. MacDonald:** Mr. Speaker, as Minister of Economic Development and Tourism, and looking at this whole portfolio today, we are in – the company is in good standing with our loans.

There's a lot of people working in these companies. There's likely close to 200 people working in Charlottetown in these companies. We have good security and we're in good standing. I mean, they're

good business people at the present time and we'll work with them to grow our economy. We're growing our economy on a daily basis, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

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

### **Richard Homburg and carbon tax**

**Mr. Trivers:** Mr. Speaker, \$40 million, give or take a million or two – it's hard to say over there what the exact amount is –

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

**Mr. Trivers:** – is a lot of money. It's almost hard to fathom how much. Just imagine what our watershed groups could do with that kind of money.

This is a question to the Minister of Communities, Land and Environment. If taxpayers end up taking a \$40 million loss on the Homburg heist, are you going to have to bring in a carbon tax and cut watershed group funding to make up the difference for this blunder by the government?

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. LaVie:** \$40 million could get a causeway. I could get a causeway with 40 million.

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

**Mr. Trivers:** Listen to the Speaker.

**Mr. MacDonald:** Mr. Speaker –

**Mr. Trivers:** Listen to the Speaker. Communities, Land and Environment. Come on.

**Mr. MacDonald:** It is –

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

**Speaker:** No. The question is directed –

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

**Speaker:** Order, please!

The question is directed to the Minister of Communities, Land and Environment. That's who I want to answer the question. All right?

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

**An Hon. Member:** Anybody can answer the question.

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

This government is very dedicated to improving the economic situation on Prince Edward Island by investing and developing in new businesses from tip to tip, all across the Island.

It's so important to increase job numbers on Prince Edward Island. It's companies like this that are so important to look at Prince Edward Island and should be supported in every way when they're looking for Prince Edward Island to be a place where they can grow their companies.

In regards to the watershed funding, it has been absolutely – as clear as I can possibly make it in the last three sittings of the Legislature that watershed funding on Prince Edward Island is stable and it's been predictable. It's been that way since 2007, for the last nine years in Prince Edward Island.

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

**Mr. Trivers:** Oh, that's (Indistinct).

**Mr. Mitchell:** In 2006, Mr. Speaker –

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

**Mr. Trivers:** That wasn't my question, anyway.

**Mr. Mitchell:** In 2006, Mr. Speaker, watersheds were trying to get by on a meagre \$118,000.

**Some Hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Some Hon. Members:** Shame, shame!

**Mr. Mitchell:** Since the last nine years watersheds on Prince Edward Island –

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

**Speaker:** Order, please!

**Mr. Mitchell:** – have increased their funding –

**Speaker:** Order, please!

**Mr. Mitchell:** – to \$1.1 million.

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

**Mr. Mitchell:** I as minister responsible am very proud of that, Mr. Speaker.

I work diligently with these watershed groups who I spend time in each and every one across Prince Edward Island. The value for dollars that they provide to Prince Edward Island is phenomenal, they should be commended, and they should be supported in every which way possible.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Myers:** In fairness, the best environment minister since I've been elected. Not saying much.

#### Statements by Ministers

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

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

#### **Office of Energy Efficiency**

Over the past eight years, the Office of Energy Efficiency has been supporting residents and businesses to reduce their energy costs and become more energy efficient.

Through the Office of Energy Efficiency we have provided over \$7 million in grants to 8,000 residential clients and \$9.4 million in loans to 1,775 clients. On top of this we have provided free weatherization to 3,500 low-income homes and have helped 500 businesses to reduce their energy consumption.

Reduction in the use of fossil fuels has been beneficial for the environment. Government

is committed to ensuring that Islanders can become more energy efficient and save energy through conservation measures. Our Island is part of a national dialogue on climate protection and climate change adaptation. Energy is an important factor in that work.

We are now in the process of developing a comprehensive energy strategy that recognizes the vital part energy plays in the economy and in the environment. We are looking at energy conservation and efficiency along with alternative energy and renewable energy sources as we chart a path for energy development that is affordable, reliable, and sustainable.

The Office of Energy Efficiency makes conservation and efficiency measures available to citizens and businesses in our province.

Last year, the Office of Energy Efficiency completed a third party review of its existing programs. The review led to a number of recommendations to provide improved results for clients and more effective use of existing funds.

Today, I am pleased to outline a number of major changes which have become effective as of April 1<sup>st</sup>. In keeping with other jurisdictions, the Office of Energy Efficiency will be renamed Efficiency PEI. It will be more focused on information, public awareness, education, and engagement. This will help people make more informed decisions about the use of energy.

The review also recommended a number of program changes for residential clients, including a shift from grant-type programs to rebates. This means that clients will now submit an application after the work has been carried out to better reflect actual costs. Incentives will now be provided for home energy audits, enabling homeowners to make better informed decisions.

Moving to performance-based funding as opposed to basing funding levels on the cost of material or equipment would mean the more energy that is saved, the greater the funding.

We will continue to work with Islanders to identify opportunities to invest in efficiencies that can save money and reduce our environmental footprint.

We recognize the special needs of low-income Islanders and we will continue to work and help them.

In summary, these changes will mean improving programming and better results from the investment of government and citizens.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** Responding to the minister's statement will be the hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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

Thank you, minister.

I have to agree that the Office of Energy Efficiency is great, and the programs that they put out to Islanders and give the chance to Islanders to save money on their electrical bills and maybe put some money back in their pockets.

At the same time we're trying to respect the environment and make improvements on how we deal with greenhouse gases and our carbon input in the world.

However, we just played a double standard here in that. It's great to do those things with the Office of Energy Efficiency, but we have a government that backed Maritime Electric in raising rates to Islanders and every hard-working taxpayer. We gave them a little bit of a break, but we took it away from them when we raised the rates by 2.3%, taking money back out of Islanders.

We compounded that back two years ago by this government bringing in the HST and putting HST on the electrical rates, so the electricity that Islanders paid – we give you a program but we take it back in taxes.

Then, I'm quite safe in saying that, within the next week we are going to have an increase of HST by 1%.

So let's roll out a program and let's take it back with a rate increase by Maritime Electric and by a further rate increase on HST.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Speaker:** Also responding to the minister's statement will be the hon. Leader of the Third Party.

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

The Office of Energy Efficiency has been chronically under-funded for some time. The minister of environment just spoke about the return on dollars that the watershed groups give us. The Office of Energy Efficiency does a similar thing, saving Islanders, especially low-income Islanders, hundreds of thousands of dollars. I hope that this government will increase funding to that office.

We all know the cheapest and best energy savings are those that you don't have to pay for in the first place when it comes through conservation. I'm glad to see that there will be expanded programs for retrofits of houses. I'm a little concerned that this will come in the form of rebates after the money is spent. I'm hoping that there will be lots of facility there for these people to borrow the money in order to get this work done in the first place. I'm not quite sure how that's going to work. Most of these people do not have the facility to go to the bank and ask for \$20,000 to retrofit their house and then come forward with the receipts to a government agency for rebates.

As we well know, 75% of the energy cost on Prince Edward Island, and use of energy on Prince Edward Island, is in transportation. If we really want to make a substantial difference in our energy use here we have to look at transportation. It is past time where we developed a comprehensive public transportation system on PEI. I hope, again, as I suggested yesterday in this House that that's part of the funding coming from the infrastructure grants.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Economic Development and Tourism.

### **Response to AG Report**

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

This government values the work and expertise of the Auditor General. Immediately upon receiving this year's report I instructed my department to review and act on all recommendations.

I'm pleased to inform the House that nine of the 10 recommendations have been fully implemented. Work is well underway on the additional recommendation and it will be completed by September.

Actions include: strengthening risk assessment processes, additional measures to ensure the value of guarantees, increased monitoring of costs throughout the construction of projects, increased reporting on loans in an open and transparent manner; for the last 18 months a detailed loan report has gone to IIDI and FPEI board and Treasury quarterly.

As a province we believe economic indicators should be shared with the general public through the discussion of our loan portfolio, private sector successes, to name a few. Indeed we have begun to share some of this information on our website, already.

Small and medium-sized businesses are key generators that drive Prince Edward Island's economy, and access to financial capital is critical for those businesses to prosper and grow to their full potential.

The province recognizes these needs. For example, through the combined efforts of Finance PEI and Island Investment Development Inc. we had upwards of 370 million in loan capital at work in more than 850 businesses in the Island community.

Island businesses supported by Finance PEI and IIDI generated in excess of 1.3 billion in revenues and had a direct wage impact on the Island of approximately 221 million in 2014. These results reflect a 4.02% and 5.12% increase over the previous year, respectively.



Almost 200 million of our loan portfolio is invested outside of Charlottetown and Summerside, building sustainable prosperity in our communities throughout our province.

Government makes money from these loans, which is reinvested into our local economy.

Working together with our Island business communities we are achieving success – leading the country in export growth, wage growth, and region and population growth.

Reflecting our commitment to accountability and transparency, today I will be tabling our response to the Auditor General's recommendations.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque.

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

It's certainly nice to hear the minister is finally admitting that there's a problem in his department. It's too bad it has taken nine years and two AG reports ripping them apart to finally realize that there is an issue.

**Mr. Myers:** Four ministers and (Indistinct).

**Mr. MacKay:** At the end of the day there's still \$386 million out there and the only way this government is going to be open and transparent at the end of the day if they put that \$386 million – let Islanders know where the loan's at in the standing and put it out there for everybody to see once and for all.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

It strikes me that the role of the Auditor General is to point out where things could be done better, where problems have existed in the past, and how we could do things better.

Clearly there were problems with loans in this province in the past. I think there's no

doubt about that. But I happen to think that things are improving. We can't ignore those problems of the past, however, and I think what we have to do – when small cash-strapped provinces go courting large international businesses, taxpayers get burned. What we need to do is to provide a larger number of small loans to Island businesses, not these massive loans to multinational companies who can out-manoeuvre us in every way.

Anyway, I'm glad that the Auditor General pointed this out, I'm glad that this government is acting on that, and I do have faith that things are and will continue to get better.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Presenting and Receiving Petitions

#### Tabling of Documents

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Economic Development and Tourism.

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

Mr. Speaker, by leave of the House, I beg leave to table the letter to the Auditor General outlining the response to the recommendations in her 2016 report and I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Workforce and Advanced Learning, that the said document be now received and do lie on the Table.

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

The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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

To the Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy.

Mr. Speaker, by leave of the House, I beg leave to table two written questions and I move, seconded by the Honourable Member from Belfast-Murray River, that the said document be now received and do lie on the Table.

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

**Leader of the Opposition:** Mr. Speaker, to the minister of economic development.

By leave of the House, I beg leave to table one written question and I move, seconded by the Honourable Member from Georgetown-St. Peters, that the said document be now received and do lie on the Table.

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

The hon. Member from Georgetown-St. Peters.

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

Mr. Speaker, by leave of the House, I beg leave to table the information that I referenced in Question Period today about loans and arrears and I move, seconded by the Honourable Member from Souris-Elmira, that the said document be now received and do lie on the Table.

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

The hon. Member from Georgetown-St. Peters.

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

Mr. Speaker, by leave of the House, I beg leave to table – it's the note that goes along with it that Treasury Board once had (Indistinct) agency and I move, seconded by the Honourable Member from Souris-Elmira, that the said document be now received and do lie on the Table.

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

Reports by Committees

Introduction of Government Bills

Motions Other Than Government

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque.

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

Official opposition would like to seek unanimous consent to bring forward the motion tabled earlier by the hon. Member from Georgetown-St. Peters entitled Understanding Bad Debt.

**Speaker:** Do you have a seconder for that?

Do we have unanimous consent to continue with this motion?

**Mr. McIsaac:** Mr. Speaker.

It's the normal practice of the House that motions like that sit on the docket for a day. We have not had prior notice of that amount of time. We would ask the members, the opposition, to bring that motion back at the next time. But at this time, we're not at liberty to or will not partake in the debate.

There are other motions on the floor to come today, but – very welcome to debate the motion if they want to bring it back in time.

Thank you very much.

**Some Hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Speaker:** Order, please!

We don't have unanimous consent.

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

Opposition now would like to call Motion No. 15.

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

**Clerk Assistant and Clerk of Committees:** Motion No. 15.

The hon. Member from Belfast-Murray River moves, seconded by the hon. Member from Souris-Elmira, the following motion:

**WHEREAS** the Cape Bear Lighthouse and Marconi Station has been a fixture at the southernmost tip of PEI since 1881;

**AND WHEREAS** the Cape Bear Lighthouse and Marconi Station was the first Canadian station to receive a distress signal from the Titanic on April 14, 1912;

**AND WHEREAS** the Cape Bear Lighthouse and Marconi Station Incorporated, a non-profit organization, has developed a 10-year plan to restore the Lighthouse and Marconi Station, as well as to redevelop this property with walking trails, a 19th Century Village and beach

access into a significant tourism destination in this region;

**AND WHEREAS** the Cape Bear Lighthouse was recently designated as a heritage property under the National Heritage Lighthouse Protection Act;

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that this Legislative Assembly offer its support to the Cape Bear Lighthouse and Marconi Station Incorporated, and their efforts towards the redevelopment of this National Historic Site to ensure that the historical significance of the Lighthouse and the Marconi Station to our province, our nation, and the world will be preserved for generations to come.

**Speaker:** I will now call on the mover of the motion, the hon. Member from Belfast-Murray River.

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

It's my pleasure to rise today and to move this motion in support of such a historic and important area of Prince Edward Island.

The Cape Bear Lighthouse and Marconi Station is located in one of the most beautiful areas of our province, the District of Belfast-Murray River, which I have the privilege and I'm honoured to represent in the Legislative Assembly.

I first want to commend the hard work and vision of the Cape Bear Lighthouse and Marconi Station Incorporated, a group of residents from my district who worked tirelessly to preserve the Cape Bear Lighthouse and to promote the Marconi Station.

For many of them it has been a labour of love. These individuals had the foresight to form their own corporation and have developed a 10-year plan for the development of this historical property.

I believe, with the support of this Legislature and this government, it will become a major tourism destination for all Prince Edward Islanders as well as visitors to our province. It will also provide a much-needed economic boost in terms of employment and hopefully result in the creation of a new business to meet the needs of those who

come to the area to enjoy the site's history and beautiful beaches.

As I seek this Assembly's support for this project, I want to also thank the people of my area who refused to give up when the lighthouse was deemed as surplus by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans. The lighthouse structure was being threatened by the erosion to the sandstone cliffs and a group of local residents came to its rescue.

They applied for the transfer of the lighthouse and formed a non-profit entity in 2012. It took the group two years to receive permission from DFO to move the lighthouse from its precarious perch. The Cape Bear Lighthouse now sits on a 119-acre property which was part of a farm owned previously by two consecutive lighthouse keepers, Thomas Munn and Martin Luther Jordan.

Over the next decade the corporation hopes to be able to find the funds to do a complete exterior and interior renovation to the lighthouse. They also plan to harvest and replant mature woodlots in the area and build nature trails for walking, cycling, and winter skiing, which should help to boost tourism in the winter months in that area as well.

The corporation also plans to prepare a safe access to the beach area and offer supervised water activities. There are plans for construction of a children's play area and farming zoo, flower gardens, the planting of new trees, and the construction of facilities for a chowder house and dining room. The project will see a local artisan village with arts and gift shops, an auditorium for public gatherings, an adequate parking area for cars and buses, and a service site for RV campers.

It is so exciting just to talk about this project which I believe has great potential for the economy of our area. Certainly when the Marconi Station and Marconi Pole are replicated and the lighthouse is restored this project will have a wide appeal to Islanders, visitors, and their families as well as historians from around the world.

The Marconi Wireless Telegraph Station was built adjacent to the Cape Bear Lighthouse in 1905. It was opened to

maintain contact with the government steamers, *Minto* and *Stanley*, while on winter service between Prince Edward Island and the mainland. According to the lighthouse website the Cape Bear Marconi Station kept a close vigil over Northumberland Strait.

The facility was to serve fishing fleets in the area as well. When the Marconi Station was established in 1905 it consisted of a large pole measuring 165 feet which was erected near the lighthouse and held in an upright position by several guy-wires cemented into the ground. A building was later constructed next to the lighthouse to house the equipment.

The Cape Bear Marconi Station ceased operations in 1922, and the building that housed the station was sold to Robert Glover in 1929. Today the Marconi building can be found in Guernsey Cove and is now a family home.

In 1905 only 13 wireless telegraph stations were in operation in Canada for navigational and commercial purposes. That year Canada enacted the first Canadian legislation to regulate radio. The wireless telegraphy act of 1905 provided for the minister of marine and fisheries to issue licences, including licences authorizing experiments in wireless telegraphy.

I might point out that it was a Canadian, Reginald Fessenden, who discovered how to transmit voices by radio in 1906 and so he is considered the inventor of broadcasting.

It was in 1907 that Canada inaugurated the first transatlantic service when communication was established with England. In 1910 the wireless telegraphy branch of the department of marine and fisheries was incorporated into the newly formed department of naval service.

The first set of radio regulations made under the act were issued on May 29<sup>th</sup>, 1914 and, at that time, it became compulsory for certain classes of ships to carry radio equipment for safety purposes.

Perhaps one of the most historically significant aspects of our Marconi station was that it was the first station in Canada to receive a distress signal from the *Titanic*. A

Thomas Bartlett, the Marconi operator at Cape Bear from 1912 to 1922, was on duty on April 14<sup>th</sup>, 1912, the night the distress signal was transmitted. Bartlett is believed to be the only Marconi station radio operator in Canada to pick up the signal, and he made contact with marine authorities in Halifax. A similar station at Cape Race in Newfoundland was in communication with the *Titanic*, but at that time Newfoundland was not a part of Canada.

The tragic sinking of the RMS *Titanic* occurred on the night of April 14<sup>th</sup> through to the morning of April 15<sup>th</sup>, 1912, in the North Atlantic. It was only four days into the ship's maiden voyage from Southampton in England to New York City.

I believe that most of us in this House today are aware of that tragedy and what unfolded that day. The *Titanic* was the largest passenger liner in service at the time and had an estimated 2,224 passengers on board. The ship struck an iceberg at around 11:40 and sank two hours and forty minutes later. It resulted in the deaths of more than 1,500 people. It was one of the deadliest peacetime maritime disasters in history.

Walter Thomas Bartlett came to PEI from Brigus, Newfoundland, to be the chief operator for the Marconi station at Cape Bear. On April 15<sup>th</sup>, 1909, he married Beth Harris, daughter of the former lighthouse keepers, William and Annie Harris. Thomas and Beth had six children and the family lived at the Marconi station at Cape Bear. Thomas Bartlett kept the station until it was relocated to Charlottetown in 1922.

In 1998 the Cape Bear Lighthouse was leased to the newly formed Northumberland Community Development Corporation which restored the tower, added the Marconi Museum, and opened the complex to the public.

While the focus on the historical fame of the Marconi Station is related primarily to the tragic sinking of the *Titanic*, I am sure that there are many stories to be told about its role in averting disasters at sea. I believe that one of the most important historical aspects of the Cape Bear Marconi station is that it symbolizes an important time in early history when the world was fast becoming connected via the evolution of radio

signaling systems and intercontinental communications. The Marconi system was revolutionary in its day and I can only imagine how many lives would have been lost, on both land and sea over the years, had this technology not existed.

Wallace Jorden is well-known for his involvement with the Cape Bear project and much of the details for this motion came from his research and newsletters. While the initiation of this project will rely heavily on government funding and organizational grants, the local fundraisers have a goal and the goal of the corporation is to eventually become self-sufficient.

It will take hard work, vision, and persistence to obtain that goal, but I believe that the residents of that area, as well as Island historians and those interested in the national preservation of Canada's history and heritage, will bring this facility to a reality. I believe it will serve not only as a tourism attraction, but also as an educational facility that will serve future generations in keeping the history of our nation alive.

I would ask that members of this Legislative Assembly offer our support to the Cape Bear Lighthouse and Marconi Museum Corporation in their efforts to ensure this historic site will stand and watch over the sea for many years to come.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** The seconder of the motion, the hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

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

This is a motion that is dear to your heart and mine, also, and probably the Minister of Finance as he grew up on the water also. We grew up on the water with very little electronics. The little bit of electronics I had – you guys probably had none. When I grew up we didn't have radars and sounders. I was very young but I fished at a very young age and we did rely on lighthouses. Each lighthouse has its own beacon to let seamen know, captains know, exactly where they were. These beacons were on the charts.

Let's say, for instance, Souris light was three fast plates, so on the chart it would show a lighthouse with a little dot on it with

the three on it. East Point would be one short and three long and that would also say on the chart.

Even go as far as we did a lot of fishing off the coast of Nova Scotia, so Ballantyne Cove light was one blink. On a clear night if you were, say, at Red Point Provincial Park, you could see approximately 35 miles away Cape George light blinking. A lot of people often asked me: What's that light that blinks over there? That's what it is, is the Cape George light.

We relied on them. When we were fishing on Fishermen's Bank we could pretty near see the Souris lighthouse from Fishermen's Bank 20 miles away on a nice clear night and that's what we steered by. If you got a focus on that light it saved you from standing up and watching the compass all the way home. Because watching the compass and no power steering your arms were pretty tired by the time you got home after steering three hours.

Mr. Speaker, you're well aware of lighthouses around PEI. I know you've been in the fishery for 50-plus years yourself.

Even back in the day before our time there was a lot of shipbuilding. There was a lot of Americans come up to fish on our waters. Actually, a lot of Americans came up and fished in the Northumberland Strait. They fished mackerel.

I read a story on it one time and it was very interesting. I read where the book *Ten Farms Become a Town* and that's all about Souris and the Eastern Kings. It says in there where the Americans used to come here to fish in schooners and there was no electronics. This is what they relied on was lighthouses. It's very interesting when you take your fishing vessel courses and you do chart work and it's very interesting how the old fishermen used to do it from today. Like today, there's a plotter in front of you with the chart built right into it and everything that's on a chart is built right into your plotter today. It's quite a change today. Even for sounders they used to have rope with a weight on it with knots on it. So many knots would give you the depth of water.

In the fishery today there's quite a difference than what it used to be. There was

more thinking back then. Even the lighthouses, and you say it was foggy, most lighthouses – every harbour had a foghorn to guide you into the harbour. You really had to pay attention. A lot of boats had lookouts. Up on the mast of the schooners there'd be a fisher up there and he used to be the lookout master, is what you call him. There were no portable radios or walky-talkies, it was all either ring a bell or you had to roar to your skipper through a horn.

It's very interesting when you talk lighthouses and there's great history in lighthouses from right across Prince Edward Island. I think there's 224 kilometres from East Point to North Cape. I think it's 224 kilometres from tip-to-tip and there's approximately 1,760 kilometres of shoreline, whether it be rock or sand. Back then there were more harbours than there is today. I know just in my district we're probably down four harbours just from the day of the schooners until today.

In order to guide these fishers in from outside our waters they used lighthouses. Some were built in brick and some were built of wood. They started building with wood because wood was cheaper back then and they milled their own wood. It was quite a project back then when you saw them building lighthouses. Today we have equipment to build everything, but back then they used block and tackle and hoist everything by hand and you're talking 60 feet, 90 feet in the air. I know the Souris light, it was just the top of it, the brass part of it, and the light was just all done over by the harbour authority and they had boom trucks to take it down. But back in the day they had to use block and tackle and hoist it up by hand. No, I didn't experience it hands on, I was looking at pictures.

The lighthouses today don't serve the purpose that they had back in the day to guide seamen into their harbours, especially with the electronics today. But a lot of the local communities are taking over the lighthouses and keeping the heritage in Prince Edward Island. Though they should, it is a big part of our heritage is lighthouses and shipbuilding. We exported a lot of stuff off Prince Edward Island back then. We exported lumber, fish, you name it, and we exported it.

Lighthouses have been a symbol of hope and safety for seamen and refugees. A lot of refugees came from over sea. I know my own family came from France. Nowhere is their presence more valued than Prince Edward Island for their lighthouses.

During the 19<sup>th</sup> century the Island's waters were very busy. All around Prince Edward Island, thousands of immigrants – a lot of immigrants came back in the 19<sup>th</sup> century so probably every one of us in here today is an immigrant in some way. These immigrants came by ship, and how do we guide these in here? Shipbuilding became a booming industry back in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. I know just out on the Souris river alone I still find it hard to believe just looking at the Souris river now how shipbuilding was built up there.

Of course we would never get a ship out of there today with the mast, with the bridge, so this is before the bridge days. I have a 42-foot boat that draws 3.5 feet of water and I have to be careful getting up the Souris river today. I really have to know that run to get up there. But imagine back in the day they used to build these schooners, and these schooners were anywhere from 60 feet to 50 feet, 45 feet. Mr. Speaker, you probably drove a few nails in these schooners and they were probably wooden nails back then so you do have a little idea what I'm talking about.

But it does surprise me, and I love history and I always – anytime I get to read history, especially in my own area, it's great and it amazes me how they did it. Even where it's very interesting – Adele Townsend, she wrote many books about eastern PEI. The Minister of Finance knows a lot of what I'm talking about because he came from the area. Actually, the Minister of Finance – I would say we are distantly related through that Paquets, and the Paquets owned a lot of land up there, and actually the Minister of Finance was brought up right on the water. His house was right on the water so he gets a lot of what I'm talking about.

I talk about my own area more because that's where I was raised and I was brought up and I never left my area. I love Eastern Kings. I had brothers and I had sisters that went out west to work and I never ever left my area. I always stayed home and I found

work in my own area. But there was not only the shipbuilding that was done up the Souris river, there was shipbuilding – I didn't know about it until I read it, it was right where the Usen fish plant was. There was shipbuilding in there. I know we have a beautiful wharf up there now and it's wharfed right from one end right across, but in my day that was all open to the bank and the fishermen used to run – and the Minister of Finance, his father was one of them. They only had smaller boats back then. They used to run them up on the shore and they'd take the engine out of them and turn the boats over for the winter, actually. That's how simple it was back then.

I'm pretty sure it's probably the way you fellows did it too. Your boats were smaller back then and you just took your own engine out and you rolled it over for the winter. It's not like today. You have a \$300,000 boat, you just don't take the engine out of it and roll it over anymore, and shipbuilding back then was quite different than shipbuilding today. Shipbuilding today is either built of steel or built of fiberglass.

Yeah, it's great and interesting what the lighthouses on PEI serve. The first lighthouse built on Prince Edward Island was Point Prim Lighthouse and it was built in 1845. Just imagine building a lighthouse back in 1845. How would they do that? Now we have a job if we put up an EastLink tower or something, you've got to have cranes and cement trucks and steel and tractor trailers to haul it. Back then they had architects back then and architects had to build it back then. You know Isaac Smith, he was an architect back then, and he designed 8.2, 60-foot round brick lighthouse, and that's what I'm saying, the round brick. That was the round, but those were the early ones. The early ones were made out of brick and they were built round.

It was the last one of its kind, down in Point Prim. At present there are seven lighthouses on Prince Edward Island open to the public. Visitors will climb right into their lantern room, right in where the lanterns were. I know most of us in here probably toured a lot of these lighthouses and we get an opportunity to go in and see what these lighthouse keepers actually did. The minister of tourism, I imagine the former minister of tourism, I imagine he had a chance to tour a

lot of these lighthouses, and if he didn't he should have because it's a part of our history here in PEI. I encourage the new minister of tourism to do the same thing also. Get right to the top of them, it's quite a view up there. I was very impressed how small they are and how steep the steps are. If you were building a lighthouse today I'm sure your steps would have to be more safer than what they were back then.

I am pleased to rise today and second the motion put forward by the Member from Belfast-Murray River, a motion aimed at not only preserving the history and the unique and beautiful area of our province, but in promoting a major new tourism destination for the region of Prince Edward Island. It is tourism – tourists love these lighthouses. Some tourists, when they come, they hit all lighthouses, not just one lighthouse here and one lighthouse there. They try to do them all.

There can be no doubt that both the Cape Bear Lighthouse and the Marconi Station and Museum are of historical significance to our province, our country, and indeed the world, and therefore worthy of the National Historic Site designation it now so proudly bears. The Cape Bear Lighthouse is very dear to all of our hearts because of anybody that watched the movie *Titanic*, which is a great movie. It's too bad it had to happen the way it happened. The *Titanic*, the ship that she was, the steamship, an unsinkable ship, but it just goes to show you no ship is unsinkable. We saw full hand what happened to the *Titanic* as she hit the iceberg. Like I was saying earlier on the schooners with the masts, the *Titanic* had a seaman up in his towers and he was too late seeing the iceberg. It was dark at night and couldn't be avoided. That's how collisions happen and that's why we speak of collisions today.

But anyway, the *Titanic* was a great ship and Cape Bear Lighthouse was the first one to receive a message from the *Titanic* that she was in trouble, so that's great for the Cape Bear Lighthouse and it's great to have in history. The Cape Bear Lighthouse is in the most southeastern part of Prince Edward Island, so anybody that is sailing south of Souris to Pictou to Charlottetown that's the lighthouse you will see. It was constructed in 1881. That's near Beach Point, the

southeast trip of Prince Edward Island, so that really put Beach Point back on the map when the *Titanic* went down.

It was one of the approximately 10 second-generation lighthouses built within a few years after the Island joined Confederation in 1873.

Again, according to the website, in the mid-1800s – and as I said earlier, the American mackerel fishing vessels sailed the Island waters. That was great, the Americans coming here to fish. We showed them how to fish when they got here.

I know what that's like because when we used to fish over in Ballantyne's Cove and we used to drag – my father had two fishing boats, actually. He'd captain one and my brother captained the other one. We used to go over to Ballantyne's Cove and we showed the boys how to get started over there with the dragging and stuff. We made great friends over there. Like, we passed that on.

Today I have friends over there. I'll take my boat over, probably, every second year and I'd go over and visit them in Ballantyne's Cove. And what'll happen, he'll take his boat over here every second year and he'll visit over here. So we made great friends over there and we all worked together over there.

If there was fish in one area, they told you where the fish were and you worked together over there. So it was a great spot to fish. As you are well aware, Mr. Speaker, we put in some nasty weather in there coming home.

You take that northeast wind or nor-west wind coming across Northumberland Strait. You definitely know it's blowing with a load of fish on. Those old, wooden boats – Mr. Speaker, you know what those old wooden boats are like because you fished out of Souris yourself, and you know what the fishing down in Fisherman's Bank is like with a load of herring coming home in the gale wind.

As I've said, as a fisher myself, I can only imagine what it would have been like in those days with the large sailboats everywhere. It would have been such an

exciting period of time. Actually, it would be nice to go back in time. I know the minister of economic development is talking about a time capsule and opposition talking about time, but I'd like to go back in time just to see what it was like back then to fish, handline fish. No electronics and just sails.

Out on the sea it's a lovely spot to make a living. It's a perfect spot to make a living. There's no opposition roaring at you and there's no wife telling you to sweep the floor, do the dishes. You're on your own and you're there to make a living.

**Mr. Trivers:** There's no housework database.

**Mr. LaVie:** No housework.

**Mr. Trivers:** No housework –

**Mr. LaVie:** There is housework, Mr. Speaker, but you just shove it aside and you just – you know, there's no better living than on the water.

Shipbuilders built ships all along the coast and filled them with lumber, bound for Europe. So we exported lumber back then. Even in my day we exported lumber. It was (Indistinct) but it was lumber. Ships brought settlers to the Island, these wooden ships they built. They brought settlers here. I'm here today because of it. We came from France.

Then the government realized there were more lighthouses needed because of the traffic that was in our waterways. The government realized back then that we needed more lighthouses. It's a funny thing. Back then government realized we needed more lighthouses, now they realize we don't need them now. That's how times have changed. But the government put them there and the government will take them away. It's just like this government here. The people put them there and the people are going to take you away.

The square tapered towers were much cheaper to build than the masonry towers built like they were elsewhere, like I was saying. They could have made them of wood, which was cheap and readily available and quickly built by locals who had learned the skill building ships.



They not only built their own ships back then but they built their own lighthouses back then, so there's great history that goes with these lighthouses. I'm glad that these communities – and the support of provincial and federal funds are helping these communities with their lighthouses to keep that history alive because it's great history.

The Cape Bear Lighthouse was a typical marine and fisheries design. It is almost identical to the Cape Egmont Lighthouse built in 1883 in western Prince Edward Island. It is 40.7 in height from base to the vane. It was built on a 9.1, say, a 30-foot cape. So the actual light is 74 feet. That's 74 feet above the water. That's quite a height for back then. It was dangerous building them back then. They never had harnesses and there were no laws back then to – hard hats. Hard hats weren't invented back then.

The vertical alignment of the doors and the windows makes it look taller than it actually is. They were pretty smart back then. They made small doors and higher doors and they made them look higher than they actually are. They were pretty smart old guys back then. They were actually smart old guys back then because I remember – I don't remember, but I've seen pictures of it. We used to have an old rink in Souris and I've got pictures of it where it was being built. Some of the pockets, the Minister of Finance, I imagine his relation, my grandfather, Edmund LaVie and my great-grandfather, they're all sitting up on one of the beams. They show them hoisting up the boards to them by block and tackle. That's how they built the stuff back then. They were sitting there on the beams, they weren't tied off, they had no hard hats on. But that's how it was, how it worked back then.

Today is a little different. Today is a faster pace and there are regulations in place today. Did they get hurt back then? Probably they did. We just never heard about it like we do today.

Parliament appropriated \$2,000 in 1880 and John Whalen received \$1,374 for completing the lighthouse the following year on land that was purchased for \$75 from Thomas Munn. Imagine, \$75. Holy God.

The original lantern and lighting apparatus cost \$1,044 and were shipped to the Island

in 17 cases. Like, today, the Souris lighthouse was refurbished. Imagine what it cost to refurbish the brass and the light. It would be quadruple that.

The coastal beacon which aided the development of the fishing industry on the southeast shore originally housed a revolving red catoptric light and produced a bright flash every 30 seconds and could be seen from a distance of 12 miles. That 12 miles – and that can vary on the night too, right? Because I can see the Cape George light 35 miles away. So that varies on a clear night. It just goes to show how clear these lighthouses were and how important they were to – I know we had a lot of freighters come into Summerside, Charlottetown, Souris, and Georgetown. A lot of big freighters. We exported potatoes and pulp. They used these lighthouses back in the day and it's a good job they had them.

They'd chart them and then they'd take a light from, say, East Point and then they'd chart the one off of Souris, then they'd chart the one off of Georgetown. That's how they'd guide themselves, you know, they know they were going by. They got one fast plus three quick ones at East Point, then they got three quick ones at Souris, they knew they were off Souris. I'm not sure what the Georgetown light was. That's how they followed themselves down the shore and that's how they knew how far down the shore they were.

They had a great purpose, these lighthouses. Actually with the electronics today some people still use them if you're sailing a long distance, especially at nighttime. You got your autopilot set and you see, say, Cape Bear light, you just set your heading for Cape Bear light – some people hold onto the heritage. Some people have a hard job letting it go. I know I still use the Souris light at nighttime or steaming down the shore.

When I take tours out on my boat – I take family members out, or people out for a sail – I take them to the East Point Lighthouse. It's beautiful up there because you got where two tides are meeting and you got the lighthouse you can see from both sides of Prince Edward Island. You can see the lighthouse from the north side of Prince

Edward Island, you can see the lighthouse from the south side of Prince Edward Island.

I believe the East Point Lighthouse, it was moved back twice. Twice that I know of. That's how much damage that East Point got up there. The damages – climate change – and there's just no ice there to hold off the sea and it's eroding fast up there. Probably it'll have to be moved again in my lifetime. It's quite a project to move the lighthouses. We have to assume to move them what they went through to build them.

In 1891 leaks in the roof were patched and the cellar floor was taken up, the chimney above the roof was repaired, the corner cases of the tower removed, and the shingles extended to the corners. The contractor bored a hole to a depth of 60 feet at the station in 1893 in an attempt to create a well but no water was found. That's 60 feet deep and they never hit water. That was at the shoreline. How much farther would you have to go to get water? They're right beside it.

This work didn't cost the government anything. This contractor took it, the task, on condition of being successful. A well was successfully dug in 1898 at the cost of \$100. Imagine, \$100 to dig a well – a lot of money back then. Today, that would be a phone call. It'd cost \$100 to make a phone call. That is a lot of money back then in 1898.

In 1899 the keeper's dwelling attached to the tower was extended by 21 feet at a cost of \$463.85. That was, of course, again a lot of money back then. But to compare it today? Twenty-one feet, that'd cost you the cost of a house today.

In 1947 Wesley Coles, a house hauler from Prince County, moved the lighthouse and attached the dwelling due to the erosion of the nearby cliffs. That's back in 1947. There was erosion back then, too. Imagine. The Member from Tignish-Palmer Road, he would probably remember Wesley Coles. He's from up in Prince County and he moved it.

The first keeper of the lighthouse was Thomas Hugh Munn who received an annual salary of \$300. I'm not sure if that was an annual salary or was that \$300 for the year? Or was it for the month? For the

week? But \$300, an annual salary of \$300, I'd probably say that's for the year. What would we do with \$300 today?

Munn was born October 8<sup>th</sup>, 1823 and died in 1893. Mr. Munn was a carpenter and, according to some, he was the man who first began the process to have a lighthouse built in Cape Bear. He found the need for a lighthouse. He was thinking not only as a carpenter, but he was thinking safety. Safety for these seamen who are sailing our shores. He wasn't all about the carpenter, he was about safety for the people in our waters. Munn, according to family, fell from the lantern in 1890 and was bedridden for three years before he passed away in 1893. Sad. During this period his son John cared for the light.

William Harris – big name down there, Harris, big name down in Murray Harbour – was the second lighthouse keeper at Cape Bear and was appointed November 11<sup>th</sup>, 1896, and was succeeded by Martin L. Jorden in 1905.

Jorden. Martin Jorden, that's another big name down there is Jorden. I know quite a few people down that way. When you fish you meet a lot of people. You go into their harbour to fish and they come up to your harbour to fish. I worked at the arena, the rink up in Souris, for 15 years and we had an Eastern Kings league. You met a lot of people when you worked at the rink because a lot of people came and a lot of people went. I met a lot of people from down Georgetown, Gaspereaux, all down the shore. Wood Islands, Tignish – know quite a few up in Tignish. Alberton – you meet a lot of people, especially when you work at a rink for 15 years. And a lot of them had kids. Those kids are grown up now. I was up in Tignish this winter for a game and some of the kids were coming up to me. I didn't remember them because it has been years since you saw them.

No, I met a lot of people through the fishery, and Jorden and Harris are big names down there. He and his wife Annie had several children. His family resided at the lighthouse while he was its keeper. William died at the age of 57. Fifty-seven years old and enjoyed what he did, I'm sure of it. Lighthouse keeper. If you're a lighthouse keeper you definitely enjoyed it.

I know the lighthouse keepers that were up in Souris our way, they really enjoyed lighthouse keeping and they raised their family there and they had a big family. The MacIntosh family, the Osbornes – you remember the Osbornes. They had big families, they were raised right there at the lighthouse. I'll tell you in the wintertime up on that hill at the lighthouse it was pretty bleak in winter months, but they've done it. I know that house isn't there anymore. That house was actually moved and it's on MacPhee Road. It's a nice little home. People bought it and they renovated it all over, Eric Gillis and his wife Jean, and it's part of the heritage yet, on MacPhee Road they kept it.

Dying at the age of 57, it would be sad. Martin Jorden, he was born October 11<sup>th</sup>, 1860 and died April 19<sup>th</sup>, 1946. He was the third lighthouse keeper of the Cape Bear light. He married Ada Beck and they had several children including one set of twins. The family lived at the lighthouse while Martin Luther was its keeper.

I did have a chance to go down and tour the Cape Bear light. That was this past summer gone by. I believe we were down and met the – I'll call them the keepers there today because we called them the keepers back then. They are doing great things with it. It's a beautiful spot and they have great plans, and that's what I like is people with a plan. Not like this government. No plan. But these people are coming in and they have a plan for the Cape Bear light and it's great, and I hope it turns out for them.

I had a chance to go up the lighthouse, of course. I wouldn't go there unless I had the chance to go up because I love it. They have great pictures – they're going to do great things down there when they – I'm not sure if they're looking to buy more land, I'm not sure if they've got it or not because I haven't been back since. They did get their land, I'm getting the nod.

Their son Gordan died as a child and Clarence died of tuberculosis shortly before his son Jorden's death. He served as lighthouse keeper for 33 years. That's a long time.

It's always a pleasure anytime we get up and speak to our heritage on Prince Edward

Island. Cape Bear Lighthouse is one of our heritages on PEI. I knew when this motion came to light I wanted to second it because I have a little time under my belt as a fisherman and a seaman.

I know, Mr. Speaker, you would appreciate these speaking to this motion as you had quite some time under your belt as a fisherman and a seaman. I knew this motion would be close to your heart.

The Minister of Finance, I imagine he'll be getting up to speak to it because he grew up right beside the water.

Actually, it's hard to believe the name of my boat is the *Souris Light*. So, here I am up speaking on lighthouses across PEI. Here's a topic I could just go on and on about. I love these motions. I know, Mr. Speaker, you're sitting up there and you're bright-eyed there, so you're interested too. If you had a chance to get up and speak to this motion you'd love to do it yourself, Mr. Speaker.

It is a pleasure to get up and speak to this and I know there's more that want to get up and speak to it so I'll give more people a chance.

I'd just like everybody to support this motion. This is a great motion. It's about heritage here on PEI. When we're going back that far in history, this is great heritage. It's great for the tourism industry. I imagine the tourism minister will be up speaking on this and he'll give great reviews of the lighthouses on PEI. I know the environment minister, he was very interested, he's sitting up there, and he works with the watershed group so he'll be very interested.

Anyway, with that, I'm going to sit down and I just ask that everybody support this motion because it's a great motion for Prince Edward Island and the lighthouses right across Prince Edward Island.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Economic Development and Tourism.

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

I'm proud to stand in the House today and support this motion. Prince Edward Island is fortunate to have many well preserved lighthouses on its shores. Most recently I had the opportunity to be in West Point, on the weekend, actually. Just seeing that lighthouse and the tourism draw that it carries, with the restaurant and the accommodations, hopefully we can preserve more of them.

One real advocate that I've got to know over the years because I was involved in tourism is Carol Livingston who was a real advocate of heritage in historical lighthouses.

Part of my mom's family grew up in Cape Tryon which was the shores just off Tryon, and I became very familiar with that area. My father grew up in Nine Mile Creek, St. Peter's Island, and Governors Island. St. Peter's Island, for example, back in the 1800s had a fish processing plant on it and they utilized the lighthouses obviously quite a bit. St. Peter's Island had actually farms on it at one time. I think everybody will know this person, but Forbie Kennedy actually started – that's where he was born was in St. Peter's Island, and you can correct me if I'm wrong, but that's where his family came from. Anyway, there's lighthouses on both sides of the Island.

Cape Bear Lighthouse is a treasure among treasures because of its historical pedigree. Cape Bear was the first Canadian land station here. The SOS, as we heard from the – I almost said the HMS, but it's the RMS *Titanic* as she sank 153 kilometres south of (Indistinct).

Like many of our historic lighthouses, Cape Bear has been threatened by coastal erosion throughout its lifetime. The hon. member talked about how it was so hard to move some of these lighthouses and their wooden structures. Each year the land where the lighthouse now stands shrinks approximately .05 metres, 1.6 feet. This is due to the sedimentary soil that Prince Edward Island is famous for. We see it in our roads every spring. It was moved for the first time in 1946 and again last fall. The Cape Bear Lighthouse committee has done a fantastic job carrying and moving the lighthouse for its own safety.

Government has worked with the committee since its inception. It has been supported by the Employment Development Agency, which is part of Skills PEI, and the Department of Workforce and Advanced Learning. It provides funding for wages for student positions and a supervisor. The plan for the Cape Bear Lighthouse and Marconi station is a good one that will tell the lighthouse story for future generations to come. This will create a significant tourist destination and another historical significant stop among many of our provinces.

I'd once again like to express the government support for this motion. I'd also like to see in the near future maybe an app built for these historical heritage sites through our department of tourism that we can actually have visitors come and draw on the app to go to all these different areas and all these different lighthouses.

I also approached a gentleman not too long ago as minister of tourism for taking his drone and taking films of all the lighthouses on PEI and we're in the process of discussion. I think the Leader of the Third Party is a good friend of his that actually gave me the cue for that.

We wish the Cape Bear Lighthouse and Marconi Station Inc. and everyone involved with this effort the best of effort with their plans and remarkable site going forward.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

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

I just wanted to speak to this motion because lighthouses are the sort of structure that really do hit (Indistinct) at the heart of people. They're famous worldwide and there are people that travel the world just to see lighthouses. They're a big tourist attraction. It's really good to see a group – especially at the Cape Bear Lighthouse – who are so dedicated to making this not just a lighthouse that's preserved for historical purposes, but also a destination.

I just wanted to rise and say I really like the approach they're taking at the Cape Bear Lighthouse. That is trying to run it as a business, trying to get it to a point where it can support itself. I know that the Minister of Economic Development and Tourism would agree with that because there are so few public dollars to go around. I applaud that.

Of course, in District 18 Rustico-Emerald we have a lighthouse in North Rustico that I believe it was the federal department of fisheries looked after, and recently the funding was cut for it. They have an association together where they're trying to do a similar thing and hopefully they're working with other lighthouses on the Island. The North Rustico Lighthouse is being managed by the friends of North Shore communities. They've got a proposal that they're putting together. But again, their approach is have it play an important part – on their website it says in the art, history, industrial technology, and social studies program of the local schools, as well as playing a major role within tourism.

I really like that approach and I would like to ask government that they encourage that sort of an approach, and I'm sure you will. Maybe it's the idea of matching funding in early years. I know that you're big on business cases and picking winners that way. If they got a business case together, perhaps you could find some money for them. It wouldn't have to be huge funds.

Anyhow, I wanted to bring that up. Of course, I would invite everyone here to not only go to the Cape Bear Lighthouse – as a PC caucus we had a great tour of it last summer and it really is a neat spot. There's quite a lot of land associated with the lighthouse as well, so that's part of the reason they have big plans. But I would also encourage you to come to North Rustico and check out the lighthouse there. You'll see it's right in the town on the road out to the harbour and it's a fantastic place to walk along the clay road in the harbour and enjoy the lighthouse.

I wanted to stress how important lighthouses are to tourism in communities like North Rustico, where they put a lot of work into building their spot in PEI tourism. I know in District 18 Rustico-Emerald, of course, we

have Cavendish, which is a very well-known tourism destination. Sometimes people feel like they just want to see Cavendish succeed, but North Rustico is building their own brand with the seawalk park and other things, and they want to have an Acadian focus I believe as well. I think the lighthouse is going to be a big part of that. Hopefully the Minister of Economic Development and Tourism as well will have a chance to work with them on that and meet with them out there.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

It's an honour for me to stand today and talk a little bit about the motion we put forward. Again, it's in support of the Cape Bear Lighthouse and the Marconi Station as a national historic site.

As a few of the speakers have already alluded to, we did have the great pleasure of going up and meeting with some of the board members and touring this tremendous facility. The work that has already taken place with regards to the restoration of the site, the historical artifacts they have on display, is a testament to their dedication, and it's a testament to our history here on Prince Edward Island.

As it was earlier stated, too, the Cape Bear Lighthouse and Marconi Station has been a fixture in the southernmost tip of Prince Edward Island since 1881. Besides being just a beautiful part of our Island, of course it does have the designation of being the first Canadian station to receive a distress signal from the tragic events around April 14<sup>th</sup>, 1912, when unfortunately the great ship *Titanic* went down, and with it many lives with that disaster.

Now, the minister responsible for tourism got up and it was great to hear him speak with regards to history and how important it is here in Prince Edward Island. Prior to being elected in 2011 I did have the extreme honour of working in the tourism industry here in Prince Edward Island. To me, with my interaction with many tourists that came

to the Island, I always felt that the lighthouses in Prince Edward Island were just as iconic as the Anne of Green Gables house in Cavendish. I would continually have guests in our restaurants that I worked at or at the front desk come down and ask: What part of Prince Edward Island should I visit, or what part of Prince Edward Island should I tour? I would always say: You know what? Just drive out into the country and the first dirt road that you find, drive down it. They would ask: What am I going to find there? I would simply say: Beauty. They would say: What if we get lost? I said: You're on an island, you're on a small island, and you're not going to get lost. If you go too far you're going to hit water. Turn around and find another dirt road. Explore our beautiful Island. There are so many wonderful lighthouses across PEI from tip to tip.

One individual I had the pleasure of working with at the Confederation Centre for a number of years too, a gentleman by the name of John Flynn, he lives here in Charlottetown. He is a stage crew member at the Confederation Centre and he has a cottage over by Rocky Point. John would actually take his small dory back and forth in the day but then when the shows are out in the evening of course it is quite dark and he would use the lighthouses to go back and forth across the harbour to find his way. I mean, the hon. Member from Souris-Elmira talked in great detail with regards to fishermen and sailors and seamen utilizing the lights over the years, but there are many people that still do.

I just want to go back to the minister of tourism again. He talked about history and how important it is to look back and to celebrate our heritage and our history. I would like to remind him, as the Minister of Economic Development and Tourism here in Prince Edward Island, that earlier today he was talking about how we can't be looking back. We can't be getting into a time machine and going back, but the same minister just finished speaking on his feet saying how important it is to look back and to celebrate what happened. Possibly some of the things we talked about earlier today you wouldn't want to celebrate, but at least for half of his portfolio he does understand the importance of looking back and understanding and learning from that.

I, as well as all of the other speakers on this very important motion, encourage all members to unanimously support this motion. Again, it is in support of the Cape Bear Lighthouse and Marconi Station as a national historic site. We have had various other motions come to the floor in previous years such as the designation that we had talked about for Province House. That was successful, albeit we're not currently in that beautiful historic building, but we're in a very well-recreated Legislative Assembly here that some days I actually forget that we're not actually in Province House because the staff did such a wonderful job recreating the atmosphere for us.

Again, I just would like to say it's very important to look back, to celebrate our history, to preserve our history, and to also market our history because we know that many tourists come to Prince Edward Island. They are looking for the way of life here in Prince Edward Island, the mariner's way of life as well, and certainly the lighthouses that dot our Island coastlines are a significant part of that.

With that, I will just again urge everybody to support this motion.

Thank you.

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

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

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

It is a pleasure to rise in support of the Cape Bear Lighthouse and the Marconi Station as national historic sites. I thank the Member from Belfast-Murray River and the Member from Souris-Elmira for seconding this and bringing it forward.

I'm fortunate to come from a long and a rich history of family at sea. My great-grandfather was a captain and he in fact had a sailing ship, and he delivered lumber from Prince Edward Island down across the Eastern Seaboard, and in fact down into the Caribbean on a sailing ship. It was back in the 1800s. The tradition carried on. My father, in 1926, moved to Gloucester, Massachusetts, and sailed on the sailing ships that sailed from Gloucester to the Grand Banks and fished codfish. My father

remained there for four years working there during the fishing season. In the off-season he worked in the city of Boston as a busboy at a theatre.

We all recognize that the biggest contribution that was made – and why we remember that particular Marconi Station – was because of the Titanic. But all during WWII my father was in the navy and made constant trips back and forth from Halifax, Nova Scotia, to Europe back and forth constantly, and this particular Marconi Station was of great significance to those people in the navy during that period of time during WWII. So that particular station brings great significance to my family and my heritage.

I am really pleased to be able to stand and support this. When I first moved back to PEI back in 1990 I always owned a boat of some sort but I bought a fishing boat with no navigation gear. Just a compass and an engine and that was it. In the travels that I did over the first number of years I used all of those lighthouses to get my way around the Island, particularly in the evening sailing and night sailing, and thoroughly enjoyed it.

The Member from Souris-Elmira stated that the name of his boat was the *Souris Light*. Well, the first *Souris Light* was a boat my father had and the second *Souris Light* was a boat that my brother had that is now owned by the Member from Souris-Elmira so we have quite a strong relationship with that lighthouse in Souris.

I won't take up any more time of the House, but other than to say that, again, that lighthouse there is of quite significance. When my father came back after serving in the navy he had one of the very first 65-foot draggers that ever fished out of the town of Souris. I can assure you that, in those days, all those lighthouses were very important for those boats. When we refer to Souris as home of the dragger fleet, very significant fleet out of there, and my father was part of that back as early as 1949. So I'm very happy and pleased to be able to rise and speak to this.

One more thing. I was fortunate – and I'm glad that the Member from Souris-Elmira brought it up because it reminded me. He mentioned the Osborne family that ran the

lighthouse back in the 1950s and 1960s and up into the early 1970s. One summer when I was a teenager the Osborne family went on holidays for two weeks. I had the great, distinct pleasure of being a lighthouse keeper for two weeks, something that I don't have on my resumé but I'm still very proud of.

Again, I thank the members for bringing this forward and for seconding it. I'm really pleased to be able to stand up and speak to it.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

Ironic that I should follow the Minister of Finance because I, too, was a lighthouse keeper at one time in my life.

**Mr. Roach:** Beautiful.

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** I'll spare you the Scottish brogue today. But in my early days I grew up in a little fishing village in the Highlands of Scotland called Fortrose and my best friend was the lighthouse keeper's son. I often used to go down there. Beautiful white stone lighthouse right on the end of the point of the village where we lived. I remember, very well, polishing up the glass around the light back when it was still a functioning lighthouse. Very happy memories.

Anyway, so lighthouses play a really dear part in my life. I think the story of lighthouses illustrate, and are perhaps emblematic, of how the world changes. Lighthouses are now, of course, largely obsolete, at least from a practical point of view. Certainly, in terms of our heritage and culture and from a tourism point of view, they're extremely important. But practically they've become obsolete.

It's interesting that this was a Marconi lighthouse in that that was sort of the very beginning of the technologies that made lighthouses obsolete. Of course, Marconi

was the first wireless connections that were created. We had telephones and then satellites and now World Wide Web. With GPS in virtually every fishing vessel, and other vessels out in the sea, the need for lighthouses is really redundant.

So I find that interesting that the evolution of the world is sort of mirrored in how lighthouses have gone from some of the most important structures anywhere, whether it be in Scotland or Prince Edward Island or any other maritime area, to being places of cultural heritage interest.

It's also interesting that the world is changing in other ways and coastal erosion is dramatically affecting, always has done, lighthouses here.

I know in 1946 Cape Bear Lighthouse was moved a large distance. And it's, I believe, ready to be moved again. Am I right about that? No, it's not. It's just moved. Excuse me.

Pick any coastal community on Prince Edward Island and you'll find, not far from it, a lighthouse. That idea that the world is changing, not just in terms of communications and technology and use of buildings, but also physically the world is changing, I just find that fascinating. We have to always be in tune with that and be ready to evolve. But I do think it is important. It was stated by a couple of the members over there, I think it was from Rustico-Emerald, that we do need to look back, we do need to value our heritage.

When we come from a place of solidity like that, of structures and places, particularly our built heritage, then we can see our present situation better. I think we can also build – not quite literally, perhaps – but we can build for the future when we look back and take stock, and have placed value in that part of our cultural heritage.

Again, lighthouses are a beautiful part of the Prince Edward Island landscape and an important part of our history. It's a pleasure to stand up and support this motion today.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Speaker:** Is there anybody else who would like to speak to the motion?

The hon. Member from Georgetown-St. Peters.

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

It's a great honour to rise and support this motion. I have to say I've never worked in a lighthouse, so I'm breaking the trend of working in a lighthouse for the speakers, but I do know how integral and important they are to both the history of Prince Edward Island and perhaps to part of our future.

I, like the other members of our caucus, had an opportunity to tour the lighthouse down in Cape Bear. Probably spent some time down in that area when I was a younger fella. There used to be quite a few parties down in Beach Point when we were young and I remember seeing the lighthouse quite well during some of those late nights and early mornings.

It is a great idea for us to not only preserve history but to support things like this where there are groups trying to put themselves in a position to be recognized nationally. Obviously it's a lighthouse that has a great and storied history and it's a history that meshes well not only in Canada but worldwide. It's a story that can be well-attributed back that everybody's pretty well heard the story of the *Titanic*.

I know that over the years there have been a lot of groups around Prince Edward Island who have worked – particularly in their lighthouses, you hear lots of stories of community groups who have worked to preserve their lighthouses. I know there are some on a smaller scale where some of the work is just beginning.

I know when some of them were decommissioned back over the years that there were people in the area who tried to buy them and move them up the beach or closer to home so they could do something with them. I think there's one down in Georgetown Royalty that was actually moved up into a cottage rental development and turned into, like, a summer home. So it's still there.



It would have been the one where the ferry wharf was, the ferry that went between Georgetown and Newport, that lighthouse. It had become obsolete obviously because the ferry hadn't run there in quite a number of years. Though I do remember, when I was young, we used to do swimming lessons at Morrison's Beach and that lighthouse was very close to Morrison's Beach. We used to walk up and have a look at it up close. It was pretty well decommissioned at the time but it was still sitting there.

Where it's moved to now is probably, I don't know, a couple of miles up the beach. It would be very close to where my parent's summer home is. It's well-preserved and it's well-kept. It's good that somebody in that area saw fit to kind of take it and do something with it so that it would be there for future generations.

I think that's what this group down in Cape Bear has done very well. They've taken this project on, they're preserving it for future generations. With the way that the shore is eroding on Prince Edward Island in all areas, and in particular in that area, it's a good project to see that being moved and taken care of.

I think it's going to be more and more prevalent along the way, if you've watched any of those presentations on how the coast of Prince Edward Island is changing and how it will continue to change, so I think it's a really good motion. I do support it wholeheartedly. I support the work of the people in the Cape Bear group and what they're doing. They were wonderful the day that they were out there, showing us around and explaining the history of the area.

Of course, it's in my colleague's riding and I know that she is pulling hard for them to make sure that they get the implements they need to do the work they're trying to do. That's why we're here today talking about it.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I support this motion and I hope everyone in this House does.

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

**Speaker:** Do we have anybody else who would like to speak to the motion?

The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton.

**Mr. J. Brown:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I wasn't planning to rise to speak to this motion but I figured, after we had a number of stories regaling all sorts of interesting marine history, I would get up and add to that.

My family, two generations back, came from a long line of mariners. My father's father was a captain. Going back for a number of generations prior to that, actually on both sides, there were marine captains in the family. I have an uncle that rose to the rank of commander in the navy and a number of his children are also in the navy at various ranks.

In any event, my grandfather, as the story goes – and anybody that's interested could go to the Wood Islands Lighthouse and take this in – but at one point in time – and this must have been prior to the days of the Marconi System – but at one point in time a report came from the Wood Islands lighthouse that there was a ship in distress somewhere between Wood Islands and Nova Scotia and there were bright orange flames coming up off of it. My grandfather lived in the first house coming off the ferry to the east side of the road and this was later in the day. I believe the last ferry crossing had already taken place. He was alerted and they got in the ferry and they set out in the ferry to go see if they could help whoever might be on this ship that was afire or whatever the issue was.

They got out there and, as the legend goes, they sailed right through the area that the fire seemed to be coming from. We've heard since that there was a ghost ship that travelled that coast or whatever the case might have been. That is probably 50 years ago or so – perhaps longer ago than that – and that story has endured and, as I said, occupies a wall in the Wood Islands Lighthouse and is something that the tourists are fond to go see and hear about. That kind of accents the value of these historic lighthouses on Prince Edward Island. Obviously, it's a little bit more of a lighthearted or uplifting story than the Cape Bear light with the *Titanic*, but it is something that speaks to the history here on

Prince Edward Island and our relationship with the coast and the sea, and basically the strife that mariners have had to endure over the years, and particularly before technology came to be so prominent, basically, in that industry.

It's great to see that we're able to utilize those kinds of things to our advantage these days and to make that a part of our culture and to have those stories and those traditions endure for generations to come moving forward.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Speaker:** Are there any other members who would like to speak to the motion?

The hon. Member from West Royalty-Springvale.

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

I'd like to stick up for the West Point Lighthouse. (Indistinct) after the minister of health here who kept it from going out to sea in the last few years. He fought hard.

The West Point Lighthouse, it's been a special place for the residents of West Prince. It's a very distinctive lighthouse. It's the only lighthouse that has bands of black-white-black that run horizontal around its perimeter. Carol Livingston did an awful lot. She was in charge of the PEI Lighthouse Society and she was a driving force for the West Prince Lighthouse.

Scott Smith is now the manager up there and it's kind of developed into an inn and a museum and they've had a very successful year. They had 85% occupancy. The lighthouse has been very special, it's very special to my grandfather, and it's very special to my father. Sometimes I think of my Dad. I think of the West Point Lighthouse because my Dad owned all the land where Cedar Dunes Park is now. My grandfather had a lobster factory – he had a lobster factory in West Point and he also had a lobster factory in Miminegash.

Speaking about the sailing ship, the ghost ship, off of Miminegash, there's countless stories of people that have actually seen it

and heard the screams, whether it's some sort of an illusion or whatever, but those people had actually experienced – stopped their vehicles and watched the fire on this ship with the masts and everything burning.

But anyway, the West Point Lighthouse is very connected to my family and to the people of West Prince. These things are a beacon of our own lives of all the special times that I have had taking swimming lessons at West Point with the lighthouse in the background or just being there and being on the wharf or being there for the boat races. My father had a speed boat and the fishing boats would race and then they had a category for other special interests. There was always a picnic at the West Point Lighthouse, and to this day there's still a very popular parade on Canada Day and people come from all over the Island to West Point.

That lighthouse kind of anchors all these activities in these communities and all the thoughts of people all over the years. All the other lighthouses that are near and dear to every member in this House, that lighthouse is one of them that's near and dear to me and residents of West Prince.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for being allowed to speak on this.

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

**Speaker:** Do we have any other members who would like to speak to this motion?

If not, we'll revert to the mover, the hon. Member from Belfast-Murray River.

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

Just before I conclude, the hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton brought up the phantom ship. I'd like to share with everyone in the House here that I actually saw the phantom ship back in August when I was a very young teenager walking home from pipe band practice at Belfast school.

**Mr. Myers:** (Indistinct) pipe band.

**Ms. Compton:** Absolutely, the Scottish heritage. It's a huge part of the heritage of Prince Edward Island. I'll forewarn the House that we have a number of lighthouses

in our district including not only the Cape Bear, we have Point Prim and Wood Islands, to name just three that are working very hard to ensure that they remain as part of the heritage of the province. I have been working very diligently with each of the groups to try and ensure that the government is onside and we can do what we can as a government to support each and every one of them.

Having said that, I want to thank everyone who rose and spoke to the motion today. As some of my caucus members mentioned, we had the opportunity to go down and tour Cape Bear Lighthouse and Marconi Station. They have a very proactive board who want to be self-sustaining which I think is something each one of us picked up at the time, that they understand government cannot pay all the bills for everyone. They do need some help, probably immediately, or as quickly as we can. But in the long-term the plan is to be self-sustaining and to provide employment and tourism in the area.

On that note, I ask that each and every one of you support the motion.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Speaker:** This is a very interesting motion indeed.

Are we ready for the question?

**Some Hon. Members:** Yes.

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

**Speaker:** A recorded division has been requested.

Sergeant-at-Arms, ring the bell.

[The bells were rung]

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

**Mr. J. Brown:** Mr. Speaker, government members are ready for the vote.

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

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

**Mr. MacEwen:** Mr. Speaker, the opposition is ready for the vote.

**Speaker:** Thank you, Opposition Whip.

All those voting against the motion, please stand.

All those voting in favour of the motion, please stand.

**Clerk:** The hon. Minister of Workforce and Advanced Learning, the hon. Minister of Finance, the hon. Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy, the hon. Minister of Education, Early Learning and Culture, the hon. Minister of Family and Human Services, the hon. Member from West Royalty-Springvale, the hon. Member from Summerside-Wilmot, the hon. Minister of Health and Wellness, the hon. Minister of Economic Development and Tourism, the hon. Minister of Communities, Land and Environment, the hon. Member from Charlottetown-Lewis Point, the hon. Member from Evangeline-Miscouche, the hon. Leader of the Third Party, the hon. Member from Tignish-Palmer Road, the hon. Leader of the Opposition, the hon. Opposition House Leader, the hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock, the hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald, the hon. Member from Alberton-Roseville, the hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton, the hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid, the hon. Member from Belfast-Murray River, the hon. Member from Georgetown-St. Peters, and the hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

**Speaker:** This motion is passed and it is very unanimous.

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

**An Hon. Member:** Call the hour!

**Speaker:** The hour has been called.

The House will recess until 7:00 this evening.

**The Legislature recessed until 7:00 p.m.**

**Speaker:** Good evening, everybody.

Please be seated.

Orders of the Day (Government)

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

**Mr. Mitchell:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. Minister of Education, Early Learning and Culture, that the 1<sup>st</sup> order of the day be now read.

**Speaker:** Thank you.

Before we call on the hon. Minister of Workforce and Advanced Learning, I'd like to call on the hon. Member from Belfast-Murray River.

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

I beg your indulgence this evening, if I could please recognize some guests we have in the House with us, visitors from Norway. We have – excuse the pronunciation – Tor Leif Stokker, Georg Andal –

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

**Ms. Compton:** – Helge Asle Lundberg –

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

**Ms. Compton:** – and Bjorn Svendsen.

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

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

**Ms. Compton:** Oh, and my husband, I would be remiss to not mention my husband. Not from Norway. Russell Compton. He's been here a number of times.

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

**Ms. Compton:** Two of these gentlemen are with Servogear and two are with Scana and they're here on PEI. Their companies manufacture marine propulsion and control systems, they are global leaders in that business, and they're visiting Prince Edward Island with an interest in a global hub for marine hub.

Thank you very much for coming (Indistinct).

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

**Speaker:** Before we continue, hon. Minister of Communities, Land and Environment, I require that the order be read.

**Clerk:** Order No. 1, Adjourned debate on the draft address.

The debate had been adjourned by the hon. Minister of Workforce and Advanced Learning.

**Speaker:** I will now call on the hon. Minister of Workforce and Advanced Learning to continue with his address on the Speech From the Throne.

**Mr. R. Brown:** Mr. Speaker, we had a great debate yesterday in the opening of the throne speech and –

**Mr. Myers:** (Indistinct)

**Mr. R. Brown:** We'll hopefully be a little quieter today for you, sir.

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

**Mr. R. Brown:** Anyway, Mr. Speaker, I was just looking at the front cover of the throne speech.

I know last year there was a comment on the front cover of the throne speech. This one is Rocky Point. I know exactly where the spot is, it's right at the end of the wharf. As a young fellow I remember there used to be the Rocky Point ferry. It was an old fishing boat that the MacDonalds ran. Each and every day or each and every weekend all the kids from downtown Charlottetown would get on that ferry and go over to Rocky Point and spend the day. That was the way we spent our Saturdays and Sundays until it came to the legion picnic. That was a big delight of the year. My father used to run the legion picnic, and back then basically every kid showed up at the legion. I know those Currie boys used to show up quite a bit. They were always trying to get in line first for the hotdogs. Still are.

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

**Mr. R. Brown:** Anyway, we used to all jump on the back of the truck. Back then there was very little legislation around the transportation of kids. My father had a couple of old flatbed trucks and he put the

sideboards on it and all the kids would get on the back of the truck and we'd head out to Brackley for the day. We had a great day out there. Hundreds of kids there running around. It was a great treat to do it because a lot of the times the kids in the area, that was the first time they got to the beach in a year at that time.

**Ms. Biggar:** As bad as Charlottetown.

**Mr. R. Brown:** That's why I grew up, Mr. Speaker, swimming in the harbour of Charlottetown because – and it's still in great shape. I can still tell you, Eddie Rice is doing a great job in the city of Charlottetown keeping the harbour clean and working with the provincial government here in order to make sure that the separation of the sewer pipes are done properly. I can tell you, I still swim in the harbour quite a bit and it is extremely clean. I don't go where the outlet is. I go a couple of hundred yards up.

I want to also state that yesterday's debate, the opening of the debate, was great. I want to thank each and every member in this Legislature because I know for a fact – and I think each and every one of us –

**Mr. LaVie:** Facts (Indistinct).

**Mr. Myers:** (Indistinct).

**Mr. R. Brown:** Well, you can never – no matter the criticism we all come here to help the residents we represent and that's first and foremost on our minds. I know even from the opposition point of view, they're here to represent the people when we're here to govern. They have their job. I sat in their position for eight years and it's an extremely hard job. You got to figure out what questions you're going to ask during the day and what hot lines you're going to make up during the day. It's always about the phrase.

I remember I used to be sitting in the office and I'd be spending days trying to get a speech down to one line and to get the sound bite in. I remember in my first term Bobby Morrissey and them would come by and I'd be just working and working on it. I remember then-Premier Ghiz used to come by and work and work on it.

I feel sorry for the current opposition because with such a good government led by Wade MacLauchlan, I just sit back some –

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

**Mr. R. Brown:** Oh, sorry, the Premier.

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

**Mr. R. Brown:** That's not the first time I cleared the room.

But I must say I sit around sometimes and I think: What kind of criticism or what kind of one-liner could I come up with to such a great Premier? I'd have to spend weeks and months in coming up with it. I know the hard job that you are having. The lines are not too bad, but maybe you got to put a couple of more days into it before you get up. That's my advice to you.

It is a great throne speech and I know it's going to get unanimous consent from this House because anyone that would be voting against the future of Prince Edward Island is definitely voting against the future themselves. Why would you vote against such a wonderful speech, especially when it's well put together and it identifies a problem, first of all – and we all know what the problem is, it's population. It's about population and how we can grow our population.

As I said earlier, back in 1973, I'd say 1973 census, from Euston Street down or maybe up to the royalty mall, the census at that time said there was 16,000 people lived in this area. Now, you might get 25,000 in the greater Charlottetown area. That's including all of Charlottetown, Sherwood, Parkdale, West Royalty, East Royalty, and Stratford and Cornwall. You might get up to 50,000 there, but this is how many people lived in this area.

I remember getting up – like I said yesterday – on a Saturday morning. You'd be up in the morning early – well, your parents would get you up early in the morning – because when you had five boys in one room and four girls in another room she wanted you out of the house as quick as possible, all nine of us. We were up pretty early on a Saturday – like the Currie boys – and we'd be sent on our way out to the streets for the

rest of the day. Back then you wouldn't come home until 5:00 p.m. or 6:00 p.m. or 7:00 p.m.

**An Hon. Member:** Sounds like an Oliver Twist story (Indistinct).

**Mr. R. Brown:** No, that's the way it was in downtown Charlottetown. I don't know what it was for you rich kids over there in Stratford. You had it all over there in Stratford, you had it in Sherwood. Any time you came downtown Charlottetown we sent you right back packing.

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

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

**Mr. R. Brown:** Mr. Speaker, back then the average size of a family, I'd say, was eight or nine in downtown Charlottetown and it was great because it was a great place to grow up.

Back then I think people had confidence in the economy, confidence in their own abilities, and that's why we had big families. You just think about what happened leading up to that era, the baby boom era. Our parents mostly came from the Depression or they grew up in the Depression. The kids, the baby boomers, the fathers and the mothers of the baby boomers, went through a war, a Depression, a war. They still had confidence in their economy, they still had confidence in the country, and they built houses, they built neighbourhoods, they built schools, and they had families.

Today, I think current families are having a rough time, there's no doubt about it, and families are getting smaller. That's why our population is decreasing. We have a thousand people leaving the workforce each year than are entering the workforce, and that's a problem for PEI and that's a problem for Canada. We have to show confidence in our people and in our families that it's okay to have a large family or more. The government and the community has to support that family, I think that's been lacking over a number of years.

I want to thank the current federal government, I think they get. I think Prime Minister Justin Trudeau gets it when he talks

about the child benefit for families and raising the child benefit for families.

**An Hon. Member:** He's raising his own family.

**Mr. R. Brown:** Yeah, he knows how hard it is and he knows how hard it is to raise a family today. I think with the new child benefit that is showing to Canadian families that we have confidence in the economy, we have confidence in the family, so therefore we will be there to support you.

**Mr. Trivers:** Certainly pumping infrastructure into PEI (Indistinct) all \$3 million (Indistinct).

**Mr. R. Brown:** More is going to come, Mr. Speaker.

It's important that we show confidence in Islanders and we show confidence in each other because how do we expect the families and the Islanders to have confidence in themselves if we don't have confidence in them?

That's why our government and the government over the last number of years has put a large investment into families into Prince Edward Island. I remember when we first got elected in 2007 one of the first things we did was –

**An Hon. Member:** (Indistinct) a time machine.

**Mr. R. Brown:** – the first thing we did was to put kindergarten in the schools. We felt it was extremely important to educate and to educate. Not only that we put early childhood centres in place across Prince Edward Island for younger kids up to five years old. That's important, too, to show families that we have confidence in them. It's important that we continue to keep that confidence.

This speech is about growing our population, about having a retention strategy, a repatriation strategy, and a recruitment strategy. There's no doubt about it, over the last seven years Prince Edward Island has done extremely well in immigration. I would say the decision of 2008 to open up the doors of Prince Edward Island to immigration was a well-founded

decision. If it wasn't for that decision I would argue that Prince Edward Island would be in much worse shape today if the decision wasn't made to open up the door to immigration on Prince Edward Island.

Through that you talk about – some people talk about our current episode into refugee immigration for 200 to 300 immigrants. Some people were concerned about the number. I can tell you since 2007-2008 we brought in over 15,000 immigrants to Prince Edward Island, a phenomenal number. Through that immigration – because before that we were bringing in maybe 50 to 60 to 100 a year immigrants. We could never get the critical mass in order to make the community.

In order to bring in immigrants you have to make a community out of it. Just to think – when our Lebanese population here on Prince Edward Island, they started coming to Prince Edward Island in the early 1900s. One family, two families, and they built a community. It took them a long time to build a community, but they built a community. No one would doubt that the Lebanese community on Prince Edward Island is one of the best communities.

**Mr. Trivers:** How's the retention strategy lately?

**Mr. R. Brown:** I'll be telling you in a minute.

I grew up in downtown Charlottetown, as I said, and there were many corner stores in this area. The Lebanese community owned a lot of the corner stores. Their commitment to the community was phenomenal. I can attest to helping a lot of families in this area. I want to thank the Lebanese community for being a part of Prince Edward Island and for helping a number of families over a number of years.

The question was asked from the other side: How is our retention strategy? We are the only province in Atlantic Canada that saw a substantial increase in our population. We went from, I think, 37,000 people or 38,000 in 2006 – 138,000 –

**Mr. Trivers:** Province is more than Charlottetown.

**Mr. R. Brown:** – sorry, 138,000, yeah, 138,000 in 2007-2008 to over 146,000 people on Prince Edward Island.

You got to admit it's great. Talking to my brother, who teaches at Prince Street school, his opinion is it's great, the diversity. He coined the phrase that our diversity is our strength. If we do have diversity we have different cultures.

It's great when you see families from different cultures celebrate their cultures and we see it each and every year in Charlottetown, and it has moved to Montague and Summerside through DiverseCity done through the newcomers association.

They're wonderful events. I went to – and I know the Member from Charlottetown-Lewis Point attends a lot of these events and she can attest and back my statements up that they are well-attended events.

We've gone to a number of celebrations, swearing in of new Canadians. We were at one event I think – or I was at one event and 25 countries were represented that day getting sworn in as new residents of Charlottetown. I want to thank, also, all Islanders because it was through all our efforts that we were able to bring that much immigration to Prince Edward Island.

There's no doubt about it. It's pretty easy when it comes to saying that statement because Islanders are an open, accepting community when it comes to new people. I was extremely proud over the last 200 that – one Islander complained once, I think. But the majority, the vast, 98%, 99% of Islanders are supporting these efforts.

I went to Kensington one night. A group was working there bringing in a family. Phenomenal, the community got together, they're working, they have a house, they have a car ready for the new immigrants. They were all working together in order to see how they can accommodate a family and make them feel welcome.

What a way to start a new federal government was the commitment to bringing 25,000 Syrians in. What a way to start a new government. It sort of ignited Canada's worth in the world. It was not only

good for the immigrants, for the refugees coming in, it was good for Canadians because Canadians had a chance to show their gratitude and show their commitment and to get together as a community and to help a crisis that was occurring overseas.

Not unlike our fathers and our grandfathers and our forefathers and mothers when World War I and World War II came along. It was that kind of initiative that people needed help. Canadians came together on the birth of a new government and came together and welcomed 25,000 I'd say really hard-pressed individuals. A lot of them were in camps for two to three years. The university students had one of these tents set up out at the university and it's not much bigger than, I'd say, 10 by 10, and a whole family had to live in it. There was a little cooker – everything was in a box, about the size of that Swiffer box that's on the commercial when the guy goes to the front door. It was in that. The whole family's possessions and life was in that box. So it's a tremendous effort and I'm proud of Islanders.

But now it comes that we have a number of Islanders living away and we want these Islanders to come home to help grow the economy. The Premier has set out an aggressive objective of 150,000 people by 2017. That's 3,000 more. But I think we can do it. I think we can do it through repatriation of Islanders that are away.

Let's talk about some of the Islanders that are away. Nancy Key's sister. I was at a – Jennifer Doyle or – I may have her name wrong. Nancy Key's sister. Her sister works at Apple Computer. She was at Apple Computer since 1982. I had a great chat with her at university, at UPEI, a couple of months ago. Just to think, she was there when the iPhone, which changed the world, was invented. She was there and saw a phenomenal shift. An Islander.

I was also at a meeting at UPEI, and I forget the name. I was supposed to have them today, but Dr. Alaa – there was an Islander from out in rural PEI won the Nobel Prize.

**Mr. Aylward:** (Indistinct).

**Mr. R. Brown:** Nobel Prize. So, you know, Islanders do have brains. And –

**Mr. Aylward:** (Indistinct).

**Mr. R. Brown:** – they're spread out and we want them to come home to help us grow our economy.

Because I see, and the Premier sees, and the government sees, and I think each and every member in this House sees, the potential is there. The potential is there for Prince Edward Island to get better and bigger in our population base, if we choose that road. And we've chosen that road because it's the right road.

Now, some people would say: Why do you want to bring in more people? Why do you want to grow the population? Simple. The baby boomers, which is a lot of us in this room except for the member from Kensington maybe, we are baby boomers and we are becoming as of age, and we're leaving the workforce. A vast –

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

**Mr. R. Brown:** No. He's a millennium, I guess. Or something like that. I don't know. Or is that 21? I don't know what they are anymore.

**Ms. Biggar:** 21 Inc.

**Mr. R. Brown:** There are so many –

**Mr. Trivers:** A few others might not be baby boomers around here, too.

**An Hon. Member:** What are you the minister of, again?

**Mr. R. Brown:** Baby boomers. No, and it's important that we grow because the population is growing older and we have to replenish our workforce.

Now, there may be some Islanders think: Why do we want to bring in new people? We have a good thing going here. But when your workforce shrinks your economy shrinks, and when your economy shrinks the money coming into the government shrinks and choices have to be made and cuts have to be made. It's important that we continue to this, continue to grow. We're going to try to retain Islanders that are currently here.



I've had a pleasure to going to a number of events throughout Prince Edward Island over the last 10 months. I was down at Holland College there a few nights ago, an IT Garage where there was, I think, five or six groups of kids – no? No, still going. That's why you guys need better researchers over there. You've got to do some of the research yourself too. You just can't depend on –

**Mr. Myers:** There's Ronnie. There he is.

**Mr. R. Brown:** If you think I look like Ronnie McKinley you need new glasses.

**Mr. LaVie:** You sound like him.

**Mr. R. Brown:** I had the pleasure of seeing the different groups and their presentations. Again, phenomenal presentations, phenomenal ideas coming out of their groups. The one that won it was a group that was doing shift tracking and shift scheduling. It is a good product. It was a product that was going to assist restaurants and hotels in order to get people through their shifts. A person would be given a shift, they could rotate their shift as long as they had somebody else coming in. A complicated algorithm, but one done here on Prince Edward Island.

Other groups were working with new systems in terms of going around Charlottetown with virtual tours. They were working on a system that not only takes you on a tour, which I thought was a great idea when the cruise ships come in. You know, the cruise ships, most people have laptops or phones today, iPhones today, then could call up this app and do a tour of Charlottetown.

Not only that, they were working on whether or not you could take a picture of a building and the history of that building would come up on screen, and you'd see it right then and there what to do. I think it's phenomenal the talent that's here on Prince Edward Island.

Also, I had the pleasure to go to a number of Skills PEI programming. The Skills Canada program is in high schools and in colleges where young people, again, get together and come up with ideas and inventions on how to better serve Islanders or better serve the province in order to make a business out of it. I can say that there were 20 or 30 kids

that are going off to the Canadian championship in Moncton and I think we're going to be getting some more gold medals.

But anyone that says entrepreneurship is dead or lacking in Prince Edward Island, I can tell you, what I've seen over the last few months in the young people of Prince Edward Island and their abilities and their initiatives to invent things, and to come up with products, and not depend on government, is phenomenal on Prince Edward Island.

But that's a long history on Prince Edward Island. All you have to do is look at our agriculture community. A lot of innovative people coming out of the agriculture community. When you worked on a farm – I didn't work on a farm – you had to invent new products and new ideas, how to get things more efficient on your farm. We are a population of inventors, of innovators. You look at the fishermen, innovations that they have taken in terms of modernizing their boats and tracking their fish, and getting their lobsters back to shore, and working with the fish plants.

One notable Islander, one of many notable Islanders, is Donnie Allan. Donnie Allan made some of the greatest products North America has seen when it comes to farm machinery. Some of his innovations enabled Island farmers the production capacity, taking them out of just being subsistent, to being a profitable farm. Innovation does make the economy better, does increase GDP.

**Mr. Roach:** And he's not an engineer.

**Mr. R. Brown:** As the Minister of Finance just told me, he's not an engineer. But you go out to his plant today, and Trent Cousins has taken over the plant. Another young person that's innovative, has the plant reopened, has a number of good people working in the plant taking Donnie Allan's tradition and moving it forward.

You just have to go to Borden-Carleton, and the Member from Borden-Carleton just has to go down the street to one of the best, I'd say, exporting steel companies in North America, MacDougall Steel.

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

**Mr. Roach:** Good investment.

**Mr. Trivers:** Lot of government loans (Indistinct).

**Ms. Biggar:** Money well spent.

**Mr. Roach:** Good investment. Yes, good investment.

**Mr. R. Brown:** I know –

**Mr. Roach:** Excellent investment.

**Ms. Biggar:** Money well spent.

**Mr. R. Brown:** I know Ronnie MacDougall, a really good person.

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

**Mr. R. Brown:** Really good person. He is employing a tremendous amount of people. It's hard to believe – some people find this hard to believe – but 10 truckloads of steel a week leaves his plant for Alberta. Ten loads. People are saying: What does PEI have? Do you have a smelter there that makes steel? No? He has tremendous crews that are working in Alberta.

Now, we all understand that there is a downturn in Alberta. But he has a – and he'll tell you himself, the success of his business is because of his employees and because of the hard work they do and the tremendous amount of skill sets they have.

Then again, you just go up the road, another very innovative family at Trout River Industries. I know there was a bit of criticism there over the Premier trying to help the industry out there from the opposition in terms of helping them in their advertising. I visited that plant, too. Again they –

**Mr. LaVie:** Time to be quiet, you're putting us to sleep now (Indistinct).

**Mr. R. Brown:** What's that?

**Mr. LaVie:** (Indistinct)

**Mr. R. Brown:** The Leader of the Opposition sent me these notes. I have a little gift at the end of this speech, don't worry there, member.

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

**Mr. R. Brown:** I have a little gift for you and I think you'll like it. There's a lot of thought went into this gift. I hope you take heed when you are given it.

**Mr. Myers:** Remember he speaks after you.

**Mr. R. Brown:** Yeah. But again, Trout River Industries, amazing job they do – in terms of innovative truck loading and unloading system. The dump trucks started getting longer to 40 feet, 50 feet long. You're 50 feet in the air with a dump truck, they were very prone to tipping, in fact they almost tipped every time. This individual came – he took the Donnie Allan - I'm not saying, but I think that's what happened. He probably saw the potato unloaders and how they loaded the trucks in the fields and saw how that was being done and then took that concept and put it into a truck, a live bottom truck. What an innovative idea that came from an idea from a farmer here on Prince Edward Island.

That's what innovation is and innovation makes the economy grow. We have a new economy according to the World Economic Forum that's coming through. We had the Industrial Revolution with steam, we had the Industrial Revolution with electricity. We had the invention of the chip in 1969 and that was a revolution of digital computing. Nowadays, the new world order is big data and robotics and that's where it's going, it's going to robotics and big data. The World Economic Forum says that's where the economies are going, your population is going to have to be highly skilled in these areas to ensure your economy to grow and your people to grow.

That's one of the reasons through the help and assistance at UPEI and through the innovative thinking of an engineer out there, (Indistinct) MacEwen, who knew that this innovation was needed and that this was the going forward in innovation in the world, and that's why the government of Prince Edward Island has made a major investment in the sustainable engineering facility at UPEI. When you go to that facility, that facility is the facility of the future. That's where the future is. You go out there, you see young students inventing, thinking new

ideas, and thinking how to do things better and how to do things cheaper.

It's not necessarily cheaper to eliminate jobs, it's cheaper to grow the GDP. If we can grow the GDP and the per capita GDP, it's good for you. It's good for (Indistinct) – the people who have jobs.

I'm proud to say that our average wage is increasing on Prince Edward Island. We are closing the gap between our provinces. Our other provinces are running around 10-11% over the last three to four years. We're averaging about 12% over the same period, so we're closing the gap.

You close the gap by innovation. That's why with our fish plants owners and our fish plants they're seeing a depleted workforce. They have to innovate and they are innovating. They're thinking new ideas each and every day. They're thinking of new HR concepts.

I want to thank one particular individual and that's Francis Morrissey up in Tignish. I think Francis is one of the most innovation people when it comes to running a plant – and no, I'm not putting any other plant down, but most visits with Francis you go away with something new. We came away with something new.

I don't know why the model that they have in Tignish is a perfect co-op model. It works very efficiently. Francis and his crew come up with an idea – they work with the community in order for the workforce, they allow students to come in when they're available to work, and they reschedule their workload around that.

One of the ideas was to offer a student bursary or a student enticement to students to work at the fish plants. First of all, if anybody thinks of a fish plant, if you did a survey on the thing, it would be the lowest jobs anywhere. That's just the general concept that was out there. Francis and the industry got together and they've recognized that. We had a forum with our fish processors association a couple of weeks ago. I can tell you all the fish plants on Prince Edward Island are working extremely hard in order to accommodate their workforces.

Francis came up with a great idea. That to give this – if a student, a university, comes to the plant and spends the whole time at the plant, his plant, and now all plants on Prince Edward Island will contribute \$500 towards that student.

We've matched that \$500 from a provincial point of view in order to help the industry out. We have a target of 250 students and to date I think it's working pretty good. But the money will go to the student towards their going back to university. It's a great way to get young people to experience working in a fish plant. I'm told, if you look at the payroll records, it's a good job. It's a really good job because there are a tremendous amount of hours involved. If you're a young person who is looking to go back to advance your education I think it's a great opportunity.

I remember I went out west one time and worked on an oil rig. I'm telling you, in December 1972 in lower Alberta it was about 42 below and I was on top of the rig. I said: I think I'm going to go back to university where it's nice and warm. It's hard work in a fish plant but it pays off, I think, and I'm pretty happy with the fishing industry and fish processing industry coming together on this effort.

Last year the temporary foreign workers was virtually closed and innovative ideas had to come up. We have – and I want to thank the federal government for allowing us a one year reprieve on this. We understand it is a one year reprieve. I can understand why the federal government did it, why they closed the foreign temporary foreign workers down. When you see a person of 58 years old – and it was on the national news – getting fired from her job of 20 years at a pizza place replaced, and when you see the biggest bank in Canada, the Royal Bank of Canada, firing 40 to 50 people and replacing them – that was abuse of the system. I don't think the fishing industry or the agriculture industry abuses the system. We're going to work with the industry over the next year to make sure that these students go to work in the plants.

We also had a great initiative with the department of human services social assistance, and I'm pretty proud of this one with the minister, last year. There's the general comment that people on social

assistance don't want to work. That's absolutely incorrect. I've known a lot of individuals who, given the opportunity to work, they will work. We went ahead, we put, I think, 30 to work. I think we're up to close to 20 retaining their jobs and the processing companies had their challenges, but they accommodated, so it's great.

Also, we invested in Holland College, investment in higher education. Holland College has the new CASP building down on Kent Street. It's great to have it in my district. It's producing good, trained individuals. It's important that we train. It's vitally important today more so than other years to have a piece of paper. The good old days when you knew somebody that knew somebody that would get you a job at some plant or someplace, those days are over. You have to have Red Seal or you have to have a certificate in order to get into the workforce today. I got to commend the staff at Holland College for their hard work in terms of accommodating these skills and accommodating our young people.

The future of Prince Edward Island is in our young people. It has to be in our young people. We have to provide a young person every opportunity to stay here on Prince Edward Island, to work in Prince Edward Island, and to grow Prince Edward Island. I just see the Pages in the room, I see a lot of potential, I see a lot of good efforts, I see a bright future in Prince Edward Island with you.

Thank you.

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

**Mr. R. Brown:** You can see that in every and any school in Prince Edward Island.

Anyway, I'm going to wrap up and I want to thank the opposition again.

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

**Mr. R. Brown:** Oh, no, I just want to get a couple of more kicks in at them. I mean talks (Indistinct).

Again, like I said earlier, it's a hard job and I wouldn't want your job against (Indistinct) the Premier. With this Premier I don't know. I'd pack it in and come over and join us.

That's what I would do if I were you guys after reading this throne speech. Go back to your caucus, think about it, read this speech again, and say: Look, why not be on the team that's looking forward and not looking backward?

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

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

**Mr. R. Brown:** No, Mr. Speaker, this is part of my speech.

There's a cartoon set called Peanuts with Charlie Brown.

**Mr. LaVie:** Listen, this is serious business.

**Mr. R. Brown:** I know, this is a serious discussion. You'll get it by the end of it.

**Mr. LaVie:** (Indistinct)

**Mr. R. Brown:** Yeah. And Lucy sets up her booth, psychiatric help, and Charlie Brown went to the booth and asked her – he was going on a cruise. Charlie said: You know, what do you think?

**Mr. Myers:** (Indistinct).

**Mr. R. Brown:** No, on the Tory dory. Charlie asked her about life and how do you engage your life and how do you (Indistinct). Charlie asked the question and Lucy says: Charlie, have you ever been on a cruise ship? A passenger opens up the deck chairs so they can sit in the sun and Lucy then says: Charlie, some people place their deck chairs facing the rear of the ship so they can see what happened and where they've been. Other people face their chairs forward, they want to see where they're going. Then Lucy said to Charlie: On the cruise ship of life, Charlie Brown, which way is your deck chair facing? Charlie is the opposition. Charlie says: I've never been able to get the chair unfolded.

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

**Mr. R. Brown:** This is like the opposition, Mr. Speaker.

They don't know if they're looking forward or they're looking backwards. If you need help unfolding that deck chair –

**Mr. Myers:** Just ask Snoopy over there.

**Mr. R. Brown:** – read the throne speech, and if you need some assistance we'll help you out unfolding that deck chair and we'll make you look forward.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** That's a hard act to follow, Richard.

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

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** Oh, hon. member, excuse me.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

*Monsieur le Président, je suis convaincu que cette session de l'Assemblée législative sera constructive dans l'intérêt de notre province et aussi de notre population et je suis certain que votre dévouement et votre bienveillance sauront nous guider tout au long de cette session parlementaire.*

Mr. Speaker, I am confident that this legislative session will be constructive for both our province and for all Islanders, and I am sure that your dedication and your wisdom and kindness will guide us through this parliamentary session.

I also want to pay tribute to our Lieutenant Governor, the Honourable Frank Lewis, and to our Premier, the Honourable Wade MacLauchlan, and to all members of this House.

*Je remercie le sergent d'armes, le greffier, le greffier adjoint, les commissionnaires et tout le personnel de l'Assemblée législative qui fournissent un travail exceptionnel afin d'assurer le meilleur fonctionnement possible des travaux parlementaires.*

I also want to thank the Sergeant-at-Arms, the Clerk, the Deputy Clerk, the commissionnaires and all the legislative staff who do an exceptional job to ensure that our parliament functions well.

*Merci beaucoup.* Thank you so much.

With recent revelations about offshore tax havens in the so-called Panama papers and examples of world-wide political dishonesty and corruption, it's easy to imagine that governments everywhere are fraudulent and all politicians liars. Faith in our leaders is one critical element of a cohesive and a functional society. These latest disclosures further erode public trust.

Here on Prince Edward Island it is absolutely essential that we govern with the transparency and the openness repeatedly promised both prior to and in this throne speech.

It is my belief that our traditional values don't coincide with a wider global trend towards the undiluted desire for money and the attendant moral problems that flow from that, but we must remain vigilant and be on constant guard that our government reflect the honest industry and the concern for our neighbours for which Islanders are renowned.

It is my intention in my response to the throne speech to follow the layout of the speech and to at all times attempt to strike a balance between being fair and open-minded and also being questioning and critical. This government has outlined its vision, albeit a fairly vague one. In criticizing it I think it's important that we don't do just that, that we don't simply denounce and be reproachful, but that we also articulate an alternative and a clearer vision. I shall welcome aspects of the speech where I see promise and where there are ideas in alignment with our vision in Prince Edward Island and I shall point at aspects where I see potential problems or an approach to me that just doesn't seem to make sense.

The throne speech opened with a section called Focusing on our People. It's encouraging to see the government will create a long-term strategy to maintain an attempt to expand our skilled workforce. The throne speech gives a few details on how we will entice people to come to Prince Edward Island and the recruiting and repatriation aspects of the strategy. I just hope that these efforts don't focus too much on marketing because surely we don't need to market the Island to Islanders.

We need more action on the retention phase. If we are to attract new Islanders and keep them here we need to offer them quality services. We need to make PEI not just a convenient place for them to arrive, but an attractive community in which they will stay. Previous research suggests that good jobs and quality of life are the key factors in doing this, so I suggest that we need to put our efforts in this area.

Over the last number of years, we have seen an increase in the number of skilled jobs on Prince Edward Island. We hear a lot about the growth of the aerospace, the biotech, and IT sectors, which is great.

But the question of quality of life and the well-being of our Islanders are less clearly understood. That is where my bill, the *Well-being Measurement Act*, will help, by increasing our understanding of the factors that affect the quality of Islanders, and it will help us to set policy goals to improve that.

Better quality of life means better retention, more Islanders choosing to stay on PEI. Our greatest competitive advantage is our quality of life. Having legislation which clearly states that will demonstrate to others that here on Prince Edward Island we care about more than just material prosperity, that we are building a society where we hold social cohesion, environmental stewardship, and economic health in equal regard.

There are a growing number of new farmers arriving on Prince Edward Island looking for ways of living that are in tune with their values of simplicity and stewardship. I believe that doing things on a smaller scale, whether that be farming and fishing, providing education and health care services, or doing economic development, that doing that on a small scale is what will separate us from an increasingly impersonal and unsustainable pattern of global economic development.

I believe the key to rejuvenating our rural communities lies in making PEI a place that resonates with those values and which will attract families who want to live a healthy and wholesome life. But, once again, we need to provide the services in rural Prince Edward Island in order to attract and, particularly, to retain them: excellent

schools, medical care, recreational facilities, and modern connectivity.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to pause.

I should have done this at the beginning of my speech and recognized a couple of guests here. Ms. Lynne Lund, the deputy leader of the Green Party of Prince Edward Island.

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

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** Sitting behind her, Jeff Matheson.

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

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** And behind me, in the back here, John MacLean. Nice to see you all here.

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

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

There are other positive points in this section. Helping to retain more international students is a great goal, but they will only stay here if there are opportunities for them and a good quality of life.

The population target – and the hon. minister spoke about this a couple minutes ago. I'm going to contend a couple of the things that you said there, hon. member. The population target of 150,000 people by 2017 is, if you ask me, a little bit bizarre considering that we are close to that figure already and that there's not a whole lot that we can do in a single year to affect population growth. Indeed, net migration to PEI sits around 1,500 people annually and we're already at a population of 147,000. This announcement is really just a statement of the inevitable. You don't need a crystal ball or a brilliant prognostication to come up with that.

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

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

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** It seems to me that the government is more interested in the pretty symmetry of the number: it's 150,000 people on the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our country.

But I, myself, am more interested in learning about government's long-term strategy for population. There are some important discussions to be had about how much growth Prince Edward Island can sustain. How many people can this Island really support?

We have accepted, without question, for many decades that growth is good, that bigger is better. I talked last year, in my response to the throne speech, that we are at a point in human history where we have to start questioning that assumption. Bigger is not necessarily better. Right, hon. member? Small, sometimes, is great.

**Ms. Biggar:** I'm pretty small.

**An Hon. Member:** I'm small.

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** That's what I meant.

Bigger is not necessarily better. Indeed –

**An Hon. Member:** Bigger.

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** Yes. Bigger with an 'e' is not necessarily better.

I've lost my train now.

Bigger is not necessarily better. Indeed, further growth of certain kinds may actually be overtly destructive. Perhaps the biggest challenge facing humanity today is to reconcile our presence on a finite planet with our habit of demanding ongoing growth in our global economy.

Interestingly, the throne speech contains the sentence, and I quote: "Global and national discussions have pointed to the connection between environmental sustainability and economic growth." Indeed, there have been conversations in that regard. Many of them. And many of those discussions have concluded that those two are incompatible.

For decades many eminent economists have been warning governments that continued reliance on economic growth as a panacea for financial challenges is a really bad idea. I realize that this is an unusual, this is a new thought to many of the members in this room. How could economic growth possibly be a problem? But we're at the point now where the damages caused by further

economic growth are actually creating more problems than they are solving.

Indeed, there are numerous reports telling us that striving for further economic growth is actually impoverishing not only our generation, but particularly those generations who will follow us and who will be tasked with cleaning up the social, the economic, and the environmental messes that we are currently creating.

**Mr. Trivers:** Depends on the growth.

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** That's true. It is entirely – I'm going to talk about that.

It is entirely possible to stimulate further economic growth. We can do that by drawing down resources, for example, or by putting ourselves further in debt. But the costs associated with that may well exceed the benefits that we derive.

Continuing to defer to growth in order to solve problems is attractive politically because it allows governments to ignore the thorny issues of limits and of sharing.

A truly sustainable world will be one where all human needs are met and where those critical supporting elements that sustain societies – food, water, shelter, soil, clothing, security – all of those are properly protected.

There is one number which clearly illuminates the profound challenges that we face. If all people in the world were to live to the same standard of prosperity that we do in North America, living in houses like ours, driving the same number of cars per capita, eating the same sort of diet that we enjoy in North America, having closets full of unused clothes – if all the world lived like we do, it would require four more planet earths to supply everything to do that. Clearly an impossibility.

So what do we do? Some other plan must emerge other than the unthinking, misguided adherence to growth everlasting.

We must open a proper discussion about limits to growth and of global equity. This is not just to address the simmering problems associated with perpetual poverty in large parts of the world, but it is a security issue

for every single one of us living in areas that have amassed more than our fair share of global wealth.

But the good news is that we don't need more economic growth of the conventional kind to provide us with meaningful and content lives. Indeed, we all know that more stuff does not make you happier. Island traditions are rooted in community values and material modesty. We know that happiness can be grasped without striving to great affluence or to outdo our neighbours. To a larger extent than most of North America, Islanders have not bought into that value system and joined the rat race. It is one of the things that makes PEI so lovely and it is the main reason that my family moved here 15 years ago.

This place is not like the rest of the world. In this uniqueness lies our strength and lies the allure of Prince Edward Island. The more we try to emulate everywhere else, the more we lose what matters most to Islanders.

Our generation can still choose a different path, one that is best suited to our unique attributes. We have the gift of jurisdiction. We are an island. We have good soil, and rainfall and weather patterns that, it appears, in the face of global change, will allow us to continue to be the Garden of the Gulf long into the future. We have a culture that respects the land and the knowledge to develop a thriving, sustainable economy. In short, we can choose the future we prefer, one that will provide for Islanders and which will protect the precious things that make PEI so special.

Bigger isn't always better. Sometimes bigger is just bigger, and on our little Island, which as the throne speech so astutely points out, is finite and shrinking, we have the distinct blessing of being able to adapt to a changing world and a way that preserves both our heritage and the opportunities and dreams of our children.

The new [www.workpei.ca](http://www.workpei.ca) website is a decent idea, or perhaps it would have been 10 years ago, but I'm not sure whether it addresses the real problem.

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

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

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** Young people know how to find job listings online. The reason they're not moving back is not because they are unable to navigate the web and find jobs that they're qualified to do. It's because of a chronic lack of opportunities here on the Island.

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

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** I would suggest that we need to have a single point of contact for both new arrivals and established Islanders who need help finding work. Further, I suggest that in our impersonal, digitized world, rather than being a new website or an app, that this single point of contact be a real human being, a person with Skills Canada, or people with Skills Canada, I should say, serving as coordinators or focal points of information, a place where people can go to get help accessing government services whether they are seeking work, looking to start a business or wondering how to get a family doctor.

Finding the right contact to access government can be an incredibly frustrating experience and we absolutely have to improve that for people. A personable, skillful single point of contact to access government services which would reflect the friendly and welcoming nature of Prince Edward Island be a huge step in that direction.

There's not a whole lot new in the section entitled Enhancing the Workforce. Supporting the creation of 1,000 summer jobs for students sounds really great, but it also raises some questions. Are these new jobs? How much of an increase is that from what we are doing already? How many of these jobs are coming from federal programs? This is nonetheless of course a good way to support both young Islanders and employers, especially in the not-for-profit sector. Programs to encourage young Islanders into farming and fishing are also great, and we talked about that a little bit this morning, twice, and we should keep these up, but in order to ensure the long-term success of these programs we also need to make sure that we support the modernization of these sectors, something which seems to be completely omitted from the throne speech.



We have to ensure that we are encouraging young Islanders into sectors that are full of opportunities. Once again I find myself talking about creating quality services in rural Prince Edward Island in order to attract these new farmers and fishers and thus to revitalize our rural communities. There is a market out there for energetic, motivated people looking for exactly what we could offer here on Prince Edward Island. We simply need to make a commitment to focus on quality of life, tell the world that we are doing that, and these people will find us.

On encouraging education and entrepreneurship, government has correctly identified education as a key to long-term prosperity. I am encouraged by many of the actions so far in this area, especially the greater emphasis on community engagement and the commitment to frontline services. It's too early yet to evaluate the success of the new approach to engagement, but there is certainly great opportunity here for government to listen and learn from Islanders and to become more responsive to the needs and concerns of students, of parents, of teachers and of the greater community.

This new approach has the potential to lead to better student achievement, a more efficient bureaucracy, a more inclusive approach which is able to better respond to the individual needs of Island students and a more grassroots decision-making process through engagement. Consulting with teachers here regularly is a critical element of this engagement process. The demands on our teachers are enormous and they are the ones who are most acutely aware of the challenges in our classrooms and therefore the people who best know what supports are needed.

As with so many aspects of governance –

**An Hon. Member:** Cheers.

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** Cheers.

As with so many aspects of governance, we have tremendous opportunities on Prince Edward Island, due to our size and flexibility, to be bold and to strike out in a unique and innovative path.

In education, I personally am intrigued by the possibilities of creating smaller-scale human – you might say human-scale schools in our rural areas. For a very long time now we have been closing smaller schools and busing Island children to larger centres. I say it is time that Island kids spend less time on buses and more time in their communities, and I'm not talking about a return to the days of the one-room schoolhouses. But, I am suggesting that the needs of our Island students can be equally, if not better, met in smaller schools in their own communities.

The potential spinoffs from such a change and direction would be many. Time in transit becomes time at home, cost saving in busing, healthier children, and smaller schools becoming once again the catalyst for revitalizing rural communities. I think it is good to see government introduce coding into the curriculum which will help prepare young Islanders to better understand the increasingly digital society in which we live. I support this initiative, but I have to ask: Will this come at the expense of other subjects? The curriculum is already pretty crammed. Hopefully the department can find the right balance and make coding fit.

Aside from the benefits to the students, this could also greatly help the teachers who will develop new skills themselves that can then be used in other aspects of their jobs. Professional development will be critical here and I look forward to hearing about how the education department develops these new skills with our Island teachers. I'm really glad to see a commitment to multiyear funding for our post-secondary institutions.

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

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** I would encourage government to ensure that this funding is enough to allow UPEI in particular to stop making cuts. How can we be strengthening our post-secondary institutions when we are forcing them to make cuts?

On the entrepreneurship side, we see a new start-up zone to help develop new businesses. I'm encouraged that government looked to see what models worked well in other jurisdictions. That's always a good practice. The throne speech indicates that this start-up zone will be initially, and I

quote, “in Charlottetown,” implying that if that works it could be moved to other parts of the Island. I hope government will have a serious look at how this or something similar could be used in rural communities where there is a greater need for economic development.

Again, I want to promote small-scale development here, whether that be an agriculture, education, health care or economic development. I mentioned this this morning: PEI will do so much better with multiple modest amounts of seed capital, developing numerous home-grown small businesses, rather than competing with other jurisdictions for the big fish. I think I said this morning when cash-strapped small provinces like ours court big international players we get out-manuevered and taxpayers most often get burned.

We also believe in providing the necessary supports for young entrepreneurs to start businesses and succeed on Prince Edward Island. However, we note that there is little information on how the government will provide these young entrepreneurs with access to capital, but it remains unclear whether government intends to directly finance these start-ups through IIDF or through Innovation PEI or if government is willing to provide access to cash and expertise and therefore help entrepreneurs connect with early-stage investors or venture capitalists, or even to attract them to the Island.

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

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** All of the above. On improving health and wellness, I want to start my discussion on health and wellness by thanking the government for finally allowing a women’s reproductive health care centre to be established on PEI.

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

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** I’m also really glad to see that a new mental health and addictions strategy will finally be coming this year. This has been a glaring hole in our health care system for too long.

Having viewed the document which represents the fruit of three years of work I’m surprised that it has taken that long to

produce, but I remain optimistic that it will lead to bold and strong actions to improve the well-being of Islanders. Here again, I believe we have an opportunity to be leaders in the delivery of innovative services. Mental illness is a complex, multi-faceted spectrum of problems and only when we understand it as such, as bio-psychosocial, when we understand the complexity of it, will we develop the individualized approaches that will start to treat people appropriately and, more importantly, keep them well.

Speaking of well-being, the throne speech talks about having a, and I quote, “...conversation about a strategy to reduce poverty...,” including, with the federal government, to again, and I quote, “...consider the best means...” to support Islanders.

There’s a lot of ambiguity in those statements and I think I’d like to break that down a bit. On the surface it sounds like we might be talking about something potentially wide-ranging and innovative, something like, perhaps, a universal basic income in which the federal government has expressed significant interest recently.

I’ve previously suggested in this House using Prince Edward Island as a pilot project for universal basic income, and government has indicated that there has been some discussion with our federal partners on that possibility. I’m hoping to hear more news on this in the near future.

Rather than poverty reduction as a goal touted in the throne speech, a universal basic income could lead to poverty eradication altogether with all the attendant benefits that that would bring. Never mind the strictly humanitarian benefits of getting rid of poverty, a universal basic income would reduce administration, health, and criminal justice costs, and free up Islanders to live fulfilling lives and contribute more fully to their communities.

However, that sort of vision is unfortunately absent in the throne speech and the wording of the speech is vague and noncommittal.

Why have a conversation about creating a poverty reduction strategy instead of simply doing it? It sounds almost as if government

is not sure whether poverty reduction strategy is indeed a good idea.

After the most recent household food insecurity report in Canada, just released a couple of days ago, 22% of children on Prince Edward Island live in food insecure households. If that's not a clear enough indication that we need comprehensive poverty reduction strategies on PEI I don't know what is. Just last week a group of friends in my district became so concerned about food insecurity in their neighbourhood that they've started a process of establishing a community food bank.

This is one of many initiatives at the community level and it reflects one of the hallmarks of Prince Edward Island life, that we tend to care deeply about our fellow Islanders, about our neighbours. I hope that this government will emulate the work of these volunteer groups who provide so much of the glue that maintains our communities and to do something to substantially help out our most vulnerable neighbours. While I acknowledge that government is open to at least talking about poverty reduction, I would have liked to have seen a much stronger clearer commitment here.

The throne speech correctly recognizes that early childhood education is, and again I quote, "...the foundation of a prosperous future." While PEI might be doing a good job on the national scale there are still ways to improve.

Government has indicated that frontline workers are a priority in education. A look at the Job Bank shows that wages for early childhood educators range from minimum wage to an upper level of about \$16 an hour. That to me is not an indication of a highly valued profession. We need to value and invest in these workers in whom we entrust our young children's well-being.

I spoke last year in this House about a single psychiatrist who made over \$1 million. If indeed that million dollars had been put in frontline full-time early childhood educators paid at their highest rate of pay we could have had over 40 of them. It seems clear to me that we have a warped sense of value here and that these people who are entrusted with the care of young Islanders deserve better.

Overall, the government's approach to helping young children and low-income Islanders seems to defer to the federal government. We should absolutely work with our federal counterparts, I get that, but there's plenty of room for us here to take our own initiative and deal with some of our own issues.

On growing our economy. On Prince Edward Island we have the foundations on which to build a successful economy based on the traditional strengths of farming, fishing, arts and culture, and tourism. A strong local economy is built with a diversity of vibrant small businesses. It is increasingly self-reliant and it is protected against the growing global instabilities.

The growing our economy section of this throne speech might well have been called the 'My Government will continue' section. Government is evidently happy with the direction of our economy and content with its current programs. I would say that here on Prince Edward Island our situation is okay. We're not a disaster, but our economy is also not nearly as strong and resilient as it could and should be.

The throne speech lists a number of ways which Prince Edward Island was an economic leader in 2015. These are essentially per capita economic indicators, which may suggest that the overall economy is working, but it says nothing about how evenly these benefits are divided. How does Prince Edward Island compare with the rest of Canada, for example, in terms of inequality?

We need to measure the affects of the economy on the lives of Islanders in the ways that matter, ways that are more closely related to our quality of life.

The only part here with anything new, actually, is the initiative to reduce red tape, which is apparently widely applauded, which is interesting given that it hasn't even been implemented. There's a certain room for improvement in this area for sure, and even though there is no commitment here for actual action I do hope that the government keeps up its efforts in this area and that it leads to concrete improvements.

Renewing infrastructure. On infrastructure the throne speech sets transportation and energy as top concerns. These are indeed fine priorities, though the details are another story.

Government wants to build transportation infrastructure for exports, which is rather imprecise. I'm not sure what that means. Does it mean roads, airports, warehouses or something else? I don't know.

**Mr. LaVie:** Boats.

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** We have all of these. I'm not sure what else is needed to get our products to export markets. Further details will no doubt emerge when the budget is presented.

Hopefully that will include a commitment to Island-wide public transit, which is much needed not only for moving Islanders around, rural Islanders in particular, but also fighting climate change and poverty.

On energy government will, and again I quote, "...emphasize..." "...work on..." and "...work with..." but apparently will not make any firm commitments. We are slowly moving in the right direction and seeing nice words, but it's time that we take some firm action to transition the Island to clean energy.

I'm nonetheless happy to see that the government has been willing to consider some Green ideas on energy policy, reflecting a more collaborative approach in this Legislature. And I thank them, in particular, in heeding our advice and dropping the proposed CT4 diesel generator in favour of renewables. I hope we never see another proposal like that again.

Thank you.

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

**Mr. LaVie:** Thank the opposition.

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** The next section of the throne speech was titled Ensuring a Sustainable Environment.

**Mr. R. Brown:** That was a good section.

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** They were all good sections, were they not? In some people's opinion.

Other than offering to sit at the table to discuss climate change with other provinces or the federal government, there is no commitment from our government to offer any initiative or to invest in real solutions to address climate change that would benefit all Islanders. There's also no initiative to address the connection between environmental sustainability and economic health at the provincial level. There is no commitment on the government's part to provide incentives and programs or even the necessary environment – again I use quotations – to invest in green start ups or businesses adopting environmentally friendly practices.

I appreciate the government's intent to strengthen our communities, but it is unclear from this throne speech what the vision of government is. There is no indication of how the government intends to work with local communities to achieve a diverse, sustainable, and vibrant economy. I suggest the government clarify what concrete measures the government will take to sustain strong, vibrant communities where people can live and work in quality jobs that provide fair wages. We need an environment in which local businesses and industries can thrive.

When it comes to green energy, we understand that the emphasis will be placed on, and again I quote, "...better harness renewable capacity and potential." To promote energy conservation at a consumer level and make better use of our resources our position is to encourage the government to further invest in innovative technologies to improve environment performance, create employment, and limit our impact on air, land, and water.

On Spending Public Funds Carefully. I agree that there's a need to spend public funds carefully. There is a need to assess performance in order to achieve balance in the application of public funds and perhaps contain the demand for some services.

I believe measuring the outcomes of government programs – something my colleagues to my left here were talking

about today – and deliverables is important to good management. It's critical to good management, to public accountability and to transparency, and to internal organizational learning and development. I even suggest that the government should design a government-wide performance reporting framework that uses very simple and relevant information, and key indicators, capable of signalling to the Legislature, to the government, and to all Islanders whether programs deliver intended results and if value for money is being attained.

I encourage government's efforts to improve transparency and accountability to the Legislature and to put measures in place so that the priorities become easier to achieve through accountable management practices.

I will be encouraging the government to integrate, produce, and present performance information into the budget process and in budget documents. Performance information can be a part of the annual budget cycle and feed into decision making at different levels and stages of the process. This will put a greater emphasis on planning and on setting the objectives in order to improve decision making. By providing better and more concrete information on the performance of government operations, we will improve expenditure control and public sector management.

On modernizing governance I appreciate the government's consideration of integrity, transparency, and ethics in government operations and in seeking new ways of governing, engaging partners, and delivering services.

There is no indication, however, of future changes to the conflict of interest regulations. Currently, only Members of the Legislative Assembly are able to ask the commissioner's opinion on whether an MLA may be in contravention of the *Conflict of Interest Act*. We believe that anybody from the public should be able to file a complaint with allegations of conflict of interest involving an MLA. If the complaint is valid, the commissioner should have the power to conduct an inquiry regardless of the source of the complaint.

The future introduction of the new lobbyist registration act raises, for me, a lot of

questions in terms of the design and implementation. What does it mean in the context of Prince Edward Island, I wonder. I assume that what the government really means, really wants to do, is to reward those who are honourable and to sanction those who are not. But PEI is so small and access to elected officials so effortless and so ubiquitous – which of course is a good thing, don't get me wrong, but that's the reality that we all face here. So I wonder how government plans to define lobbying and determine who should be registered as a lobbyist.

On open data. On the issue of open government and the practice of open data, we believe in using technology to create an open, accountable, participatory, and innovative government. The government is taking a first step towards taking a data-driven accountable and transparent culture in the public sector. However, developing policy is not enough. Government should implement the legal and regulatory framework to ensure the coherent use of digital technologies across all of government. Any actions must also reflect a risk management, of course, approach to address digital security and privacy issues.

In the section on building strong communities, as I mentioned earlier, strong local communities are critical to the long-term success of our province. PEI is the most rural province in Canada and this is a defining part of our identity, our economy, and our culture. It's what makes us unique.

But the trend over the last number of years has not been good for rural communities. Last year's State of Rural Canada 2015 report confirmed what many of us already know, that providing services in our rural communities is vitally important. I'd like to quote from that report, on the chapter on Prince Edward Island:

"...hospitals and schools have served as the heart and soul of communities and the loss of these 'essential' social services in the name of economies of scale and regional rationalization was especially damaging to the vitality and future viability of rural Prince Edward Island communities.

Those are strong words. Clearly we need to change the way that we do rural

development. There is a definite shift, I sense in this throne speech, towards more long-term planning so I'm surprised that we don't actually see that reflected in this section.

I'm looking forward, of course, to seeing how the long-awaited municipal reforms will strengthen our local communities, especially in rural areas. Communities in my district, and no doubt across the rest of the Island, are really concerned about the potential for forced amalgamation. Government should therefore continue to collaborate with both large and small municipalities to find voluntary solutions that work for both.

There was a section on renewing relationships with Aboriginal Islanders. This is where we go, in the throne speech, from merely ambiguous and non-committal to downright hollow and fuzzy. I've read through that section repeatedly and I still cannot determine what was really being said, which is a real shame, because there is so much that needs to be said about the condition of Mi'kmaq Islanders and so much that should be done.

Poverty, high rates of illness, clean water, mental health, schooling issues, all chronic problems in Island Native communities which deserve our immediate attention. I saw no sense of urgency and certainly no plan anywhere in this speech to combat any of these concerns.

In conclusion, there is a lot to like in this throne speech and many good intentions described in ornate language. There are also some glaring omissions and areas where I had hoped and expected to see more boldness. I guess I was hoping for a more transformative vision from this Premier rather than the somewhat cautious and unambitious one that we seem to see in this throne speech. However, I'm glad to see that my repeated calls from last year for more long-term planning have found a receptive ear in this government.

I think I understand and appreciate better, after a full session, the rigours of governance and that there are few easy answers to all of our complex issues here on Prince Edward Island. Premier MacLauchlan has had a year to become

established and to colour the tone of his government. I remain optimistic that this administration will continue working, calling on our better natures, and will prove itself to be truly transformative for Prince Edward Island and Prince Edward Islanders.

I also give my own commitment that I will continue to encourage this government to consider new ideas, to be bold and brave, and I will push them to give their best to the people of Prince Edward Island.

*Merci, Monsieur le président.*

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Family and Human Services.

**Ms. Mundy:** Good evening, and thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm very pleased to respond to yesterday's Speech From the Throne.

It is a very proud day on Prince Edward Island when our prestigious Lieutenant Governor delivers a Speech From the Throne that highlights the engagement of Islanders and is focused on sustained prosperity through employment, population growth, support for families and education, and an opportunity for our youth.

Yesterday's speech was visionary and sets out the path for the future that is based on opportunity and hope for Islanders. The speech provides a positive platform that sets the tone for this, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Session of the 65<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of Prince Edward Island.

I am proud to be a member of this Legislature, representing District 22 Summerside-St. Eleanors. I am especially honoured and humbled to be serving all Islanders as the Minister of Family and Human Services.

This Speech From the Throne puts a focus on our youth, on prosperity, on population growth, on engagement, and on providing services and supports to Islanders who need it most. These are all themes that are very familiar to me because they are the same things that I heard when I was at the kitchen

tables and on the doorsteps of my constituents in Summerside last spring.

District 22, like many other urban ridings on this Island, is diverse and colourful. My constituents range from those who are very comfortable to those who are the most vulnerable in our society.

The one commonality from both demographics was the need for measures to address the everyday needs of ordinary Islanders from tip to tip. They want the promise of bettering the lives of thousands of Islanders, combining solid economic practices with sensitivity to social issues and the plight of our most vulnerable citizens.

My constituents, like those in every other riding across this province, rely on key government services like education, health care, and social services. We share a common goal in seeing that our most vulnerable citizens get the assistance that they need.

Poverty knows no geography. Every single district on this Island has people struggling not just to make ends meet, but to even find the ends. I know this from first-hand experience. Anyone who has lived on the edge of financial distress – and yes, I have – knows how important even a little help can be. As a single parent I've experienced many times when there was too much money left at the end of the month.

The strong theme of supports for Islanders also truly resonates with me in my role as Minister of Family and Human Services.

Our department is committed to ensuring that we have the supports and services available to Islanders who are most at risk, and I'm very pleased to see that our government supports this important priority.

I am looking forward to the results of the conversations that will take place through the engagement of our stakeholders, Islanders, and other government partners regarding poverty reduction and the establishment of a youth advisory council.

My department is currently conducting a fulsome engagement process to review the *Child Protection Act*. To date the review committee has helped 23 public partner and

private consultation sessions all across the province and discussed what is and what is not working within the *Child Protection Act*, where there is opportunity for improvement and providing supports for Island children and families.

Through this review Islanders continue to be engaged in rich and valuable conversations on how we must work together to protect children and keep them safe. We are hearing about the incredible challenge that's being experienced by some Island families. We have heard some amazing stories of strength and courage from Island youth and the struggles that they have had to overcome and the insight that these experiences have given them. I am encouraged by our government's commitment to continue to engage Islanders in the important discussions about supporting Island families and the future of our province.

My department is also working very closely with the Department of Workforce and Advanced Learning to engage the youth in our province. Some youth who grow up in low-income families have some additional challenges and we have a responsibility to provide as much support as we can to help them stay connected to school and gain employment in life skills that will enable them to be confident, independent, and self-reliant. Very often it is these skills and values we learn and develop as youth that help set our life course. Our youth are our leaders and entrepreneurs of tomorrow.

I am proud of our government's steadfast and earnest commitment to support our Island youth. We have a number of exceptional young people in our province that we should all be very proud of. In the last number of years our young people have become amazing ambassadors for Prince Edward Island, including proud Summerside natives Heather Moyse, Suzanne Birt, or another strong female athlete and Olympian, Kara Grant. Hannah MacLellan from Stratford, a 16-year-old paralympic in swimming, is nothing short of inspiration. All of these young women are exceptional role models for our young people of today.

We must continue to support and engage young people to ensure that we can maintain and grow our economy and our arts and culture community and our future. Our

children are the future entrepreneurs, teachers, volunteers, and leaders, and we must continue to engage them to ensure that they can provide perspective and imagination to our Island communities and economy.

On any given day on Prince Edward Island there are approximately 125 children in the custody and legal guardianship of the province because they require protection from parental harm. These children are among some of the most resilient people any one of us could meet and I truly hope that we are able to engage those youth through the youth advisory council to hear their unique perspective on the future of our Island.

I would be remiss not to mention the amazing support system that is also there to help engage and encourage these young people – our foster parents. We currently have a team of about 65 parents who open their hearts and their homes to children who are in need of protection. These foster parents are as diverse as our beautiful Island. There are younger foster parents who are new to this important role and there are those who have been providing support for decades.

I try to take every opportunity I can to thank those who provide this support to children across the province and also encourage Islanders to consider opening their hearts and homes to the children who really need their support. We are always looking for individuals or families who are interested in providing this much needed support. Our department has a website dedicated to the recruitment and retention of foster parents.

You can go to [www.gov.pe.ca/beafosterparent/](http://www.gov.pe.ca/beafosterparent/) for more information. If any member of this Legislature or anyone listening in the gallery are interested in learning more about being a foster parent, please visit the website.

I am also very pleased to hear that another important priority for our government is to continue to support the housing needs of low-income Islanders. Examples of such support include our seniors and family housing units, financial assistance offered through our Home Renovation Programs,

home supports for seniors, and rental supplements.

This government recognizes that safe, affordable and quality housing is important to all Islanders. Indeed, housing is a basic necessity and it is well known that substandard housing can affect physical and mental well-being.

Our government welcomes the reengagement of the federal government on the housing file. With my colleagues across the country I welcome the new and refreshing attitude of collaboration, meaningful engagement, that is evident within the federal government. It is clear that the Government of Canada is sincere and is working to reestablish its rightful and meaningful role in supporting access to affordable housing in all jurisdictions.

The PEI Housing Corporation is the largest landlord on Prince Edward Island and it currently provides 1,113 senior units across 32 Island communities; 463 family units across nine Island communities; 182 rent supplements; nine single-family rural community housing units; seven single-family rural and native housing units; four garden suites. The department also supports private developers to reduce capital investment, allowing charging a lower rent. 348 units have been constructed since 2007.

Through the Department of Family and Human Services the province has developed a five-year commitment to invest \$750,000 per year to fund needed renovations to public housing for seniors and families across Prince Edward Island. Renovations can include new roofs, sidewalks, heating systems, windows, doors, and many other necessary repairs.

I have been in conversation with my federal counterpart as recently as last week and we have had a number of conversations regarding the importance of social housing infrastructure in our great country, and I look forward to more details.

The federal minister and I had much to talk about as the contents of our mandate letters are very similar and contain many themes in common with yesterday's Speech From the Throne, including providing help to those



who need it, social housing, and poverty reduction.

The new Canada Child Benefit is an initiative of our federal partners that will provide a maximum annual benefit of up to \$6,400 per child under the age of six and up to \$5,400 per child for those aged six through 17 for families with income less than \$30,000 in net income. This benefit is strategically designed to provide more benefits to low and modest income.

This new program will provide a total net additional benefit to Prince Edward Island families of approximately \$21 million this year, and increasing to \$25 million annually. This funding will provide support for families to help with the cost of raising children.

I am very pleased to inform you that the Department of Family and Human Services will continue to ensure that these federal benefits remain in the pockets of Islanders who need the support most and will be excluded when calculating eligibility for social assistance programs and social housing.

I am also looking forward to hearing more from my colleague about the important work that is being done with our federal government partners to transform education in our province and our country through the development of the early learning child care framework. My colleague, the Minister of Education, Early Learning and Culture, is the provincial and territorial lead in discussions with the federal government on the development of this important framework.

The re-engagement of the government of Canada on the early learning and child care file is an exciting development, and I am confident that the framework will highlight the important issues of access, quality, affordability, and the need to invest in the dedicated individuals who provide care to our youngest citizens.

As well, I am also very pleased to see in this speech that Island seniors will continue to be supported through our renovation programs as well as a continuum of care through home supports and home care investments, community care, and long-term care.

Our government has been working hard to ensure that the supports and services that Islanders need to live safely and securely are available to everyone who needs those supports. We have proven that by following through with a number of commitments that we were elected on last spring, including increases to the personal comfort allowance to Islanders on social assistance, increasing investments to the home repair and renovation programs, helping foster parents with an increase to monthly rates for their services and to the room and board rates for children in care, as well as additional funding for our community partners who provide these essential services to our clients.

We have also implemented a tax relief that will reduce or eliminate provincial income tax for 12,000 low-income Islanders as well as improved drug coverage through the Generic Drug Program.

In closing, I would like to reiterate how proud I am to stand here today and share my thoughts on the exciting path that our Speech From the Throne has set out for our government, our province and our future.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**Mr. Henderson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for this opportunity to reply to the Speech From the Throne.

It's always an honour to have this opportunity. Not many people have the privilege, so I'll take the opportunity to talk a little bit about the great things that are in the Speech From the Throne and how proud I am to be part of this particular administration that's working on hopefully doing much better things for health care, growing our economy, improving Islanders' health and well-being.

I feel that we're certainly building on last year's throne speech and it is sending out a new direction for the coming year. I think that's the importance of throne speeches. They are about giving a road map to where we are going as a province and how we are

going to deal with the issues that many Islanders are facing.

Health care is one of our largest government expenditures. It's approximately in the \$600 million range and it becomes 45% of the total budget. I'm pleased that this Speech From the Throne includes several initiatives to enhance health services as well as many key investments in the social determinants of health that Islanders so cherish. Investing in social determinants like education, income, housing, is important because they have a far greater influence on the health status than health services can ever have.

Clearly factors like poverty, low literacy, lack of social supports, can lead to major conditions like heart disease, diabetes, and mental illness. At the same time, factors like education, a good income, and healthy child development often determine whether Islanders have good or poor health.

For these reasons I'm happy to see that the Speech From the Throne focuses on important initiatives that are key to our economic prosperity. The health of the population, for example, growing or working-aged population, making it a greater portion of our overall population, is important. Enhancing job growth, encouraging youth employment, are all important factors, as well as renewing our approach to education, ensuring a sustainable environment, and supporting the most vulnerable in our province.

I'm going to touch on a few of these issues. There is definitely a high co-relation between income and health. When you have a good income you are more likely to have a good education, access to healthy food, adequate housing, and less financial stress.

I've always had the comment that low-income Islanders are unlikely to be able to afford a gym membership. They're probably unable to identify and purchase healthier food items. Those are going to have a factor on one's outcome. So we need to encourage Islanders to consider healthier lifestyles. We need to encourage Islanders to quit smoking. That's one factor that will have a big outcome on a person's health. It's actually one of the biggest contributing factors to death and illness in this province as well as, I think, across the globe. We need people to

understand how to grow a garden and how to provide healthier food for themselves.

The Minister of Family and Human Services and I were talking the other day. It's the old adage where, you know, give a person a fish, feed him for a day, teach him how to fish, feed him for a lifetime. Those are the types of things that I think we need to have more Island families have that opportunity to participate in growing their own food.

Drink responsibly. I think it's important that Islanders understand that any excesses of alcohol and some of those things are also going to have an impact on their health.

Exercise regularly, I think, is another important component. Obviously Islanders sometimes have to put a lot of effort into their work and daily routines and whatnot, but I think there needs to be more opportunity for people to take a little bit more responsibility, to take a more regular approach to exercise, and ultimately take control of your health and health choices.

Job and wage growth is a high priority for this government and we are focused on working with the private sector to create more well-paying year-round jobs for Islanders.

I want to take this opportunity to talk a little bit about my riding, with some of the things that are going on and some of the projects we've done with the Minister of Economic Development and Tourism.

Sometimes we'll talk to my constituents and they think: There's not many jobs around here. But when you start to add up the jobs that are out there, it's surprising how we've grown as a riding, as a community, just in my term in office.

Think about Trout River Industries. We had the hon. Minister of Economic Development and Tourism, we met with some of the MLAs, the Member from Alberton-Roseville and the Member from Evangeline-Miscouche. Trout River Industries is doing fabulous work there, developing and constructing live bottom trailers for an international marketplace. I know I was out to visit one of their owners there, Harvey Stewart here, probably about a month ago. He just signed a contract, I believe it was

with Lebanon, for something like 20 or 30 trailers to be delivered by year-end. He's got approximately 80-some employees working there. They're working, basically, 24 hours a day, seven days a week trying to reach these orders of delivery.

So there's products coming from – it's actually from the riding of Alberton-Roseville although it's next door to my riding, and they are delivering worldwide first-class product, high-end live bottom trailers for the construction industry in moving aggregate and other products around the globe.

Just issues like – Maple House Bakery and Café just opened in O'Leary recently. It was a project that was developed. They acquired the old liquor store in O'Leary and have now moved their facility. It's a shelter workshop for intellectually-disabled adults. The facility is very busy. I was there just on Monday for dinner and the place is quite busy. It's very promising to see people with some intellectual challenges working, being productive, showing up for work in the morning, waiting on customers, cleaning off tables, and providing a lot of the baked goods that are for that.

Another business I was talking to just recently was HF Stewart's. HF Stewart's are making a lot of manufactured products in the agricultural sector, a lot going to Ontario, and are talking about a fairly significant expansion. They may be coming to the Minister of Economic Development and Tourism for some help there, too. But, once again there's an employer that, in West Point – and is going to a lot of shows across the country. I was down to the international potato expo and went to their booth. They had a number of big products there: trailers, they had potato-grading equipment, a lot of things that handle with washing carrots and things of that nature. They can custom make a number of agricultural products, some that can be a lot smaller, like the Leader of the Third Party had mentioned. But they have a specific niche market that they go after and they can design and create – like, potato diggers for – I think they send some to the Ukraine and Russia. They're specifically designed for smaller operations, smaller horsepower, and they're manufacturing that in the riding of O'Leary-Inverness.

Recently, Five Star Shellfish is – just in my own community down at Milligan's Wharf. They had a recent large expansion in cooling down their oysters and marketing oysters, once again all around the globe. Once again, the Minister of Economic Development and Tourism, we were up and we made a significant announcement –

**Mr. R. Brown:** He's a good fellow, that minister of economic development (Indistinct).

**Mr. Henderson:** – for three-phase power. A project I've been working on for a number of years. I was really grateful that the federal government and the provincial government got together.

The idea behind that is these shellfish industries were running into some struggles around the issue of vibriosis. They had pressures from the Canadian Food Inspection Agency to make sure their oysters were cooled down quick enough and not to get into this issue. One of the problems in a rural community where a lot of these businesses are based out by the water is they didn't have access to three-phase power. Three-phase power allows them to have a greater, I guess, voltage of power to operate and it gives them a greater supply of power at a reasonable cost.

I really commend the Minister of Economic Development and Tourism and how that department worked with the region, the community, and helped all those businesses out.

Annand Clams would be another business that's up and running. Same thing. They're bottling bar clams and they were breeding bar clams. You can go to a lot of places and that's on the menu now, breaded bar clams, and you can get a bar clam dinner. If it wasn't – once again, they were running into the challenge of – they had to shut down part of their business to operate the other part of the business. They couldn't get enough power.

I know the poles are in, just to let the hon. member know next to me, but the poles have been in and hopefully that power will be switched on. We'll turn the switch and we'll see a lot more economic activity and development going on in the riding for

O'Leary-Inverness, in rural communities across this province as well.

Just to give a little more background on that three-phase power issue, the municipality of Lot 11 – once again a rural community, a community in which I live in – was the applicant to help work with all those businesses and channel the money that can help them and the businesses work together, and that's what you see, co-operation.

I know the Minister of Communities, Land and Environment, his department was up and we were working on an emergency measure plan together, I think with three or four municipalities in that Tyne Valley region. They're all working together, looking at their challenges, identifying issues, and are able to use the power of incorporation within their communities to benefit businesses and hence through to employers and employees all across that.

As the Speech From the Throne has indicated, in 2015 Prince Edward Island was a national leader in wage growth and labour income reached 3.1 billion, an all-time high. I think that starts to explain how those numbers came to be. They just didn't happen, it came with government, it came with communities, it came with corporations all working together to identify a challenge and to rise to the occasion and meet that challenge.

If I look at, and I say many times, to our communities – and in O'Leary, once we start thinking a little bit more positively about our community and our riding and our region we can start to see the value of that.

That's one of the things the opposition has to do –

**Mr. LaVie:** You close our schools, our hospitals (Indistinct).

**An Hon. Member:** (Indistinct) make Georgetown come back to life.

**Mr. Henderson:** – but that's how it all works. You've got to start thinking positively and good things will come back your way.

**Mr. R. Brown:** You thought positive and you got an ambulance.

**Mr. Henderson:** Yeah. If I think – and I just want to give a little highlight where it all sort of started. I know the opposition talks a little bit about liquor stores as an example –

**Some Hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Henderson:** – if you take the situation in O'Leary, we had a number of dilapidated structures on Main Street, O'Leary. They were in disrepair, there was some problems existed. The Co-op had an empty space. We turned around and we made a decision as a government to put a new liquor store into the O'Leary Co-op. I want to give some explanation on what that did for the community.

**Mr. Myers:** It cost a million dollars to switch liquor stores in Stratford.

**Mr. Henderson:** The first thing it did was it provided a good tenant for the Co-op, a very important business in the riding of O'Leary-Inverness. In fact, I think our second-largest employer outside of the hospital. They now have a solid tenant, they've seen the sales increase at the Co-op by about 5 to 6%.

**Mr. LaVie:** Whose district is that?

**Mr. Henderson:** It's in the great riding of O'Leary-Inverness. They've stabilized their business there. The liquor store has seen an increase in sales just because of a more street front presence.

Then you turned around – then what happened the Credit Union next door to the liquor store felt that: Geez, we need to look a little bit better, the liquor store looks really nice. It's got nice beautiful pictures on there of our riding – our community's West Point Lighthouse is there, there's some Irish moss horses out in the water in these pictures. So now the Credit Union decided to do a major expansion. Now all of a sudden it's looking pretty nice, fixed up significantly.

What happened here just recently right on Main Street, O'Leary, O'Leary Auto Parts decided it would do a major renovation and spruce up its town. They started thinking positive about their communities. They started thinking a little bit better about things that could be, as far as possibilities and good things.

Then what happens in O'Leary – and this is all because our government's in power. We've seen McLean Farms take over the old O'Leary Potato Packers plant and they put together, they got the rights, I guess, to a new potato product called Smilin' Eyes potatoes.

**Mr. R. Brown:** Even the potatoes (Indistinct).

**Mr. Henderson:** Even the potatoes are happy in O'Leary-Inverness –

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

**Mr. Henderson:** – that's how good it is.

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

**Mr. Henderson:** McLean Farms there are now exporting a product to lots of different stores and different locations. I believe they have the rights to this potato, North America-wide.

Then we start to think about, okay, more positive news. Once again we talk about the Canadian Potato Museum, which once again promotes the potato industry in Canada, for that matter.

**Mr. LaVie:** Whose district is that in?

**Mr. Henderson:** That's in the riding of O'Leary-Inverness again, too.

**Mr. LaVie:** Oh, O'Leary.

**Mr. Henderson:** There's over 10,000 visitors have toured the potato museum, driving right by the local liquor store and by the Maple House Bakery and deli, and all of those businesses are starting to flourish because the concept is about trying to create traffic flow into a rural community. When you have a government that works together, your community works together, and businesses start to think more positively, then good things are going to happen.

It's always important to think that way. Same thing. I know I've had chats with the Member from Souris-Elmira about thinking more positively when it comes to health care. In O'Leary-Inverness we had all our challenges with health care. When we

started to think a little bit more positively about things –

**Mr. Myers:** Where's your (Indistinct)?

**Mr. LaVie:** Be careful what you say.

**Mr. Myers:** Where's your (Indistinct)?

**Mr. Henderson:** – that could happen –

**Mr. LaVie:** Be careful.

**Mr. Henderson:** – all of a sudden doctors started to want to come to our community, they wanted to stay there and practice, and we've had good success in retaining those doctors since then.

**Mr. R. Brown:** You have to be positive.

**Mr. Henderson:** You got to think positively. You got to think good about things –

**Mr. LaVie:** (Indistinct) the minister.

**An Hon. Member:** That's all your (Indistinct).

**Mr. LaVie:** I need a minister.

**An Hon. Member:** That's all your (Indistinct) good government (Indistinct).

**Mr. Henderson:** So that's the way it sort of works, and I think it's very important to acknowledge that importance.

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

**Mr. Henderson:** Anyway, I think it's important as a government that we do look at –

**Speaker:** Hon. members, there's only a couple of minutes left, let's settle down.

**Mr. Henderson:** It's a riveting speech, I know, Mr. Speaker, but I really think it's important that when governments think about continuing to support our primary and emerging sectors – which this government is doing, which I've been working with the Minister of Economic Development and Tourism, worked with the Minister of Communities, Land and Environment.

We were up, we toured watersheds, we met with municipalities, we talked about the virtues of working well together, and we're starting to see the fruits of our labour in the riding of O'Leary-Inverness.

It takes that, and I think it is important we also take steps to grow our working age population and try to make sure as many people are employed as we can possibly have within a riding, in a community. That's ultimately how the challenge works. We will continue to rise to the challenge as a government. I will do my very best as an MLA for the riding of O'Leary-Inverness to achieve that.

Education is also a very powerful determinant in health outcomes and is fundamental to our long-term prosperity. We're making concerted efforts to renew our approach to education. We've done a lot of good things. I know the minister of education and culture is working hard on restructuring the education system.

**Mr. LaVie:** You have to do some (Indistinct).

**Mr. Henderson:** Same thing, when things get positive and we talk about the good things that possibly can be achieved by having good education –

**An Hon. Member:** Call the hour.

**Speaker:** The hour has been called –

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

**Speaker:** The hour has been called.

The hon. Minister of Communities, Land and Environment.

**Mr. Mitchell:** Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the hon. Member from Charlottetown-Lewis Point, that this House adjourn until tomorrow, April 8<sup>th</sup>, at 10:00 a.m.

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

The Legislature adjourned until tomorrow, Friday, at 10:00 a.m.