

HANSARD



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Speaker: Hon. Greg Deighan

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The Legislature sat at 10:00 a.m.

Matters of Privilege and Recognition of
Guests

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier Binns: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

First of all, I want to say it's a pleasure to be back in the Legislature for this fall session. Mr. Speaker, we welcome you, the Clerk, the Clerk Assistant, the Pages, the Hansard staff, the security staff, the messengers, all the people who keep this institution running behind the scenes. We do appreciate the job that you do. I think the public doesn't see that much of the people behind the scenes, but this building could not run without their contribution. So, we thank you all.

This does seem to be a record setting day. I know it's nice and warm outside. It's another beautiful day on Prince Edward Island, probably going to achieve a record in terms of temperature. Certainly, the indications I have is that Prince Edward Island is the warmest place in the country today, and I don't think that's just because the House is in session. But it does indicate that we live in a pretty special place.

I'd like to take just a moment to recognize the work of the Red Cross here on Prince Edward Island. Last night Mr. Myron MacKay was recognized with their humanitarian award. Of course, Myron has contributed much to the Prince Edward Island business community, the social community, over the years. I want to congratulate him.

Also I want to recognize the fact that this morning was the time at which the new business school and centre for enterprise entrepreneurship was officially announced to the people of Prince Edward Island. There

was kind of a ground breaking ceremony at the university. This \$11 million facility will not only help put Island business higher on the map, give our students a greater opportunity, but continues to show the tremendous achievement that's taking place at our university. Of course, the provincial government is very proud to be part of that partnership.

I want to welcome people to the gallery this morning, those who are watching on cable television. I hope everybody enjoys the session.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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

First of all, let me apologize for sound of my voice today, but I've been fighting a little bit of a cold recently.

I too want to welcome everyone back to the Legislature, all the members, yourself, Mr. Speaker, the Clerk and Clerk Assistant, the messengers and all the staff here that help make sure that Province House runs on a timely basis.

I also want to recognize people in the gallery today. It's great to see John Broderick and Sean Casey. Also, we have Rob Vessey who is our newly nominated candidate in District 9. As many probably know, Rob's a very well known potato farmer here in Prince Edward Island and recently won national awards at the Royal for his potatoes in the seed and table stock division, so I want to recognize him for that.

Recently, I had the opportunity to attend

Remembrance Day ceremonies out at Whisperwood Villa. I had a great opportunity to talk with many of our veterans and many of our seniors there. A lot of them inform that they watch the Legislature so I want to say hello to all our friends there today.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Alberton-Miminegash.

Mr. Dunn: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'd just like to take this opportunity to welcome all the members back to this fall session of the Legislature. Welcome the Speaker back as well as the staff. Also like to welcome all those people that work behind the scenes and do a great job for us.

Also like to welcome those people in the gallery today and also our viewing audience. I know quite a few people in my district tune in to the Legislature and really appreciate the opportunity to view what's happening in the Legislature through Eastlink. I want to congratulate Eastlink in providing that opportunity to reach out and to communicate with our constituents.

I'd also like to welcome the new Pages; Kate MacKinnon from Morell; Alana McKie from Souris; Katharine MacDonald Colonel Gray; Brittany Rojas from Kinkora; Keltie MacPhail from Bluefield; Jacques Gallant from École Évangeline; and Matthias Brennan from Three Oaks. We really look forward to working with them over the next few months and hope we'll have an enjoyable experience with them.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

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

I too join my colleagues in welcoming visitors to the gallery, in particular my District 15 constituent Blair Ballem, and of course the viewers on Eastlink.

But before the days slip too far away from that important and solemn date of November 11th, I do want to take this opportunity to express my appreciation to the members of the Royal Canadian Legion right across Prince Edward Island who organize and conduct the beautiful ceremonies of Remembrance Day. In particular, members of Branch No. 1 Royal Canadian Legion in Charlottetown. They conduct services every year at the Andrews Lodge and the Beach Grove Home, both located in Winsloe-West Royalty. I know these events are very much appreciated and looked forward to by all the residents there.

So on their behalf, and personally, I offer my thanks to those members of the Royal Canadian Legion who do such a wonderful job year after year after year.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Statements by Members

Speaker: The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

PEI 2006 Island Music Awards

Mr. Mooney: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I extend congratulations to everyone who took home Prince Edward Island music awards recently at the 6th annual PEI Music

Awards show. The gala was held on Friday, November 10th, on the main stage of the Confederation Centre of the Arts.

Islanders are not strangers in the east coast, Canadian or international music scenes but it's always gratifying to see our own artists, songwriters, technicians, and producers receive recognition for the work they do at home where it all begins.

Awards were given for male and female vocalists, songwriter, group, album of the year, and in categories: roots/solo, blues/jazz, folk, new artist, instrumental, spiritual, rock, alternative rock, country/bluegrass, and edge. Two new awards were presented for the first time this year, recognizing the rise in popularity of urban music and the valuable contribution of the recording studios.

Mr. Speaker, the recipient of the 2006 Lifetime Achievement Award was Haywire - the most commercially successful rock and roll band ever to emerge from Prince Edward Island. My congratulations to the members of Haywire: Mr. David Rashad, Paul MacAusland, Ronnie Switzer, Marvin Birt and Shawn Kilbride.

I also extend congratulations to Catherine MacLellan, multiple winner of the Female Vocalist of the Year, Songwriter of the Year, Album of the Year and Folk Recording of the Year.

Congratulations also to Mr. Eddie Quinn, Male Vocalist of the Year; to Celtic Ladies, which a lot of that group originates from up in my district for Group of the Year; and many other winners too numerous to mention at this time.

The success of the 2006 Prince Edward Island Music Awards proves once again that great musical talent is alive and well here on Prince Edward Island and I want to wish

them all the very best in the years to come.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Glen Stewart-Bellevue Cove.

Remembrance Day

Dr. McKenna: Mr. Speaker, another Remembrance Day has come and gone and Canadians have paused to remember those who answered the call and took up arms to defend the principles of peace and democracy.

Remembrance Day is a special opportunity to publicly honour the more than 2 million Canadians who have fought in major wars. During the past 100 years, our military forces have been involved in five wars and numerous peacekeeping missions and it is only right that we take the time to honour so many who have given so much.

Remembrance Day services remind us of the great price paid by our parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents for the freedoms we often take for granted today.

Thanks to the efforts of Dr. Ralph Kennedy, son of veteran Earl Kennedy, and veterans Lloyd Martin, Eugene MacDonald, Joe Dunning, and Jack Farquharson, the town of Stratford has a wonderful new cenotaph, which is a great tribute to our veterans. Councillor Sandy McMillan acted as the liaison for the town with this committee. In addition, 14 beautiful, life-sized banners of our community veterans taken during the war years were placed on display and they're still on display in our town hall.

I'm really pleased to hear that approximately 1,500 citizens of Stratford gathered for the dedication of this new

memorial and I congratulate the organizers of this event. Unfortunately, I was unable to attend due to a death in my family.

It is my sincere hope that everyone took two minutes at the 11th hour of the 11th day of this, the 11th month, to give thanks and say a prayer, 'Lest We Forget.'

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Kings Square.

Support for Island troops

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

I, too, also want to congratulate the Legion, especially branch one for the excellent job they did in terms of the cenotaph out front here. They do an excellent job.

I also want to talk about a group of 17 Islanders, or 16 from the PEI Regiment No. 1 of the 721 Communications Squadron, among 300 reservists joining regular troops in the 1,600-soldier task force in Afghanistan. According to this, 17 Islanders are going to head for Afghanistan.

I think all of us should recognize the importance that - these people are well trained and that they're not put in the front lines, but I know they will be. Although I know they're well trained and I see 721 is in my district and I see the work that goes on there, I know these troops are well trained and they're going to look after themselves pretty good. I hope that none of them are killed in action. It disappoints me every time it's on the media that one of our Canadians are being loaded onto the aircraft coming back, being repatriated to Canada. Although I have a problem with Canada being in that war, and especially in the front lines, I do

support our troops. I do support them, and I do support that we give them all the tools and (Indistinct) that they need in order to protect themselves over there.

I hope and I pray that some day this war will end and there will be peace over there. I pray that it ends as quickly as possible and that democracy is restored over there, and that our troops can come home and be integrated back into the community. So my heart goes out to them. I wish them all the best of luck and I wish a safe return to those troops from Prince Edward Island and all troops from Canada, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Questions by Members

Speaker: The Leader of the Opposition.

Appeal Re Human Rights Act decision

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

Again, I apologize for the sound of my voice today. I'll try and be as clear and concise as possible in asking these questions today.

Earlier this year, the Premier decided to send the issue of his political discrimination abuses to the Supreme Court of Canada. He said at the time that this was an issue of national importance and other provinces would be interested in participating in this court case. Mr. Speaker, how many other provinces signed on with the Premier to support his discrimination abuses in the highest court in the country?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier Binns: Mr. Speaker, we've long held the view that the provincial Legislature

should have some authority when it comes to setting limits regarding settlements.

That was the reason that we asked the court to consider this matter. They chose not to do so. That doesn't change that fundamental belief, because this could happen in any number of circumstances where government is called upon to make expenditures in relation to public needs of some type or issues. It could be anything from storm damage to I don't know what, some health issue.

So this was a principle. We agree that the court did not receive it. Other provinces did not become involved in this, as the hon. member knows. In regard to this matter, we're hoping that there might soon be a settlement. That matter is currently being dealt with by lawyers for the respective sides.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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

Again, I'll give the Premier credit for being persistent. Here we have a court case that went to the Supreme Court of Prince Edward Island, ruled against this Premier over his discrimination abuses, went to the Appeals Division of the Supreme Court of Prince Edward Island, again ruled against this Premier for his discriminatory abuses, then went to the highest court in our country, the one that's there to protect our Charter of Rights and Freedoms, protect basic human rights, and again, they decided they wouldn't even listen to this Premier's court case.

But at the time, the Premier said other provinces would want to get on board with this court case. It was of national importance. Can the Premier please list what

other provinces joined him in his legal battle with the Supreme Court?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier Binns: I've already answered that question, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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

Unfortunately, this Premier is able to list none, and it's shameful that in the last sitting of the House, the Premier and the Attorney General would stand up in this House and try to defend their discriminatory actions saying other provinces would sign on. It was of national importance, that's why they were doing it. The Supreme Court would not even listen to the case and no other provinces would sign on.

When will this Premier start to realize the discriminatory measures are not acceptable in the Province of Prince Edward Island?

Now that the Supreme Court has ruled, I'm wondering: Would the Premier please tell the House how he plans to address the ongoing complaints of discrimination against his government?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier Binns: Mr. Speaker, I've indicated the answer to the latter part of that question as well, and remind the hon. member that no government in the history of the province has done as much as our government has to eliminate patronage, which is unwarranted.

I would remind him that it was this government that brought in recall legislation so that for the first time ever seasonal employees do not have to go on bended

knee to their MLA to see if they get their jobs back. His party condoned this practice. They made them re-apply every year. Go and see the MLA, see if you can get your job back. We said: That's not good enough and we changed the system so that those people are automatically recalled if they've had a good record.

What we don't know is where the Leader of the Opposition stands on this issue. I mean, he says one thing behind closed doors when nobody is listening and he says something else when he's out in public, and we get that feedback all the time.

As well, we classified hundreds of jobs in the public service, people who were hired by various governments over the years. I remind this House that the reason for that was that we felt it was not fair to use those public servants as some kind of tool at election time: You keep voting for us and we'll leave you your job. That's not the way we do business, Mr. Speaker, that's why we classified those jobs, and our record is second to none in this province when it comes to eliminating patronage.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: That's shameful, Mr. Speaker, these members clapping, this Premier's comments with regards to him eliminating patronage in this province when we all know this Premier callously fired more than 800 Islanders.

He discriminated against those Islanders because they exercised their democratic rights in opposition to him. He has used every lever of government to look after his own and has used the Island legal system to delay and avoid his personal responsibility for the pain and hurt he caused across this

province.

Every member on that side of the House has endorsed this Premier's discriminatory abuses. They even just clapped for them, even as every level of the legal system has condemned this Premier's actions: the Supreme Court of Prince Edward Island, the Appeals Division, and the Supreme Court of Canada that would not even listen to this Premier's court case.

My question to the Premier: What will the Premier do now to settle this lingering stain on our democratic system?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier Binns: Mr. Speaker, it's interesting, you know.

The Leader of the Opposition has said on many occasions that he feels patronage will not go away. I have a quote back in March 14 of 2003 in which he said when speaking to CBC: Patronage has been here from the beginning of time and I don't know if it will ever go away. Obviously, no indication that he was prepared to make it go away. Another one, April 1, 2003, to *The Guardian*, he said he would love to eliminate patronage but he doesn't believe it will ever happen. He didn't believe he would probably do it himself, Mr. Speaker, if given the opportunity.

Certainly, nothing he has said, in my view, has convinced Islanders that he is prepared to take that step. Mr. Speaker, our actions prove that this government is not only prepared to take those steps but has taken those steps in the actions I've just mentioned - by classifying public servants, by bringing in recall legislation. People no longer have to come on bended knee to an MLA in this government asking if they can have their jobs back.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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

Back in 1997, why were there over 800 human rights complaints filed against this Premier?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier Binns: Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member knows, those workers were asked to re-apply every year.

They were asked to go back and see their member. They set the system up so they'd have to file their applications again, go back in and see if they could get their job back. We had thousands of applications in that year and they were reviewed. People who could do the job satisfactorily, many who had done the job before, were given the opportunity to do the job again.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Again, Mr. Speaker, it's upsetting that this Premier, even after so many court decisions that ruled against this discriminatory practice, still continues to defend those actions, and it's a stain on the Province of Prince Edward Island for this Premier to act in such a way.

Cost of McQuaid Commission report

On this side of the House, we have many questions also about the Conservative electoral map. We know why you wanted this map. You wanted to gerrymander the lines so that no sitting Tory MLA would face another in seeking a political nomination. Prior to the third Tory map there were two others, one of which was designed by a commission after many

consultations with Islanders. Will the Premier please tell the House how much money he wasted on the McQuaid Commission?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier Binns: We didn't waste any money, Mr. Speaker.

We followed the legislation that was put in place and that was to have a review of the boundaries after three elections. As the hon. member knows, what the legislation failed to do was to deal with what happened to the report, other than that the report would come back to this House for debate. So it left the matter of deciding what would happen to the House.

Our government has been very clear. We have supported a 15% variance between ridings, recognizing the fact that there are special needs in certain parts of the province. For example, a member from western Prince could drive up to two hours a day just to come to Charlottetown to do their job. Certainly, that sort of thing should be taken into account when determining the number of electors per riding, and it's just one of the factors that has to be considered. That's why all ridings would not necessarily be exactly the same size. We've been consistent about that.

We've also been consistent about the fact that we think there should be fairness between urban and rural here that, yes, urban ridings should have adequate representation in this Legislature, as should rural ridings. What the hon. members wanted to do is take two seats out of West Prince, take a seat out of eastern PEI, and that has, in my view, not been fair. His own party's against him on that. It stood up and said that it's not fair to people of the province to have the distribution that he would suggest.

So the electoral boundaries map was drawn by a former electoral officer of this province, Mr. Wigginton. I think he did an excellent job under the circumstances and came up with a fair map.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition suggests that there would not have to be any Conservative sitting members running against each other. That's not necessarily the case. For example, the riding I'm in, the new riding that I intend to run in, of Belfast-Murray River, half of it was in the riding of the Member from Belfast-Pownal Bay and so half of it was in - half the new riding comes from my old riding. So we have to make a decision. Is the hon. Member from Belfast-Pownal Bay going to run in that riding or myself?

It's not as easy as that, Mr. Speaker.

An Hon. Member: Oh, come on! Come on!

Premier Binns: I do intend to run, but his suggestion is ludicrous.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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

This Premier's answers are ludicrous and it's quite unfortunate that we would have a premier, a first minister in our nation, stand up and give answers like this in the House and not respect the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, not understand that legislators are here to respect the hallmark of independence.

I just want to quote from Justice McQuaid: It remains to be seen as to whether the Legislative Assembly will respect this hallmark of independence or choose to depart from the practice in other jurisdictions.

This Premier chose to go in another direction. We all know he does not respect the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. My question to him was: How much did the McQuaid Commission cost?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier Binns: Mr. Speaker, I'm quite confident if he wants to look back in the Hansard, probably from last spring or the summer session, he would find the answer to that, but I will bring it back to the House once again.

I stand by the comments I made earlier, that this House had a duty to debate. It was the position of the government that a variance of up to 15% was reasonable. That was supported by the Carruthers report, which had looked at the whole issue of elections and boundaries and so on. It's been supported in other provinces up to 25% variance. The federal government supports up to a 25% variance. McQuaid in his report chose a different direction, suggested that we should try to solve tomorrow's problems today. We should go to a tighter variance that would reflect future shifts in population.

Well, it was a good report but, fundamentally, we did not agree with that conclusion. We felt that a 15% variance of today's numbers was reasonable and, in fact, if you recall, we have now indicated that through legislation that future reports will be binding. But the House will need to give the commission some direction in the terms of reference, I guess, as to what the overall parameters would be. So we've accepted the principle, we've learned from the process, and I think at the end of the day we have a system that's meaningful for Prince Edward Island.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Cost of electoral boundaries maps

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

It's amazing how this Premier can stand up and answer those questions with a straight face because his arguments make absolutely no sense whatsoever someone of your intellect could come to understand. Because this Premier knows full well that he went and he asked for a second map to be drawn with a 15% variance by the Chief Electoral Officer in this province, and guess what? He came back, he drew up a second map with a 15% variance, and then this Premier chose to throw out that map as well. Why? Because this is a premier and this is a party that's more concerned with themselves than they are with what's right for Islanders.

My question for the Premier: How much did the second map cost that you threw out?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier Binns: Mr. Speaker, just again in terms of the principles here, it has been and is and continues to be our belief that a wider variance is a reasonable one.

We did not see substantial change between the McQuaid map and the second map that was drawn. We did not feel it reflected communities of interest to the degree that was possible. In the interests of trying to recognize those communities across PEI and trying to protect rural Prince Edward Island - while he seems to favour taking seats away from rural Prince Edward Island - we came to the conclusion that we should ask the former chief electoral officer to look at the matter one more time. Frankly, we felt that his proposal was the best that we had seen. We had a lot of public input in the matter and we made a decision that that was the way to go.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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

Again, a premier who makes absolutely no sense. He talks about protecting rural Prince Edward Island when we all know now there are only two ridings in this province that are over a 15% variance, and one of them happens to be a rural riding and the other one happens to be half rural. So the Premier when he tries to make these arguments just proves that he knows absolutely nothing of what he's talking about.

I'm wondering. We all know roughly how much the Tory party spent on the third map. According to reports, it was about \$10,000. Will the Premier please tell this House exactly how much the Tory party paid for the third map?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier Binns: Mr. Speaker, he's really stretching here, reaching to try to create fabrication of, you know, some plot or something that was going on.

The reality was that the former chief electoral officer who did the map had participated in the workforce program and received a package as a result of his work. We found out, of course, because of that he was not entitled to receive money from public funds and so there had to be another way to pay for that. The hon. Leader of the Opposition understands that but he wants to twist it around and make it look like some kind of a sinister plot. The Government House Leader said: I'll find a way to pay for it and it'll be paid for. This had nothing to do - this was well after the map was drawn, after everything was completed, so to try to tie these two together is absolutely foolish.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: I'm sorry, Mr. Speaker, maybe I'm not seeing something here, but I understand that the Tory party paid for the third map.

That's plain and simple. I believe that that's something that has been established here. I know at the beginning they tried to say that their office was going to pay for it. Then they said the Tory party. Then they said the member's riding from Alberton. Well, that's the Tory party, so they paid for the map. This province has a law on the books in the form of a map that was paid for now by the Tory party of Prince Edward Island. I'm pretty positive we can never find another piece of legislation in this country that is paid for by a political party. That just goes to show the arrogance of this government.

Since that law is a public law, there's no question in my mind that Islanders have every right to know who paid for the map and who directed the consultant in the drawing of the map. How much was paid for the map? Which members of this government, including staff, were involved in drawing the new map?

But let's begin before the Tory party got involved. Was there any attempt at any level of government to get Islanders to pay for this Tory commissioned map?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier Binns: Mr. Speaker, as we indicated earlier, the map would have been paid for - the work done by the former chief electoral officer would have been done in a different fashion.

But really, this is a red herring the hon. member is bringing up. The map was all completed before there was any decision as

to how it would be paid for and so it had no impact on the outcome of the map. The map was done. The map was finished. It was drawn before any arrangements were made as to its payment. So he's fishing in a pond here trying to catch a big fish when the reality is it's going nowhere. The matter was settled long before the suggested event took place.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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

As you well know, the fact of the matter is we have a new law on the book here in the Province of Prince Edward Island. That law was paid for by the Tory party of Prince Edward Island. I'd be challenged to know if this has happened anywhere else, but I've got a new question for the Premier.

We all know that former chief electoral officer Merrill Wigginton was hired to do the map. I'm wondering: Who first consulted with Mr. Wigginton?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier Binns: Government would have asked Mr. Wigginton to prepare this map, Mr. Speaker, and I'd have to check as to who maybe made the first approach, but I will take responsibility for that given that I'm head of the government.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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

I believe our budget is somewhere around \$1 to 1.3 billion here in the province. We obviously have a lot of lawyers working for the Province of Prince Edward Island. A lot

are out on contract at a lot of large firms here around Prince Edward Island. Did nobody even think at the time that hiring Mr. Wigginton would be inappropriate since he just did take a public servant retirement package?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier Binns: Mr. Speaker, Mr. Wigginton had been involved in the preparation of maps in the past and drawing boundaries and determining polls within electoral districts.

He spent years doing this and he's always done it in a fair-minded way. No one has ever questioned his results. It's my view that this was the best person on Prince Edward Island to draw this map. That's why he was chosen, because of his expertise, his knowledge, his fairness, and his understanding. There was no one else, no lawyer in government, nobody in the private sector, in my view, that had as good an understanding as he did. That's why he was chosen.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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

It's quite incredible that this Premier can stand up and insult a Supreme Court Justice in the province the way he just did, said he doesn't know how to draw maps, how he can insult the current Chief Electoral Officer in the province and say he doesn't know how to draw maps. Why doesn't the Premier just admit he wanted to gerrymander the boundaries so that none of his own MLAs would have to run against each other for nominations? That's the simple fact of the matter.

But there are also more issues to be explored

here. I'm wondering: Were public resources used in drawing this new map? Did Mr. Wigginton and his Tory masters sit down together and use government resources and were government computers used in the drawing of the map?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier Binns: Mr. Speaker, to the best of my knowledge, this map was drawn independently by Mr. Wigginton.

I say that (Indistinct) certainly absolutely independently in terms of the input and decision as to where the lines would go. If a computer was used in a government service, I don't know that for sure, I'll find that out. But if that were the case, then certainly it would only reflect on keeping the costs down, nothing to do with any kind of interference in preparing the electoral map.

I take offence to the fact that the Leader of the Opposition would suggest any disrespect towards the earlier commissions. There's no disrespect towards those commissions. They prepared recommendations based on their beliefs of what an electoral map should look like for the future, but it was our contention the map should not be drawn for down the road. It should reflect today's reality. It should reflect a bigger, more than a 10% variance, and the report did not reflect that and that's why a decision was made to move to another map.

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

Mammogram testing and reports

Ms. MacDonald: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the minister of health and social services.

Island women have been concerned about the reading of the mammogram reports. Can

the minister update Islanders on this issue?

Speaker: The Minister of Health, Social Services and Seniors.

Mr. Gillan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I think that not only the members of the Legislature here are quite familiar with the fact that there is a backlog of mammograms to be read, due principally to a shortage of radiologists. We have approximately 700 of those mammograms that we want to get done as quickly as possible. We have been able to secure the services of three Ontario radiologists. One of them is presently in the province reading some of these mammograms. Two others are due the first week of December. Within a month, therefore, we should be able to have the backlog of the mammograms cleared up.

But just let me add as well to the hon. member's question the fact that there is an appointment wait time which stretches now up to nine months, and with the backlog erased we will be able to lessen that appointment wait time considerably. I can't say this morning exactly because I'll have to wait and see how things develop. The present report time of seven weeks, we will be able to now, with the backlog being erased very soon, bring that down to approximately one week.

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

Eastern PEI wind farm

Mr. Collins: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

My question is for the Minister of Environment, Energy and Forestry. When it comes to the advancement of renewable energy in this province, we all know that wind is certainly a big ally, but when it comes to the actual erection of these

impressive V-90 wind turbines, wind, I think, can be a bit of a foe.

I know we've had a rather brisk fall here for the winds. I'd like to know the situation east of Souris with the new 30-megawatt wind generating farm. Can the minister give us an update on whether construction is on or behind schedule here?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Environment, Energy and Forestry.

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

The member is exactly right. We want the wind to blow in North Cape but we don't want it to blow in East Point. Unfortunately, we've had some delays. I think at one stretch we lost seven out of nine days in construction because when you're trying to lift a 90-ton unit up 250 feet, you want to make sure that there's no wind blowing. To date, I think we've got six of the ten turbines in place and we're working on the seventh one right now. Our target always to have the farm complete and generating power by the end of December and we're still on that schedule, although it's getting tighter every day.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Kings Square.

Human Rights Commission hearing

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

My question goes to the Premier. Mr. Premier, back in 1992 you appeared before a Human Rights Commission in a case and you were under oath at the time. At that time you said to the commission that if the person is doing a good job, they should keep that job. We shouldn't throw them out at any given time. You said that under oath at a Human Rights Commission. A couple of

years later, you laid off 850 people or over 1,000 people. Are you saying that all of those people did not qualify or they weren't doing a good job?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier Binns: Mr. Speaker, I explained that earlier, that the former government had a system whereby they kept these people dependent, they kept them coming back each year applying, re-applying for the jobs, so it was their view that those people didn't own the jobs either.

If they weren't supporting their party, then they would replace them with somebody else. Mr. Speaker, we changed that system. We made a wholesale change. Nobody comes before our members any more asking for the job back.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Kings Square.

Mr. R. Brown: The Premier's right, Mr. Speaker, they did make a wholesale change in 1996.

I want to get back to your human rights testimony in 1992 where you said if a person is doing a good job, that person should keep that job. So why only a couple of years later when you took over this government and the premiership of Prince Edward Island that when those people re-applied for their jobs the next year that you didn't hire them?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier Binns: Mr. Speaker, as I've indicated, we did change the system so that people do have the right to keep those jobs, not re-apply as they did under the system that the former government had in place.

Speaker: The hon. Member from

Charlottetown-Kings Square.

Mr. R. Brown: Mr. Speaker, in your 1992 testimony before the Human Rights Commission - you didn't believe what you were saying at that time, is that correct?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier Binns: Mr. Speaker, I just indicated that what we've done in fact is exactly what I've suggested.

That we had put a system in place so that people don't have to re-apply for their jobs every year, that they're not used as political pawns before elections, and they have the right to keep their jobs if they do a good job. We had changed that. We had put the system in place. No government had the courage to do it before. In fact, quite the opposite. They manipulated people's lives so to take advantage of them politically.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Kings Square.

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

Talk about manipulation. Then why did you not re-hire these people? If you believed in what you said before the Human Rights Commission, then why did you not re-hire these people when they re-applied? I know you changed the system. You said you changed the system. But in 1996 when you took over the leadership of this government and this province and all those people re-applied for their jobs, why weren't they given their jobs back, if you believe in what you said in 1992 before the Human Rights Commission?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier Binns: Mr. Speaker, what I've indicated already continues to be the case.

We've changed the system. The hon. member will recall that as in probably the time the government changed before, many people who held their jobs for years were not re-offered their employment. Those people continued to apply every year and their files were just shoved off to the side. We felt we had a duty to look at all the applicants that came forward, not just those that were in the system most recently, and many of those people had experience. They had driven the snowplow or they had been part of the operating system of government, and we felt those applications deserved consideration as well.

But, Mr. Speaker, we have moved on from that. We have changed the system today. Nobody comes back today asking for a job back. We try to put as many jobs as we can through the Public Service Commission and we've changed the operations.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Kings Square.

Casual employee hiring practices

Mr. R. Brown: Mr. Speaker, another question to the Premier then.

Do we still have the casual employment centre open on Prince Edward Island, or how do you hire your casual employees right now?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier Binns: Mr. Speaker, I'll perhaps ask the minister responsible for the Public Service Commission to answer that.

As the hon. member knows, basically, there has been a no new faces policy in government the last few years and so there's been very few casual positions actually filled in recent times because we have downsized government's overall operations

to meet our operating budget requirements and so on. But the minister responsible can provide more detail.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Kings Square

Number of discrimination cases

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

Okay. Now in 1986 there was one human rights complaint, and that complaint went before a commission and the commission found that there was not discrimination. How many discrimination cases were filed in your administration in 1996?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier Binns: Mr. Speaker, I don't have those numbers off the top of my head.

Obviously, people became aware that they perhaps had an option. There might be an opportunity to collect some revenues as a result of that awareness, and so this situation evolved over time.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Kings Square.

Payouts re legislation changes

Mr. R. Brown: Mr. Speaker, can the Premier tell me how much was paid out under your changes in 1996 legislation or 1998 legislation where you limited people's recourse to a remedy here? How much was paid out under that illegal act that you passed in this House?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier Binns: Mr. Speaker, again, he would find the answer to that in Hansards past but I can look it up again.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Kings Square.

Changes to legislation

Mr. R. Brown: Mr. Speaker, he criticizes the previous administration.

Okay, I'm going to challenge you on something, Mr. Premier. In 1996 there was a human rights complaint, okay? The courts found that the description of political discrimination in the act was illegal or didn't hold any water. There was a reference to the Supreme Court and the Supreme Court said: This reference doesn't matter, or the definition of political discrimination is unclear so you have to fix it up. That time, in 1989, the premier of the day changed the legislation to clarify the definition of political discrimination and he made it retroactive so that individual could go back to court.

Will the Premier be bringing in legislation here like that premier did and make it retroactive so these people, the 850 that you forced to take a payout, now can have their cases re-tried?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier Binns: Mr. Speaker, he's raised a lot of questions there of a legal nature. I think that legislation may even have been sunsetted but I'd have to review the matter.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Kings Square.

Mr. R. Brown: Mr. Speaker, it's a simple question.

This administration brought in legislation that limited people's rights. He's been found guilty on three Supreme Court decisions. Now I'm going to ask - he criticizes the previous administration on their

mechanisms that they used. Will you do what the previous administration did and change that legislation back to what it was before it was found illegal and make it retroactive so those complaints can be properly heard now, or are you going to continue?

You got your payout. You got them to sign the little deals just before Christmas so they could get some money in order to buy some Christmas presents. Will you do the right thing, Mr. Premier, through you, Mr. Speaker? Will you do the right thing and bring in legislation as the 1989 administration did in order for that individual to go back and have his case re-tried?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier Binns: Mr. Speaker, it's already that the matter has been settled.

We have brought in legislation that is progressive and that has eliminated people coming back asking the MLA for their jobs. It's progressive. It removes patronage hiring within the casual service of government. I can't be responsible for everything that's happened in the past. I can tell you that a lot of his assertions are just not correct, however. In one case it was determined the matter was not properly before the courts. His assumptions or his assertions are basically incorrect, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Kings Square.

Current human rights cases

Mr. R. Brown: Okay then, Mr. Premier.

Can you tell this House how you're going to resolve the current 11 cases? How are you going to resolve them? Are you continuing to fight them, are you going to make them

go back to the Human Rights Commission or are you going to settle? Are you going to set up an independent tribunal to settle this or are you going to allow the Human Rights Commission to set the remedy here? What are you going to do?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier Binns: Mr. Speaker, legal counsel for the 11 as well as legal counsel representing the provincial government have been trying to find a settlement in this matter.

It is my understanding that that has not been resolved through no fault of the government's representation here. We have been anxious to settle the matter. I would point out, however, Mr. Speaker, that in two of those 11 cases, those people are still working for government. One of the 11 technically never worked for the government, but in any event, the government is trying to have this matter resolved as expeditiously as possible.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Kings Square.

Mr. R. Brown: Mr. Speaker, this government continues to abuse these people.

The Premier has indicated to this House today that he's negotiating. Well, it's quite obvious that you're at an impasse, that you can't settle this. That's the assumption I'm taking with what the Premier is doing. He's going to try to delay this and have the legal people go back and forth and spend a lot of money on this issue. So if you can't resolve this issue, why don't you allow the Human Rights Commission to set up a tribunal or to say: Human Rights Commission, set the remedies? Set it if you can't agree. Why do you continue to torture these people? Haven't they had enough torture already?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier Binns: Mr. Speaker, the matter is being dealt with by legal counsel at the present time.

Government's lawyers have been attempting to get a claim from the legal counsel representing the 11. To the best of my knowledge, unless something's happened very recently, we still don't have an actual claim from them so it's not our fault that the matter is dragged out, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Kings Square.

Mr. R. Brown: So you've indicated to this House those 11 people have not - no, they're waiting for their rights to be heard before a Human Rights Commission.

That's what their problem is. These guys are trying to work behind closed doors and offer them settlements behind closed doors and try to put it under the rug and make believe nothing happened here. You don't want it to go to a Human Rights Commission, do you Mr. Premier?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier Binns: Mr. Speaker, that matter is always up to the individuals.

I mean, the Human Rights Commission is there for the public to access if they feel they have a need to go there. That's their determination, not ours.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Kings Square.

Mr. R. Brown: Then would the Premier agree then, will he allow the Human Rights Commission to set the remedies for these 11 people? If you can't agree - look, I know what's going on right now. Your lawyers are

sending letters back and forth and saying: Here, we'll offer you \$10,000 or we'll offer you \$5,000. and I know what kind of negotiations are going on.

You have your lawyers in delay mode. Delay this issue. Delay it until after the next election or we're not going to pay this. We're going to pay them a measly sum. We're not going to let anybody else determine what these 11 people should receive. So are you agreeable to sending it to the Human Rights Commission to set the remedy?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier Binns: Mr. Speaker, as I've indicated, the government is attempting to have this matter settled by the legal counsel for both sides coming to some sort of agreement.

But the government cannot settle this until a claim would come forward from the lawyer representing the 11. To the best of my knowledge, as I said earlier, we have not received that claim. That is not government's fault. I don't know why it hasn't come forward. I don't know why they haven't put numbers to paper, but it's certainly taking a long time.

Speaker: Final question.

The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Kings Square.

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

There hasn't been a claim he states, hasn't been a claim. You know why there hasn't been a claim? Because you changed the legislation in 1998 so no one could file claims. Remember that, Mr. Premier? Remember you came onto this floor and you made legislation. You changed the *Human Rights Act* of Prince Edward Island that said:

People cannot make a claim against us under these circumstances, and those 11 were under those circumstances.

That's why they had to take you to the Supreme Court of Prince Edward Island, that's why they had to take you to the Appeals Division, and that's why you tried to take it to the Supreme Court of Canada. It was your legislation that didn't allow them to make a claim, Mr. Premier.

So what I'm asking is the Supreme Courts of the province, both Trial and Appeals Division, and the Supreme Court of Canada have rejected that legislation that you have denied these people access to the courts. What I'm saying today is: Will you allow them a fast track remedy system through the Human Rights Commission?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier Binns: Mr. Speaker, again his assertions are generally wrong but we have embarked on a course of action.

We have accepted the fact that these people can make a claim. We have tried to settle that claim. It's reasonable, but we do not have a claim to the best of my knowledge at this point.

Speaker: End of Question Period.

Statements by Ministers

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Community and Cultural Affairs.

Mr. MacFadyen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I want to take this opportunity to extend congratulations to those who were successful in gaining a seat on their municipal councils in the elections held across Prince Edward Island on November 6th. Within the 75 municipalities functioning

on Prince Edward Island, we have approximately 540 elected officials, and this indicates a high level of involvement in the political process.

I want to thank those who offered their names as a candidate for municipal office and thank those who gave freely of their time to make our communities, cities and towns a better place to work and raise our families.

My own political career began as chair of the Community Improvement Committee of Hillsborough Park in the early 1970s, so I do recognize the challenges that new and returning councillors face. I also am aware that it is personally fulfilling to work every day ensuring that municipalities are maintained as healthy vibrant places in which to live.

It has often been said that the municipal government is the level of government closest to the people, and we can see how this is true. Through this level of government, such services as recreation, policing and fire protection are offered. Some of our larger municipalities have assumed responsibility for municipal sewer and water, some have taken over responsibility for land use planning within their boundaries by adopting official plans and zoning bylaws. Municipal councils can positively affect the everyday lives of Islanders, and these newly elected officials will be making decisions that impact on their communities for many years to come.

I offer congratulations to all and best of support and best wishes.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Crapaud-Hazel Grove.

Ms. Bertram: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I, too, would like to respond to the minister and give the opposition's congratulatory remarks to those that were successful during the municipal elections, and also to those that put their name forward as the minister stated. Because just to put your name forward and run in a municipal, provincial, federal election, is a lot of work and it shows a commitment to the community here on Prince Edward Island. There is a great deal of people that have done that over the years.

So congratulations to all of them and best wishes in their terms.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Development and Technology.

Mr. Currie: Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise this morning to inform the House of an announcement which will take place Monday, November 20th at St. Teresa's Consolidated School at 11:00 a.m.

The Premier, the minister of education, the MLA for District 2 and I, will join the teachers and students at St. Teresa's to throw the switch on a new wireless highspeed video conferencing capability for the St. Teresa's school. This is a pilot project jointly funded by the Department of Development and Technology and the Provincial Treasury, which has the potential to connect students in small rural schools to programs and curriculum that may not be available to them on a regular basis.

As this House is aware, there are ongoing challenges with the declining enrollment in our Island school system. In 1995, St. Teresa's was one of the schools that was red circled for closure. Our government not only kept all schools open, but have made investments such as this one to help them remain active and vibrant.

On Monday, David Philips, a senior weather man with Environment Canada, will be part of the ceremony, via video conferencing from Ottawa. Students will be encouraged to ask questions of Mr. Philips to learn more about the ever-changing weather patterns in our region and our country.

It is my hope that bringing new technology to St. Teresa's school will allow teachers and students to explore new opportunities beneficial to their overall learning. As technology develops, it brings the world closure and its potential as a learning tool will only continue to expand.

Members of the Legislature, the media and the general public are invited to attend the ceremony.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Kings Square.

Mr. R. Brown: Mr. Speaker, I don't know what this government would do if it wasn't for the opposition.

I questioned the minister on wireless communications last year in the House and I made that suggestion that we do wireless communications for rural PEI. You know, I'm glad to see the minister taking our advice. I read the Throne Speech, it's identical to what we have been proposing for the last couple of years. Buy hey, this is a democracy, and if you can't make up your own ideas, steal someone else's.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health, Social Services and Seniors.

Mr. Gillan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to bring attention to Family Doctor Week in Canada which took place earlier this month to recognize the significant contributions that family doctors make toward the health and well-being of Canadians and Prince Edward Islanders.

Each and every day family doctors diagnose and treat illnesses and injury, promote disease prevention and good health, coordinate care and advocate on behalf of their patients. They not only provide primary medical care, but also a substantial portion of secondary and tertiary care in many communities, working from their offices as well as hospitals, their patients' homes, nursing homes and other community facilities.

It is my pleasure to welcome members of the PEI College of Family Physicians to the gallery of the House today. Joining us today, we do have two members here representing the individuals in the groups that I have spoken about. We have Dr. Charles Duffy who in the past has been a recent winner as a preceptor of the year and very well known in both the eastern and western sections of Prince Edward Island for his valuable work. The college administrator from the college of family physicians, Elaine Caseley, is also here with us today. So I welcome them on behalf of the members of the Legislature.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Gillan: A highlight of Family Doctor Week in Canada is the College of Family Physicians of Canada's annual Family Medicine Forum, which was held this year in Quebec City from November 2nd to the 4th. I'm very pleased to note that at this event Dr. Alfred Morais, Prince Edward Island's 2006 Family Physician of the Year, was one of only ten family doctors to receive the Reg L. Perkin Award in

celebration of Canada's Family Physicians of the Year.

These awards go to outstanding family doctors in each province for their embodiment of all that a family doctor is meant to be: a caring, compassionate and skilled personal physician committed to the health and well-being of patients and communities.

Canada owes a debt of gratitude to its family doctors and it gives me great pleasure to take this opportunity to say thank you to all of our family doctors for the work that they do each and every day, and for their significant contribution to our health care system in PEI and across Canada.

I know Islanders are very appreciative of family doctors, as I am, for their contribution and dedication to the health care system on Prince Edward Island. Please join me in thanking them.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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

I, too, would like to recognize our family doctors during Family Doctor Week in Canada. I had the opportunity to read in the paper about the award won by Dr. Alfred Morais, and I can attest that he is a great doctor and a great gentleman. In fact he works with the department on recruiting, and I know that he's one of the driving forces in looking for change here in the Province of Prince Edward Island to make sure that we can have more family doctors here in the province.

So I want to take this opportunity to thank all our family doctors for the great work that they're doing and hopefully we'll be able to get them more help along the way.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health, Social Services and Seniors.

Mr. Gillan: Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to acknowledge that Monday, November 20th is National Child Day, a day that commemorates the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

National Child Day is also a day to remember that children need to be loved, nurtured and heard in order to learn and grow to their full potential. It's a time to celebrate our children and to think of ways we can improve their well-being through actions in our homes, communities, workplaces and governments.

Since 2000, governments, communities, family-centred organizations and individuals have been working together to turn knowledge and ideas into actions that support the goals of the Healthy Child Development Strategy. I remind members that the vision of the PEI Healthy Child Development Strategy is that all Island children will be safe and secure, enjoy good health, be successful at learning, and benefit from social belonging and responsibility.

Significant action has taken place in the past two years to improve the well-being of Island children. More dollars have been invested in the regulated early childhood sector of PEI than ever before; more spaces have been created and supports put in place for this sector; more dollars have been invested in child care subsidies for Island families; investments have been made to the

Best Start program to take it province-wide. To date there are more than 200 families which have benefitted from this Best Start program.

Through the PEI Partnerships for Children fund, community-based groups have received support to carry out key actions of the Healthy Child Development Strategy. Projects like bicycle helmet and car seat safety education, physical activity resources, parenting supports and most recently, the Parenting is the Best Job You'll Ever Have media campaign.

In last evening's Speech From the Throne, government announced the new Young Child Tax Credit that will benefit Island families this tax year.

Provincial government is committed to strengthening our early learning and child care system. Collaborative work with the early learning and child care sector of the province continues. Together, we will implement a comprehensive action plan that assures quality, accessible and affordable care programs.

In the spirit of National Child Day, I want to thank the Early Childhood Development Association, child care operators and staff, volunteers and staff of family resource centres, faith communities and the many other family-centred organizations and communities of PEI for your commitment to our children.

My government and opposition colleagues have been invited by the Early Childhood Development Association and the PEI Children's Secretariat to wear blue ribbons today to show our support for National Child Day and PEI children. I invite all Islanders to join in National Child Day celebrations. Plan to take part in a children's walking parade on Monday morning in Charlottetown and Summerside, or simply

take the time to play or read with a child.

Our future depends on their healthy development.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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

This is obviously an important subject, National Child Day. It's something where if we want our future to be prosperous we have to concentrate on helping our children now.

I want to take this opportunity to congratulate the hon. Member from Crapaud-Hazel Grove, and all the other volunteers across this province, and all the other mothers and parents, fathers, too, that when this government tried to cut the Best Start Program funding they lobbied to not have that cut. They lobbied successfully and this government did reinstate it. But I want to thank the hon. Member from Crapaud-Hazel Grove and all those other volunteers.

If there's one other thing that I think we should strive for, that is a national daycare program. I know we were on the verge of having one. We did have a deal signed, but unfortunately federal parties changed, or the federal government changed. We had a premier here that was all alone and not trying to stand up to fight for that original deal and it's quite unfortunate, but it will be my pleasure for the rest of my career to fight for such a program. Because I believe by investing in our youth today, it will only pay dividends in the long run.

Thank you very much.

Mr. Gillan: Mr. Speaker, may I ask the Pages to now deliver a child package to each of the members so that they will have information before them on the importance of this day and the occasion?

Presenting and Receiving Petitions

Tabling of Documents

Speaker: The Clerk.

Clerk: Mr. Speaker, please be advised that, pursuant to Rule 80(k) of the Rules of the Legislative Assembly of Prince Edward Island, the following documents were received by the office of the Clerk and tabled intersessionally since the House last met on June 28th, 2006:

2002/2003 Annual Report of the Department of Community and Cultural Affairs; the 2004/2005 Annual Report of la Commission scolaire de langue français; the 2004/2005 Annual Report of the PEI Lending Agency; the 2004/2005 Annual Report of the PEI Lotteries Commission; the 2004/2005 Annual Report of the Teachers' Superannuation Fund; the Eastern School District Annual Report for the period ending June 30th, 2005; the 2005/2006 Annual Report of the PEI Liquor Control Commission; the 2002/2003 Annual Report of the Office of the Attorney General; and Answers to Written Questions Nos. 1 through 9, 11, 16 through 23, 40 through 62, 68 through 71, and 73 through 80.

Reports by Committees

Introduction of Government Bills

Speaker: The hon. Provincial Treasurer.

Mr. Murphy: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce a Bill to be intituled *An Act to Amend the Civil Service Act* and I move, seconded by the Honourable Government

House Leader, that the same be now received and read a First Time.

Speaker: Shall it carry?

Some Hon. Members: Carried.

Clerk: *An Act to Amend the Civil Service Act*, Bill No. 2, read a First Time.

Speaker: The hon. Provincial Treasurer.

Mr. Murphy: Mr. Speaker, this is a request of the auditor's office to put before the Legislative Assembly to make an officer or employee of the Office of the Auditor General exempt from the *Civil Service Act*. In other words, give them excluded employee status.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Aquaculture.

Mr. Bagnall: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce a Bill to be intituled *An Act to Repeal the Livestock Community Auction Sales Act* and I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Development and Technology, that the same be now received and read a First Time.

Speaker: Shall it carry?

Some Hon. Members: Carried.

Clerk: *An Act to Repeal the Livestock Community Auction Sales Act*, Bill No. 4, read a First Time.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Aquaculture.

Mr. Bagnall: This act just repeals the community action sales act, which has been obsolete and hasn't been in use for years. So we're just repealing it.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of

Environment, Energy and Forestry.

Mr. Ballem: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce a Bill to be intituled *An Act to Amend the Renewable Energy Act* and I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Education and Attorney General, that the same be now received and read a First Time.

Speaker: Shall it carry?

Some Hon. Members: Carried.

Clerk: *An Act to Amend the Renewable Energy Act*, Bill No. 3, read a First Time.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Environment, Energy and Forestry.

Mr. Ballem: This amendment will allow for small capacity renewable energy generator under net metering to have an alternative anniversary date as opposed to October 31st.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Education and Attorney General.

Ms. Dover: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce a Bill to be intituled *Hairdressers Act* and I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Environment, Energy and Forestry, that the same be now received and read a First Time.

Speaker: Shall it carry?

Some Hon. Members: Carried.

Clerk: *Hairdressers Act*, Bill No. 6, read a First Time.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Education and Attorney General.

Ms. Dover: This act will repeal the current act and will continue the association setting out a modernization of their powers, of their abilities to license and give permits and so

on.

Government Motions

Orders of the Day (Government)

Speaker: The hon. Provincial Treasurer.

Mr. Murphy: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Government House Leader, that the 1st Order of the Day be now read.

Speaker: Shall it carry?

Some Hon. Members: Carried.

Clerk: Order No. 1, Consideration of the Speech of Her Honour Lieutenant-Governor at the opening of the present Session.

Speaker: The mover of the motion, the hon. Member from Morell-Fortune Bay.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Crane: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's certainly an honour for me to have the privilege to actually be moving this Throne Speech. In fact, I must tell you I was so excited when the Premier asked me to take on this task, until one of my colleagues mentioned that actually people take turns and we're at the end of the group in the room to not have done this before. So it's still thrilling to me.

Anyway, it's hard to put in words the pride I feel and felt yesterday as I sat in the Legislature and listened to Her Honour Lieutenant-Governor Barbara Hagerman deliver our government's plans for the future.

The response from the public was overwhelming. If you were over with us yesterday at the Speaker's Reception you

would have heard all kinds of great comments. Also, judging from the conversations that I've had after that as well as a couple of telephone calls that I actually received, clearly the forthright thinking and the decisive leadership of our hon. Premier has won the favour of Prince Edward Islanders. I know his leadership certainly resonates with me.

Before I begin to comment on Throne Speech, I would like to first acknowledge some of the new faces here in the Legislature.

On behalf of my hon. colleagues, I would like to extend a sincere welcome to our new Pages. I'm sure they are probably today as nervous as I was a few months ago when I entered this Chamber.

Kate MacKinnon, from Morell High School. I actually know Kate and her family quite well. Alana McKie, this would be Eddie McKie's daughter from Souris area, a fellow blueberry farmer and an extremely hard working family, welcome. Katharine MacDonald from Colonel Grey - actually it's funny. Katharine grew up in Savage Harbour, Prince Edward Island, and many the nights she spent at my house with my daughter Lydia having sleepovers, and many the nights I chased Katharine to bed. I really looking forward to seeing her here in the House.

Brittany Rojas from Kinkora High School, Keltie MacPhail from Bluefield High School, Jacques Gallant from École Évangeline Matthias Brennan from Three Oaks Senior High School - I don't know you all personally yet, but I certainly look forward to have the chance to get to know you over the next month.

It is important to show our appreciation for all the people who work so hard on behalf, including the staff of government members,

the opposition office, our industrious Clerk Charles MacKay, the very capable Clerk Assistant Marian Johnston, and all the staff of the Legislative Assembly.

I would like to extend our congratulations to our new Director of Security, Al MacDonald, who replaces the recently retired Wayne Collicott.

As you know there have been numerous others who play a vital role in keeping us on an even keel. I would like to thank the Sergeant-at-Arms, the staff at Hansard, our hard working messengers and Pages and our diligent commissionaires. Thank you for all the hard work that you do for us on our behalf.

I would be remiss if I didn't also mention what a privilege it was to witness our new Lieutenant-Governor's first day address to the Assembly. Her Honour's appointment as Prince Edward Island 40th Lieutenant-Governor does credit to that office and I know that her term in office will be of benefit to all Islanders.

I want to make special mention of our government's decision to declare 2007 the Year of the Public Servant. This includes our civil servants, police, fire and military services. I cannot imagine a more deserving group of hard working people, whether it's police departments, fire departments or the reservists or the civil servants, the people working here.

Sometimes when you mention people like that you don't put people in front of you, but when you actually think about it, these people are wives, our husbands, our sons and daughters. They are also new people to the province. I think it's really nice over the next year when each of us take a chance to individually acknowledge the great contribution these people make to the province.

Also, on behalf of all of all Islanders I would like to extend my appreciation to all the public servants who work so hard to deliver programs and services to all the people. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Crane: My children will tell you that they have always heard me say on so many occasions how lucky we are to live here on Prince Edward Island.

We have a quality of life and an appreciation of others that is second to none. A funny story: yesterday morning as I was trying to get ready to come into the House, a new neighbour of ours was actually coming up our side road. Most of the people know where I live, it's pretty isolated. Anyway, this lady was stopped alone the side of the road and I went out to see how she was doing or what was wrong. I discovered she actually had lost her horse. Her horse was named Bear, she's new to the community, and she was frantic. For us who have pets, pets are an extension of our family. But what struck me was that before the morning was over it wasn't just myself and other ladies that were actually helping this lady recuperate her horse. When you think about it, the Island has many traditions, but one of our greatest traditions is the notion that we're always ready to help others and we're also always ready to do a contribution for other people.

We're very fortunate to be bound together by more than our geography. We are an independent lot and as our history has shown we take pride in our self determination. Imagine for a moment what the earliest European settlers saw when they first arrived here. What was their first impression of Prince Edward Island? It was the forest, Mr. Speaker. After all, in the 16th and 17th century 99% of the Island, indeed much of the Maritimes, was forested land

and what we call the Acadian forest. For the earliest cultivators the forest was an obstacle. Or was it? Was the forest an opportunity?

Early diaries make reference to feeling imprisoned by the forest, which is understandable when you consider these new Island settlers came from areas where the land has been in agricultural use for generations, from areas like the Highlands where trees were few and far between.

Consider as well what it was like for the Selkirk settlers, the group of Scottish colonialists brought to Prince Edward Island in 1803 by Thomas Douglas, the 5th Earl of Selkirk. These 800 Highland men and women sailed on three ships, the *Polly*, the *Dykes* and the *Oughton*.

As they looked at their new home all they could see was trees. They realized that they didn't have the proper tools to clear the land, but what they did have was the energy, the ingenuity to make the land habitable

I mentioned diaries written by some of the settlers, and their stories vividly bring to mind the dangers and hardships they faced in the 100 years that it took to clear the land to become self sufficient. It also makes me think of the men and women who also saw the future. They saw the chance for agriculture, for building of homes, and for selling of products.

There are many - and I mean many - references to mosquitoes. The work to clear the land was as difficult as it was dangerous. Accidents and injuries were common and the wooded land made it easier for children to wander off and become lost.

Another ever-present worry was the fear of livestock wandering off into the forest. It wasn't just about the fear of being lost. There was the very real threat posed by the

wildlife inhabitants of the forest.

However, when my son Drew, who happens to be a history major at the university, tells me about the past, he always gets excited about the opportunities that these new people had and the great chance to start a new place here on Prince Edward Island.

When you take a look at the passenger list from the *Polly*, it immediately becomes apparent that these settlers were here to stay and they did. Just pick up the telephone book and you will see their descendants prominently listed in communities throughout the province, established family names such as MacLaren, MacDonald, Fraser, Gills, Buchanan, MacKenzie, MacLeod, Nicholson, Ross, Stewart, MacAulay, MacRae, MacEachern, Docherty and Campbell. This is not the entire list, but it is clear that these settlers, despite the dangers and hardships, came to Prince Edward Island and stayed. They stayed because they saw the potential, that they wanted to be a partner in creating a new culture.

Think about the great era of ship building. Timber was removed, but at that time it also allowed for agriculture to take place. The forest at that time was still covered even then with wild blueberries which everybody knows what a successful agriculture product wild blueberries are even today.

Did our forefathers at that time think about just the dangers or did they see opportunities for the province of PEI even then?

So you have to ask yourself: What is it about our province that evokes such strong feelings of pride, pride of place and pride in people?

There are many answers, but for my money it's that we're all bound by the commonality of our arrival here. Our arrival as displaced

people from lands that can no longer support its population, to a new place, a new beginning with hope, opportunity, a chance to work together in a place full of possibilities.

Our early history books detail the obstacle and challenges faced by newcomers in the province, the majority of whom came from primarily European cultures, including the people of Scottish, Irish, English, and French heritage. They were met by the Mi'kmaq who made the Island their home for 2000 years before their arrival. Men and women working side by side making contributions and being neighbourly to each other in this new place.

But our province's history is continuously evolving and changing. Today I am very proud to say that more than 90 different ethnic groups are included in today's population of Prince Edward Island.

For example, this year our Chinese community is celebrating its 150th anniversary of cultural heritage in this province. I am proud to say that so far this year nearly 350 immigrants have arrived on our shores from over 29 countries, including Cambodia, Ethiopia, Taiwan, South Korea and China.

Drew reminds me that in the early 1800s I think it was 80,000 people who lived here in the province. He claims that it was a great issue then and it's a great issue now, and I'm really proud our government continues to make PEI a welcoming place as we encourage more people to come and reside here.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Crane: Religion, language, political systems, traditions. Each group of settlers arrived and continues to arrive with their own set of beliefs. Mr. Speaker, it is this,

our very diversity, that has shaped and continues to shape our history.

Part and parcel of this commonality is our immense appreciation for the sheer beauty of our province. I think for some Islanders it's only after they've been away - an Island expression that everyone here understands to mean anywhere but Prince Edward Island - that they truly grasp the natural wonder of this province.

Start at any point on the Island and as you travel the highways and the byways there is an unfolding panorama of colours, the shades of green in the cultivated fields, the white sandy beaches, the red clay roads, the palette of blues that mark our coastal and inland waters. Picture horses grazing, Holsteins standing tall, our families fishing lobster from the (Indistinct) shore. Our Prince Edward Island and our people are beautiful.

Every fictional story written by Prince Edward Island's most famous daughter, Lucy Maud Montgomery, is set on Prince Edward Island, and her ready explanation for this choice is the inspiration she drew from the land, the sea and the people around her.

Our government has a sacred obligation to protect this legacy of beauty in our surroundings and the families that choose to be part of our Island way of life.

Fortunately for us, our Premier and members of this government have the abilities required to ensure a strong and viable future for Islanders. Not only do these talented men and women have the ability to get things done, they also have a keen insight into what needs to be done.

Our government supports initiatives that will enable newcomers to participate in the labour force, to become economically self-

sufficient, to participate in the social dimensions of life here on Prince Edward Island, and to encourage community involvement in settlement and integration priorities.

How is it that they have this foresight? It is because our government listens to what Islanders from across the province have to say. Then, based on these conversations, our government has open and frank discussions about possibilities for the province today and into the future. Then together, government and the people work on developing the framework to be able to implement these ideas. These initiatives announced in the Throne Speech yesterday came directly from Islanders. We are a smart province and the people here know that we can have the best of both worlds. We can protect and enhance the natural beauty of the province. At the same time, we can provide a thriving economic environment. After all, it is our province's success in agriculture and fisheries that has actually allowed the evolution of an industry such as the bioscience industry.

In the first order of business, it provides a strong educational foundation for Island students. Our government believes that an investment in our youth benefit all Islanders. This year's operating budget for the department of education is \$20.4 million. This includes new investments of \$9 million which will be spent over the next three years to address the recommendations for the task force on student achievement.

Then there is another \$9.4 million for capital construction. I believe, and I think Islanders also believe, that this 5% increase in our budget is a reflection of the high priority our government places on education and is a clear demonstration of our commitment to improve student achievement in our province. We are fortunate in this regard because Prince Edward Island is home to

fine post-secondary institutions. Look at Holland College. Holland College this week just completed an open house on Wednesday. It has more than 65 full-time career training programs, and the curriculum of all these programs is industry driven. This year the college welcomed more than 2,600 full-time and 4,070 part-time students in 13 locations across the province. They came from a variety of work and educational backgrounds.

What is it about Holland College that has led them there? It is the college's reputation as a leader in hands-on skilled based training. But as well, Holland College has exceptional staff, instructors and support staff. Holland College places high value on its students and their educational experience. In fact, a recent study of Holland College graduates indicates that 94.1% of graduates who are in the labour force are actually employed. What parent wouldn't like these statistics? I think it's also fair to say that our government contribution of \$15.5 million to the college's annual operating budget is money well spent, not to mention the sound investment in the future of our youth.

Then we have the University of Prince Edward Island. Again this year, UPEI has moved up in the annual *Maclean's* magazine ranking for the country's 21 undergraduate universities. Where does the university currently stand in the national rankings? It ranks fifth.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Crane: The *Maclean's* ranking placed UPEI number one in the country for awards for full-time faculty and placed fourth for the number of students winning awards. Right now, there are more than 4,000 students from 50 countries and every region of Canada attending UPEI. Again, I'd have to say that our government's \$21 million annual contribution to the university's

operating budget is a worthwhile investment.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Crane: Certainly, president Wade MacLauchlan, members of the staff and faculty, and indeed the students, have worked hard to attain this ranking, and I'm sure that all members of the Assembly will join with me in offering our congratulations.

I want to just mention a few highlights directly from the Throne Speech that I think is remarkable that we're able to provide to the citizens of the province.

One, yesterday it was mentioned about the establishment of a new multi-year program to address capital requirements to the Island's system of manors. I think for every one of us who have visited our relatives and friends in the manors, we realize how over the years a lot of work needs to be done. Some of those manors were built back in the early 1970s. Also, the change of assessment for long-term care to consider our seniors' income rather than seniors' assets. How many times has the Shirleys, the Flos, the Arts, the (Indistinct) all make great idea to each and every one of us how things could help change their life by something as great as that?

Another great, I think, accomplishment or something that's going to be new, is the work on the youth addiction strategy. Every one of us here knows how much that's needed in the province. We have great young people, but our young people are no different than everybody else, and there's a number of issues that need to be addressed, especially in the area of addiction.

In the area of education, I'm really proud to be able to say that apparently one of the statistics that in our grade one to nine schools, 79% of class size in our grade one

to nine schools actually has a student-teacher ratio of less than 25 students to teacher. I think that's pretty impressive.

In the area of tourism, our notion of all the opportunities, especially new ones, when you start thinking about what may be possible - some of our colleagues this morning mentioned about the wind farms a couple of times. How many people have made the comment they'd like to drive up to eastern Kings to see it? I happened to be lucky enough to be on a bus with a group of engineers about two weeks ago that came from all over the place to actually see that. Tourism can take place in various ways and we have tremendous opportunities if we just keep looking at the future to help make things happen.

In the area of small business, it's exciting to think that we're going to have a pilot project to allow Sunday shopping from May until December.

Again, in the area of energy, the government has set a very bold target: 30% of the province's total energy needs from local renewable energy resources by 2016, not far away. The other part, I think it gives such a tremendous opportunity for our agriculture community who can look at growing alternative crops to help us with our energy solution.

In the area of agriculture, how many times have we talked about the opportunities around organics? Actually last night in the news, we would see young Scott Dingwell a farmer from our area, talking with his partners about natural and organic pork. Often we forget though, as well as organics, another area that people in the province have a real opportunity is in terms of production around agriculture, is actually being really good in our animal husbandry techniques, and allowing our animals to be treated the way they should be. Now that we've had

one successful company around the area of organics, how many others are going to follow?

In the area of alternative crops, whether it's sugar beets or whether it's actually growing barley for heat units, many exciting things. Still in agriculture, I keep going back to my earlier comments about our forefathers. As we sit here today and we talk about agriculture, how many young people might see some tremendous new opportunities? Now that we have announced and worked with the University of Prince Edward Island in the area of the expansion of business school and also entrepreneurship, how many new things are going to be able to happen? I keep challenging people: What do you see when you think about the future of PEI?

In the area of the fisheries, this week there was a couple of announcements - or actually in a couple of newspapers that talked about the notion that by the year 2050 there is going to be very few fish left in our oceans. When you think about the Atlantic Vet College and you think about the number of very successful Island fishers - in our north shore in my community, for example, we had some lobster fishermen that actually brought in between 40 and 50,000 pounds of lobster. Can you think of the possibilities that they sit and think about? Maybe it's time again for farmed fish using closed system re-circulation and some new ways to keep the energy costs down.

In the area of forestry, every one of us here have met Kate MacQuarrie. When you think of the work that Kate and her department have done working with the community over the last couple of years to come up with the new forestry product. It's exciting because people in the public, the forestry sector, and our communities start to look at new ways that are sustainable that each person in their own way can make a living doing some things that are different. Yes, Mr. Speaker,

Prince Edward Island is a great place to be.

My goodness, Mr. Speaker, has there ever been a better time to be living here on Prince Edward Island? Like I tell my children, I do not think so.

The policies that this government have put in place, as well as the direction that is outlined for the coming years, shows a vision of a prosperous province (Indistinct), one where Islanders are actually going to work together with government. This work is going to enable to create a very sustainable future for our children. It is no surprise that ours is the only maritime province with a growing population. After all, people know a good thing when they see it.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker (Mooney): To second the motion, the hon. Member from Evangeline-Miscouche.

Mr. Arsenault: Podium, please?

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

It's a considerable privilege to have the opportunity to second the Speech From the Throne. I am honoured to stand in this Chamber and give my full support to the goals that our government has laid out for the future of Prince Edward Island.

I am proud that our government is recognizing the contributions made by the provincial government employees as we mark the 2007 as the Year of the Public Servant here in Prince Edward Island.

I would like to echo the sentiments expressed by my colleague, the hon. Member from Morell-Fortune Bay, and

extend my appreciation for their dedicated efforts on our behalf, for their efforts on behalf of all Islanders. I would also agree with my colleague when she says that this is a good time to be living on Prince Edward Island. For example, I recently read that the cost of living in Atlantic Canada is 25% to 65% lower than it is in other major North American regions.

Il n'est donc pas surprenant que les Insulaires soient confiants face à leur avenir. Nous avons toutes les ressources nécessaires ici même à l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard pour bâtir des communautés sécuritaires, saines et prospères.

It is no wonder then, that Islanders are confident about their future. We have all the resources we need right here on Prince Edward Island to build safe, healthy, and prosperous communities.

We have a talented and skilled workforce, natural resources to build on, and a government with a vision for all Islanders. Still, we can always do better, so our government went out and asked what Islanders wanted and this is what they told us.

They want to become healthier citizens and families. Islanders want to embrace lifelong learning. They want the privilege of building safe and caring communities. Islanders want to create a respectful balance between prosperity and ensuring a safe environment.

Nous avons écouté les Insulaires, comme il a été clairement mis en évidence par les initiatives exposées dans le discours du Trône de Son Honneur. Nous avons écouté, et afin de mener à bien les objectifs proposés par les Insulaires, nous prendrons les mesures suivantes:

We listened to Islanders, as is clearly made evident by the initiatives outlined in Her

Honour's throne address. We listened, and in order to accomplish the goals laid out by Islanders we will do the following:

Nous continuerons de mettre en oeuvre des stratégies: qui mettent en valeur notre santé et notre bien-être général; qui accroissent les revenus et les perspectives d'emploi; qui améliorent notre apprentissage et le développement de nos compétences; nous accomplirons ces objectifs tout en protégeant nos terres et nos eaux.

We will continue to implement strategies: that enhance our health and over-all well-being; that increase income and job opportunities; that improve our learning and skills-set development, and we will accomplish these goals while protecting our land and waters.

We will continue to promote and protect the health of Islanders. I can give you a few examples: a new single, acute care hospital which will be built in West Prince; the move to provide affordable drugs by increasing the budget for provincial pharmacy programs; a new multi-year program to address capital requirements for the province's system of manors; expanding nursing bed capacity for Island seniors; and the move to eliminate the consideration of assets owned by seniors when applying for long-term care.

There has been a great deal of talk recently about the new hospital for West Prince. I want to be very clear. I agree with and fully endorse the recommendations from the West Prince Consultation Project Committee to build a new single acute care hospital in Bloomfield.

The recommendations were part of a report which detailed results from a series of community consultations held in West Prince this past spring.

Just to give a little background, it was in the 2005 Speech from the Throne, that our government made a commitment to provide a forum for dialogue on the concept of a centrally located single acute care hospital with the community of West Prince. In March 2006 my hon. colleague and staff of the Department of Health announced the formation of a committee to oversee this dialogue.

The primary objective of the committee was to seek the views and perspectives of partners and stakeholders regarding the concept for a new single acute care hospital centrally located between the existing hospitals in West Prince and report the findings to the minister of health. Consult they did. Almost 1,200 individuals participated in the process which included six private stakeholder meetings, six public forums and alternative opportunities for written and oral submissions.

The next stage of the hospital project also involves consultation. A consulting firm will carry out the master planning phase which will engage staff, physicians and community residents in defining the range and scope of services to be offered in the new hospital.

Our government anticipates that this process will take place over the next six to eight months. Upon completion of the architectural design, we expect to break ground in 2008.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Arsenault: I agree with area residents when they tell me that the new hospital project will be a means to stabilize delivery of acute and primary care services in West Prince.

I would like to quote Ernest Hudson, who serves as chair of the West Prince

Consultation Committee. Here's what he said: Hospital physicians, staff and many others in the community recognized that a single new health facility was needed and will attract staff, physicians and volunteers to acute care services in the area. End of quotation.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Arsenault: I also maintain that this decision to go ahead with a single acute care facility in West Prince will work to ensure reliable long-term healthcare for residents.

Mr. Speaker, I realize that the Community Hospital in O'Leary and Western Hospital in Alberton are very close to the hearts of all West Prince residents. Both sides of the issue were heard. We were told that every effort should be made to maintain them in their present roles.

On the other hand, a number of participants stated that maintaining the status quo would be impossible, indicating that a prolonged attempt to do so would inevitably result in West Prince losing the services that are presently provided.

It was brought up at every meeting that the recruitment and retention of healthcare workers was one of the most important factors for maintaining viability of services. Specific areas of concern mentioned were increasing workloads, frequency of on-call schedules, work-life balances, and discrepancies in physician compensation between rural and urban areas. Again, I was glad to hear that our health recruitment and retention initiatives will be expanded with a focus on rural Prince Edward Island.

Les nouvelles mesures que nous mettrons en oeuvre incluent un «Programme de résidence en médecine», ainsi qu'un programme amélioré en matière de frais de scolarité et d'incitatifs fiscaux offerts aux

étudiants en médecine de l'Île et aux praticiens qui acceptent de travailler dans les régions insuffisamment desservies de la province.

New measures that will be undertaken include a Medical Residency Program as well as an enhanced package of tuition and tax incentives for Island medical students and practitioners who agree to work in under-serviced regions of the province.

As well as recommending a new single hospital, the committee brought forth a recommendation that government develop a strategic plan to address the health care needs of an aging population, the need to replace Maplewood Manor, and to make best use of existing acute care facilities in Alberton and O'Leary.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Arsenault: One thing you can count on with our government, Mr. Speaker, is that we listen. In the Speech from the Throne we announced a new, multi-year program to address capital requirements for the Island's system of manors.

La décision d'introduire des améliorations à la viabilité financière des soins de longue durée pour les personnes âgées de l'Île est d'égale importance aux Insulaires. Comment allons-nous y arriver? En tenant compte du revenu plutôt que de l'actif, ainsi que grâce à la décision du gouvernement d'absorber les coûts médicaux associés aux soins infirmiers. Je crois que les Insulaires de tous les âges appuieront ce changement.

Of equal importance to Islanders is the decision to introduce improvements to the affordability of long-term care for Island Seniors. How will this come about? Through assessment changes from assets to income and as well as government's decision to absorb the medical costs of

nursing care. I think Islanders of every age will support this move.

Now, I would like to turn attention now to one of my favourite topics, the rapidly growing aerospace industry that is located in Slemon Park in the Evangeline-Miscouche area. Slemon Park is certainly the place to be if you are interested in a career in the province's ever-expanding aerospace industry.

Since the closure of Canadian Forces Base in Summerside back in 1991, the province has been working hard to develop a niche market in the international aerospace business. To say that our government has met with some success is an understatement considering the influence the aerospace sector now has on our provincial economy.

Aerospace is Prince Edward Island's fourth largest industry and it currently accounts for 25% of all our international exports. Today, the industry is Prince Edward Island's second largest exporter.

The industry produces a broad range of products and services and these include airframe repair, space and defence, mass-transit, high-performance aero engines, engine accessories and landing gear.

Islanders have a very real opportunity to develop a career in this field. Just ask the people already employed in this industry and they'll tell you that the numbers seem to increase day by day. Their workload increases and the number of jobs created increases.

For example, seven aerospace firms operating in Prince Edward Island had a total of 700 employees on their payroll by the end of 2003. By the end of 2005, that number had grown to 828 people gainfully employed in the industry.

Cela représente une hausse de 18% du nombre d'emplois créés dans cette industrie. De plus, en 2005, les services de paie ont gonflé avec un taux de temps supplémentaire de 17%.

This represents an 18% increase in the number of jobs created within the industry. Additionally, in 2005 the companies' payrolls were swelled with a 17% overtime rate.

As telling as the job growth numbers are at Slemon Park, the numbers in terms of sales, are even more impressive. In 2003 the cumulative sales in the Island's aerospace industry were \$180 million dollars. In 2005, two years later, the sales reached \$273 million dollars.

That's quite a result. In just two years, the industry saw an increase of over 50%. Keep in mind that this was all happening at the same time as the US dollar fell by over 20%.

Clearly, this success reflects the work ethic and the productivity of Islanders. There's no surprise here. Islanders have had a long tradition of skilled workers and bringing innovation as a keen sense of integrity to their working day.

I believe that there's another ingredient that is part of the success of the rebirth of former CFB Summerside. This is the spirit of cooperation and partnership that went into finding a way to recover from the closure of the base in Summerside. Area residents, all levels of government, and the industry, stepped up to the plate when they realized the potential in establishing an aerospace industry here in Prince Edward Island.

I'm proud of our government's support to the aerospace industry. I'd like to encourage Islanders to consider a career in this aerospace industry and join with this growing community of people who have

already done so.

The outlook for the aerospace industry this year and into the future is very promising. The industry is predicting similar economic and employment gains, and this is especially encouraging for Islanders as Prince Edward Island and owners and employees at Slemmon Park cement their reputations for offering a recognized centre of excellence for the aerospace industry.

Another source of good news for people in my area - we have an increase in visitations in the Evangeline region this past summer.

Selon les chiffres compilés par l'Association touristique d'Évangéline, le nombre de personnes qui participent à des activités et des événements dans cette région a connu une hausse de 20 à 30% au cours de la dernière année.

According to numbers compiled by the Evangeline Tourism Association, the number of people taking in events and attractions in this area have jumped between 20 and 30% over last year.

The Atlantic Fiddlers' Jamboree saw a 30% increase in attendance, while the Evangeline and Area Agricultural Exhibition and the Acadian Festival realized a 23% hike. The Acadian Museum proved to be a popular attraction again, showing an 28.6% jump in the number of people coming through the doors.

Le Centre Expo-Festival a pris la décision d'ajouter davantage de spectacles à son horaire cette année et par conséquent, ils ont connu une hausse de 20 pour cent en assistance. Les ventes de soupers au homard ont augmenté de 50 pour cent et tout ce que je peux dire est que si vous n'avez pas encore eu la chance de goûter à ce repas, vous vous privez d'une vraie expérience culinaire de l'Île.

The Expo-Festival Centre made the decision to add more shows to its schedule this year and in turn, they had a 20% increase in attendance. Lobster supper sales increased by 50%, and all I can say is that if you haven't had a chance yet to enjoy one of these meals, you are missing out on a true Island culinary experience.

Les activités organisées par la nouvelle Coopérative de développement culturel et patrimonial de Mont-Carmel, qui ont inclus la reprise du souper-théâtre populaire La Cuisine à Mémé, ont également attiré un grand nombre de personnes à la région.

Activities organized by the new Co-opérative de développement culturel et patrimonial de Mont-Carmel, which included the takeover of the popular dinner-theatre La Cuisine à Mémé, also drew large numbers of people into the region.

I think that one thing that made a positive difference for businesses in the area was the decision to open early and close late in the season. As they say, the proof is in the pudding. When the numbers were tallied, they were strong indeed, especially for the months of May, June and September.

It's been a banner year for residents of West Prince. For that, I would like to certainly thank my colleague, the Minister of Environment, Energy and Forestry, for his recent announcement for the completion of the major restoration project at Arsenault's Pond in Egmont Bay.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Arsenault: Mr. Speaker, this is a \$140,000 investment and the first major project completed under the Province's new five-year capital budget for the management of ponds and impoundments.

The minister and I had the opportunity to

visit the pond a couple of weeks ago. Much to my surprise, word got around. We were certainly pleased and surprised to see close to half of the community that showed up to express their pride and appreciation for such a fine project.

I'd like to recognize Mr. David Richard from Egmont Bay who has been a very strong promoter of this initiative. He's been working on this initiative for years. We've had numerous meetings, numerous phone calls. I certainly want to thank him and recognize him for his dedication. Without all of his efforts certainly this project would not have come to fruition.

This is a very important initiative. Ponds provide valuable habitat for fish and wildlife, as well as public access for a broad range of recreational and educational activities from angling to hunting and canoeing and bird watching. These are activities that continue to grow in popularity and this investment is welcome news to the residents of my district.

The restoration work included the replacement of the fish ladder, as well as addressing the erosion problems from the adjacent roadway that posed a safety risk and contributed to sedimentation of the pond. The work significantly improves fish habitat and fish passage. It is also important to mention that the fish ladder is a new design that is being used for the first time in Prince Edward Island. It is more cost effective to allow more species of fish to pass from Riviere Jacques into the pond.

I'd like to mention two other projects that were well-received by the Wellington area constituents and the Evangeline area constituents. These are federally and provincially funded initiatives for Barlow's Pond, the park associated with it, and *La Place du Village*.

I'd certainly like to recognize the contribution and much support that we've received from the Minister of Development and Technology.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Arsenault: He believed in these projects from day one and certainly was very involved in making this project come to fruition.

L'étang et le parc Barlow recevront les fonds nécessaires pour des améliorations, et lorsque le projet sera complété, l'étang et le parc Barlow se joindront aux rangs croissants des lieux d'intérêt d'importance culturelle l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard.

Le centre commercial de Wellington, La Place du Village recevra une nouvelle image en subissant des rénovations importantes à l'intérieur et à l'extérieur de l'édifice.

J'aimerais reconnaître la contribution de la Société de développement de la Baie acadienne, de Madame Louise Comeau, directrice, et j'aimerais aussi reconnaître Monsieur Francis Thériault qui est responsable du réseau de développement pour sa généreuse contribution.

Clairement, ces projets reflètent l'engagement du gouvernement dans l'appui d'initiatives qui renforcent nos communautés rurales. Le maintien de communautés fortes et vivantes dans notre province a depuis longtemps été la marque distinctive de notre gouvernement.

Barlow's Pond and Park will receive the necessary funding for improvements, and when completed, Barlow's Pond and Park will join the Island's growing ranks of culturally significant landmarks.

Wellington's commercial centre, La Place

du Village will get a new look as it receives extensive renovations to the interior and exterior of the building.

I would like to recognize the contribution of the Société de développement de la Baie acadienne, and Madame Louise Comeau, director, and I would also like to recognize Monsieur Francis Thériault, responsible for the development network for his generous contribution.

Clearly these projects reflect our government's commitment to support initiatives that strengthen rural communities. Keeping communities strong and vibrant has long been the hallmark of our government.

As such, it gives me great pleasure to support projects that recognize the significance of our past, and the great potential our region has for the future. And speaking of pleasure, the recent announcement by Moody's Investors Service of a boost in the province's credit rating to AA2 is another indication of support for our government's policies and initiatives.

Certainly, I want to recognize the efforts and dedication of our Provincial Treasurer and our entire government for the strong efforts in the financial management and the affairs of our province. The goals outlined in the Speech from the Throne describe the direction this government is taking, and I know that with the cooperation of all Islanders we can accomplish all of our aims.

We want Prince Edward Island to continue to be known for its healthy lifestyle, its clean environment, with a job for anyone who wants to work. We already have a reputation as a safe place to raise our families, and as we all know, you would have to look far and wide to find a more generous group of people.

I'm very grateful for all that Prince Edward Island has provided for me and my family, and I enjoy doing my part to give back to my community.

J'appuie le présent discours du Trône et la direction de notre gouvernement pour l'avenir.

Merci Monsieur le Président.

I support this Speech from the Throne and our government's direction for the future.

Thank you Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker (Deighan): The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

Mr. Mooney: I'll have the podium, please?

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It gives me great pleasure to bounce on my feet today to also throw my support behind the Speech from the Throne.

It's been just an absolute pleasure to have the privilege to represent the good people of first district for the last 10 years. I don't take that responsibility lightly at all because they put a lot of faith behind their member, because being in a rural area you certainly have to fight for things and that's just the way things are, and I don't mind a good fight, as some know.

What I'm going to touch on is what the Speech from the Throne has meant to our district over the years and what this will mean as we move forward.

When I got elected in 1996, one of the first projects I worked on with some of our community groups was the Road to Rollo Bay, festival grounds out there. The

previous government had announced that it was a beautiful spot for an amphitheatre and different things, but nothing ever came to fruition. When I got elected, we knew that the benefit to our area by developing these beautiful field that the Chaisson family had run for years would be just tremendous.

So that was the first project I worked on and we put probably about \$300,000 into the grounds with federal and provincial dollars, and it's made a real impact on tourism in the east.

I'm a member of our bluegrass association and we hold our bluegrass festival there, the first weekend of every July. Our association has also worked with the good folks of Evangeline to have a second festival a week later, and what's that done, when people come to the Island to our festival and come to Souris they'll stay around the Island for a week and then go to Evangeline for a few days before they leave the Island. So even if their campers are well stocked when they come to the Island, they're visiting the local grocery stores, they're visiting all the local tourism attractions while they are there.

It's just been a real boost to our tourism and it taught me right off the bat, being elected, you dig in and work on projects, you can make a real difference in your area.

We had a ski club in the area that had a small building, but it was out of the way, not a very comfortable facility and so with the Shriners ski club, we worked with them once again on another project that was federally and provincially funded.

Our government cooperated tremendously. At that time we kind of bartered back and forth between the departments and the department of forestry at that time allowed some work crews to be put on to cut lumber off government lands. That lumber was sawed to build this building, keeping the

cost down. It was a way of using the taxpayers resources that were there to put a really nice project in the area to make a difference.

What's this done for our area? We've have people from five to 95 that are out on the ski trails in the winter. It's just tremendous to see a three kilometre trail that is as flat as a table top and well lit so people can go late in the evening. They have moonlight skies. It's encouraged a lot of seniors because they can go at their own pace, and then they have more challenging trails in through the woods.

It's all to do with our government priorities on better living. I guess the shadow I cast I really shouldn't be speaking too much about living a little healthier, but you know what? I think I'll be blowing the dust of my old walking shoes once again after I had my little (Indistinct) this spring. I was a little under the weather. I was on a hell of a track walking and then when I got busy at digging potatoes and things I kind of laid the sneakers aside. So I guess they're coming back out of the closet. I'll make that commitment to the House here. I'll try to practice what I speak. I see the pens coming out.

So when you talk on this throne speech and government's commitment to trying to promote healthy living in the communities, even in the last year we've helped with a project to retrofit our eastern Kings sportsplex, not only the rink portion, but also there's a beautiful fitness centre put on with a walking track that - it's just a beautiful facility. It's another facility that a lot of our seniors are getting to use and people of all ages. People are into different sports, whether it be hockey or football, they'll go for pre-training there and put in the hours so when they start the hockey they are in pretty good shape to start with.

We are very proud in a small town to have such a beautiful facility and very well run. Accessible to every one and the cost is not great. It's just a tremendous asset.

When you're talking healthy living and you look at the Souris Hospital, we put an expansion on the Souris Hospital in the last year or so and this moved addictions and mental health into the same complex. Addictions and mental health, as you know, was at the Breakwater Centre overlooking the harbour in Souris. Tremendous view, but the building itself, the stairs are steep, mental health was up on the second or third floor, and it was very hard for people with disabilities to get in and get the help they need. So we worked hard and put an expansion on the hospital. Now addictions and mental health are in the hospital, beautiful new facility, and at the same time expanded our doctors' offices to make it a little easier for them to work. We have three physicians there now, with Dr. Gonzales, Dr. Toma, and Dr. Berrow, who are going over quite well and we are going to dig in and work on getting our fourth physician.

Also, we are one of the areas that are moving forward in health as far as with the nurse practitioners. Sherry MacKinnon is doing a phenomenal job there. She's got the full support of our physicians and the full support of our community, and I tell you, she's a real asset and she's to be commended for the work she's doing.

So we had some changes at the Souris Hospital and I didn't duck them. I was straightforward with people, and the minute we knew we were coming towards having to make changes as far as our emergency room, I held a series of town hall meetings and I announced at the first one: This is one of many. We had a tremendous turnouts at these town hall meetings and we put it out to the people exactly how it stood. At that time our physicians were not willing to work

seven days a week, 24 hours a day, to keep the full coverage. In their mind they basically said for some instances, such as heart transplants and things, people may be farther ahead to go right to one of the referral hospitals where the expertise is there on sight where they're seeing these things every day.

I'm a living example of that very thing. What I ended up taking this spring was a mild pericarditis which is an infection in the heart muscle itself. The first thing they did when I came in with chest pains was take a blood test. The first thing the blood test showed them was this gentleman had a heart attack. Once again, casting the shadow I cast, that wasn't a stretch. Because they said: We think you had a heart attack. I said: Holy smokes, I don't think I had a heart attack.

The one thing is if I was at a small rural hospital, the first thing they would have done was give me a thrombolytic, a clot buster, which they only have a certain time frame to give and that would have been the best intention. I had two specialists at the hospital in Charlottetown when I went in. I had Dr. Beck, Dr. Bergin. The first thing they did when they saw the blood test, I had a strange heart rhythm that showed it could have been pericarditis, which is an infection of the lining of the heart. They said: If we give you a thrombolytic and it happens to be an infection it'll rupture and we can kill you within seconds. They called Halifax and Halifax, based on the blood work and on this heart rhythm I had, said: We don't know what to tell you.

The doctors came back to me and said: Halifax is not sure. I said: For goodness' sake, I'll take my chances, please don't give me any thrombolytic. I don't think I would have had that choice if I had have gone to a smaller rural hospital because the first thing they would of looked at is the blood work

showed signs of a heart attack and I would have been done for. That's the plain and simple truth. So I think I'm living prove that these changes all were not a bad thing for our community.

The ambulance service, I tell you, is second to none right now and its -

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mooney: You'll not find anyone anywhere that loves the people in his community as much as I do. We're a tightknit crew out there. If somebody takes ill in the community, the community rallies behind them for benefits. Right this Sunday there's a benefit for (Indistinct) Grant, a good friend of mine that had taken a stroke right out of the blue.

Peoples lives can change so quickly from one day to the next, and we're in a community where people watch all this and they try to do their best to help.

So I don't take our health system lightly. With these changes, I tell you, I lost some sleep some nights worried about: Are we doing the right thing or the wrong thing? But you know what? We have three doctors there now. We're going to do our darnedest to get our fourth, we've a nurse practitioner that's dug in and working, and we're trying to make it very accessible for people to get in and get medical attention. It's still not perfect. We got a way to go, but you know what? Our doctors and our nursing staff are second to none and they're willing to go the extra mile to get us there.

So, you know what? I fully support our government on what's been taking place in the last few years. Our throne speeches have outlined that we're trying to move forward in health in different areas to benefit Islanders, and benefit people in rural Prince Edward Island, and I think we've been true

to our word.

When you look across at all the different organizations that people volunteer their time in, our government has stepped up to the plate and tried to support all of these different groups. Without the volunteers across Prince Edward Island it would be a pretty sad place. It's incredible. I know one of our hon. members spoke on the Legions and how important the work the Legions do is.

Just in the last number of months the legion have finished the renovation in Souris that was supported by federal-provincial dollars. A beautiful facility. We have a gentleman that is managing the Legion, the president right now, David Perry. He has come in and done just tremendous work. As you walk into the Souris Legion it catches you the minute you walk in the door. They have gone through every family where somebody has done any service in the armed forces - whether it was for a short term, whether it was in any of the wars that our country has sent people off to fight in - and they've got a snapshot. So there must be 1,000 pictures when you walk in. There's just a certain area that you walk in. You can see all these veterans, but mixed in amongst the veterans you can see the people that have spent a few years, five years, or any time in the service.

All the pictures are done in black and white so they all kind of match and the names are below them. This was a project that David Perry and some of his group have taken on. When war vets - the day I was there for Remembrance Day, they would stand back there with family. They would smile and say: There's me when I was a young fellow, and there's a picture of them in their war fatigues.

I tell you, it's very impressive and it'd be a great idea for all the Legions to follow, because you have grandchildren and great-

grandchildren that can go in and they can see from generations back their family members that have made a tremendous sacrifice to give us the freedom we have today.

I tell you, our Legions need to be commended and I'm so proud that our government was part of a renovation at the legion to make it a beautiful place that it is today.

Mr. R. Brown: I agree with opening (Indistinct).

Mr. Mooney: Just down the street from the legion is the Silver Threads Club. Right in our Speech from the Throne we talk on the benefit that seniors are in our communities. Our community is very active with our seniors and a prime example of that is our Silver Threads Club. It's right on main street and they have events just about every night of the week, and these events are not held specifically for seniors. On Wednesday nights they have a ceilidh and people in the area come and volunteer their time. We have tourists that come back every year and part of the reason they want to come to Souris is they take themselves and young kids and go to these ceilidhs to see local entertainers volunteering their time.

I happened to be there for a birthday or an anniversary - and to tell you the truth, the sound system they had was pure poison. For someone that does volunteer the odd time to go and play at things, one thing I find frustrating is that if you're in a large crowd and you're donating your time to play, it's frustrating when you don't know if they can hear you or if you're trying to holler loud so they can hear you and put your voice all out of whack, especially when it's not perfect to begin with.

Mr. R. Brown: (Indistinct).

Mr. Mooney: That's right. So I talked to the Silver Threads Club and I said: What you folks need is a better sound system. What that sound system would do for you is you would have a lot more people wanting to come and play. When you have a good system to work with it's not hard. You'd probably bring better crowds to your ceilidh.

So with the department of development we worked and we came through with a small grant for them. It covered their sound system and a small renovation. You know what? Sometimes it's not millions of dollars or hundreds of thousands of dollars that make a real impact in a small community, sometime's it's \$4,000, and this is a prime example.

The seniors have made our town what it is today. I'm proud of the contributions they've made, and I tell you, it's just due that that our government supports groups like this. You know what? It's made a difference in their lives, especially the people that volunteer their time, whether Helen MacDonald or Ester Gauthier, the different ones that help lead their group. It just made their lives a little easier and they take more pride in their facility to have people come in. So I tell you, it's things like this that make a difference.

Eastern Kings Rec. Centre, another area that a lot of our seniors use when they're putting on birthdays or anniversaries. They had some trouble with their septic system, wells, and different things a few years ago. Once again, the importance of rural Prince Edward Island. We came through with a small grant to help with that and that helps give them a community centre that they can take pride in and hold community events.

When you look where all this ties in as far as other types of projects, our wind development. When we announced the wind development - and I have to say, I took

some torturing, but they did agree in the department that we would break out a block of money each year for the full term of this wind development to go to the Eastern Kings Community Council to help with different community facilities such as the Eastern Kings Sportsplex, the fire department at Eastern Kings, the Eastern Kings Rec Centre. Because we're an aging community. Smaller families coming on now, it's harder and harder for rural areas to support these different types of facilities.

But they're so important, especially during the summer months when the Eastern Kings Community Council - the rec centre up there puts on ceilidhs. I think it's every Thursday night they have their ceilidhs. It's something for tourists to do every night when they're here and they get to learn a little bit about the Island culture and the Island music.

So once again, sometimes it's not mega-projects that really make a difference in the area, it's helping all the different community groups and to make them know that our government knows they're important to our government and important to their communities.

Basin Head, another very important area in my district. It's kind of the jewel in our crown on tourism I guess in eastern Prince Edward Island. There is even a lot of Islanders that I talk to right across the province that at least once or twice a summer they take their families and pack them in the car and head to Souris to go to Basin Head. It was really disheartening for our community when a tidal surge came out of nowhere and had destroyed something that was just a beautiful thing in our district for so many years. We wasted no time in negotiating with the federal government and coming up with the provincial taxpayers' money to help restore something that is vital to our tourism industry in eastern Prince Edward Island and vital to tourism on Prince

Edward Island as a whole.

It went out to tender one year, the company had bid and the bids (Indistinct) very high. It frustrated some, but instead of awarding they took it back and they broke it into two separate - and the wharf structure was tendered, the building structure was tendered separate. So two different companies that specialize in those different types of work bid and it saved a million dollars by going out to tender the second time.

I'm proud to say that the work - they're working very long hours getting this work done. I think next spring people are in for a very pleasant surprise when they go back to Basin Head. It's going to be as beautiful or more beautiful than it ever was up there. I tell you, it's a -

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mooney: I would like to thank our government and our treasurer, everyone across the board here, for the support. I couldn't stress enough how important this was to our community. Government followed through and it's been there for our community.

When you go up to Elmira, there is a railway museum. Once again, a very integral part of our tourism business in the summer. Our government along with the federal government put considerable dollars in there in there in the last few years. We have a tremendous staff up there that do a great job. They are very warm to people when they come and visitors get to learn a little bit about what the railway meant to Prince Edward Island in years past. The minister of railway (Indistinct) there for people to go on a little whirl through the woods on and it's a really nice experience. They're doing a tremendous job. North Lake Harbour, once again another community project that was

federally/provincially funded. There is a tower right down near the run with all of the history on the tuna fishing industry. People can go up and they can look at these pictures, but also from there they can have a tremendous view of the boats that are coming in from the harbour. If a boat is coming in with a tuna, I believe you can actually see it coming behind the boat from that tower. It's very impressive.

On the business side, AgraWest has made a very big impact, not just in our district, but all across the province. For years, being potato farmers ourselves, when we were shipping potatoes to some of the processors they'd give you a tolerance on smalls under two inch and there is probably 3 to 5% tolerance. Then after that your potatoes were basically going for nothing. Some years if the rain didn't just hit when you wanted it to and you're shipping out into the processors, sometimes there was 15 or 20% of your crop you weren't getting paid for.

AgraWest stepped in and they will buy all these smalls. They buy out the potatoes that wouldn't make Canada No. 1 and they'll dehydrate them into granules. They've been working hard at markets. They've been offering a couple of cents a pound for this. So right off the bat the farm said: Goodness, if processors aren't paying for them, I'll strip them out at home, (Indistinct) your two cents. So what's it's done, the processing companies have all stepped up to the plate and said: Listen, you'll get full price for your tolerance, anything above that tolerance, that 10 or 15%, we will give you the two cents a pound to match AgraWest. So even if AgraWest is not buying the potatoes, they have affected the processors into stepping up to the plate and increasing the money they're putting out on the farms.

So AgraWest, it's not just the money they're putting out on payroll with about the 80 employees in my district, but it's the money

it's spread across the province, not just to the farms but to the trucking companies that are hauling potatoes there and hauling some of the waste products back out of the plant that's going for cattle feed.

So it's had a real impact in our area. I'm not going to name names, but if I walked through and said hello to some of the staff there on certain days, they are youth that are working there that would have been out-of-province now that had science backgrounds or they're running the labs and doing all the testing in the plant. So it has kept some of our young people home that we would have lost. So it's got a great service to our area.

Once again, it was a project that took a lot of work from our provincial government over a couple of years to help get that plant there. It's stable. They're working on some very strong contracts and doing some scanning of products. The one thing that I'm hoping is going to happen is that potato granules would be considered food aid which would certainly open up some tremendous markets. Instead of just sending dollars around the world, we could be sending things such as dehydrated potatoes on years that potato prices are low or we have surplus. That's maybe a way that we could be helping countries and the farms still get paid for their product.

The opposition kind of booted and kicked quite a bit, threw as many snowballs as they could, because of the decision of government to no longer to keep pounding money into the Polar group. Do you know what? If you go back into the days of the opposition when they were in power and you come forward to the ten years we were here, the opposition had put every bit as much money into the fishing industry as we did. Year after year after year there was money going to the plants. You know what? It came to a point, and government had made the decision which I supported, that

we just can't continue to do this when there is no light at the end of the tunnel.

The last two or three years government has put no money into where this existing Polar group was. Ocean Choice has stepped in. I met with Ocean Choice last week and they are on target right now to process more lobsters this year than the total Polar group has ever done in any particular year.

The payroll at Ocean Choice is just phenomenal. What has it done? I'll tell you what it's done. The Souris Co-op would have tremendous financial troubles without Ocean Choice. The IGA would have tremendous trouble. It kept a lot of our young people home. Some of our young people want to go and experience the west, and they're going to go anyway. But what Ocean Choice has done, it has drawn in, not just workers from around Atlantic Canada, but it brought in a group of workers from Russia.

Now, what has this done for our community? These folks from around Atlantic Canada and from out of the country that work in Souris, they pay the rent. So all of the facilities that people have for rent in the area are pretty well tied up. Every one of them support local businesses and do all their shopping. The Russian workforce, tremendous workers. The reason that they looked at immigrant workers from the Russian bloc of countries, the experience in Iceland - and one of the plant managers at Ocean Choice is from Iceland - Iceland has a population of 300,000. They have 10,000 immigrant workers in Iceland.

What it's done for the local people in Iceland, it's brought their wages up. Most of the people from Iceland used to work six days a week. They're getting up in age as well. It enabled some of them to cut back to five days. A lot of them became supervisors of crews and different things and the

immigrant workers have really filled in that void and allowed some of the local people that - when they go up, the supervisor's paid a little better, a little better standard of life because they're not doing the six days a week. So the plant manager that's there said: Do the same here. If you get immigrant workers from southern climates, a lot of times they kind of don't mix in as much because they really don't have any intention of staying somewhere where the winters are cold. But when you look at the -

Mr. R. Brown: Sometimes the winters are pretty cold in Russia.

Mr. Mooney: Exactly, and that's why they looked at taking in the workforce from either Ukraine or Russia or Poland where the climates are similar. When the people get here they kind of spread through the community. What their dream is, is the possibility of maybe someday becoming a citizen here in Canada and staying in communities like this. It's a tremendous idea on their part and they're hoping, if there is still a work shortage, that they can continue to take workers over each year.

I know, because I've talked to some of the folks from overseas, or indirectly have spoken through some of the plant workers, some of them love it here, some would love to stay and have families here. You know what? That's what we need. Some of our strongest years in Prince Edward Island history were through the years of immigration where people came and needed new buildings and helped communities expand.

I'm working close with some of our departments right now because of a housing shortage in Souris. Once again, when you look at our throne speech it's to support rural Prince Edward Island and to help it expand. When you look across the Maritime provinces at the out-migration of workers

heading for the west, heading for Ontario, and the population's dropping, Prince Edward Island is one of the only Atlantic provinces that's holding its own, and actually increasing slowly, but we are increasing. With that, we have to do some work on better housing in the area.

I met with one of our town councillors. I met with some of our local businessmen in Souris in the last week or so. I said: The way I look at things is simply this. If you go somewhere for six or eight months to work and if you happen to be living in facilities that aren't really up to scratch, you're not enjoying your home life in the evening, well, I don't really think you're going to be keen on trying to stay on a year-round basis. If we can work collectively with the plants and with local businesses and with government to try to get some better housing in the area, these people will have a better experience while they're here working, and we may be able to capture a certain percentage of them to stay on a year-round basis every year. That's what we're really striving for to keep our numbers up in our schools, to keep our young people there to support our rinks and to support our sports facilities of all kinds in the area.

I think our government has been very supportive of businesses. Even some of the announcements for Charlottetown with AIM Trimark. I've already talked to people from my area that have moved out of province. They've called me: How do I get a resumé into AIM Trimark? I may not come back to Souris, but I'd love to come back to Prince Edward Island. They can't believe the strides that our government has made on pulling some of these large, very strong companies to Prince Edward Island that are not going to just be here for a short term, but making long-term plan to be here and already talking to start expanding.

I'm very proud to be part of this team. No

government is perfect, but our government has always strived to do the best thing for Islanders. I think it has been shown over the years.

Mr. R. Brown: The Liberals built that Souris plant (Indistinct)?

Mr. Mooney: Yes, and you know, that brings a good point, because at the time North Lake Fish Co-op was dealing with the minister of development with the previous government. It was committed at the time that there be a plant at North Lake, but all of a sudden it was decided to have one major plant in the east and one in the west and that was it.

When our government came in some of the first things I've done is met with the board of directors of the North Lake Fish Co-op, a very strong fish co-op. Were doing great work, but their plant couldn't meet the federal regulations. They were grandfathered in, but grandfather was about to die. That's pretty much what I was told. He wasn't going to last.

With the support of our government we worked extremely hard with North Lake Fish Co-op, and you know what? They have a beautiful modern plant. It's not massive. It was built very efficiently, very well thought out. They're doing great work. They employ probably 150 or 160 people for probably six months of the year. They have been working on doing alternative species: dogfish, skate from out of province. They've been doing very well at some types of products that other plants aren't set up to do.

We have showed that we don't just support one or two. We've tried to support the industry and make a difference.

Mr. R. Brown: (Indistinct).

Mr. Mooney: Under the Ocean Choice

banner, I tell you, they have put in about 8 or \$10 million worth of renovations. They know that with the aging demographics it's going to be increasingly harder to get a constant workforce. That's why they've been working hard at immigrant labour, trying to draw more people in and show them that they can do some very good work at decent paying jobs in the area. But they've also been putting in modern equipment to stay with the marketplace. If they're short of workers, some of this equipment will take the place and try to keep them safe for years to come. They're very forward thinking.

I stopped into the plant and they had a photographer there taking pictures. They had chefs there and they were doing up some unbelievable recipes and then the photographer was taking pictures of these different recipes. They're going to do up a calendar, recipe cards.

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct).

Mr. Mooney: No, I missed it, I was too late. I tell you, it was just incredible the quality of the products they're putting out.

This (indistinct) chamber they're using where they put lobsters under 40,000 pounds pressure and it breaks the meat away from the shell, basically, they can take the arm and knuckle meat and claw meat right out of the shell all still joined and it's raw. If you look at any chef, as chefs have told me, if you were working just with cooked beef or cooked pork, what can you do with it? With lobster it's the same. For years the only thing people were selling was a cooked product that you could make into a soup or make into whatever, but it limited you on what you could do.

Ocean Choice are supplying a raw product that is just a high quality so then chefs can use all these different ingredients with it and

cook it whatever way they want. With that they're opening up a lot of markets that's not just going to benefit Ocean Choice, but it's going to benefit the fishing industry as a whole right across the Maritime provinces. They're to be commended. They're thinking down the road many years and developing new markets.

I'm very happy to see in this Speech from the Throne the commitment of government to start working on better ways of recruitment for physicians. I know the challenges in recruitment because I've been involved with staff at the Souris Hospital on recruitment of the three physicians we have there. I've been talking with a fourth and I tell you, it is a battle.

A lot of the local people that go through school, I've talked to a lot of them. A lot of them say: You know what? I'm going to try somewhere else. Maybe I'll come back home. The problem is that when a lot of them graduate they're at the age where a lot of times they meet someone. If they go to the States they work or one of the larger centres and they meet someone, they settle down and that's where they end up being. It's hard for them to move back.

I'm glad to see our government is going to look at incentives to try to get some of our graduating students from medical school to stay here and maybe they'll meet someone local home or they'll get the roots here and see that things aren't so bad.

When you look at the problems in health right across the country on recruitment, right now a doctor graduating today doesn't have the same mindset as a doctor that graduated 40 years ago. Even when talking with our Dr. Gonzalez, a doctor from Cuba, he said: You know what? I wanted to be a doctor all my life, knowing that I could make three times as much money in the tourism industry in Cuba. What brought him to

Canada?

Mr. R. Brown: You!

Mr. Mooney: Partly.

An Hon. Member: Don't be modest.

Mr. Mooney: But you know what? He met a very fine person from Ontario who said: I'll marry you, but I'll marry you if you're coming to Canada. He had no intentions of leaving Cuba, but it was love that brought him here initially and then some tremendous persuasion (Indistinct).

But you know, as he said, for him all he wanted to be was a doctor. He didn't get into it for the money, he got into it for the love of helping people and that's the very type of people we really need right across the country.

I've called different provinces and asked them on recruitment what is taking place, and they say every profession you are in, people don't want to work 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Physicians are no exception to that. They can go to larger centres and work nine to five and have a tremendous family life, and that's what we are up against.

That's why we made the changes in Souris for the government to give them that quality of life and try to find a balance where people are still well served. We have the walk-in clinics that are going just about every night of the week and just about every weekend. If we can get up to our fourth physician, we'll have full coverage, 365 days a year, and I think it should be very good access for people in the community.

I visited a lot of seniors over the last number of years. That is the one thing that I can say I'm very excited about that was in the throne speech, that government has not taken for

granted the seniors of Prince Edward Island and the contribution they make for us here, and the fact the cost of living all across this country has gone up considerably and seniors on a fixed income find things very hard.

I visited seniors at their homes and senior citizens units. They'll say that sometimes it is hard to come up with 30% of their income, and things that people don't think of. If a senior over the years had RSPs put away and they take out that RSP, that RSP is considered income for that time, and it bumps their rent for a certain period of time. It's frustrating.

So I was so happy to see our government's commitment to lowering the rents to our seniors because we owe everything to our seniors for what we have here today. That drop from 35 to 25% is going to mean so much to so many people in our community, and I'm proud to be a part of government that is going to implement that.

More and more we see seniors that are working past 65. On our own farm this fall we had two gentlemen in the area, one that I knew but didn't know him that well, Winston Young. In 1953 he started working with White Trucks up in Toronto, he worked with airlines, worked with the city of Toronto for years. Tremendous experience. He moved back here for the great family life and worked with different farms, and he landed on the farm just before we were going to start harvesting, wondering about maybe taking a truck for the fall.

It was the best move we made. The experience he has in maintenance saved us a lot over the course of the fall. Any trucks we had trouble with, they automatically came back from the shop but he came out of the truck and just worked for the day and kept equipment going. He was just a joy to have around. It's proof of the benefits that seniors

when they move back here can be. In the farming industry we have a lot of trouble trying to find drivers every fall just because we need them for a short window.

There are a lot of school teachers that retire, take their trucking course. So it's a little extra income in the fall. They all head to the farms or to the fish plants to do trucking or different things and it's a real contributor to our economy. It's helping out our business, but also it's giving seniors some extra cash that's well needed.

Some people still get frustrated that there aren't plants (Indistinct) up every day in the communities across the province, but when you look, not only our population has increased every year. In the last ten years our workforce has increased by 1,000 people a year. I tell you, that is just tremendous. The minister of environment and I were in western Canada looking at ethanol plants. Saskatchewan, they're losing a lot of their youths to Alberta. Other provinces out there - even their cities, pulling from cities out there. This is not as phenomenon that's just here on Prince Edward Island. It's all in waves and trends and over the years we've had an out-migration to Ontario. But a lot of people move back. Some don't come back until their retirement years but they're still contributing to our economy when they come.

What did our government do when people started saying we're losing too many of our youths to the west? Our government implemented trade missions to western Canada, but we took out some of our tradespeople and some of our businesses that do topnotch work and said: Listen, instead of some of our youth or some of our expertise coming to the western Canada to work, why don't you do the work right here on Prince Edward Island and export finished products?

I talked to Wendell MacDonald of Charlottetown Metal Products just a few nights ago. They just landed another contract from western Canada and it's keeping our young people working here and shipping finished products across the country. When you look at the wage difference, the cost of living difference, it more than absorbs the cost of trucking these finished products out.

So our government is not sitting back waiting for things to happening, we're going out and initiating things to happen and trying to make things better for Prince Edward Islanders. There's a company in Souris that have put bids in in western Canada. They are hopeful that they will get some work, but they are quite appreciative of having a change to go out on these trade missions because they were starting to lose some of their best tradespeople. That made it hard to have them do their day to day tasks.

Once again I want to say we have not been sitting back on our laurels. Some people talk of arrogance in government in different things. I really don't feel that is the case with this government. I know every day I get up and I thank the good Lord that I (Indistinct) here and I have the support of the people. Whenever they decide to send me down the road kicking a can, well, that's just how it is. I know that, but I know as long as I'm there I'm going to dig in and work for them.

There are projects we are working on presently that I think will make a real difference for the everyday Islander and for the people in my district. The one commitment that I'll give them is that I'm going to dig in and work on that.

When we look across in the different departments, agriculture and the things we are doing, with ethanol production, that is a

chance for farms to make money on alternative crops, not depend solely on potatoes as the only cash crop. When we look at some of the nutraceutical companies, once again there's a possibility for farm crops.

Forestry, when you look at (Indistinct) production from ground hemlock, that's produced a lot of work in a lot of areas across the province. People made very good money at it while the (Indistinct) was on.

So I think there are little things that we are doing that are going to make a real change in our economy for years to come, and the investments we've been making in the university and in the college to get our people educated, it makes the world of difference.

One of my boys was down at the farm this fall when we were harvesting and I put him on a conveyor belt picking rock, and he was just seasick. He turned white as a ghost and he wasn't really enjoying himself. I said: There's one thing you should take from this. You may not be standing on this conveyor belt all your life, but if you don't get educated you'll be on a conveyor belt somewhere. There's nothing wrong with that work, but if it's not what you want, then get educated. That's how you get to have more of a choice in life what you want to do.

So I think our government has tried to push that message to all our young people. I think a lot of our young people are listening when you see the amount of Islanders that have been going back to further their education, and you also see adults that are going back to further their education.

I met with some of our staff at Holland College and they said that some of the parents that have taken students that are having trouble and taken them to Holland College for a little extra work, the parents

are watching the students and said: I think I can do that. What do they do? A lot of these parents got their GEDs. I have a next door neighbour - he's retired now - but at 60 years old he got his grade 12 equivalence and he was proud as could be and holding this up. I was very proud of him. He was a great influence on the rest of the class because he heard somebody that was in their 20s or 30s kind of whining about a certain course. He said: Listen, young fellow, I've been out of school for 35 years and I have to do it. So, you know, the students would dig in and work a little harder next (Indistinct). It's a great mix and it's educating our community and it's benefiting a lot.

Even on highway work it's mentioned in our throne speech on the work that we've done on certain (Indistinct) roads. I travel to town just about every day, especially on House sessions. That Morell bridge, what a beautiful job they made there. Widen the bridge, much safer. It's just a beautiful job. They did it with no inconvenience to the travelling traffic, as least as possible. Tremendous work our department of transportation is doing. That was completely provincial and it just shows that we have stepped up to the plate and done a lot on our highways. We had a bridge mysteriously burn. Now we are going to offer convenience to people. Our department dug in and had their engineers there overnight, it seemed, and it started to work. It took a little longer than locals wanted to see, but the bridge is done and it's going to be there for a long time. I don't think this one is flammable.

So in my district we had talked to transportation and said the cost of completely rebuilding the road where they pulverized everything, it's tremendous per kilometre. A lot of our roads that don't have high traffic, they put an extra sealer cap over it. We can go over so many kilometres saving taxpayers money, but giving our

community very good roads to drive on. So that's what we've done, and in our district we've averaged probably five kilometres a year resurfacing since I got in.

I shouldn't really be talking about some of my negotiations. I'll have that stricken from the record? But you know, the public notice and they say our roads are in great shape. Town hall meetings I've had, it's the strangest things that you don't think of that come up at town hall meetings.

I had seniors come to one meeting and they said: We don't expect every road to be paved every year. But you know, if you're driving, especially in the winter when the visibility is not great, if there are fresh lines on the road at least when you come out of a snow bank you know exactly where you are. To name certain roads that they didn't think were getting due care and attention they deserve. With one call to transportation, within a week they were out putting new lines on. At the next meeting these very same seniors came and they said: Thank you very much. We kept up that work every year. We try to keep the lines fresh and we try to keep on top of our roads.

So one other thing I'll mention as far as next year being the year of the civil servant, I'm quite happy to see that as well. Governments and elected officials are really nothing without a very strong civil service that are dedicated to Islanders. I'll tell you, the civil service here are second to none. You can call any department with a problem that the constituent is having and they bend over backwards to get an answer as quick as they can and to be as accommodating as they can. Sometimes they don't get the answers they want. But you know what? It was quick and it's the way it is and my constituents have to take that. But as I say, our civil servants do all they can in the framework they work.

As a prime example, in the service centre

where my office is in Souris, our (Indistinct) staff are there. They are to be commended for the work they do every day for the community people that are having really problems. I have some constituents that come and complain and my answer is always the same. Our social workers do everything they can inside the perimeters they can. If they can't help you with something it's because it's outside their rules, and I said: Don't think for a second that they're not bending over backwards.

I've met with our social workers. If a client who has signed a release form and has discussed things and we try to work together to help families that are in need. But I tell you, social work is I think one of the hardest professions to be in. There is a lot of people that take some of this home with them at night and they're dealing with some of our communities that are having a real hard time, so they are to be commended. So I'm glad that this upcoming year will be the year of the civil servant.

We see the moves as far as producing better quality food that's bringing up the price to the farmer right at the farm gate. In my area, this is the first year in many years that we are not going to be packaging potatoes on our farm. East Point Potato, which is a branch of MacKay and Hughes, are set up at South Lake Farms, a friend of mine's place, Wayne Bruce. They're putting out a very high quality pack) that's breaking into some new markets. The trouble we're having on the farm is with the plants (Indistinct) things having trouble holding employees. We were finding ourselves with markets the last few years after the border was shut and (Indistinct), we were working for maybe two days a week and down two or three days a week. We couldn't keep stable employment for some of our workers. So a lot of them wanted to go to where the work was more stable.

So because of that, farms were always evolving and we made the decision - and maybe we'll try it for one year anyway - to put our potatoes through another packing plant where their workforce would have stable work. So with five or six farms all going through the same, it got people working and they're putting out a very high quality product and I wish them the very best.

I've been meeting with some of our local stores in the area and the same questions come up as far as our large institutions, why they're not all completely focusing on Island products, Island potatoes. I explained to them that a lot of our kitchens in some of these institutions want partially prepared meals - that keeps their cost down - and there are some companies that have trouble when it's just small commodities of this or that they want. There are local businesses in the area that said: Maybe it's a niche we'd like to start taking a look at that. So you know, I think there are some tremendous things that can happen.

Our beef and pork producers are putting out some of the highest quality beef in the world, and some of the large chains are focusing in on western beef. Well you know, it's a real shame. We have Garden Province Meats, I guess that's coming under a new plan that's going to be promoting more national products, and it's a good news story. I heard it on the news on the way in this morning. I think that's a tremendous step. But we also have the beef plant in Borden that's putting out a very high quality product. I would hope that Sobeys and Loblaws and some of the large outfits start concentrating on some of our local beef. We're running the same breeds as they are in western Canada, we're running high quality feeds here, and we're putting out equal quality. I think they're missing the boat and they're paying transportation costs to truck stuff across the country that's right

on their back door. So it just doesn't make much sense.

So another couple of minutes I'll go here and I'll let somebody else speak. One thing when we're looking at our youth that I've had a concern with and that I've been pounding on it for the last couple of years is drugs in our communities. I've met with the drug enforcement in Charlottetown, I've met with the local RCMP, and what the devil can you do? They're frustrated because even when they go through a lot of work and they catch the people who are trafficking drugs, the court system themselves are really giving these people a slap on the knuckles and sending them on their merry way. They're frustrated, and if they're frustrated, they start wondering: Is it all worthwhile?

I talked to an ex-RCMP officer that said: Even the changes in the workload on our officers, the computer systems that make so much sense that if anyone in this room or anyone on Prince Edward Island have any type of an infraction, at the end of an officer's day, they punch all this information into the computer. So if anyone had moved, let's say, to western Canada and they get in trouble, they can punch in that name and if they had any offense on Prince Edward Island or anywhere else, all the RCMPs are supposed to be linked. So as long as they're doing their homework they'll know what this person was up to across the country and know what they're likely to be at there. A tremendous system.

But with it comes a cost, and the cost that comes with it is the amount of time it takes the RCMP officers at the end of the day to put this information into the computer, and that time is taking them off the street or off an investigation.

So I was very happy to see us as one of the only provinces in this country that have put a couple of extra officers specifically on

drug enforcement. Because as the RCMP had told me, all of the break-ins, all of the muggings, just about everything, you can trace it all back to drug abuse and to somebody that needs cash quick to get themselves out of trouble or to get their next supply.

I got into a little hot water with our principal - she's not there anymore - for saying that there are drugs in our area and in our schools. I'll just say it point blank: You have to have one eye looking one direction and the other one shut tight to say that there are not drugs in our community. Because we all know they're there. This just doesn't affect any segment of our community. There are well-respected families out there that do everything with their children, and you have very little control over who your children get around with, and it's a constant worry. So I'm glad to see that our government is making some steps that we're going to start making things a little more miserable for these people that are pushing drugs on our youth.

When you hear stories of some of these characters dropping into a house party and dropping off drugs free of charge just to see if they can get a few kids to start using them, that frustrates me. We had presentations at caucus from physicians that said of prescription drug use, 20% of the population is of an addictive nature. If they get three or four prescriptions hand running with the heavy pain medications, they can be hooked. That's a concern. But when you take that back to street drugs, that same 20% that has an addictive nature, when they have no controls on how much they're taking or when they're taking it, they can be using drugs just two or three weekends and they're hooked for life and their lives are ruined.

So my message is plain and simple to drug enforcement in Charlottetown. The concern that I have for my community that I'm

taking forward is that sometimes we feel they're sitting back and watching all these small players to try and catch some of the big lads that are taking in heavy shipments. How many of our kids are getting impacted in that time?

So as much emphasis as they can put on stepping out all these small drug pushers, it will mean an awful lot to our Island economy because we will not be paying the health charges to try to get these people back off it and we'll have people contributing to our economy.

The last topic I'm going to touch on is infrastructure. What has infrastructure done for our communities across the province. It's leveraged millions and millions of dollars from the municipalities, from the federal government and I'm of hopes that we're going to target main street in Souris next summer. We're pushing hard on the infrastructure side. I believe the water has been covered. We're looking at trying to get the sewer system covered. Our full intent is to start moving on - a lot of the communities in eastern Prince Edward Island has been done.

Our department of transportation engineers have done a phenomenal job and it has turned out just lovely. We're hoping it's going to be Souris next.

I have a lot of confidence. Our treasurer keeps us very well grounded as far as balancing the books. Our constituents and our towns, we have tremendous wish lists, but everything comes at a cost. It's nice to see our government that sets out priorities but also tries to balance and knows that we can only afford so much.

Our departments work very closely with the federal government and keep pressure on the federal government at all times to negotiate the very best deals for Islanders, and I'm

proud to say our government has been very successful in the years. In the ten years we've been in government, we have come forward in leaps and bounds. We've done it, and tried to protect the taxpayers of Prince Edward Island at the same time. I think there's always room for improvement, and I'll be the first to say it, but I think we've done a great job, and I think the intentions have always been nothing but the very best. I think over the next year or so we're going to see some more great advancements in some our communities and infrastructure is a tool that we're hoping that will help an awful lot.

I've been talking to some of our town councilors in the last week or so on things that we'd like to see done. Last year we did Breakwater Street, it overlooks the harbour, they put a lovely walkway with lighting, and that is to encourage the Quebec travellers who are heading to the Magdalenes. When they're there and they're waiting for the boat, they can take a walk up the street and support some of the local businesses ,and that has worked tremendously.

The Magdalene traffic is a tremendous boost for our community. So we'd like to work a little harder to help some businesses that (Indistinct) even for bilingualism. I know a lot of the businesses try to put an emphasis on a summer student that has some bilingualism to help with directing some of the Quebec traffic that comes through. Maybe there are some things they can do in our area while they're waiting for the boat.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I would just like to say that I'm extremely proud to be part of this government. I think our intentions are nothing but the very best and I think we have made major strides in the last ten years, and I tell you, in the next years to come I think we will make major strides. I would like to personally thank the people of the good district of first for giving me the

support. It's a privilege to represent them and I don't take it for granted.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Dunn: Call the hour.

Speaker: The hour has been called.

The Government House Leader.

Mr. Dunn: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. Member from Belfast-Pownal Bay, that this House adjourn and stand adjourned until Tuesday at 2:00 p.m.

Speaker: Shall it carry?

Some Hon. Members: Carried.

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

