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PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY



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Speaker: Hon. Kathleen M. Casey

Hansard, Published by Order of the Legislature

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First Session of the Sixty-third General Assembly

Wednesday, 24 October 2007

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The Legislature sat at 2:00 p.m.

Matters of Privilege and Recognition of
Guests

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Development and Technology.

Mr. Brown: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I want to welcome everybody to the gallery today, and I also want to welcome the people that are watching over the Internet and watching on Cable 10.

This week Multiple Sclerosis fundraising is under way. It's in Kings and Queens County. The Chapter of the MS Society annual Christmas cake campaign is underway, and I encourage everyone if they could buy a cake. This is a very hard disease and I encourage everybody to go out and buy some.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I rise to welcome our guest to the gallery. I see Lorraine Robinson is here today. I also want to say hello to visitors who are watching us from home: my good friend Bernadette MacDermid from the Tignish area. I'd like to wish happy birthday to another friend of ours, Mr. Dewy Pratt, who turns, I believe, close to 55 today. I'm sure he's going to kill me for that.

Finally I'd like to encourage people, too, to attend the open house at Holland College that's coming up on November 5th from 2 to

7 p.m. Island-wide.

Thank you.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Tyne Valley-Linkletter.

Ms. Biggar: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I, too, would like to recognize Lorraine Robinson, chair of the board of the Stewart Memorial Hospital, and also my sister. Nice to have her here today.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

Ms. Dunsford: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I would like to recognize my daughter who is listening via the Internet in New Zealand, which is seventeen hours ahead. So this is the evening tomorrow for her, but today is her 24th birthday. So I bring greetings from her mom for her 24th birthday which actually happened to her yesterday, but for me it's today.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Vernon River-Stratford.

Mr. McIsaac: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I'd like to welcome everyone to the gallery too. I see one member from my own riding, Vernon River-Stratford. I'd like to welcome all who may be watching on t.v. Gordie Gallant, from what I understand, is a frequent member of the gallery. It's the first time I've seen him here this time. Anyway, I welcome Gordie.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Transportation and Public Works.

Mr. MacKinley: Anyway, Madam Speaker, I can't be looking up at the gallery all the time because I'm underneath the gallery.

There's a lot of vacant space over on that side. I'd like to welcome the viewers from Channel 10 that watch us regularly and phone in questions and answers and everything else. I'm sure they'll help the opposition now to get them some really good questions, because they were a great help to myself when I was there and our members, and we really appreciated it.

I also want to congratulate all the farmers and their workers that are out in the fields digging our potato crops for the Province of Prince Edward Island. It's been a good crop, I believe. I hope they have good prices and I wish them all the luck and safety in doing it.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Communities, Cultural Affairs and Labour.

Ms. Bertram: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I would like to rise and welcome everyone to the public gallery today, and the viewing audience. I too would like to welcome the sister of the member from Tyne Valley-Linkletter, Lorraine Robinson, in the gallery. As minister of sport I would like to thank Ms. Robinson for all her hard work with the Island Games Association. She is the treasurer and she took the large contingency along with other members of our athletic group to Greece this year, and I applaud her efforts in that.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture.

Mr. Campbell: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

It gives me pleasure to rise in the House today and welcome our guests in the gallery, as well as a special hello to all the people out in Souris-Elmira who are joining us today on the EastLink Cable 10 and via the Internet.

I would also like to take this opportunity to remind the viewers out in the Souris area that this Saturday night at the Eastern Kings Sportsplex there will be a benefit hockey game between the Souris All Star - no, it's not the Hockey Mamas - between the Souris All Stars and the K-Rock Ocean Rangers, with all proceeds going to KidSport and help children in the Souris area participate in sports in the area.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Tourism.

Ms. Docherty: Madam Speaker.

I rise today with the pleasure of welcoming Allan MacDonald here, a great supporter of our party from District 17 and it's such a pleasure actually to see him here. Thank you for coming.

I also would like to recognize the fact that today is the 54th wedding anniversary of my parents. Wonderful achievement for anybody today to make it to 54 years. That's Don and Betty Campbell of Cornwall. All my best wishes and love to them.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Tracadie-

Hillsborough Park.

Mr. Watts: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

At this time I would just like to thank all my supporters in District 8 for putting their trust in me. I certainly hope to be able to work hard for them as for all Islanders to make PEI a better place to be.

I would also like to welcome everybody to the gallery and in particular a couple of fellow fishermen, I think, have a little bit of experience in the fishing industry and around the water for a number of years, Wilfred Richard and Alan MacDonald. Welcome here, guys.

I'd also like to say a special hello to my mother-in-law who is watching on Cable 10, I'm sure. Of course, I welcome all viewers who are watching on Cable 10. So (Indistinct), I'll be out for biscuits this evening.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: Hon. members, I'd like to introduce you to one of my friends in the gallery today, Ernie MacKay from Charlottetown-Lewis Point, and to tell you a little about his service that Ernie and his girls, Lily and Sarah, do.

They're two dogs, beautiful dogs, and they travel to Beach Grove Home every Monday and Friday. They visit all the residents there at Beach Grove Home. Very soon one of his ladies is going to be making her 1,000th visit to the Beach Grove Home. So thank you, Ernie, for that service.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Statements by Members

Speaker: We'll start today with the Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

PEI Symphony Orchestra's 40th anniversary

Ms. Dunsford: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

A wise person once said: Music is the speech of angels. I rise today to pay honour to a most wonderful organization in our midst. I refer to our own Prince Edward Island Symphony Orchestra and to the fact that this talented group of musicians, conductors past and present, and supporters of the orchestra are celebrating their 40th anniversary this year.

This truly professional aggregation began its inaugural season in the fall of the same year we, as Canadians, celebrated our centennial year in 1967 and then became incorporated the following year in 1968. The people of Prince Edward Island from one end to the other have had the beautiful sounds of the PEISO brought to them season after season, featuring guests from all over the world coming here for Islanders to experience.

In fact, the orchestra is better known across the Island as a community orchestra, with members from communities all over PEI participating, including the beautiful district of Stratford-Kinlock. I know of a few members who are currently members: Allie McCrady, and Dave Sheppard being a couple and, of course, past member the bassist extraordinaire, Wayne Dunsford, who has also been a member.

As reported by Sally Cole in the *Guardian*, the secret of this orchestra's success has many factors. It includes the commitment of the musicians, the season subscribers, the concert-goers, as well as the support of the community.

The current conductor of the PEI Symphony Orchestra is James Mark, a professor at Mount Allison University.

Personally, I have enjoyed many performances of the PEI Symphony Orchestra's concerts over the years, with the most recent being just this past Sunday where Monctonian Roger Lord was featured as a guest pianist, as well as PEI's own Christina Bouey, a budding violinist in her own right who debuted with the symphony orchestra this past Sunday.

Hats off to the organization for all their hard work over the year. The PEI Symphony does appeal to all Islanders, young and old, from Sibelius to Bernstein, from Mozart to the Chucky Danger Band. They cover it all.

Congratulations to them on their 40th anniversary and we hope for many more.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from York-Oyster Bed and Government House Leader.

Recognition of Lori Kane

Mr. Vessey: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I am pleased to stand during this, the fall sitting of the Legislative Assembly, to recognize the 10th anniversary accomplishments of our own Island golf legend, Lori Kane.

I'm sure many of us here today and many who will be watching these procedures on Cable 10 Eastlink will remember November 1997, just 10 years ago, when this same Legislature congratulated Lori on the completion of her first full season on the LPGA tour.

Lori was then and still is an example for everyone. Her hard work and determination have allowed her to reach international fame. She not only made the name Lori Kane synonymous with the name of ladies golf, but she has also promoted our beloved province in the international media and especially on television screens all around the world.

Just a few days ago, once again, we heard the good news that our Lori Kane has attained another year of full exemptions on the LPGA and finished fourth in another prestigious ladies tournament out in Danville, California.

As our unofficial ambassador for Prince Edward Island, it is indeed a great pleasure for me to stand here today and to recognize Lori Kane for all that she has done for the world of sport and for all of PEI during the past 10 years. We can only imagine how proud her parents must be.

Congratulations, Lori Kane, not just on your career earnings, but to the honour you have brought to yourself, to the game of golf, and to all of us who follow your illustrious career from here at home.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Week of the Coach

Mr. Bagnall: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I rise today to express my appreciation for volunteer coaches on Prince Edward Island. Coaches across the province give generously of their time and they are an important part of every local community.

When volunteers come forward to coach local sports teams, they are enabling Island youth to exercise, participate in team sports, and to enhance their social and interactive skills. Young Islanders and, indeed, Islanders of all ages enjoy sports activities, whether as a cheering spectator or a competitive participant. Coaches deserve our thanks for delivering a great service to Islanders and they also deserve our appreciation for generously donating their time and sharing their knowledge with others.

The Coaches Association of Prince Edward Island has designated October 16th to October 21st the Week of the Coach, and I would like to take the opportunity to join with them in paying tribute to all Island coaches.

Madam Speaker, I ask that all members of this House join me in acknowledging the Week of the Coach and in congratulating these well-spirited Islanders for a well-deserved week of province-wide recognition.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Responses to Questions Taken as Notice

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

Student nursing programs

Mr. D. Currie: Madam Speaker, I rise today to respond to a question that I took under advisement from the Leader of the Opposition regarding the \$1.5 million going to the University of Prince Edward Island.

The \$1.5 million is an incremental increase which totals our commitment to the University of Prince Edward Island to a total

of \$29 million.

To clarify, the Department of Health does not directly fund the UPEI School of Nursing. However, the department does have programs that directly support the nursing school and the students at the University of Prince Edward Island to a total of \$675,000: the Bachelor of Nursing student sponsorship program for 252,000; the Bachelor of Nursing students employment program, 375,000; UPEI School of Nursing grant of 20,000; three clinical positions which are presently working at the University of Prince Edward Island are supported by the Department of Health; and the mentorship program, which is a total of \$27,000, okay.

I just do want to acknowledge a couple of things. As of today, the graduating class from the UPEI School of Nursing last year - 48 out of 60 nurses are working today in acute care facilities across this province. So that's certainly a great return rate in respect of the work that's been done. We are having ongoing discussions to expand seats and to work on enhancing capacity within the school of nursing. As I alluded to in the House prior to - the accelerated nursing program, we're engaging in discussions as well.

So nurses are a priority in this province and key players in the health care system in the province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Organized crime (further)

Mr. Greenan: Madam Speaker, yesterday the hon. Leader of the Opposition asked some questions about organized crime and tobacco smuggling.

In response to the hon. member's question about organized crime, each year the office of the Attorney General identifies priorities for action by the RCMP "L" Division, and organized crime is one of the current provincial priorities.

Tobacco smuggling

As well, the hon. Leader of the Opposition also asked how the province is policing illegal tobacco smuggling. The Atlantic Coordinating Committee on Organized Crime recently, just last month, identified tobacco smuggling and drug smuggling up as its two top priorities.

The hon. member's question about the cost of tobacco smuggling in our province - I can tell you that in March of 2007, Sergeant Brad Chugg, officer in charge of RCMP Federal Enforcement Section on PEI, estimated a \$3.9 million loss per year in tax revenue on PEI due to tobacco smuggling. The loss is continually increasing as time goes on.

I want to thank the hon. Leader of the Opposition for bringing this issue to the floor of the Legislature. Illegal tobacco smuggling is a matter of serious concern, and this public discussion may help inform the public about the connection between illegal tobacco smuggling and organized crime.

The three main areas of focus needed to deal with tobacco smuggling are: seizing contraband tobacco, legislation such as the new *Tobacco Act*, and getting the word out not only about the revenue lost but also about the potential public health risk associated with contraband tobacco, which has no safeguards in place to ensure that it is safe from fungi and other contaminants, and the connection between illegal tobacco smuggling and organized crime.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Questions by Members

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Thanks to both ministers for getting back to me. It's great that you two both recognize the tremendous work the former provincial minister of health had done in regards to nursing recruitment and the supports for the UPEI School of Nursing, as well as the work the Attorney General's office and her staff had done in order to bring that legislation to the fore as we speak.

Public Service Commission

My first question, Madam Speaker, I'd like to ask the minister who is responsible for the Public Service Commission a few questions.

Could the minister please confirm the role of the Public Service Commission in its work on behalf of government as the employer's representative with the Union of Public Sector Employees, who is the union for the majority of civil servants?

Speaker: The hon. Provincial Treasurer.

Mr. Sheridan: Madam Speaker, I didn't understand that last piece that you had, hon. member.

If you could you just repeat that? I don't see the question on the end of it. If you would just repeat that for me.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Absolutely. I'd like to clarify that for you, for the minister. Could the minister confirm the role of the Public Service Commission? As you know, the Public Service Commission acts on behalf of government as the employer, and the role of the work that they do in relationship of the employer with the Union of Public Sector Employees who represents all the employees.

Speaker: The hon. Provincial Treasurer.

Mr. Sheridan: Madam Speaker, I'm struggling with the question.

The role that they play is that this is the hiring entity that we use. All jobs that come into government come through the Public Service Commission. Very proud of their work. I have now had a chance to meet most of the players in that department. I can't speak highly enough of their professionalism. I think they play a very key role here in our government and I thank them very much for their work.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Salaries and duties of DMs and ADMs

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I couldn't agree more with the minister.

The next question: Would the minister please describe for us and the House the senior government benefit package for our senior deputy ministers, assistant deputy ministers? You can include, please, the salary range and benefit plus the scope of authority and responsibilities.

Speaker: The hon. Provincial Treasurer.

Mr. Sheridan: I'd like to speak - I think it gives us a great opportunity to speak here to

the scope of practice of our deputy ministers and other senior members in our government.

I think I've been quoted publicly now as saying that that has been my greatest joy in coming to government, to see the professionalism, the dedication of our senior service. It's just incredible.

I'd like to speak personally on my deputy minister, Paul Jelley. I don't think I've ever met a gentleman who has been more dedicated in his career to one service, and that is to the betterment of Prince Edward Island. Paul Jelley has served our Island government as well as the Canadian government for over 30 years, and to my knowledge I can't recollect anyone that would put out this kind of service that Mr. Jelley has.

As for compensation packages, I can table that for you, Madam Speaker. I don't think that I would ever be able to stand here and quote you numbers. I don't think that it would achieve anything here today to try to pull that back. I'll table that for you and bring back those compensation pieces.

Again, I'd like to reiterate that I just can't say enough about our senior service.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Public Service Commission (further)

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you for that answer. I couldn't agree with you more. The senior deputy ministers like Paul Jelley are worth their weight in gold. I understand that most deputy ministers in the province probably make somewhere around \$110,000, but I believe there's a few more deputies that are making around \$130,000 as

well as other benefits.

Madam Speaker, would the minister responsible for the Public Service Commission please describe the process that the commission goes through to develop policy in order to provide a workplace so all persons can expect to be treated with dignity and respect?

Speaker: The hon. Provincial Treasurer.

Mr. Sheridan: Madam Speaker, thank you very much.

A great opportunity to speak to the professionalism of our Public Service Commission. The policy surrounding equal opportunity in the workplace is one of the pieces that give me great pride in seeing what the public service stands for in our community. The policy that they've worked on over a number of years under the leadership now of Jim Ferguson I can't be more proud of.

I think that what's going on right now is we review, actually, visible minorities in our workplace. The work that we've gone into putting all of these efforts into equal opportunity in our workplace is just fabulous. I can only thank the Public Service Commission for doing that.

Thank you.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Policy on harassment

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Thank you, Mr. Minister, for that answer. My next question is to the minister responsible for the Public Service Commission. Could you please highlight the

harassment policy developed by the Public Service Commission and the Union of Public Sector Employees?

Speaker: The hon. Provincial Treasurer.

Mr. Sheridan: Madam Speaker, all policy with regards to Public Service Commission is very much public knowledge.

It is on the website. All of our policy is there, very easily taken and received. I will certainly table all of that policy if the hon. member would like that. There's no problem with that. It's very much common policy and very pleased and proud of what we stand for. The commission has taken each and every one of these kind of cases in hand, deals with them very consistently, and I'm very proud of what they do with it.

Thank you.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Would the minister responsible for the Public Service Commission please describe in detail, under the harassment policy and procedure, the procedure process and who in the policy makes the decision when to use the formal or informal process of investigation if a complaint has been made by anybody working in the civil service?

Speaker: The hon. Provincial Treasurer.

Mr. Sheridan: I'm sorry. I missed the first part of that. I'll have to have it repeated.

Thank you.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: No problem. I'd be happy to repeat the question.

Madam Speaker, would the minister responsible for the Public Service Commission please describe, under their harassment policy and procedures, the procedure, the process, who in this policy actually makes the decision when to use a formal or an informal process of investigation when a complaint has been made?

Speaker: The hon. Provincial Treasurer.

Mr. Sheridan: Madam Speaker, as to where the complaints lie and how they're handled, I'd have to get an exact handle on who makes those decisions.

I can find out who in the department judges those types of things and I can table that information for you.

Thank you very much.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

My next question's for the minister responsible for the Public Service Commission. Could you please tell the House what assumptions are written into this policy? For example, is there a standard of duty being written in the policy? For example, the more senior the position, the more it's connected as the extension of a government, the position that has to be guarded by behaviour both by example when on duty and on personal time. Could you please explain if there's a standard of duty theme written throughout the policy?

Speaker: The hon. Provincial Treasurer.

Mr. Sheridan: Madam Speaker, I can't speak to that in any way, shape, or form.

I can certainly table that piece of policy. I would have no idea how that would lay out in any kind of format-wise that way as to senior employees. As the hon. member would know, those senior employees that she may be referring to as deputy ministers and such, all those type of policies surrounding those senior deputy ministers, for instance, we know that most of those decisions are made around Executive Council with regards to their benefits and their pay periods and all of their pay levels.

So I want to make sure that everyone is well aware of that piece. If that's where the question is going, that's what I'd like to make very public.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Excuse me. In regards to the Public Service Commission who works on behalf of the employer to develop the policies and procedures, under the harassment policy my next question is: Could the minister responsible for the Public Service Commission tell the House what assumptions are written into this policy? Because this is extremely important. For example, in the Union of Public Sector Employees you probably have at least 3,000 people who work for your senior management.

Speaker: The hon. Provincial Treasurer.

Mr. Sheridan: Madam Speaker, again the question is very vague.

I don't see the meaning behind the questioning. I don't understand it. I will

table that regulation. I do not know where the hon. member is going with this question. If she'd like to ask me straight out, I would be very happy to answer.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

My next question is for the minister responsible for the Public Service Commission. Would you like to interpret section 4© of the policy for prevention and resolution of harassment in the workplace? I'll give you the quote of what the definition says where the workplace takes place: Workplace includes but is not limited to the actual work site, lunch room, or cafeteria, a client's home or a work site, training sessions, conferences, business travel, or work-related social gatherings.

Speaker: The hon. Provincial Treasurer.

Mr. Sheridan: Madam Speaker, was there a question?

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Bagnall: Doesn't listen very (Indistinct).

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Earlier in Question Period, I asked about the scope of practice and authority for deputy ministers who are hired on behalf of government. The hiring authority that works to develop policies and procedures is the Public Service Commission.

In terms of policies that take care to protect

all employees that work for government, the question reads: How would you interpret section 4(c) of the policy for prevention and resolution of harassment in the workplace? I'll give you the quote to help you: Workplace includes but is not limited to the actual work site, lunch room, or cafeteria, a client's home or a work site, training session, conferences, business travel, or work-related social gatherings.

Speaker: The hon. Provincial Treasurer.

Mr. Sheridan: Madam Speaker, the hon. member is obviously asking a question with regards to something we feel is a very private matter in this House.

If the hon. member would like to get to that question, that would be very much appreciated.

As to the actual harassment 4(c) portion of it, I'll table it and speak to that at another time.

Thank you.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Conflict of interest issue

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you for that.

In terms of my next question, it's actually going to be for the acting Premier. The question is, acting Premier: Have you been in touch with the Premier of the province and does he have any intention of asking for the Minister of Transportation and Public Works' resignation?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Development and Technology.

Mr. Brown: The Premier and I have talked

last night, Madam Speaker.

The Premier has no intentions of asking for the resignation or the setting aside of the minister of transportation. This is a matter, as you are well aware of, goes to the conflict of interest officer. The conflict of interest officer will investigate this, report back to the House. We presume people are innocent until they're found guilty or not guilty. That is our law in Canada and around the world.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you for that answer. It's interesting how the Premier's has changed his mind. People would like to go back and take a look at Hansard and some quotes that were done this year in the *Guardian* paper as to what he would choose to do if any of his ministers were involved in anything, even while an investigation would go on.

Youth addiction services

My next question is actually for the minister of health. Adult addiction programs are not well suited for the treatment of youth. Youth programs in Prince Edward Island rely mainly on out-patient services in our hospitals and our schools where counsellors have student assistance programs. Could the minister of health and social services please provide an update on the steps his government's taking to improve remedial programs for youth suffering from substance abuse?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Development and Technology.

Mr. Brown: Madam Speaker, in the

preamble to the Leader of the Opposition's statement she has indicated comments by the Premier.

The Premier has made it quite clear in his rulings. If laws are broken, he will deal with them when a person is found to have broken the law. No one has broken any law at this time. There has been an allegation made. I wish the opposition would allow the process to carry out in this.

If she wants to debate the allegation on the floor of the Legislature, let's do it then. But no, we have a law in place now that has put an independent person into this decision to look into these allegations and to investigate them and to be unbiased. So I wish that the Leader of the Opposition would allow that this process takes place. We cannot, as politicians, run down to the courtroom at any time and start intervening in rulings.

So I hope that the Opposition allows for the process to take place. The allegation has been made. The law is quite specific what will happen. Allow it to follow out. We will get a report back because I have every confidence in the commissioner involved in this case.

Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Madam Speaker, I don't mind repeating my question.

The other part, I'll just refer people to the *Guardian* article, January 31, 2007, that was published in the *Guardian* in regards to a finding where the Conflict of Interest Commissioner actually had ruled that there was no conflict, and then the comments by

the then-opposition leader.

Anyway, I'm more interested today on health issues. Adult addiction programs are not well suited for treatment of youth. Youth programs in Prince Edward Island rely mainly on out-patient services in our hospitals. There are schools where counsellors have student assistance programs. Could the minister of health and social services please provide an update on the steps that his government is taking to improve remedial programs for youth suffering from substance abuse?

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

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

Certainly, we'll give an overview and update on where we're at with addiction services in this province. Certainly we're very pleased at the progress we're making.

In my former life I had the opportunity to work very closely, over 20 years, with youth in this province. I also spent a tremendous amount of time coaching in this province. Through those experiences I was exposed to a lot of personal situations and continue to watch individuals I coached as they progress through their lives.

I certainly have a tremendously strong belief in enhancing addiction services in this province. I've witnessed some personal stories of youth in this province who have struggled with addictions and eventually have taken their lives. So it's very personal with me and I'm extremely committed to moving this agenda forward.

Phase one in the addiction youth strategy was implemented under the previous administration in December 2006. Through that process they engaged stakeholders

across this province, collected a lot of great information across this province in respect to what a new program, a new facility, will look like.

Phase one was completed. We do have a report that's basically on the table being fine-tuned. I'm pleased to announce here today that we will be beginning phase two which will be taking that information back out to the stakeholders. We'll be bringing in some experts to evaluate the direction and input that we have received. So phase two will be implemented and basically is in the process of being implemented between October and the end of December.

We're excited about the work that's been done, and I credit the process. There's a lot of great work but we have to validate the process right now. We have to go back out to re-assess and bring that information back to the key stakeholders that were at the table before we finalize our direction.

This is an issue that my department is taking very seriously. It's a huge priority, but it's very important to understand that the development of programming is equally as important as actually where we put the facility and what that facility looks like. The heart and soul of the facility is going to be the most important priority right now to look at in-service, out-patient services provided to youth struggling with addictions in this province, and we'll be diligently working.

I've directed the department I want phase two completed by the end of December so we can move into an implementation by, hopefully, the spring of next year. That's the hope.

So we're excited about the work that's being done. But I also want to recognize the work of individuals in this province who have been under a tremendous amount of stress over the last number of years in respect to

providing youth services in a system that has been very restricted in respect to a demand that's intensifying. We know the pressures and the problems that the enhanced level of street drugs are causing in the city and across this province. So as the minister responsible for youth addictions, I'm extremely excited about moving this agenda forward, and that's it.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

It's obvious the minister of health and opposition agree how important youth interventions are for youth struggling with substance abuse.

My next question goes to the health minister. Could you be a little bit more specific? We notice in your budget document it does not indicate what your government is going to address with youth substance abuse problems in terms of an actual dollar figure. Would the minister please tell us what money has been made available for the youth addiction centre?

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

Mr. D. Currie: In respect to actual figures, we have a \$200,000 commitment in budget as we speak for operational to continue the process to gather the information. Once again, the importance of going out, gathering the information and bringing back the information so people on this Island and the key stakeholders are a key player in helping us direct where we go with youth addictions in this province.

The second part to that, we budgeted

\$300,000 in capital budget to look at having that into next spring's budget for a facility. We also have the program that was announced by the federal government, the national strategy against substance abuse. We are anticipating anywhere between 200,000 and 300,000. Figures haven't been confirmed. So that money will go into the support of us making sure that our government defines and develops a quality, top-end youth addictions facility for this province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Thank you, minister. My next question is for the health minister. I know it's important sometimes to take time to study. However, I believe the work that you described was ongoing for at least 2.5 years. So this is not the time for any more study but probably more a time of action.

My question to the minister is: In regards to the interest groups that have been taking the lead here, are you willing to help this interest group and their troubled families by actually speeding up the process? Like, you talked about more research for the next several months. Since all the research has been done, can you speed up the process?

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

Mr. D. Currie: As the minister responsible for addictions, certainly it's a big issue and it's a huge priority. The time lines, if anybody - my colleagues know my personality. I'm not the most patient person, and I certainly understand that being inside government, new for the first time, we

understand that process - and some of the former members across the floor certainly can appreciate by some of the comments they've made with respect to how things work in government.

Certainly I respect the question from the Leader of the Opposition, and as the minister responsible I will be paying very close attention to the time lines. But I think it's also important that we make sure that we do this right and that we do follow a process that engages all Islanders that want to be part of developing a process.

I also would like to add that I have had some wonderful discussions with Portage in New Brunswick in respect to what their services look like to give myself a better appreciation for what a quality facility would look like. This is about taxpayers' dollars, but it's also about young lives. I know the challenges that we're facing every day in this province and the seriousness of it.

So I will take that question very seriously in respect to doing my best as minister to expedite the process to make sure that we have a quality program-facility for all youth in this province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Vernon River-Stratford.

Comments by Leader of the Opposition

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

My question is for the minister of education. Maybe it's because I'm new in this House, but yesterday I was appalled at the comments coming from the Leader of the Opposition with regards that possibly some people in the Department of Education may be falsifying the common assessment scores.

She mentioned earlier about going back in Hansard and looking at what the people had said. If we do that from yesterday, I'll just quote you, comments she had said: "Are we going to receive the details from that report or is your department working on changing some of the figures, the data from that report?" is what she asked the minister of education. She continued to say: "I must say I'm a little concerned that someone may be doctoring" up the report.

As a former civil servant, and also having family and friends in the civil service, I was really put off by that comment.

My question for the minister of education then is: Since I think these are quite below the dignity of this House, do you take these accusations seriously, and what do you make of the comments made by the Leader of the Opposition?

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

Mr. Greenan: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I want to thank the member for his question. I was somewhat surprised by the comment made by the Leader of the Opposition, and upon reflection of what was said, I was offended that the Leader of the Opposition would suggest that officials in my department would practice such an activity.

The results of the common assessment program are going to be true and will reflect what the students in this province actually did in the intermediate math and primary literacy. Those are going to be rolled out this week.

I thank the member for the question, and I hope that the Leader of the Opposition will at some point speak to the officials in my department and make an apology.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Vernon River-Stratford.

Briefing of Leader of the Opposition

Mr. McIsaac: Supplementary for the minister.

Yesterday, you offered her a briefing with regards to the results of this common assessment testing. Can you tell me if she's accepted that and she will take from that for what the accusations she made with regards to Department of Education officials?

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

Mr. Greenan: Madam Speaker, yes, I did offer the Leader of the Opposition an opportunity to get a briefing.

She has accepted that and she will be meeting with the officials in my department before week's end. I'm sure that she will take that opportunity to make her apologies known.

Thank you.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Tyne Valley-Linkletter.

Medical centre for Tyne Valley

Ms. Biggar: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

My question is for the Minister of Health, Social Services and Seniors. The previous government neglected to budget the \$500,000 promised for a new professional medical centre in Tyne Valley. Could the minister update the House on what his department is doing regarding plans for this project?

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

Mr. D. Currie: Madam Speaker, first of all, I would like to acknowledge Lorraine Robinson who's in the gallery today and who's the chair of the board of Stewart Memorial, and the work that her board is doing and has done in the community of Tyne Valley.

I also want to acknowledge Dr. Roy Montgomery who is a 29-year physician who grew up in the community of Tyne Valley and certainly has done great service in health care in Tyne Valley. I also want to acknowledge the fact that he's moving down the road to O'Leary and I certainly wish him well.

In respect to the medical services centre in Tyne Valley, the process for this started in July of 2006. There was a community health assessment done in the communities of Tyne Valley and Lennox Island. The recommendations from that assessment were referred to the Stewart Memorial Hospital Board. The board prepared a letter on recommendation of what that assessment directed the board to do and that was calling for a medical services centre. In January 2007 the Department of Health received that notice and letter and request. On February 14th the Department of Health referred back and confirmed that Stewart Memorial would be receiving a medical health centre in Tyne Valley.

With the previous administration - when taking over government, I sat down very early in my responsibilities and met with the board. Basically, at the end of the day, the \$500,000 which was the cost of the facility was not implemented in the budget. After looking back through the documentation by the previous minister in the department, it was a commitment that was made which involved the community, the federal

government, and the province. At that point in time, after government had changed, we had learned that the process had started but the process and approval for money from the federal government - the processes were not in place but, most importantly, the money wasn't in the previous administration budget as indicated.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Tyne Valley-Linkletter.

Ms. Biggar: Thank you, Mr. Minister.

My supplementary question is for the Provincial Treasurer. Will the Provincial Treasurer assure this House and the residents of Tyne Valley and area that the \$500,000 for the professional medical centre will be in the 2008 budget and that construction will begin in 2008?

Speaker: The hon. Provincial Treasurer.

Mr. Sheridan: Madam Speaker, as our health minister has spoken to, we realize the value, the importance to Tyne Valley this facility would mean to you.

We have taken it under advisement and we will be meeting with budget cabinet within the next two weeks. As you've been told, we will be tabling our capital budget here within two weeks' time and at that point we will have made our decision on that.

Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Approval for traffic lights

Mr. M. Currie: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

My first question is for the acting Premier. To gain access onto an arterial highway, do you have to have approval from Cabinet?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Development and Technology.

Mr. Brown: Yes.

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

Mr. M. Currie: Madam Speaker, when you are in Cabinet and an executive memo was brought forward for new lights in Winsloe for the MacDonald-McQuaid application, as it was posted on IRAC, did you realize there was no IRAC approval for this new site?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Development and Technology.

Mr. Brown: Madam Speaker, I spent seven years in this House asking these members about Cabinet memorandums.

Each and every time in this House the answer was the same. We are not allowed to discuss Cabinet information in the Legislature. He is fully aware that Cabinet memorandums are confidential, but they are made available after 20 years.

Thank you.

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

Mr. M. Currie: I guess, Madam Speaker, the hon. member is not going to answer any questions about the lights in Cornwall either, are they? Cabinet approval?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Development and Technology.

Mr. Brown: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The member has made an allegation of a conflict of interest. We have jurisprudence in this country and in the world that when a person is alleged to have committed a crime, that person is allowed to be judged.

This issue has gone to the Conflict of Interest Commissioner. The Conflict of Interest Commissioner has access to that information. He will review that information. He will make a decision on whether a conflict of interest occurred and he will bring it back to you and you will file it in this Legislature, Madam Speaker.

If the member wants to put the person that he alleged the conflict of interest on trial in this Legislature, then say so. Or does he want the case to go before the conflict of interest? He could have denied making the allegation and continued to ask the questions in this Legislature on this important issue. He chose to go the legal route to the Conflict of Interest Commissioner. That has taken it out of the Legislature, for the time being, and into the conflict of interest officer's hands. Let the conflict of interest officer do his job and report back to the Legislature as we allowed the conflict of interest officer to do it when an allegation was made against one of their members, Madam Speaker.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Chemical-free zone for schools

Mr. M. Currie: Madam Speaker, I see that he's not going to answer any of the questions so I'll move to a new minister.

The question today is for the Minister of Agriculture. I guess there's a lot of talk in the last little while about a one kilometre

chemical-free zone around our schools. I'm wondering if the Minister of Agriculture is in favour of that.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture.

Mr. LeClair: Madam Speaker, I didn't hear the last part of the question.

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

Mr. M. Currie: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The question is there's been a lot of talk lately about a one kilometre free zone for spraying around our schools. I'm wondering, as Minister of Agriculture, are you in favour of that?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture.

Mr. LeClair: Madam Speaker, we will be discussing that, and I'll discuss that and have been with my colleague here.

What I do assure the member across is that whatever is best for everyone involved is what I will be in favour of.

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

Body burden testing

Mr. M. Currie: Madam Speaker, I don't know if I got a yes or a no or if I got any kind of an answer.

But I do want to, I guess, ask the minister. There has been a lot of talk lately about chemicals that are absorbed in our body, whether through the air or water or what we eat. Certainly there is some testing that's taking place. It's called body burden. I'm just wondering if you'd approve of that testing being done in our children in our

schools.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture.

Mr. LeClair: Madam Speaker, did you say testing of children? I didn't get the question. I was talking to this person here. I'm sorry, but I was talking to my colleague here, but I can't hear.

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

Mr. M. Currie: Madam Speaker, (Indistinct) since the minister of development is trying to coach the Minister of Agriculture, I'll move to a new minister.

I'll go to the minister of education. Minister of education, would you agree or think that your government should start doing body burden testing on our children? It's a test that I guess determines the level of toxicity in our blood. Would you do random testing in our schools across PEI?

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

Mr. Greenan: Madam Speaker, that question is an interesting question, and it's certainly something as a government we would not make hastily.

We would have to get more information and, in concert with the Department of Health, we would look into such a test. I am not familiar with it but, certainly, it is an interesting concept and I thank the hon. member for bringing it forward.

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

Mr. M. Currie: Madam Speaker, at least he didn't say it was going to be under this mandate.

So could you narrow that down a little bit, that if you would consult with the minister of health, maybe the Premier, and some other people in regards to doing some random testing on our children - of course, with the consent of their parents on this test - to determine if there are any toxic buildups?

I guess the point I'm trying to make when previous governments across Canada and United States took lead out of their gasoline and out of their paint, we saw that lead compound be reduced in the blood of our children and stuff. So what I'm trying to find out is if you're prepared to do those tests now, if you, as you said, put Islanders first.

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

Mr. Greenan: Madam Speaker, I guess in response to the hon. member of the opposition's question, if those requests come from the parents of the students, then we certainly would react since they're coming from the parents.

For us as a legislature to make that decision, again, we have to work with the other departments. But if the parents are requesting that, then I think we as a government should indeed look into providing that. But we'll see what happens.

Thank you.

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

Mr. M. Currie: Madam Speaker, to the minister of education.

Are you a parent?

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

Mr. Greenan: I am indeed a parent of two adult sons.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Future youth addiction facility

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I'm going to go back to the health minister. You we were talking a little while ago about Portage. I couldn't agree with you more. That facility that's located in rural New Brunswick is terrific. The programs are exceptional, as are the staff. I actually was lucky enough to attend one of the graduation ceremonies of one of the young people who had to go there.

My question is back on the facility. You were talking about studies. My question is: Where do you believe is the best location to locate this new facility that's probably going to be very similar to Portage with its programs and its services and its aftercare model? Where will this new location of this facility be?

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

Mr. D. Currie: Madam Speaker, in respect to the question, to date my focus has been on implementing the process and making sure that we're validating the information in order to get to the point where we know what a quality program looks like, as well as a facility.

To date I've had no discussions on location or space. I know that there are a number of community groups that have brought to the attention of the department an interest, but as far as my understanding, we haven't looked at an actual site or location as of today.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Youth addiction services (further)

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Mr. Minister, for that answer. Madam Speaker, my next question is to the health minister.

We'll go back to talk about addiction programs for youth in Island schools. Island schools have replied with programs to help youth. What steps has your government taken to coordinate programming between education, health, and social services?

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

Mr. D. Currie: Madam Speaker, personally, in my previous life, I was a school counsellor, so I certainly have a tremendous amount of respect for the role the school counsellors play and the impact that they can play in working with students with addictions in our schools.

I am a huge proponent of intergovernmental discussions around how we can best utilize the services inside health, education, social services. I think that we have a tremendous amount of opportunity in front of us as we continue down the journey here, looking at youth addictions, to engage the Department of Education, the Department of Health, which is under my direction, and social services to collaboratively look at how we can best enhance services inside the school system to allow us to continue to bring those services inside, hopefully, which will be a quality facility.

Speaker: Final question.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, health minister, and Madam Speaker.

My next question's for the minister of health and social services. Could you please tell us what programs and services are available to off-Island youth when substance abuse programs on PEI are either not suitable or have not worked for the individual, where they are, and what's the per diem rate to actually attend such a facility?

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

Mr. D. Currie: Madam Speaker, I know we do pay for beds at Portage, and we do have opportunities if services aren't successful in our capacities within the province.

I know that we have had access to beds in Calgary. The name of the facility doesn't come to me, but I'll bring that information back with the exact data of costs for individuals who are requiring those much needed services out-of-province.

Speaker: End of Question Period.

Statements by Ministers

Speaker: Starting with the hon. Minister of Development and Technology.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct).

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

Mr. D. Currie: I do want to acknowledge a gentleman who is in the audience today, and he's a long-standing employer with the Department of Social Services and Seniors, and the gentleman's name is Barry Chandler. He is the Supervisor at Tyne Valley Centre.

I've had the opportunity to work with Barry over the years, and I have a tremendous respect for the work that Barry does. If anybody is familiar with Tyne Valley, it is a

great facility. Barry has the huge responsibility to deal with some of our more challenged students, and I commend him and his staff for the work that they do in the day to day work with some very difficult cases.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. LeClair: Madam Speaker, I'd just like to rise today to welcome a couple of people from my riding in the Gallery.

I noticed them come in. I see Paul McAlduff up there, and I think it's Paul Buote by the side of him. I'm not sure, I don't see anybody else. I could be missing somebody, but anyway, I'd like to welcome them to the gallery and I hope they enjoy the proceedings.

Speaker: Thank you.

The hon. Minister of Development and Technology.

Mr. Brown: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I'm pleased to rise in the House today to briefly outline to all hon. members and Islanders this government's commitment to increasing the number of immigrants coming to Prince Edward Island.

As I'm sure all members are aware, this province is facing a major labour challenge. This can be an issue when it comes to attracting new businesses to our province, because the first question we often hear from executives from companies who come to Prince Edward Island is: Do you have the employees we need?

So, given this priority this government has placed on immigration, I'm pleased to report to the House today that the Government of

Canada is announcing today an \$808,000 commitment over four years for Prince Edward Island to assist the development of an online information system to help potential immigrants and those settling in our province.

Our government is partnering with a number of organizations to help develop this online content.

I'm most pleased that we are working with the PEI Association for Newcomers to Canada, who are working with us to develop and implement a translation system and a searchable online engine, and a web-based PEI Newcomers' Association Centre.

More, I'm pleased, and I'm pleased, dealing with the Association. I can tell you they do tremendous work. I'm very pleased to be able to support them in this effort. Given that in the search for potential immigrants, work is so important, we're also working with the PEI sector councils who are developing searchable labour market data bases also.

So, again, this government takes seriously the immigration and we are pleased to work with our many organizations and to work with the federal government in order to attract new immigration to Prince Edward Island.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct).

Speaker: Yes, you are. Sorry, I didn't see you standing there.

The hon. Member from Georgetown-St.

Peters.

Mr. M. Currie: Madam Speaker, I, too, would like to join with the minister and congratulate Peter MacKay in sending that money down.

It's certainly well needed. Kevin Arsenault does a fantastic job with our immigrants. I just think that he's probably overtaxed, overworked, and he probably needs some more help. I think he just does a fantastic job and I just ask that all Islanders embrace our new immigrants and welcome them into our province.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. D. Currie: I rise in the House today to recognize the outstanding contribution by our province's 87 foster parents who have opened their homes and their hearts to children and youth in care.

Some of them have joined with us today and are in the gallery. Our guests include Friend Herring, president of the PEI Federation of Foster Families, and other members of the Federation.

Across Canada, this is National Foster Family Appreciation Week. In PEI, foster families are providing a safe, stable place for children to call home until they can safely reunite with their own family or make their lifelong family relationships. There are more children who need a home. The work of resource staff of the Department of Social Services and Seniors and the PEI Federation of Foster Families, to recruit and train foster families, is never ending.

I, too, send out an appeal to Islanders to

consider becoming a foster parent or a foster family to a child or youth. To help this critically important work, my government has committed an additional \$149,000 this year. The increase will help finance the care needs of children receiving foster care.

In closing, I ask my House colleagues to please join me in thanking foster families in our communities for the care, commitment and compassion they are providing for our children.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you.

I'd like to rise, too, and congratulate foster families on the tremendous contribution they do with our children. My brother Hubert and his wife Georgina are foster parents, my niece Lori Johnson and her partner Richard are foster parents.

We have several young people at the house who are with my brother and my niece to put our arms around them and to offer them our extended family. Foster parenting is a real important role and it's great that people take the time to make the contribution.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. D. Currie: Madam Speaker, October is being recognized across the country as Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness Month.

On a local level, the support group Broken Hearts...Shattered Dreams was initiated here

in Prince Edward Island in 2006 for parents who are grieving the loss of a child or pregnancy. Members of this volunteer group offer support and information to parents during a very difficult time.

For example, earlier this year the group created care packages that include information on resources and support available for grieving parents, which were donated to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

The group organized the Island's first Walk to Remember which took place earlier this month. More than 70 parents, family members, friends and health care professionals attended this event in support of parents who are grieving a loss. The Walk to Remember is an awareness event held annually in many other provinces.

I am pleased to welcome members of the Prince Edward Island's active support group Broken Hearts...Shattered Dreams to the Gallery of the House today. I commend the group's valuable work and their commitment to offer support to grieving parents.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Webster: Madam Speaker, I recently had the pleasure of visiting the Rollo Bay Consolidated School to make a special presentation to one student in the school.

Jessie Woods is the winner of the Prince Edward Island poster contest for the 2008 Energy and the Environment Calendar produced by Natural Resources Canada to promote wise energy use and a healthy environment. This calendar features one drawing from each province and territory.

About 135,000 calendars are distributed across Canada.

The theme of the poster contest for the 2008 calendar was: Using Less... Living Better. Jessie's artwork, entitled Don't Pollute the Environment, encourages the use of bicycles rather than cars, hanging clothes on the clothesline to dry, and using solar power.

I want to take this opportunity to congratulate Jessie and thank all the students who entered the contest. They had some excellent ideas for conserving energy and protecting our environment.

I would also like to thank teachers for their efforts in helping young Islanders learn more about the environmental benefits of energy efficiency, as well as links between energy use and climate change.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture.

Mr. Campbell: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I'll wait until the traffic dies down here a little bit. Take your time. You're doing great.

Madam Speaker, I would like to bring to the attention of the Members of the Legislative Assembly my concerns with respect to the decision of the federal Minister of Fisheries and Oceans to allow midwater trawlers to fish herring in the Gulf of St. Lawrence.

This unwise and unfounded decision was made without full consultation with the industry. It flies in the face of the need to protect fish stocks and it puts politics and corporate interests ahead of sound science

and common sense. There are already significant concerns about the spring and fall herring biomass stocks. Increasing the fishing effort at a time when there are concerns about the state of the resource will only exacerbate the problem.

Let me tell you a little about midwater trawlers. The use of nets guided by state-of-the-art electronics catch everything in their path. Unlike pursing gear, nothing in the path of these trawls can survive. This will have a serious impact not only on herring stocks, but on species as well. We have seen the devastating impact of the use of midwater trawlers in areas such as the Gulf of Maine. At a time when other jurisdictions are moving away from trawling we cannot sit back and simply allow this to happen. As a government, we are firm in opposing this unfortunate decision.

There has been much discussion of this issue in the media, and the federal minister has said there is no deviation from the management plan. I have spoken to members of the advisory committee and have been told by my department staff that at no point in time was there ever an understanding that new vessels would enter this fishery. The federal minister approved the two new vessels to direct for herring by midwater trawl on his own accord, and that is why we are raising this concern.

I want to commend the Prince Edward Island Fishermen's Association for its initiatives in organizing other maritime fisheries organizations in a united voice against this decision. We need to firmly impress upon the federal minister that we are serious about protecting our fishery resources and the livelihood of our fishers.

We are an island surrounded by water. Many thousands of Islanders depend on the fishery. On a percentage basis, the fishing industry is more important to our economy

than it is in any other Canadian province. This is why we are so concerned about unilateral decisions taken by the federal government and their impact on our future. I cannot understand why the federal minister has turned his back on the basic principles of conservation and responsible fisheries management practice.

I will be raising this and other issues with the federal minister next week during the annual meeting of the Canadian Council of Fisheries and Aquaculture Ministers. In the meantime, I call on all members of this Legislature to join with me in opposing the operation of midwater trawlers in the Gulf of St. Lawrence.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you.

I would like to respond to that. If it was a perfect world in 2007, there would be no herring seiner period, not only in the Gulf, but not anywhere else either. It's on record that the opposition has a motion on the floor in regards to herring seiners that we will be debating later in this session.

When you think about all the changes that have taken place since 1996 when that management plan was put in place and agreed to - climate change to name a few, migration patterns, ocean temperature changes, as well as new technology. The other part that we have to consider, at the Atlantic Vet College here in Charlottetown, we have world-renowned experts who know how to do independent research. No matter who you talk to about the herring, whether or not the stocks are so low in the spring that they can't even catch any fish or a little bit

more plentiful outside the 25-fathom line, there are all kinds of questions that need to be answered.

In the letter that we have written to the minister, we ask him to take a look at providing dollars to Atlantic Vet College to do some independent research so that people, not only the fishers, but all the stakeholders have real answers in terms of the changes that have taken place. That management plan from 1996 is well outdated and we encourage all people that they need to take a stand. That in this day and age there is too much information that we don't know and we have to protect the livelihood of not only the fishers, but all the other people that are associated with herring as well.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Transportation and Public Works.

Mr. MacKinley: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

It gives me great pleasure to rise in the House today and describe the actions of members of my department, land and survey section of the Department of Transportation and Public Works.

On the afternoon of Monday, October 22nd, surveyors from transportation and public works land surveying sections were on Route 2 returning from surveying property. Three individuals noticed a vehicle crossed the road in front of them. That vehicle then collided with a parked tractor-trailer on the side of the road. That's when our surveyors leaped into action. These are very proud employees of the Department of Transportation and Public Works.

The surveyors quickly removed their fire extinguisher that is provided in all transportation service vehicles and dosed the flames and tried to put them out. A passing school bus driver also stopped to help. The driver of the bus gave one of our surveyors a fire extinguisher to try to put out the flames. Imagine what they were doing. One fire extinguisher - I've used them - didn't put out the flame. Another one still didn't put them out. One of our surveyors also removed the extinguisher from the truck involved in the accident and dosed the flames again. He managed to get the flames out prior to the arrival of the emergency crew. Our surveyors and neighbours then formed a water line from a nearby house to ensure that the fire did not start again.

While the fire was still burning, one of our surveyors managed to get into the back seat of the car to attend to the driver who could not be removed safely from the vehicle until the safety people or the medics got there to remove him.

So, Madam Speaker, because the driver could not be removed from the vehicle, having the fire extinguisher on hand, combined with the quick action of our surveying crew and the driver of the school bus, may well have saved a life here in the Province of Prince Edward Island. Surveyors Les MacIsaac, Sam MacLeod and Barry Woodgate deserve a great deal of gratitude in the House and from all Islanders for their heroic, selfless determination to go and help people in distress, and also the bus driver that assisted, and all other people that assisted in this. This is what PEI is all about, saving lives and helping people and keeping our highways safe.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Presenting and Receiving Petitions

Speaker: None.

I'll recognize the hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

Ms. Dunsford: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I rise to acknowledge some people in the gallery today that I've had the privilege of meeting with and learning more about foster parenting, as was mentioned previously in the House.

I had met Nancy MacFarlane but not Wayne MacFarlane when we celebrated at a dinner the other night for foster parenting, so I welcome Wayne. Thank you for all your hard work over the years with foster parenting. As well, as mentioned before, Barry Chandler and Friend Herring of the Foster Parents Federation of PEI. A pleasure for me to get to know foster parenting on PEI better through meeting with you and learning more about foster parenting on PEI. I thank you all for your hard work and your cooperation and partnerships you have with one another.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Tabling of Documents

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Transportation and Public Works.

Mr. MacKinley: Madam Speaker, I beg leave to introduce a Bill to be intituled *An Act to Amend the Highway Traffic Act* and I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Communities, Cultural Affairs and Labour -

Speaker: Hon. Minister of Transportation and Public Works, we're going to get to government bills just in a minute.

Mr. MacKinley: I'm sorry.

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

Mr. Greenan: Madam Speaker, by Command of Her Honour the Lieutenant-Governor, I beg leave to table the Annual Report for the Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission for the period ending 31st March, 2007 and I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Tourism, that the said document be now received and do lie on the Table.

Speaker: Shall it carry?

Some Hon. Members: Carried.

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

Mr. Webster: Madam Speaker, by Command of Her Honour the Lieutenant-Governor, I beg leave to table the Annual Report of the Prince Edward Island Environmental Advisory Council for the period ending December 31st, 2006 and I move, seconded by the Honourable Provincial Treasurer, that the said document be now received and do lie on the Table.

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

Thank you.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Tourism.

Ms. Docherty: Madam Speaker, yesterday in the Legislature I was asked by a number of the members various questions when tabling my budget.

I have the information here that has been requested. Just to outline it, regarding tourism, we will be tabling the KPMG Report, the question on Sunday shopping

regarding the exit survey -

Speaker: Hon. Minister of Tourism, just to stop you there. That was done during the Committee of the Whole House yesterday, and I would ask you to do that during the Committee of the Whole House again today.

Ms. Docherty: Okay.

Speaker: All right. Thank you.

Anybody else for Tabling of Documents?

Reports by Committees

Introduction of Government Bills

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Transportation and Public Works.

Mr. MacKinley: Thank you, Madam Speaker, for keeping me in a straight line here. I was little too quick.

Madam Speaker, I beg leave to introduce a Bill to be intituled *An Act to Amend the Highway Traffic Act* and I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Communities, Cultural Affairs and Labour, that the same be now received and read a First Time.

Speaker: Shall it carry?

Some Hon. Members: Carried.

Speaker: A brief explanation, after it's read by the Clerk.

Clerk: *An Act to Amend the Highway Traffic Act*, Bill No. 17, read a First Time.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Transportation and Public Works, a brief explanation, please.

Mr. MacKinley: Basically what we're

going to do is that we're going to - for instance, the school bus issue has been in the news lately about a lot of people are passing school buses. We're having problems. The fine use to be \$500 or \$5000, but as we all know, \$500 is the minimum fine most of them pay, unless somebody was probably killed or something. I don't know of any \$5,000 fine.

Basically what we're going to do in this section is increase the \$500 fine to \$1,000. So now if anybody passes a school bus when the red lights are on or flashing, it's automatically \$1,000 plus your demerit points.

Another part of this bill is, is vehicles that are flood-damaged vehicles. A lot of these vehicles are coming in, there's been so many floods in some parts of the world, that they're being fixed up and sold again. Now if they come in we're going to - any flood vehicles are going to be stamped non-repairable vehicles. So somebody like our Pages or anybody here goes and buys a vehicle, it might look perfectly good, and then all of a sudden you got trouble with wires and everything else. We're going to make them non-resaleable here in the province.

Also, going back to the first part of it, the *Highway Traffic Act*, basically what we're doing here is we're going to increase our fines for speeders. For instance, we're going to have - I believe it is a minimum - yeah, we're going to leave the fines the way they are now, but anybody caught for speeding that's charged for speeding will automatically pay \$50, plus the way the fines are now. Trying to make sure that our highways are safe for our children and everybody to travel on.

Thank you.

Speaker: Thank you, hon. Minister of

Transportation and Public Works.

The hon. Minister of Education and Attorney General.

Mr. Greenan: Madam Speaker, I beg leave to introduce a Bill to be intituled *Securities Act* and I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Fisheries, that the same be now received and read a First Time.

Speaker: Shall it carry?

Some Hon. Members: Carried.

Clerk: *Securities Act*, Bill No. 16, read a First Time.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Education and Attorney General, would you care to give a brief explanation?

Mr. Greenan: Madam Speaker, this act provides for regulations of trading in securities.

It has two main goals. It provides protection for investors from unfair, improper or fraudulent practices in the marketplace, and it builds confidence in the capital markets by ensuring that these markets run smoothly and fairly.

Our existing *Securities Act* is increasingly less capable of properly fulfilling these functions.

One concern is to improve protection for PEI investors. The existing act does not include many of the enforcement tools necessary to deal with the modern markets. The new *Securities Act* incorporates the best and most up-to-date investor protection laws in Canada.

Another concern is to ensure that PEI goes forward with the other provinces as we improve the structures and systems of

market regulations.

The new legislation incorporates the recent changes being made across the country to modernize and streamline the Canadian Securities Regulatory system.

This bill consists of 192 sections. It is complex law of a technical nature. I would therefore be pleased to offer the opposition the opportunity to meet with my officials for a full briefing on the new act before we move to second reading.

I will ask my officials to be in touch with the opposition for this purpose.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you.

Any other government bills?

Government Motions

Orders of the Day (Government)

Speaker: The hon. Provincial Treasurer.

Mr. Sheridan: Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. Government House Leader, that Order No. 2 be now read.

Speaker: Shall it carry?

Some Hon. Members: Carried.

Clerk: Order No. 2, Consideration of the Estimates in Committee.

Speaker: The hon. Provincial Treasurer.

Mr. Sheridan: Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Government House Leader, that this House do now resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole House to take into consideration the grant of supply to Her Majesty.

Speaker: Shall it carry?

Some Hon. Members: Carried.

Speaker: Deputy Speaker, Chair of the a Committee on Supply. I'm turning over the Chair.

Mr. Bagnall: The minister had to go out. We'll wait for him. Did we carry the \$1, 800,000?

Mr. MacKinley: No.

Mr. Bagnall: We'll carry that.

Mr. MacKinley: You want to carry that. Can I have permission to bring on my deputy?

Chair (Biggar): The House is now in a Committee of the Whole House to further consider the grant of supply to Her Majesty.

Mr. MacKinley: Madam Chairperson, is it all right if my deputy comes on? There were questions you had asked about speed radar guns under highway safety. You asked questions about -

Chair: I believe that was agreed.

Mr. MacKinley: Agreed. It's agreed for you to come on, sir. While we're waiting here. We're putting radar guns in -

Mr. Bagnall: I think I was if you had to change the legislation on that, hon. member.

Mr. MacKinley: Yes, and the deputy has found that information out for you. I didn't think we had to, but he'll brief me on it better.

Mr. Bagnall: Yes.

Mr. MacKinley: We're only going to go with vehicles that are registered 14,000 kgs.

and up.

Mr. Bagnall: So that's about three-ton and above, would it be?

Mr. MacKinley: Roughly, yes. Two point two point zero four six by 14, you multiply, and that's what you get, 28, 29.

Mr. Bagnall: Yes.

Mr. MacKinley: Basically we're not going to go after any cars or trucks or three-quarter trucks. They are not going to be there. It's sort of what you call a pilot project.

Mr. Bagnall: Yes.

An Hon. Member: He's here now.

Chair: We will be working from page 162 today in the budget book.

The hon. Minister of Tourism.

Ms. Docherty: Madam Chairman, with your permission, I would like to table the documents asked of the members from yesterday's - while I was on the floor doing my estimates.

Chair: Is it agreed?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Ms. Docherty: I have one clarification I would like to make. I think one of the members asked me about the grants for the Women's Secretariat which was \$120,000, and I indicated that a portion of that went to the West Prince Family Violence. Actually, you will see the correction. What I gave you was incorrect, but the correction is on what I will table.

Chair: We finished up at Total Land and Environment, and that section was not carried.

Mr. Bagnall: We'll carry it.

Chair: Shall it carry?

Some Hon. Members: Carried.

Mr. MacKinley: Could Steve explain out, though, under highway safety, before we get - the member's question was - the hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir questioned I believe about - do we have to go through legislation change to put radar guns in highway safety vehicles, which we are planning on doing? By the way, that will be the first time for it. Actually do it and charge.

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: The answer to the questions is there's nothing new required in the act. The *Highway Traffic Act* as it exists right now, Section 10 provides sufficient authority for the department staff to enforce the speed limit requirements. I have copies of the act if you like. We can table.

Mr. Bagnall: Just one question on that. Really that's what I was wanting to know, if we were going to have to change the legislation and you say we don't.

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: Yes.

Mr. Bagnall: The existing legislation then, can they stop anybody on the highways for speeding if they want to sit there with the gun and do that?

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: The answer to that is yes. Our intention is really to the extent that those officer are commercial vehicle enforcement officers, the focus will be mainly around that piece of the motoring public, the commercial vehicle fleet. We don't intend to -

Mr. MacKinley: Like if you live in my own District 17 -

Mr. Bagnall: That's fine. I'm okay.

Mr. MacKinley: - Cornwall, like trucks, big heavy trucks coming through there fast, or you go to school zones in some areas. We can send our highway safety people out there and enforce the thing. Because the RCMP, there's not enough of them with all the different things they got to do, really. This is going to be a way to assist our highways and try and make them safer.

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: With permission, if I may, I'd like to table some of the information that the minister promised to bring back. That's the reference to the *Highway Traffic Act*.

Mr. MacKinley: Here's the security camera issue.

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: The RFP.

Mr. MacKinley: The RFP and everything.

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: Here's the outline of the property taxes.

Mr. MacKinley: Here's an outline of the property taxes and - property taxes be paid 2007 - this land we own?

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: Yes. That the municipal (Indistinct).

Mr. MacKinley: That's land we own.

Mr. Bagnall: That's the properties you own? It was easier to do that way than a map?

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: That relates to the question on taxes and land and environment section. That's the municipal tax component of the properties that we own.

Mr. Bagnall: Okay.

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: The answer to the question about the provincial inventory, provincial lands inventory, I got 80 pages there.

Mr. Bagnall: That's just the map is it, or is (Indistinct)?

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: No. (Indistinct).

Mr. MacKinley: All the inventory of the land we got.

Mr. Bagnall: Okay.

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: There is no map that would show property ID numbers at that scale.

Mr. Bagnall: That's fine.

Mr. MacKinley: Show the acres, location, etc.

Mr. Bagnall: Thank you. I appreciate that.

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: And there is the (Indistinct) chart for the property land environment section.

Mr. MacKinley: Here is the land environment chart for that section.

An Hon. Member: You're efficient.

Mr. MacKinley: I got a good deputy.

Chair: Highway Maintenance Operations. Highway Maintenance Administration. "Appropriations provided for the administration and supervision of the highway maintenance functions." Administration: 24,500. Equipment: 273,700. Materials, Supplies and Services: 4,680,200. Professional and Contract

Services: 3,000,000. Salaries: 897,500.
Travel and Training: 23,700. Grants: 80,600.
Total Highway Maintenance
Administration: 8,980,200.

Questions?

The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: Grants, what would you be giving grants for in that department?

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: Just a grant to Slemon Park Corporation. It's where government placed the street services in our budget, Slemon Park.

Mr. Bagnall: So you give Slemon Park x number of dollars a year to do the maintenance there?

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: On the streets.

Mr. MacKinley: Yeah, 80,600, it looks like.

Mr. Bagnall: Is that for like snow removal?

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: That's correct.

Mr. MacKinley: Maintenance, snow removal.

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: On the most part they enter into a service agreement with us to provide the money right back.

Mr. Bagnall: Professional and contract services. I know you must have quite a long list of them. I'm not interested in anything under 50,000. Anything over 50,000, what would you have -

Mr. MacKinley: I believe I tabled them last night.

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: That's the provincial Recap Program.

Mr. Bagnall: Provincial Recap Program. I better go into this a little bit.

Mr. MacKinley: What do you want to know?

Mr. Bagnall: Did the distribution change this year on it, on what districts got recapped and what districts didn't, and how much each district got and they didn't get?

Mr. MacKinley: There is a piece in the *Eastern Graphic* there today and it's the former premier, Premier Binns, talking and he's basically saying in it that in 1988 or something he had lost the election or something (Indistinct) prepared for it. Then he said there was a lot of people that Cabinet ministers this time around weren't prepared for it and didn't see it coming. That's a quote from Mr. Binns.

Getting back to some redistribution of the paving was Premier Binns, I call him - or the former leader of the opposition, I want to give him respect because he was the premier for ten years and a great fellow. He is doing great justice for us now in Ireland and we're going to see results. The thing is is this. He told me outside - and I believe it was the former minister of development, I'm not sure about the conversation - basically what he wanted was some more pavement in his area. I said: What have you been doing for 11 years? He said: The (Indistinct) where I am I had to drag a lot of people in. He sort of wasn't looking after himself.

I just thought, well, he's been the premier for ten years, we put an extra kilometre or something in his riding for him, and it's not my fault he left, but that's why we did it. So you could be missing half a kilometre or kilometre or something, I'm not sure.

But that's why we did it, just to put it in because the former premier asked me to help him out because he was always looking after everybody else and not himself. He dragged a lot of people in, as you know, he dragged them in over the years, just dragged them in on his coat tails. I respected this gentlemen so I took his wishes into consideration and he made a decision to do that.

Mr. Bagnall: I was going to let you go through very quickly here today.

Mr. MacKinley: I don't care, you want to know the truth.

Mr. Bagnall: (Indistinct) and that kind of answer you'll be here for a month.

Mr. MacKinley: I don't care. I got all kinds -

Mr. Bagnall: I still have a question that he didn't answer there yet. With the district alignments that took place, the District of Montague-Kilmuir for instance, over doubled in highways and in size geographically. It increased drastically because we took in all of Panmure Island, Sturgeon, St. Mary's Road, Brooklyn, all that area and large area that was never there before. But when the recap was on that earlier in the spring, that was four kilometres that was looked for the district. Actual fact, when they came out we ended up getting - even though the district got doubled in size, the kilometres for recap in the district went down by 25%. I was just wondering, was there a real reason behind that?

Mr. MacKinley: The thing is, how many kilometres do you got in your district, roads?

Mr. Bagnall: I'd have to go back and double check -

Mr. MacKinley: You must know.

Mr. Bagnall: - but it's over - actually it's almost three times the size now as it used to be.

Mr. MacKinley: What's that? It was 80 kilometres before, what is it now?

Mr. Bagnall: It wasn't 80 before.

Mr. MacKinley: What was it?

Mr. Bagnall: I'm not sure, I'd have to check.

Mr. MacKinley: Do you know what it was before they changed? Do you know what it is now?

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: Not (Indistinct).

Mr. MacKinley: He's the member - but there was some pavement - we're trying to find out. The minister of development, I'm told, or you and I were driving down there through your district seeing what you wanted and there was some gentleman that has - I don't know, he was trying to get hooked on to Souris to Montague, what's his name?

Mr. Bagnall: The business person. I don't know if we want to talk about names. But the gentleman has a business in Montague and he had the property up on a road that we were looking at.

Mr. MacKinley: Yeah. The former minister of development, you told me, got this paved sometime during an election with recap. I don't know if it's right or not. The minister of development or something. Then we ended up going in, what (Indistinct) re-paving it, wasn't it, or something, or what did we do? Did you figure that out?

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: I'd have to check.

Mr. MacKinley: You'd have to check.

Chair: Further questions?

Mr. MacKinley: But we're going to try to get that extra .7 kilometres. I thought it would have been done because the person needed it done and it should have been done, because it just went so far and it stopped.

Mr. Bagnall: Yeah, well, it's still stopped at - but we're working on that.

Mr. MacKinley: All right.

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

Mr. M. Currie: You put an extra kilometre in I guess it would be District 4 this summer. Is that what you said there a minute ago?

Mr. MacKinley: Who is District 4?

Mr. M. Currie: You said it was -

Mr. MacKinley: The ex-premier's yeah. Roughly an extra kilometre there.

Mr. M. Currie: Was that during the by election?

Mr. MacKinley: Look, we were paving down there so much, I'm not sure.

Mr. M. Currie: Thank you. I understand.

Mr. MacKinley: We're doing a lot.

Mr. M. Currie: Good. Glad to see we're getting some down there. You fellows up west there, you don't need anymore.

Mr. MacKinley: Don't mention them.

Chair: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: (Indistinct) million dollars. What's the breakdown?

Mr. M. Currie: They got everything the last four or five years.

Mr. MacKinley: And they're still getting it.

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: It relates to materials, supplies and services.

Mr. MacKinley: I tabled that.

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: There is a breakdown tabled.

Mr. Bagnall: Anything over 50,000 deputy?

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: There is \$362,000 in culverts, \$270,000 -

Mr. Bagnall: Is that where the maintenance purchased those culverts?

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: Yes.

Mr. Bagnall: Where does the revenue show up that you get from those when you charge the customers 500 to put them in?

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: I think it's in our revenue number. It's either in ours or in Provincial Treasury, I'm not sure. I'd have to check. I can find it. It's in this book somewhere (Indistinct). The materials, supplies and services is essentially where the shale and the gravel for the unpaved roads program comes from, and it buys all of the asphalt, liquid asphalt that goes through the government spreader. The contract service portion would pay for the private recap portion of the -

Mr. Bagnall: Would a lot of that be for the capital projects for districts? Is that where

that money comes out of? Each district has a little capital budget for projects.

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: It's all been placed in (Indistinct) two years ago and this is where it sits now.

Mr. Bagnall: Yeah, okay.

Mr. MacKinley: They got paint in here, \$1,500.

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

Mr. M. Currie: They still go with the - the liquid asphalt is 94 or 96%, roughly, and the 6%, are you paying for that or is there a contractor paying for it?

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: Contractor is.

Mr. M. Currie: That's all changed, okay. I'm looking at a temporary assignment opportunity. For three summer equipment operators that were hired on in Bridgetown - and these are permanent people - they advertise, they put it up on the bulletin board, and I guess the employees bid on it. They were cut short this year and then you brought three new people on. Is that kind of breaching the union or -

Mr. MacKinley: No.

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: I think what the member is talking about Article 9.10. Article 9.10 in the collective agreement says: that if a part-time unionized member comes to the end of their work term and the same work exists it shall not be re-offered to someone else. In this case that work that you're talking about is not the work that they're doing the classified position for.

Mr. M. Currie: This is the first time in 11

years they weren't given the opportunity to bid on it after. It usually was longer than the eight weeks what they gave them. It was usually ten or 16 and they were cut short, sent home on Friday and then there were new guys came Monday.

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: Yeah. I think that (Indistinct) whether or not they were cut short, it's my understanding that individuals who were offered 14 weeks of employment and that's what they received. There was more work than that and it was offered to others.

Mr. M. Currie: See, I don't have any problem with that, deputy, if they're seasonal, but these are permanent people.

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: The work that they were doing was not departmental work that they hold as a position.

Mr. M. Currie: In accordance with the article of the collective agreement it says it is? Okay.

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: I believe it was adjudicated by union representatives and it was -

Mr. M. Currie: No.

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: - considered to be well within in the bounds in terms of the collective agreement

Mr. M. Currie: I remember reading a letter from the Premier now indicating he wouldn't do stuff like this and a letter from Shelly Ward indicating she was going to stand up those people that are permanent. But anyway -

Mr. MacKinley: I know that there's been people on there that's been in a temporary job for maybe four years or five years, and

the union's down our back all the time saying: This should go out internally first. Then I believe if there's nobody internally applies for it then it should be somebody externally.

I met with Shelly Ward over this and they brought it to our attention. We're new. I'm trying to take a good look at it, the deputy and I, because we want try to be as close as we possibly can to the collective union agreement.

But there are people that are there that - there's questions that got to be asked, like how did they get there, are they qualified, etc.?

Mr. M. Currie: You did some work down there, you did some site work to put some new buildings up. Was that tendered? This summer.

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: Can you elaborate?

Mr. MacKinley: Where at?

Mr. M. Currie: At Bridgetown.

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: I'd have to check.

Mr. M. Currie: Pardon?

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: I'd have to check. I can't be certain right now.

Mr. M. Currie: I'll answer it for you if you want. No, that's all right. Are you going to tender out the snowplow contracts?

Mr. MacKinley: No, we're not going to tender out the snow contracts. We're going to honour the contracts that were signed.

Mr. M. Currie: Great. Thank you.

Chair: Questions.

Mr. M. Currie: No.

Mr. MacKinley: They're signed for three of four years.

Chair: Shall it carry?

Some Hon. Members: Carried.

Chair: Provincial Highway Maintenance Operations. "Appropriations provided for the staffing, materials, equipment and services for the repair, maintenance, contracted snow removal and sanding of provincial roads." Administration: 157,700. Equipment: 7,500. Materials, Supplies and Services: 8,734,500. Professional and Contract Services: 8,488,000. Salaries: 9,895,300. Travel and Training: 220,700. Total Provincial Highway Maintenance Operations: 27,503,700.

Questions from the hon. Member from Georgetown-St. Peters.

Mr. M. Currie: I hope you look after Lomar.

Mr. MacKinley: You guys did, did you, or what?

Mr. M. Currie: No.

Mr. MacKinley: All right.

Chair: Any other questions?

Mr. M. Currie: Carried.

Chair: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: This is the section where the contract for the sand operators are in?

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: Yes.

Mr. Bagnall: How long are those contracts signed for?

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: Four years.

Mr. Bagnall: Four years. Are they being honoured?

Mr. MacKinley: Yes.

Mr. Bagnall: They're going to be continued to be honoured?

Mr. MacKinley: Yes, the only thing is somebody doesn't do their work right or something. No, they are going to be honoured. Another thing is we're going to honour split payroll and that too. Because it says that in the contract that they can take -

Mr. Bagnall: Carried.

Mr. Brown: Just wait now until I get it on the record. So the people will know that the contracts are going to be honoured, providing they do their work and split payroll where they take so much money as salaries, is going to be honoured too. Because it's in the contract.

Chair: Shall it carry?

The hon. Member from Georgetown-St. Peters.

Mr. M. Currie: Those contracts transferrable?

Mr. MacKinley: I would say. If somebody came and wanted to come in and buy it, I don't know. I've come across that, but I know when your department was in there they transferred some to somebody else and I see nothing wrong with it. The people that got it are doing a good job. Providing they have the proper equipment to do it and providing they'll get up in the morning to do

it and everything else, and take orders, I can see nothing wrong.

Mr. Bagnall: There's no clause in (Indistinct) that says they can't do it.

Mr. MacKinley: I think the minister has to approve it.

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: That's correct.

Mr. MacKinley: The minister has to approve it. Same as snow contracts. Like, if somebody wanted to sell their snow contract, we'd have to take a good look at it through the department.

Mr. Bagnall: Okay, move on to the next section.

Chair: Shall it carry?

Some Hon. Members: Carried.

Chair: Mechanical Operations. "Appropriations provided for the operational costs of the government garages to supply equipment support to the highway maintenance operations." Administration: 193,200. Equipment: 39,700. Materials, Supplies and Services: 3,883,700. Professional and Contract Services: 74,100. Salaries: 9,925,200. Travel and Training: 538,300. Total Mechanical Operations: 14,654,200.

Any questions?

The hon. Member from Georgetown-St. Peters.

Mr. M. Currie: Are you looking at putting a kind of a satellite building up in Alma to -

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: I'm sorry?

Mr. M. Currie: Are you looking at putting any kind of a satellite building up there for storing of equipment or doing maintenance in Alma?

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: Nothing beyond what we've built.

Mr. M. Currie: It's all going to go back to Summerside?

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: I'm sorry, what's all going to go back?

Mr. M. Currie: Minor maintenance?

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: Most of the maintenance has been done out of Summerside for the last number of years. We have that facility in Alma which allows for something simple that an operator might do themselves.

Mr. M. Currie: Yes.

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: We used to have a contract for the service provider there, and it was a standing offer kind of basis, but there really wasn't much uptake on a lot of the work and the repairs were actually done in Summerside. So that's the way it's been for a couple of years and that's the way it will be.

Mr. MacKinley: I thought those rates were pretty good up there.

Chair: The hon. Member from Alberton-Roseville.

Mr. Murphy: (Indistinct) question on the school bus depot, the repair work - currently done by (Indistinct).

Mr. MacKinley: It's being done in Summerside.

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: The

hon. member is correct. When I was speaking earlier I was speaking about Transportation and Public Works' equipment fleet, school bus fleet. The operations are still as they were for the most part in Elmsdale, just under our supervision.

Mr. Murphy: Is there a plan in the immediate future to move those two?

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: Not yet. The level of planning about how best to merge bus fleet maintenance with our fleet maintenance and what that means in terms of facilities, we're not there yet. The Elmsdale facility is working fine right now. So it's more about getting the initial transitional matters working well. Looking at broader issues, like facilities such as that, will probably come down the road.

Mr. Murphy: Thank you.

Chair: Shall it carry?

Some Hon. Members: Carried.

Mr. Bagnall: We'll carry the next section too, Madam Chair, without reading it.

Chair: Shall it carry?

Some Hon. Members: Carried.

Mr. Bagnall: And we'll carry that total.

Chair: Total Highway Maintenance Operations: 52,418,500.

Shall it carry?

Mr. Bagnall: We'll carry public works services section.

Chair: Public works.

Shall it carry?

Some Hon. Members: Carried.

Mr. Bagnall: We'll carry the direct building maintenance section.

Chair: Shall it carry?

The hon. Member from Georgetown-St. Peters.

Mr. M. Currie: It's my understanding that a lot of the work has already been done out at the Royalty Centre for the transfer of the labs. Am I correct?

Mr. MacKinley: What was that?

Mr. M. Currie: Deputy? I'm wondering -

Mr. MacKinley: I can answer it, I'm the minister. What's your question?

Mr. M. Currie: I'm wondering. Has a lot of the work been done at the Royalty Centre for the consolidation of the labs for testing? Has that already been done?

Mr. MacKinley: I don't think there's been any work done on the building or anything like that.

An Hon. Member: Yes there has.

Mr. MacKinley: Has there been work done? (Indistinct).

Mr. M. Currie: Well, you're the minister.

Mr. MacKinley: The question you have with the building is it's too close to that residential development to start putting a lab in. You were on your feet today talking about one kilometre spraying around schools. This lab is only 50 feet from a property that Mr. McQuaid had bought (Indistinct).

Mr. M. Currie: I can't understand why

testing for water would be dangerous.

Mr. MacKinley: Pardon?

Mr. M. Currie: I can't understand why testing for water would be dangerous.

Mr. MacKinley: We're going to test for water, we're going to test probably for insecticides. You never know what we're going to test for out there. We're going to test the milk, we're going to test the feed, soil analysis. You have to look at - one of the things we're trying to do, and I don't want to be insulting to you, but the thing is we're trying to look inside the box rather than look out.

So if you look at a lot of problems we had in the province - and it's happening among all of us - but the thing is -

Mr. M. Currie: Somebody (Indistinct).

Mr. MacKinley: The thing is, is to look at where you're going to be.

Mr. M. Currie: Wrapped too tight.

Mr. MacKinley: For instance, you're talking about one kilometre radius around schools. Why did you build a school down in (Indistinct)? You know.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct).

Mr. M. Currie: We're talking about a building here. All I'm wondering, Madam Chair, is we're understanding that the building has been remodelled. Deputy, do you know?

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: That's not my understanding at all, hon. member.

Mr. M. Currie: You'll check on that and get back to us.

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: I can't say there hasn't been anything, but to the best of my knowledge, not very much.

Mr. MacKinley: Certainly wasn't a parking lot.

Mr. Bagnall: Have you been out to look at it, deputy minister?

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: No, I have not.

Mr. Bagnall: Would you go out and look at it and report back to us?

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: I will, as soon as I -

Mr. Bagnall: Thank you.

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: - have a chance.

Mr. MacKinley: I was in the building.

Mr. Bagnall: Carried.

Mr. MacKinley: Yes, but I was in the building.

Mr. Bagnall: Carry accommodations?

Chair: Shall it carry?

Some Hon. Members: Carried.

Mr. Bagnall: We'll carry the planning and building construction.

Chair: Shall it carry?

Some Hon. Members: Carried.

Chair: Total Public Works -

Mr. Bagnall: We'll carry the total.

Chair: Okay. I'll just read that.

Total Public Works and Planning:
\$18,149,200.

Shall it carry?

Some Hon. Members: Carried.

Chair: Capital Project Division. Traffic Operations.

Mr. Bagnall: No. No, read. Got a question there? Carried.

Chair: Shall it carry?

Some Hon. Members: Carried.

Chair: Capital Projects Administration.

Shall it carry?

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct).

Chair: The hon. Minister of Development and Technology.

Mr. Brown: Just in terms of the industrial parks and that, so when we want changes made to the industrial parks, like down in Pooles Corner, and things like that, do we go through this division in the department of development?

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: I'm sorry, could you -

Mr. Brown: We're trying to get businesses to PEI, and down to Pooles Corner, and things like that. If there's some changes that want to be done down there, do we go through this division to get the changes made, or how?

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: Most of the industrial parks have their own infrastructure. Now, if there was an

entranceway or an intersection our department would become involved. But the history is that generally the park itself is managed under the department of industry.

Mr. Brown: So we would contact you guys in order to get the (Indistinct) done?

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: Yes.

Mr. Brown: Okay.

So, we'd contact the department for any changes we'd want done to access the industrial parks that are under our mandate?

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: That's right. If you're talking about an entranceway or an intersection with a provincial highway, you'd need to deal with us.

Mr. Brown: So there was a question earlier today. If we wanted to change an entrance to an industrial park or something like that, do we have to get access permits, or does it have to go public, to IRAC? Like, when an individual wants an access, they have to go -

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: Like for an entranceway permit?

Mr. Brown: Yes.

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: An individual property requires an entranceway permit. The minister may grant an entranceway permit. The roads act has restrictions on collector highways and arterial highways that are specific. Arterial highways are the most common highway that issues come to light where property owners can't get permits that they need or want for business purpose, and that's where the provision is in the roads act that says if the business or the application is deemed in the best interest of the province, Cabinet may grant an entranceway.

Mr. Brown: Okay.

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: So, for routine entranceway permitting, that would be done by the minister. On arterial highways there's no change of use permitted, or intensification of use, except in an infilling area, where some areas in urban areas that's been deemed what's called infilling, and new commercial operations can proceed within those limits. But -

Mr. Brown: So, let's take -

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: - generally speaking, it's done at the ministerial level except if it's on an arterial highway.

Mr. Brown: So I've been up to Bloomfield Industrial Park, and we're looking at some changes -

An Hon. Member: Can't hear you.

Mr. Brown: I've been up to Bloomfield Industrial Park looking at some changes and stuff like that. So, if we wanted to change the entranceway or that, we wouldn't have to get -

An Hon. Member: Still can't hear you.

Mr. Brown: If we want to change the access to one of our industrial parks, we don't have to go to a public - to get the same permit as some other individual? It's a public road. It concerned me there today. The question was raised that you'd have to get permits through IRAC. So I just want to just make sure that my department is fully aware of that, if we have to get permits. Let's say we want to build a new industrial park at some time -

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: Is it already an existing industrial park and it's a simple relocation because you're changing

something on your site, and you want a different traffic circulation, it wouldn't require Cabinet involvement, to the best of my knowledge.

It'd be something simply that the minister and the department as the highway authority would do our job to make sure that it was a safe entranceway, there was good site distance, it met good engineering standards, wasn't (Indistinct), that sort of thing.

But the permitting process, and I'm no expert on that, and it can get complex at times, but for something like that, as you've described, I think the permitting process would be straightforward and would be dealt with by the minister in the department.

Mr. Brown: Okay.

So on the one on the Trans-Canada Highway, and I know there's been some discussion with you directly, has all the proper documentation been done in that area for the changes to the Cornwall Industrial Park?

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: The industrial park. Are you talking about the capital project that we're doing presently?

Mr. Brown: Yes.

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: The road already exists, so there's no new entrance onto the highway. All that's happening is the road to the industrial park only will be signalled. There is no new connection anywhere else, there's no new addition.

There's been some talk about a fourth leg there. There is no fourth leg. The tender that's out right now is to create a three-way intersection only, just simply signalize what is already there. There's no connection to the north, there's no commitment by

government to make a connection to the north, there's no one that's made application for a connection to the north, to the best of my knowledge.

Mr. Brown: Okay.

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: It's been talked about as a future, in the same way that we talk about future connections in a planning sense. But formally, strictly speaking, there's no decision that's been made by government to do anything other than signalize what's already there.

Mr. Brown: Okay. Thank you.

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

Mr. M. Currie: I'm a little bit disappointed in the minister of development that would put on a grandstand show here in question period, and imply that these types of questions should be left for the commissioner.

I had a whole list of questions today for you, and you avoided them. Now you go in an orchestrated statement here today on this section. You just opened up the kettle. I'll deal with this tomorrow in question period.

Chair: Any further questions?

Mr. M. Currie: I'm a little bit disappointed that you would indicate that. I went and spoke to your house leader about this issue and said that, do what you said, that the way you portrayed it in the House here, that we would abide by that. Yet you want to bring it up and discuss it. You said that we weren't going to discuss it, and it shouldn't be discussed.

Chair: Could we direct questions and comments to the Chair?

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct).

Mr. M. Currie: Anyway, I'm really disappointed, and I guess we'll deal with this another way.

Chair: Any other questions?

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct).

An Hon. Member: Good.

Chair: This section, Capital Projects Administration.

Mr. M. Currie: It's my understanding that you need -

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

Mr. M. Currie: - Cabinet approval to get access onto an arterial highway.

Mr. MacKinley: I would think so.

Mr. M. Currie: You're the minister.

Mr. MacKinley: Well, I think so. I'm pretty sure. For instance, I'll use this example. Down in Vernon River there was a daycare centre or something. We had to go to Cabinet to get approval to increase the daycare from nine to 18, or get an access on that particular piece of highway, providing site distance and everything. So you would need Cabinet approval to get an access onto the highway. Yes.

Chair: Another question?

Mr. MacKinley: I would think. Am I right? Yes, I am right.

Mr. M. Currie: Have you been - no. I gave my word to the house leader that I wouldn't bring this up, so I guess at least some people in here keep their words.

Carried.

Chair: Shall it carry?

Some Hon. Members: Carried.

Mr. M. Currie: I'm not going to act like the rest of them in here.

Chair: Engineering Services.

"Appropriations provides for staff and related services in providing engineering services to the highway maintenance and construction operations." Administration: 11,400. Equipment: 900. Materials, Supplies and Services: 34,800. Professional and Contract Services: 6,000. Salaries: 310,700. Travel and Training: 28,900. Total Engineering Services: 392,700.

Questions.

Mr. M. Currie: Who looks after this section?

Mr. MacKinley: (Indistinct) which one is this?

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: It's Doug Gaudet. Doug Gaudet, Ed Monroe. Morley - the group that looks after the traffic data collection. (Indistinct), payment management information.

Mr. M. Currie: How many accidents at the Cornwall business park?

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: Since the business park - I just looked at that information today - since the business park was opened, I think there was five.

Mr. M. Currie: In what, eight years?

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: No, five since 2001.

Mr. M. Currie: It was opened in 1998.

Mr. MacKinley: I think it made permanent in 2001, wasn't it, or something, I don't know. By the minister at the time.

Mr. M. Currie: It was open since 1998. So it was nine years.

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: I could go back prior to 2001, but I know since 2001 there was five.

Mr. MacKinley: I stand to be corrected, but I think they had to get water and sewage and everything in there. Even though it was open maybe - I stand to be corrected - in 1998 or whatever it was, the intent was to hook up the MacRae Drive. But then they found out the former mayor who passed away was Willard MacPhail and the town wanted an industrial park. I believe the intent was to go down to MacRae Drive and hook up, but for some reason they couldn't make a deal with whoever owned that particular land.

I believe it was you, Mr. Member - I might be correct - but you might have given them temporary access for that particular piece coming out. Then maybe in 2001 it might have been Don MacKinnon or somebody approved it as a permanent access. In order to get in there a temporary access, a lot of people were holding back from going in to build because it was only temporary. There is a whole case there, history and that. I stand to be corrected on some of this stuff, but I'm going from memory.

I believe from 2001 he has the figures. I haven't looked at the figures. It's right handy to my gate and it's noting to go out - I went out one morning probably about 2:30 in the morning and there was a lady in the ditch upside who was injured very badly. (Indistinct) clipped cars or something or trucks whatever. I'm not going to get into that personal stuff but it was dangerous.

Anywhere you come out with traffic,

especially if trying to make a left corner to go to Cornwall. It's all right to merge in to Charlottetown, but when you make these left corners (Indistinct) there.

Mr. M. Currie: I see the mayor of Cornwall has a piece in the *Guardian* today indicating that he's disappointed in my comments about safety. My comment is then, if you got three businesses in Cornwall with 15 employees and you got 47 businesses less than a mile down the road with 1,500 employees, you don't have a set of lights in the West Royalty Industrial Park -

Mr. MacKinley: Well the thing is out in Cornwall (Indistinct).

Mr. M. Currie: I know why the lights are going in - carried. We all know why the lights are going (Indistinct).

Mr. MacKinley: No you don't.

Chair: Shall it carry?

Some Hon. Members: Carried.

Chair: Next section is Design. "Appropriations provided for staffing, materials, equipment and travel for design." Administration: 6,700. Equipment: 1,500. Materials, Supplies and Services: 4,200. Professional and Contract Services: 22,200. Salaries: 385,100. Travel and Training: 10,400. Total Design: 430,100.

Questions?

Mr. M. Currie: Who looks after this section?

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

Mr. MacKinley: Darrell Evans.

Chair: Further questions?

Shall it carry?

Some Hon. Members: Carried.

Chair: Bridge Maintenance.

“Appropriations provided for staffing, materials, travel and services to maintain small bridges.” Administration: 4,500. Materials, Supplies and Services: 915,100. Professional and Contract Services: 731,000. Salaries: 414,000. Travel and Training: 10,000. Total Bridge Maintenance: 2,074,600.

Questions?

The hon. Member from Georgetown-St. Peters.

Mr. M. Currie: Do you have a number of crews across PEI that do bridge maintenance contracts?

Mr. MacKinley: Yes.

Mr. M. Currie: Did you hire a new crew this year?

Mr. MacKinley: We probably hired one or two more, I don't know. The problem we got is this bridge maintenance - and because of Quebec, because of the United States people getting killed, we had to beef up our bridge inspection and everything. We're even looking at trying to get - like this gentleman there, Ken Hoy, is an excellent person.

Mr. M. Currie: He is.

Mr. MacKinley: For instance, we got a place over there by Stratford, going through there, we got to replace the top there. We got to replace the Craud or Bonshaw bridge now. There is a whole bunch of these bridges and we just want to make sure we

got enough people to get the work done.

Mr. M. Currie: I understand that. I asked a question: What new crews did you hire?

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: I can't remember the name, the company, I can bring that back.

Mr. MacKinley: We're going to try get Gerry Peters on there too, seeing you didn't put him on. He can do it, I talked to him and he's done it. We need more people to do this. It's not that easy - or Jerry MacKinnon I mean. It's not that easy to get people to do this because they all got to be able to cut bridges, they got to be able to cut creosote, the whole thing, and they got to be able to make boxes and all this stuff, I just don't know.

It's not an easy job. It's going to cost us a lot of money with these bridges because we got to up our safety inspections more than we did. For instance, Quebec and the States - and I stand to be corrected - but I believe it was cement was the problem in one of them bridges. I mean, we wouldn't want the Hillsborough Bridge or North River or anywhere to fall in.

Mr. M. Currie: The staff are probably listening and they can probably e-mail that down.

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: Central Prince Industries, is it?

Mr. MacKinley: I don't know.

Mr. M. Currie: You don't know the name of the guy? Central Prince, would that be Kensington? No. Everybody lost their memory in here this afternoon.

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: A lot of contractors to remember.

Mr. MacKinley: There is a lot of contractors.

Chair: Any further questions?

Mr. M. Currie: Yes, one more.

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

Mr. M. Currie: You made great noise over the years huffing and puffing about the Dunedin bridge. Are you going to fix it?

Mr. MacKinley: We have got - and I hate - like I'm embarrassed to tell you.

Mr. M. Currie: You should. The potato trucks are going over it now. They're near going through the bridge, the people are calling about it.

Mr. MacKinley: Listen, it was your government -

Mr. M. Currie: You're the minister, fix it.

Mr. MacKinley: Listen, it was your government that hired (Indistinct) consultants -

Mr. M. Currie: You don't want to fix it. Tell the people out there that you don't want to fix it.

Mr. MacKinley: Will you give me a chance? Anyway, we got -

Mr. M. Currie: Six months, you got all kinds of (Indistinct).

Mr. MacKinley: The person that is looking into it is Larry MacQuaid and he's the brother of Clifford MacQuaid, and we don't want another conflict of interest put against us.

Mr. M. Currie: Oh, it just gets worse. It

just gets worse.

Mr. MacKinley: They said that would be the first question you'd ask me because I lost a dollar bet with the minister - it was a girl from environment in my office, we were wondering what your first question would be. I said: Oh, it won't be that. I put a dollar down and I lost the dollar bet.

But the thing is, we're going to try to fix that as soon as possible. We're looking at different options. We'd like to let it come in under 3 million. Then I got to be very careful because with land on the other side of it too, it might make it more valuable. So that makes another problem too. But we're going to try to get around all of this and see what we can do for you.

Mr. M. Currie: It's cottage lots, okay.

Carried.

Chair: Shall it carry?

Some Hon. Members: Carried.

Chair: Materials Testing Lab.

"Appropriations provided for salaries and related support costs for the materials testing lab and quality assurance for maintenance and construction operations."

Administration: 19,800. Equipment: 10,700. Materials, Supplies and Services: 12,800. Professional and Contract Services: 2,500. Salaries: 1,204,600. Travel and Training: 41,200. Total Materials Testing Lab: 1,291,600.

Questions?

The hon. Member from Georgetown-St. Peters.

Mr. M. Currie: What ratio of liquid asphalt do you buy, 150-200 and 200-300?

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: That's a good question and I don't know the answer to that. I'd have to come back with that after I talked to Terry Kelly out at the lab.

Mr. M. Currie: Are you moving more to 150-200, then, out of 200-300?

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: No, I think we experimented a number of years ago there and I think we sort of found the right gradation and the right penetration and stiffness of asphalt that works in our climate, with the heat we get in the summer and the extreme cold we get in the winter.

It's a real challenge to pick, as you know. The liquid asphalts that perform very well in the summer don't perform so well in the winter and vice versa. So it's always a balancing act, but we have really good staff at the lab, they stay on top of the technology and stay well trained, attending conferences like the Canadian Technical Asphalt Association, and have good relationships with what is being done in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. They do a pretty good job in making those decisions for us.

Mr. M. Currie: Yeah, Mr. Kelly does a good job. You have two labs, you got one in Mount Stewart and one in Summerside, I believe. Is there one in Summerside?

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: Yes.

Mr. M. Currie: It's built onto the new one at Slemon Park?

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: The lab in Summerside is still operating out of Pope Road right now.

Mr. M. Currie: Oh, for the - that's a trap of a building.

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: Yes it is.

Mr. M. Currie: I thought you were moving that up to the new one?

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: We do plan to move it there in time. It was a question of living within the budget.

Mr. M. Currie: Now there's a chance boys, lobby for this, get this in your district.

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: Living within the budget, (Indistinct) of the time for the project in Slemon Park. But certainly the space was allowed for it. It's just a question of getting the lab project to the top of the list and the public works capital priorities.

Mr. M. Currie: Would you put that up west?

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: The space is already planned for it in the Summerside facility.

Mr. M. Currie: What are you doing with it now?

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: It's just -

Mr. M. Currie: Vacant?

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: Yeah.

Mr. M. Currie: How come you don't move it up?

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: Pardon me?

Mr. M. Currie: How come you don't make the move? It's just technical equipment and benches.

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: There are fit up expenses and equipment and ventilation and some - I don't know the exact scope -

Mr. M. Currie: So you're not going to go out and find another building in another district and rent from somebody?

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: There's no plan to do that.

Mr. M. Currie: There was no plan to move into the Royalty Centre either?

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: I can't predict -

Mr. M. Currie: At least I'm getting good answers from you, though.

Mr. MacKinley: We can't predict the future.

Mr. M. Currie: Carried.

Mr. MacKinley: The thing is - the hon. Leader of the Opposition and I toured the lab in Mount Stewart. As far as I'm concerned, that's an excellent spot to go to. Just one question -

Mr. Bagnall: Looking after rural PEI.

Mr. MacKinley: What's this 150-200 your talking about? Because I don't know what it means when it comes to liquid asphalt. Can the former minister of transportation tell me what this 150-200 means? It's over my head. So I have to learn.

Mr. M. Currie: The 150-200 is the penetration rate for liquid asphalt at 15°C and 200-300 is the softer - the higher the number the softer the grade. The 200-300 is used on our roads because we don't have a good gravel base and there's some flexibility or elasticity in the asphalt. One hundred fifty -200 is mostly used on the Trans-Canada Highway.

Mr. MacKinley: What's used on our roads here?

Mr. M. Currie: Two hundred-300 is probably 70%. I'd say 150-200 is probably 30. But the reason I was asking the question is because we started doing over Route 2, you guys are going to do it now. Are you going from 200-300 on Route 2 to 150-200? That's why I was asking.

Chair: Shall it carry?

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: I can get you that information.

Mr. MacKinley: You've done a great job on Route 2.

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

Mr. M. Currie: I was just waiting for an answer.

Mr. MacKinley: I will say that. They made turning lanes, we've made it a lot safer. It's a pleasure - big trucks going to Cavendish Farms or whatever.

Mr. M. Currie: Good question then, while your on that subject. When you get to Kensington, what are you going to do with the intersection in Kensington? It's the most heavily travelled intersection on PEI in the summertime. To the best of my knowledge. Would you be looking at changes or would you be looking at diverting around the town?

Mr. MacKinley: Might look at a circle. That's yet to be seen. We might look at a circle.

Mr. M. Currie: Under design you'd look at that? You'd work with the member up there to find something -

Mr. MacKinley: The problem you got is up there, Kensington is a fairly lively area. You are taking heavy trucks and that are through

there and there's also a lot of potato farmers that go through anyway. It's a hard intersection to figure out how to do anything. I don't know. That's what we've got engineers for. We might consider putting a circle there at some time.

Mr. M. Currie: Okay.

Chair: Further questions?

Mr. M. Currie: That's panicky. No, carried.

Chair: Shall it carry?

Some Hon. Members: Carried.

Chair: Total Capital Project Division. 10,287,300.

Shall it carry?

Some Hon. Members: Carried.

Chair: Provincial Waste Management. "Appropriations provided for the transportation, bailing and disposal of used tires as well as the closing and capping of provincial dump sites." Administration: 1,900. Materials, Supplies and Services: 15,800. Professional and Contract Services: 1,360,000. Salaries: 51,900. Total Provincial Waste Management: 1,429,600.

Questions.

The hon. Member from Georgetown-St. Peters.

Mr. M. Currie: This is just looking after the tires? Right.

Mr. MacKinley: No, this is provincial waste management. This is the whole thing. The tires is part of it.

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: Mainly

the tires.

Mr. MacKinley: Oh, mainly the tires. We put them out for tender. Gerry Moore put them out for tender and we've got a place in Quebec (Indistinct).

Mr. M. Currie: I didn't see Gerry Moore's picture, I saw Bush Dumville picture in the paper. He was the one that (Indistinct) -

Mr. MacKinley: He's the one -

Mr. M. Currie: You don't want to give your own member credit.

Mr. MacKinley: No. If you just give me time. We had to be pushed, and it was Bush Dumville that pushed us to do it, which came to me in the Cabinet and everybody else. Bush Dumville was right. I tried to get it done for years, but no assistance from your government was there.

I will say Gerry Moore put out the tender, but I'm going to tell you. He's made a tremendous job. I've learned a lot from watching how he put it out for tender. Because he saved us a lot of money. Now it's yet to be seen on the trucking part, because the trucking part, the tenders are out there now and they don't close till Friday. So I don't want to talk too much about the trucking part of the tender. But basically there is a company in Quebec that's going to receive - and we're going to do it over three years, I believe?

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: Yes, may be able to do it in two years.

Mr. MacKinley: If we can.

Mr. M. Currie: So on the tenders, is it anything specific to local preference rule?

Mr. MacKinley: Pardon?

Mr. M. Currie: Are you going to give Island companies any kind of leeway or -

Mr. MacKinley: I suppose that's up to the (Indistinct) but it's yet to see. What's on the tender form? We'll give you a copy of the tenders. I'm not sure.

Mr. M. Currie: Well your minister, you can make changes.

Mr. MacKinley: I don't have the tenders here. High or lowest tender, not necessarily (Indistinct), but mostly you go with the lowest tender. So if a company comes in and they're low, that's what happens when you put something out for tender. If you don't go with the lowest, well, you better have a good reason to come and tell the opposition or even the press why you didn't go with the lowest tender. Because you have to remember this is the taxpayers of PEI that are funding this to the tune of four or -

Mr. M. Currie: That's right.

Mr. MacKinley: - through the garbage, whatever. So I mean, that decision has not been made. If you would like us to talk to you before we make our decision, we might.

Mr. M. Currie: No. I was just wondering that. You raised a good point. The fact that the people paid the taxes sometimes get a little antsy when we give a contract to somebody in Quebec to haul the tires away from PEI.

Mr. MacKinley: No, they're not getting it. Quebec is disposing of the tires.

Mr. M. Currie: No, I understand that.

Mr. MacKinley: See, the company in Quebec is getting the job of disposing of them, of getting rid of our mess that we have.

Mr. M. Currie: I understand that.

Mr. MacKinley: They came in fairly good. There was some other companies came in too. Now the companies, we won't know until the tenders are over on Friday on who or how they're going to do it. Waste Watch is run by Gerry Moore and staff which are doing as good as they can, plus we have a board there of directors and whatever.

Mr. M. Currie: Under Atlantic procurement you would have to tender, but the minister still has the final say in a local preference rule. I'm just wondering if you were leaning that way.

Mr. MacKinley: We'll have to wait and see. We are prejudging things here that - until the tenders come in.

Mr. M. Currie: You have a lot of truckers out in your district too.

Mr. MacKinley: Do I? A lot of truckers all over PEI.

Mr. M. Currie: I know.

Mr. MacKinley: It would be nice for all of them to get a piece of it, but the thing is we'll have to wait and see until the tenders come in.

Mr. M. Currie: One more.

Mr. MacKinley: All right.

Mr. M. Currie: Okay, sorry.

Chair: The hon. Member from Alberton-Roseville.

Mr. Murphy: I just have a question, not really pertaining to tires, but it is with Island Waste Watch. I operate my own business and I take my own garbage to Brockton, to the dump there. Some Saturdays I find

myself pretty rushed because it closes at 12:30. I'm just wondering if the minister would consider extending the hours that the drop off facilities are open on Saturday. I think that Saturdays are a more appropriate day.

Mr. MacKinley: That's a good point. But I'll bring that to the board of directors and I'll bring it to Gerry Moore, the manager, and let them decide, because basically it's a Crown corporation, I do believe, and it's run by a board of directors. I'm new to this position as far as waste watch goes. I was on the other side before asking questions about it, but how much influence does the minister got with waste watch? I don't know.

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

Mr. M. Currie: We had tried a number of years ago - and deputy, you are aware of this - we baled the tires and we were (Indistinct) in cement and we were using them down in Panmure Island. As of today they are as good as the day they were put there. They look the same.

Mr. MacKinley: It was a good idea.

Mr. M. Currie: For \$1.5 million, I'm just wondering why - with the cement companies that are practically doing nothing this year, because all the capital projects were cancelled - it might be something to carry them through the winter instead of trucking them all up to Quebec.

Mr. MacKinley: The problem we had was that it was done and it was a good idea and incentive. It was a good idea to bale them, because when you bale them you compact them, right, rather than having them loose. So that's one of the reasons we're trucking them to Quebec cheaper.

(Indistinct) problem we had that and we

looked into it. I love to do it and it seemed to be a good idea when you did it. I think I might have supported you on it. But the problem we have is it would be just as cheap to make the things out of cement or not cheaper than put the tires in there and cement around them. That's where we're into the problem.

Mr. M. Currie: No, I understand there was cash. I have one question, minister. Capital projects. That was approved last fall. I thought I heard the minister of finance today say that he was bringing that back.

Mr. MacKinley: Capital projects? Well, capital projects I believe would have to come back and approved again, our capital projects -

Mr. M. Currie: No, they're already approved.

Mr. MacKinley: The budget was already approved.

Mr. M. Currie: Okay, well why -

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: He's talking about the capital budget. Are you? It's all capital budget.

Mr. M. Currie: So is that December? Or for next year?

Mr. MacKinley: Yes.

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: Yes.

Mr. M. Currie: Have you spent all your capital budget dollars? That's not here, but -

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: No, that's not here. That's not what is in here in the estimates.

Mr. MacKinley: When we go to capital

budget, we'll bring you all that information.

Steve MacLean: But to answer the question, we're very close.

Mr. M. Currie: Even with the \$4 million out for the labs? You found the money for these intersections. Where was that? Out of the capital budget?

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct).

Mr. M. Currie: Okay.

Chair: Shall it carry?

Some Hon. Members: Carried.

Chair: Total Department of Transportation and Public Works: 88,108,700.

Shall it carry?

Some Hon. Members: Carried.

Chair: We'll be moving to page 21, Department of Agriculture.

Mr. LeClair: I'd like to ask permission to bring on my Director of Finance.

Chair: Agreed?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

An Hon. Member: Who is your deputy?

Mr. LeClair: Who is my deputy? Brian Douglas.

An Hon. Member: Is he here too?

Mr. LeClair: There he is, right there.

Chair: We'll actually be starting on page 24.

Corporate and Financial Services.

The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: I wonder if the minister could give us a little bit of (Indistinct) on your priorities in the department. When you came in as minister, what was your major, your first priority with the department?

Mr. LeClair: My first priority when I came in was the hog producers and the beef plant. My focus, I'd like to have, would be sustainable agriculture in the long term and diversification and a sustainable industry without so much reliance on government.

Mr. Bagnall: What are we going to do - and I'm not being critical of you here or anything like that - but what are we going to do with agriculture? We have sectors right now in agriculture that are in dire straights. We have the hog industry, that, as you know, is really challenged. The beef industry is a real challenge now. Cold crops is another area that has not been successful in the crops. We haven't been successful in experiments with new crops to the extent where we can go in to agriculture and do them. Blueberries have come along but it's taken 15 years. The cranberry industry is in dire straights.

I mean, what have we got that we can look forward to in agriculture? How are we going to - we have to do something for our primary industries. I mean, what are we going to do here?

Mr. LeClair: I don't have that answer right now, and that's a good question, because it's not - those conditions have been ongoing, and they've been going for 15, 20, 25 years. I was in agriculture for 26 years and you could never rely on a real good year because you figured the next year you were going to take the money to keep yourself going for the following year.

We definitely need agriculture. We're going

to have to try to get innovation and different directions in some of these programs. The commodities are really under pressure. I don't know where the answer is. I think we can't just shut it off and stop working towards a viable agriculture industry. I think the answer is going to have to be Canada as a whole. We're not going to solve it as PEI.

Mr. Bagnall: But we also know if we have to wait for the federal government to come in here and help us, there isn't a federal program that doesn't take three to five years to develop (Indistinct) so that we start seeing any benefits here on Prince Edward Island.

You've been looking at the new CAIS Program. We've been working on that now - when I was minister. You're working on it now. They still haven't come any farther in the last six months, or last eight or 10 months. They're still debating on disaster funding and the percentage of funding, and nothing is moving ahead. It was supposed to be completed in March of 2008. We're supposed to have a new program, but are we anywhere near ready on that?

Mr. LeClair: You know the process as well as I do.

Mr. Bagnall: Yes, I know. Like, your last meeting, how did that go?

Mr. LeClair: The last meeting in June, we had issues and we didn't solve all our problems, and we have to come back in the middle of November, and -

Mr. Bagnall: Is disaster funding still the problem? The funding split?

Mr. LeClair: No, we're getting some of these details worked out. One of the big issues we had was disaster, stating what a disaster was, or the definition of a disaster.

Mr. Bagnall: How deep? How deep it went?

Mr. LeClair: Exactly. That was one of them. That was one of the big issues at the last meeting. That's still on the board for November.

Mr. Bagnall: Has the split been decided yet? Are you still going to go 60-40? Or has that changed?

Mr. LeClair: They're working. It hasn't been decided, but it still looks like 60-40, but we're looking for a bit of our own - how would you put it? - a lot of provinces are looking for the ability to use the funds in their own way. They want to get away from -

Mr. Bagnall: That's one thing we had brought up when I was minister at the time, that we use a regional flavour to this program.

Mr. LeClair: Yes.

Mr. Bagnall: Where Atlantic Canada or provinces in eastern Canada could put that money into the CAIS Program or into the areas where it's needed for the provinces.

Mr. LeClair: For that area?

Mr. Bagnall: Yes.

Mr. LeClair: For the area of the country?

Mr. Bagnall: But the blanket that was on the CAIS before, it dealt with the potato farmers, but it didn't help the beef farmers, it didn't help the hog farmers, it helped very little other commodities. I don't think it really helped here in PEI.

So that's a big issue. That's a major issue that has to be dealt with in the new CAIS Program. Because if we are going to have

any agriculture here in PEI, we have to have a program there that's protecting our industries. Right now there's nothing there to protect the hog industry, and there's nothing there to protect the beef industry.

Mr. LeClair: No. We're looking for some agri-insurance; we're trying to get that broadened so that it will take in the livestock sectors.

Mr. Bagnall: Your crop insurance, is that the one you're talking about?

Mr. LeClair: Yes. Agri-insurance, they're going to call it. It's a new section of the -

Mr. Bagnall: Okay. So are they going to bring in livestock, or is that just a -

Mr. LeClair: We're working, it looks like we could probably do it. Try to bring in livestock, and I don't know, we're just at the outside stages of it. But again, if it doesn't, if it's just like the CAIS, where we have it in there but it doesn't pay enough, or it doesn't, I don't know they'd implement it. But it's something that they're looking at. They would bring it in for livestock.

Mr. Bagnall: Okay.

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

Mr. Henderson: Minister, is there any plan in place at all for the forages? One of the things I'm finding, even in my own farm, is a case where I've got absolutely no market anymore for hay, silage, that type of thing. I mean, the beef sector is under a lot of stress right now. I fear that we may be starting to see in the future weeds growing up in fields. I see a lot of it in my own riding, fields that the hay wasn't cut on it. I certainly think there's something that needs to be a bit of a plan there.

Mr. LeClair: It'd be something to look at. I don't have a plan right now for forages. The only plan was for feed. We're starting to look at forages now for ethanol.

Mr. Henderson: I just look at if we're trying to deal with environmental issues, you can't get better protection than a good sod field. Here we've got absolutely no market left for that product anymore. With the crop rotation act for three years and things like that, I just think that that's something the department needs to really look at, some sort of market that a farmer can generate some income off that forage year.

Mr. LeClair: Yes. That's something we could certainly look at. Find a market as a feed -

Mr. Henderson: (Indistinct).

Mr. LeClair: (Indistinct) I don't know. Again we go back here at the state our livestock industries is in, but you know, maybe that's diversification, maybe it's ethanol, maybe it's heat, maybe we can burn it. But yeah, it's something that maybe the direction we got to take.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: I'd like to go back for a minute to the minister's comment about the hog and the beef industry. Now we're talking about some of the other areas of agriculture that are searching for markets. You mentioned the commodity markets not working and the Canadian cheap food policy's not working. Do you have any suggestions, and are there resources in your budget to help, as the previous member just asked, to develop new markets?

Mr. LeClair: We have market development monies.

Leader of the Opposition: I guess what I'd ask in terms of - the commodity market's not the right place for PEI agriculture. Do you have any sense where there are some opportunities?

Mr. LeClair: Niche markets, maybe, we're looking at.

Leader of the Opposition: Can you give an example of one?

Mr. LeClair: Yes, in the pork industry we're looking at organics. We're looking at organics a lot.

Leader of the Opposition: Okay. Are you developing a system to take organic agriculture to its full potential? You were talking about grasses and grains. In order to have organic food, you need to have organic feedstock. Right?

Mr. LeClair: Yes.

Leader of the Opposition: The other question I have, or a comment. When you were talking about opportunities around hay, are they square bales that you're using or are they round bales? Are you looking at opportunities - harness racing industry in Ontario is still pretty strong, as are the thoroughbred and harness racing industry in the eastern US, as well as in the United Arab Emirates. Often they're looking for good hay. But it has to do with having a knowledge about where your market actually is.

I'm just curious in your department. I noticed that you have a person by the name of Rachel Cheverie that's gone from individual pest management practices to actually I think she's a potato coordinator. But I'm just curious in terms - it seems like farmers really know how to grow a lot of things. I'm more interested in what kind of strategies are in place to help develop an

integrated - the minister of health, for example, has the largest budget in PEI and most provinces across Canada, the largest budget is in health. It used to be that if you grew food, people knew that you were going to be healthy. Now when you grow food, people challenge whether you're going to be sick or not.

I'm just curious in terms of under your leadership in agriculture, what's on the table to help people understand the importance of agriculture to the province and the opportunities that are there in true niche markets?

Mr. LeClair: I think we're doing that now. (Indistinct) in the beef plant issue we had this summer, and we're getting the word out to the public and they seem to be starting to understand that we have to buy our products locally. (Indistinct) -

Leader of the Opposition: Sure. In terms with the beef plant. One of my concerns is when you look at Sobey's and Superstore, no offence, but they're part of the grocery retailers that believe in cheap Canadian food.

Mr. LeClair: Yes.

Leader of the Opposition: So even though your beef may get into the actual store, I would go back to the question: Are there retailers out there that have more of an interest in sustainability and promoting local agriculture, and also appropriate animal farm practices?

Mr. LeClair: Yes, I think that concern is growing all the time. I think there's more retailers that have that knowledge now and are starting to use that when they buy, and they use that when they advertize and when they sell.

Leader of the Opposition: The group that

was here this week, I believe from Seattle, from whole foods, have you had meetings with them?

Mr. LeClair: No, I haven't.

Leader of the Opposition: Okay. What you may want to do is - I encourage - when we actually go to the agriculture committee to - I know the hon. Member from Vernon River-Stratford, who is chair in agriculture, is quite anxious to get going because the crisis in agriculture - but maybe it's appropriate that the minister actually goes and has discussions with the owners of whole foods.

They look at a sustainable agriculture and they also are quite interested in local food supply. They also believe in sustainability and environmental plans. They're a nice fit.

I'm just curious in terms of, again, when we're talking about the beef plant or the hog industry, I understand organic and natural pork, they're actually doing some negotiations with whole foods. But my, I guess, area is more interested in agriculture as a whole package of putting a system in place that can actually support sustainable agriculture.

I guess the next question that I kind of ask is: What's the connection to the bioscience department that's in the Premier's office, and how does that connect back to opportunities for our primary sectors?

Mr. LeClair: I think that connection is - obviously we're looking for other areas to use our agricultural product. Through bioscience, if we can grow crops that are usable in bioscience industry (Indistinct). There's (Indistinct) alternative. We have an organic program, which you'll see probably a little later on here, which we use for innovation to help industries -

Leader of the Opposition: So in the cranberry industry, I noticed that you have interest relief for cranberries. In order for farmers to receive that interest relief, do they have to start the conversion over to organic?

Mr. LeClair: Can I get that again, please?

Leader of the Opposition: In terms of - in the area of cranberries -

Mr. LeClair: Yes.

Leader of the Opposition: - I noticed that you have, I think 200,000 or more dollars for interest relief for this year for the cranberry bogs.

Mr. LeClair: Yes.

Leader of the Opposition: My question is. Are there conditions on that, that cranberry farmers have to start the conversion over to organic practices?

Mr. LeClair: No.

Leader of the Opposition: So the market that the organic farmers are in, what makes it different that they're going to be able to actually get their production up and to actually be paid for what they grow to make a difference, so that next year they can actually make their payment?

Mr. LeClair: Cranberries specifically or -

Leader of the Opposition: Cranberries was an example because that's one area that I noticed that you have given interest relief to. Cranberries used to be, I think, around 27, 30 cents a pound.

Mr. LeClair: They're getting over 80.

Leader of the Opposition: They're getting over 80? Is the cost of production still the

same?

Mr. LeClair: The initial cost of production was the capital cost, right?

Leader of the Opposition: Absolutely.

Mr. LeClair: So I mean that exists, but we're giving them interest relief for another year. Certainly if they get 80 cents a pound. (Indistinct) 15,000 pounds, some of these fellows, an acre.

Leader of the Opposition: Sure. The average yield on a cranberry acre is considerably higher than that. I used to have the exact figures, but a wise person from McCain's once gave me the advice not to try and compete against the companies, the cranberry mafia from the New England states.

I'm not trying to be mean, but what I'm trying to suggest is that there's a lot of work that needs to be done in this area. In the commodity market for cranberries, they fluctuate up and down. They were as low as 27 cent a pound. With our yields still not being where they need to be in order to be competitive, plus we came into the cranberry business probably five or six years late - and on top of that we grow five and six acre bogs and we are trying to compete on a commodity market that the average bog size is probably hundreds of acres.

So I guess what I'm saying is sometimes in government we keep putting band-aid solutions on things to help out rather than - I hope everybody across the province gets behind PEI agriculture for a real change. We keep hearing about people are worried about wasted taxpayer dollars, but I truly believe that agriculture is one of the big keys to PEI's future. But we need a lot of support and we need a lot of people looking at the model that we have in place and how that changes.

So not to get you off on a too far a tangent, minister, we really on the opposition side want to work on some areas that are going to make significant changes to the model that we're now working under. Like commodity markets, Canadian cheap food supply, and then regulations. Because a lot of people in this room, I'd challenge them: Where do they get their food from?

Mr. LeClair: Well, that's it. People are not going to realize, I don't think, the value of agriculture until it's gone. There's the sad part.

Leader of the Opposition: How many people in this room buy groceries that they think is Canadian food product and it's actually not?

Mr. LeClair: That's what we ran into with the beef industry this summer. People were buying steaks because they were cheaper but they didn't realize that they came from Brazil.

Leader of the Opposition: One of the lessons that I think we need to take a look at is what happened to the recall around toys and lead in the paint that came in from China. Take a look at strawberries, folks. If you think you're buying your products as a frozen product from Nova Scotia, I'd put money on that strawberry actually coming from China. Not that there is anything wrong from imports, but again, coming back to health concerns and to support local agriculture, that's a whole conversation that we need to have.

Mr. LeClair: As a country we are paying the prices as producers for probably the highest quality (Indistinct) in the world.

Leader of the Opposition: Absolutely.

Mr. LeClair: We're paying for it. If they're going to continue to bring in lower quality

of our food that comes from, let's say, Third World country or anywhere for that matter, we've no restrictions on it, we can bring that in. How do we compete when we're putting so much onus on quality food?

Leader of the Opposition: Just to get people thinking - the minister of fisheries has left the room and so has the minister of environment - but when the by-election was going on in District 4, I had the chance on Saturdays to go with the candidate and talk to people. She has spent time in Indonesia, and again, we're talking about food. In this case it was fish. She and a couple of the fishermen and myself were having a conversation about safety in food. Her big problem in that country, because they don't have refrigeration, was often deciding what fish she might eat, because formaldehyde is injected in the fish. Watermelon, lots injected in watermelon, baby food. Folks in this room, most baby food stays in food distribution systems for sometimes two years before it's on food shelves.

So I think in terms of where agriculture is at and the kind of work again on a system, I'm glad to see you have more dollars in organics. But what I think the time has come for serious discussion around: Is agriculture still important to the people on PEI? What kinds of things can we put in place to make sure everybody helps while agriculture probably moves a little bit more out of the commodity market into an organic and real niche market?

But you need safety dollars in there while the turnover. When you're talking about the hog industry, I know natural and organic pork company is finally in the right market. The trouble is, right now with all the people that were producing hogs, they can't keep going anymore. So how can you get the dollars to support them while the industry gets up far enough that they actually have enough product to handle the opportunity

that's in the marketplace?

Mr. LeClair: That's a good point. That's my problem right now. That's what we're looking at. We also have the dollar - I know MGA is shipping - most of their organic product is going to the States. That's an issue too.

Chair: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: I'm just kind of relating back to some of the things there. I guess I would have, minister - we have a problem with our strawberry growers, and let's say corn and a few of these issues - where in the strawberries we have six weeks or four weeks of production where we can sell our strawberries and the growers can try to make some money on PEI. We do the same thing with the corn. Corn goes in and they have a very short period of time where we can sell our product.

What's happening is we're having halfway through that season, we're having the chain stores like Superstore and Sobey's come out with a flyer that cuts the crap out of the price. I mean, they cut it 50% on the producers. All of a sudden, where the producer was going to have a good living, he's not making any money now because of these chain stores coming in and throwing these on the front page at a lost leader. The week after the flyer, you go in that store, you can't buy the product. Because they only bring it in, promote it, and take it out. The next week you'll find California or Florida strawberries but you'll not find the Island strawberries.

Would you be (Indistinct) to bringing a bill in that prohibits chain stores from taking loss leader of the Island produce here and protect our Island producers?

Mr. LeClair: It's a great concept.

Mr. Bagnall: I mean, we can do it in a bill.

Mr. LeClair: I don't know that we can.

Leader of the Opposition: We have new researchers that are starting (Indistinct).

Mr. Bagnall: What makes you think we can't?

Mr. LeClair: I'm not going to get into that.

Chair: The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Vessey: In dealing with Loblaws and Sobey's, I've dealt with them over the years. What they do, as we all know I think, is they go out and they buy six weeks out, potato time, strawberry time, corn time. The local supplier has the opportunity to supply at their rate or not supply at all.

For cash flow reasons, we usually ended up supplying because not only the week of your sale, you don't have any profit, the next two weeks down the road because the sale was so good, you're out for three weeks. They kind of have you. But they can bring it in. They don't have to go local. We had the opportunity to supply. It's a tough call for the producer because if you don't -

Mr. Bagnall: But the problem is they're advertising Island corn, fresh local grown product (Indistinct) think it's fresh local grown product. What happens there is they come in right in the middle of the season - it's always right dead in the middle where you've got a couple of weeks - and then they come in and put it on as a lost leader on their flyer. It affects every one of our growers on PEI.

Chair: The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Vessey: It never is a lost leader for the store, it's a lost leader for the producer. There's a lot of times they'll come out and

they will not put Island grown unless a producer guarantees a supply.

Mr. Bagnall: The front page (Indistinct) very little profit on it.

Mr. Vessey: (Indistinct) never sold.

Mr. Bagnall: (Indistinct), but anyway, we're not going to argue on that one, I don't think.

Chair: The hon. Member from Vernon River-Stratford.

Mr. McIsaac: Madam Chair, the hon. Leader of the Opposition and the Member from Montague-Kilmuir make good comments about the disaster that's on our agriculture community at the present time.,

I hope they work closely with me in getting the Standing Committee going soon so we can hear some of the ones that want to approach this House with regards and concerns.

On the overview of your department, however, just while we're doing that, in discussions with the federal minister or the federal government with regards to those commodities which are covered under supply and management, have you received assurance that supply management is still strong and will be supported throughout the country?

Mr. LeClair: Actually, the last time I met with the federal minister I was really impressed. His attitude towards supply management is different than the previous minister. The new minister is even - I'm not saying the previous minister was against supply management or anything, but he was a little more lukewarm than the minister we have now. He's totally committed to supply management. Those are his words.

Now whether that - we still have to deal with the WTO and a lot of countries and stuff, but I'm feeling much better about that right now.

Mr. McIsaac: I think that's where the concern is, the fact that I think, was it, .06% of Canada's GDP is covered under - the commodities under supply management counts for that much of Canada's GDP. When you get to the World Trade talks concerned about that being traded off, there is none. Going forward with the federal government that still looks pretty strong.

Mr. LeClair: It's very strong as far as the federal government and as far as the federal minister told me. That would be a serious deterrent to PEI and Canada. As far as agriculture goes, that's been the cream of agriculture, for God sake, supply management industry. I wouldn't even consider, personally, even thinking about that (Indistinct).

Chair: Any further questions?

The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: Getting back to that. Would you have your legal people have a look at that and see if there is something -

Mr. LeClair: An interesting concept.

Mr. Bagnall: Pardon?

Mr. LeClair: Yeah. I understand what you're talking about.

Mr. Bagnall: I was approached down east by one of our large growers of strawberries, and he's so upset. He said: I end up, I have to sell my berries to them, because if I don't, I don't sell berries because they're out there pushing them at half price. I won't sell any unless I sell to them. He said: I'm really forced to sell to them but I'm selling at half

the price I should be selling.

I think there is - if we really want to protect our agriculture industry here on PEI, then we can do it. If they want to challenge us, let them challenge us on our legislation on this issue.

Chair: The hon. Provincial Treasurer.

Mr. Sheridan: Madam Chair, did the hon. member look into it at all?

Did you have any success in doing it when you were (Indistinct)? Just for the law wise, because that's what we're really up against. Did you have any luck in doing it?

Chair: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: The first time it was brought to me this fall by the producer down home, down in the Montague area, I told them that I would look into it. I told him that I would bring this issue up and debate it in the House for them and we'll get into that as we go along here in the thing.

But to my mind, if we're really interested in trying to save and protect our agriculture industry here, sometimes we have to put ourselves out there. I think this is an issue - it's not big like the 96,000 acres of potatoes or whatever we have, it's probably 1,000 or 2,000 acres of strawberries on the island. They need some protection, these smaller producers. I think that we should be looking at a way to try to help protect them.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Just while we're talking about strawberries. There are a couple of things that earlier today we were talking about the change in climate and the change around the environment.

Strawberries, as people know, can be grown in the spring of the year, but strawberries also can be grown in the fall of the year. With the change of the climate, when you think of strawberries on Prince Edward Island, raspberries and wild blueberries, not to mention rhubarb - and the fact that we have quite a bit of infrastructure across the province - I think if we're bringing in legislation and we get to utilize the new researchers and the staff that are going to be here, maybe it would be really important to get them to look at broad research, too, on opportunities around value-added.

When you think of the strawberries, for example, that used to leave here, if they weren't for the fresh market and end up to go to Nova Scotia to get frozen, aren't even going there anymore because of the stuff coming in from China. When you're thinking about the consumer wanting to watch how much money gets spent because of wasted resources and energy in terms of transportation costs, we have wonderful facilities here. Tignish has a wonderful (Indistinct) in fish processing that actually have IQF freezing. They can actually do other things around products. The same as down in my area in terms of Wyman's, they have extra capacity.

So, like, sometimes I think we look at just one thing, but strawberries to me could be a lot bigger crop. When you get into the health attributes of whether it's strawberries, blueberries, cranberries or whatever, that gets you into the value-added opportunities. When you get into extracting some of the antioxidants and stuff from the blueberries, that's where your bioscience kicks in.

My hon. member next to me, when he's talking about the legislation, it's a lot bigger than just that bill.

Mr. LeClair: I understand that. We do have - value-added is going to be a big part of our

direction. We have to find different ways to get our products out there and get value for them. We are doing some of that - like you said at Royal Star down -

Leader of the Opposition: Eugene is doing a what -

Mr. LeClair: Blueberries and cranberries.

Leader of the Opposition: Okay, very good. Is he involved in the project that is going to Japan?

Mr. LeClair: No, I wouldn't say. He's just working with the industry (Indistinct) product (Indistinct) like themselves for bringing (Indistinct).

Leader of the Opposition: For bringing the product in. He's the IQF freezing for them.

Mr. LeClair: Yes.

Leader of the Opposition: Custom service.

Mr. LeClair: Yeah, which is working out good. We probably need more storage capacity for those products, once they come to the freezer. Organic, value-added, all these areas are - like I said, the commodity markets are just not doing it anymore. We -

Leader of the Opposition: Will your government support you while you try to stabilize what's going on to make sure we don't lose more potential farmers while they're trying to move over to the new model?

We're about three or four years ahead of ourselves here in PEI, and you need the dollars, the help and support, so people don't want to close down buildings after 30 days or 90 days. Like, it's a lot bigger than that. It needs more attention, and it's got such potential for not only PEI but the whole Maritimes.

Mr. LeClair: Yes. Certainly our government will be there in that capacity to support the industries, once we get a direction or while we're working for a direction. We'll certainly be there to support the industries in that avenue. Support for - you know, if everything just stayed the same, but if we're moving in another direction, certainly we understand, I understand, that we need support to get to that point -

Leader of the Opposition: Thanks a lot.

Mr. LeClair: - where we're making money and are going to be -

Leader of the Opposition: Sure.

Mr. M. Currie: Can we call the hour? It's 5:00 now and we're not going to get any more done here today.

Thank you, minister.

Mr. LeClair: Madam Chair, I move that the Speaker take the Chair, and that the Chairman report progress and beg leave to sit again.

Chair: Shall it carry?

Some Hon. Members: Carried.

Chair: Madam Speaker, as Chair of a Committee of the Whole House having under consideration the grant of supply to Her Majesty, I beg leave to report that the Committee has made some progress and begs leave to sit again.

Speaker: Shall it carry?

Some Hon. Members: Carried.

Speaker: The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Vessey: Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. Minister of Tourism, that this House adjourn until Thursday, October 25th, at 2:00 p.m.

Speaker: Shall it carry?

Some Hon. Members: Carried.

Speaker: Have a great evening.

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

