

# HANSARD



## PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

**Speaker: Hon. Mildred A. Dover**

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10:06 a.m.

**RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY (The late Honourable Melvin J. McQuaid, Q.C.)**

**Speaker:** Resolutions of Sympathy. The Honourable Premier.

**Premier:** Thank you very much Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I'd like to introduce two Resolutions of Sympathy on behalf of former Members of this Legislature.

The first, Madam Speaker, in regard to the Honourable Mel McQuaid. AND WHEREAS, the Honourable Melvin McQuaid, former Member of the Assembly, former Member of the Executive Council and the former Honourable Leader of the Opposition passed away on January 16, 2001, BE IT RESOLVED that this House recognize the contribution to this province of the Honourable Mel McQuaid and extend to the members of his family our deepest sympathies.

Madam Speaker, while I never had the pleasure of serving in this House with Mel McQuaid, I did know him personally, I knew him to be devoted to the betterment of Prince Edward Island. Mr. McQuaid served Islanders through many important capacities. He was first elected to this House as a Member from 1<sup>st</sup> Kings in 1959 and served as Minister of Finance and Attorney General in the Government of Premier Walter Shaw.

Turning his attention to Federal politics, Mr. McQuaid was elected to the House of Commons in the Federal constituency of Kings in 1965. He enjoyed success for re-election in 1968 and 1970. Mel McQuaid returned to provincial politics in 1972 to lead the Island Progressive Conservative Party and become the Leader of the Official Opposition. During his political career, Mel McQuaid was known for his thoughtful approach and his dutiful attention to his constituents.

Prime Minister Trudeau appointed Mr. McQuaid to the Supreme Court of Prince Edward Island in 1976 where he served until 1981. On the bench, Mr. Justice McQuaid gained a reputation for his sharpness and his well organized approach as a jurist.

Mel was predeceased by his wife Catherine and leaves three children, John and Mary Jo and Peter, who is my Chief of Staff. And on behalf of all Members of this House, Madam Speaker, I wish to convey my sincere condolences to the children of the Honourable Melvin J. McQuaid and their families.

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

**Leader of the Opposition:** Yes, as Leader of the Opposition I would also like to express our sympathy to the McQuaid family which we've known. Mr. McQuaid had a great career in politics and went on to be a judge. And also, his family have followed a lot in his footsteps, and we give our sympathy to the family and also recognize the great service that Mr. McQuaid did for the Province of Prince Edward Island.

**Speaker:** The Honourable Member from Belfast-Pownal Bay.

**Wilbur MacDonald (PC):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I want to rise, too, and pay tribute to Mel McQuaid.

Mel McQuaid to me was a man of outstanding character and his honesty and sincerity in dealing with people was, indeed, a major part of that character. And who, not only did he have a character of friendliness and honesty, he was a man who served this province well as Minister of Finance and Attorney General. He went on to become a Member of Parliament for Kings County who served in the House of Commons and later became Leader of our Party.

He was always a friend to those who had the pleasure of knowing him. I think that Mel was one of those icons of our Party who served so well the Party and the province and the people of our province and, indeed, a friend who will be missed in our gatherings and in the gatherings of our Party. And especially in the Town of Souris, he seemed to be a very very special person who had that special privilege of being able to be associated with so many people, and I want to extend to his family and to people of the Town of Souris and the people who had knew Mel are indeed, deepest sympathy. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Speaker:** The Honourable Premier.

**RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY (The late Honourable Jean Canfield)**

**Premier:** Madam Speaker, I would next like to introduce a Resolution of Sympathy for the Honourable Jean Canfield. AND WHEREAS Miss Jean Canfield, the former Member of the Assembly and the former Member of the Executive Council passed away December 31, 2000. BE IT RESOLVED that this House extend to the members of the late Jean Canfield our deepest sympathies.

Jean Canfield was a true pioneer in Prince Edward Island politics. She changed the landscape of Island political culture by being the first woman ever elected to this Assembly. She was first elected to the Assembly on May 11, 1970 for the district of 1<sup>st</sup> Queens. Jean Canfield was subsequently re-elected in 1974 and served Islanders as a Member of the Legislative Assembly until March 27, 1979.

Premier Alex Campbell appointed Jean Canfield to the Executive Council as Minister responsible for the PEI Housing Authority, which was another first for Prince Edward Island women. As Chair of the first Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women, Ms. Canfield advised this Chamber on many issues respecting women and families.

Jean Canfield was a 1977 recipient of the Queen's Silver Jubilee Medal. Jean's achievements serve as a standard for many Island women and her ultimately legacy will be her devotion and commitment to Prince Edward Island and to its people.

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

**Leader of the Opposition:** Yes, I also want to, on behalf of the Opposition, like to second that and pass our sympathy on to Jean Canfield. As the Premier alluded to, she was one of the first ...woman elected to the Legislation Assembly of the Province of Prince Edward Island. And at a very young age I met Jean Canfield and I guess it was probably the first time I was ever... how would I put it... invited to do Government work at that particular time with my snow equipment. And I always, sort of remembered Jean for that and she did a great service to not only the women of Prince Edward Island, to the people in her district and the Province of Prince Edward Island. And I give my sympathies to

any of her family member's that was at the funeral and that and also to her... people in that district.

**MATTERS OF PRIVILEGE AND RECOGNITION OF GUESTS**

**Speaker:** Matters of Privilege and Recognition of Guests. The Honourable Premier.

**Premier:** Madam Speaker, with your permission, I would like to welcome visitors to the Gallery today. In particular, Madam Speaker, we have the Grade 8 French Immersion students from Birchwood Intermediate School along with their teacher, Joceyln Boisclair. Bienvenue (Welcome) to all students.

I'd also like to welcome other visitors to the Gallery today, and of course, I'm sure that televisions are turned on and people will be watching the proceedings on cable. I want to welcome all of our cable visitors today. (Applause)

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

**Leader of the Opposition:** Madam Speaker, with your permission, I'd like to recognize students in the Gallery, the French Immersion Grade 8, I believe, from Birchwood. Also, I'd like to recognize a former colleague of the Legislation Assembly, Mr. Francis O'Brien, who's been in the House for a number of years. And I think we called him Junior, was his nickname, and he did a lot for the people in his riding and did a lot for the people of the province when he was here. And, he still tries to help out with advice I hear, from time to time, to the Government and Party which is in power.

And also, I'd like to recognize the other people in the Gallery here also, and a teacher, the French Immersion teacher. My daughter, Joanne McKinley-Curran, is a French Immersion teacher out at East Wiltshire and I think it's very important that we have that second language here because it does help our students at a later date when they go out looking for work.

But I'd also welcome the viewers. It's very important that we have the viewers, and thank Island Cablevision for having a show on, on two different occasions. Because, when the viewers can tune in and they can

see exactly what their MLA's are doing and I think it's a good thing. Thank you very much. (Applause)

**Speaker:** The Honourable Government House Leader.

**Elmer MacFadyen (PC):** Madam Speaker, with your permission, I, too, want to welcome everybody to the Gallery. In particular, I want to welcome the former Member of the Legislative Assembly, Mr. O'Brien. But in particular, a member from my district, Mr. Frank Murray. (Applause)

**Speaker:** The Honourable Member from Charlottetown-Kings Square.

**Bobby MacMillan (PC):** Madam Speaker, with your permission, I would also like to welcome the students here today from Birchwood High School. One of the fine schools from my district, I know many of your parents and all fine people and I hope you enjoy your day. And also, Mr. Wes Edwards there, a fine constituent, a great entertainer and enjoy your day. Thank you. (Applause)

**Speaker:** The Honourable Member from Morell-Fortune Bay.

**Kevin MacAdam (PC):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. With your permission, I, too, would like to welcome Junior O'Brien. We have a nephew of his that sits behind me here from up west from Alberton-Miminegash. And as many know, Mr. O'Brien sat in this Chamber for a number of years, is a great representative, worked very hard for me in all of my campaigns as a mentor, great advisor. And to the students that are here today, I hope they enjoy this mornings proceedings, so welcome. (Applause)

**Speaker:** Honourable Government House Leader.

#### POINT OF ORDER

**Elmer MacFadyen (PC):** Point of Order. The Minister of Development and Technology is at a meeting with the Federal Minister Tobin in Halifax. And just so the Leader of the Opposition will know that Provincial Ministers have to meet ongoing in regards to Federal/Provincial relations. And the Minister of Fisheries, Agriculture and the Environment is at a

meeting in St. Andrews in regards to the Fishery. And the Minister of Health and Social Services will be returning to the province this evening after having a short break in regards to vacation. Thank you.

#### STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

**Speaker:** Statements by Members. The Honourable Member from St. Eleanors-Summerside.

**10:17 a.m.**

#### CONGRATULATIONS TO SUZANNE GAUDET CURLING TEAM

**Helen MacDonald (PC):** Thank you Madam Speaker. If there was ever a time to follow the sport of curling this was the year! On behalf of my honourable colleagues I want to extend congratulations to our newest world champions—the Suzanne Gaudet rink of Summerside. Suzanne's teammates include mate Stephanie Richard, second Robyn MacPhee, lead Kelly Higgins, alternate Carol Webb and coach Paul Power.

Madam Speaker, Islanders across the province were glued to their television sets to watch their win at the World Junior Curling Championships last weekend. And it was a pleasure to watch the expressions on their faces as they realized they were coming home with the gold. They won as they played, as team working together and caring for each other.

Madam Speaker, when the Suzanne Gaudet rink won the World Junior Curling Championship last week they served notice to small town Canada and to the world that no matter where in this great country you come from you can be as good as you want to be. Madam Speaker, I can assure you our Summerside pride was shining brightly on Wednesday night as we celebrated this victory. Suzanne, Stephanie, Robyn, Kelly, Carol and Paul, your city and your province are truly proud of you. You are our champs. Thank you. (APPLAUSE)

**Speaker:** The honourable member from Park Corner-Oyster Bed.

#### PEI HOSTS THE EAST COAST MUSIC AWARDS

**Beth MacKenzie (PC):** Thank you Madam Speaker. We can certainly agree that a good time was had by all during the recent East Coast Music Association's convention and awards show. The talent was simply tremendous. And there was something to appeal to everyone.

Prince Edward Island musicians made a great showing at the Awards ceremony Madam Speaker. And our home boy of South Rustico Lennie Gallant took home the coveted "Male Artist of the Year" Award, as well as awards for "Album of the Year" and "Roots Solo Artist". Popular entertainer Teresa Doyle was named "Childrens' Artist of the Year" and crowd pleasers the Jive Kings were once again chosen "Jazz Group of the Year". The Stompin' Tom Award for a lifetime commitment to music went to the Souris-based Chaisson family. And Madam Speaker, the group Celtitude won as best showcase.

I want to extend congratulations and a sincere thank you to the organizers and the 700 volunteers who worked together to make a huge success of Prince Edward Island's second ever ECMAs. Madam Speaker, an event like this in the middle of what can only be described as a long, hard winter made life a lot brighter. The impact wasn't just on our spirits though. This ECMA was the largest ever and the financial rewards to our economy were in the range of \$4 to \$5 million. More than 1,300 delegates, 300 members of the media and in excess of 1,000 fans experienced Island hospitality at its finest and frequently commented on their intentions to come back to play on our Island again, and we welcome them anytime. Thank you Madam Speaker. (APPLAUSE)

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

#### **WORLD JUNIOR WOMEN'S AND MEN'S CURLING CHAMPIONS**

**Leader of the Opposition:** Yes Madam Speaker, I would like to recognize also the junior curlers who won not only, they won the Canadian Championships---I was at the airport when they came home from that---but also won the World Championship. The Susan Gaudet rink as did great as ambassador, her and her team, for the Province of Prince Edward Island and also for Canada.

And also I'd like to congratulate the Junior Men's from

Newfoundland, which also brought the gold medal, that won the world curling championship, which is all good for the Island, but also good for Newfoundland, but also good for all of Canada.

And I'd like to recognize the many people that volunteered in the province, to help these people become where they are today, and that's our coaches and the people that volunteer, whether it's flooding the rinks, ice, or whatever, or the many fans that travel to the USA to cheer them on because I know it means a lot to have fans there to back you and cheer you on. I think that it's a tremendous thing if you look at how Islanders can do. I give the Minister of Community and Cultural Affairs credit for putting money into to recreation this year because it shows that Islanders can excel when they have the infrastructure there. If you look at, right back to your Jamie or Jamie Kennedy or Forbie Kennedy or Mr. Mac...the MacMillan boys (LAUGHTER) that played hockey (APPLAUSE) The MacMillan boys. I know you can't name a member but... If you watch how...and the Becks. And if you watch how those young people are doing today and their offspring are doing so good in the hockey arena or in the baseball or Mr. Richards from the Premier's riding down there.

So, I just want to wish you all well. And I think the people, not only the coaches deserve a great deal of credit too. (APPLAUSE)

**Speaker:** Questions by members starting with responses to questions taken as notice.

#### **RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS TAKEN AS NOTICE**

There were none.

**Speaker:** The honourable Leader of the Opposition. A question?

**10:23 a.m.**

#### **WELCOME BACK TO THE SPEAKER**

**Leader of the Opposition:** Madam Speaker, it's great to see you back in the chair here and I hope you make as good a job this session as you did the last session. I know you have your hands tied with that bunch over

there, to try and keep them under control. But you're doing really good!

#### POTATO WART CRISIS

**Leader of the Opposition:** So, a question to the Premier. Since the last, since the House, we last sat in this House Madam Speaker, there's been a number of developments surrounding the potato wart issue that have hurt quite a few people. Could the Premier update the House and Islanders about where we currently stand with the U.S. border closure for Island potatoes?

**Speaker:** The honourable Premier.

**Premier:** Thank you Madam Speaker. And it is fitting that the honourable member would start with this important question. I know that probably nothing has affected our economy as much as this potato wart crisis. It started when we were in the....last in the House and it's gone on for quite a number of months now. And of course, we've all been very disappointed with the response of the federal government towards this crisis situation for PEI potato producers and to all who are affected by it.

We were disappointed Madam Speaker, as the honourable member knows, with the financial contribution towards....from Ottawa towards the problem. We felt that their contribution was far short of what it had been. And while the honourable member last night was talking about all of the money the province is supposedly getting from Ottawa, which is not true—he forgot to mention that they didn't do much to help out in the potato crisis.

Madam Speaker, we are working on the matter of trying to get the border reopened. The Minister of Agriculture could give a more up-to-date kind of indication of exactly where that's at at this moment as he spent nearly full-time the last few months on this issue. I can tell you though that I've made quite a number of calls personally to the Canadian Ambassador to the United States, to the Prime Minister. I've talked with the Minister of International Trade Mr. Pettigrew on this matter on a number of occasions. And we've asked them to do everything possible to press for the immediate reopening. And Madam Speaker, that continues to be the case today and we'll continue to

press. But I have to point out that it's Ottawa, the federal government, who carries the primary responsibility for trade relations between Canada and the United States. And they have to take the firm moves necessary to ensure that the border reopens.

It's already too late Madam Speaker, for this season given what's happened---the fact that people are close to putting new potatoes in the ground. But I'll leave it at that for now Madam Speaker.

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

**Leader of the Opposition:** Yes, I'd like to thank the Premier for his answer. And if you notice in the budget last night, when it came down, you were....your Finance Minister was bragging how much success you had of selling in the United States, in the New England markets, how it went up. I just thought some farmers, myself, I figured you'll have some influence on helping the federal government get this border opened.

Another question Madam Speaker, to the Premier. It's getting late now for diversion on the fields to work the way it should. We all know that. It's been in the media. Can the Premier tell us how the diversion is process, going...getting along. How it's getting along. Roughly what percent have been diverted to this point? What percent of potatoes have been diverted to this point?

**Speaker:** The honourable Premier.

**Premier:** Madam Speaker, I could give him an exact detailing but I think the Minister of Agriculture would have those details and I would ask him to answer the question in full.

**Speaker:** The honourable Minister of Agriculture and Forestry.

**Hon. Mitch Murphy (PC):** With regards to diversion Madam Speaker, it was decided, the number decided to be diverted between the 2 rounds was 6.3 million hundredweight of potatoes. I believe there's been a deadline set on the second round of diversion to get diverted potatoes out on the field of April 6<sup>th</sup>. So come April 6<sup>th</sup>, there should be around 6.3 million hundredweight of potatoes diverted.

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



**Leader of the Opposition:** A new question to the Premier Madam Speaker. When something like this comes up there's always a lot of questions surrounding it. One of the main ones I've heard, where did the potato wart come from. It's been about 5 months since we found it in one small section of a field. Do you have any idea yet where this potato wart came from Mr. Premier?

**Speaker:** The honourable Minister of Agriculture and Forestry.

**Hon. Mitch Murphy (PC):** Well Madam Speaker, the latest, I guess, scientific answer to the honourable Leader of the Opposition's question is this. Is that the Canadian Food Inspection Agency is the lead scientific agency looking into the matter. As well the province has engaged the leading North American expert on potato wart, Mr. Ken Proudfoot out of Newfoundland. And the response back to that is that, now people may never know how the potato wart fungus had ended up in that field. There could be options. Mainly this is a disease of small gardens. The speculation is is that that particular piece of property was probably a home garden at one time. And before phytosanitary regulations were as strict as they were today, there certainly was more movement I think of potatoes from areas that had...tubers from areas in Europe that had potato wart.

The speculation is, is that that's probably where the potato wart fungus, how it ended up in that particular section of the field. But the scientific experts in the field say, obviously, it's very hard to determine that and they may not have conclusive proof of where the fungus originated.

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

**Leader of the Opposition:** You know, for being a number one industry the Premier doesn't seem to be up to too much speed on this. A new question to the Premier Madam Speaker. This is obviously a very serious thing. And as I said earlier, a lot of Islanders have are hurt by it. Not only the farmers but the workers, the people that depend on the spin-off, right through the Provincial Treasurer. What kind of priorities is there in government to find out the source of where the potato wart came from? Is there ongoing

effort by your government where it came from? And how many people have you working on it? We know the feds are working on it. But how many have you got working on it also to try to find this serious matter out?

**Speaker:** The honourable Premier.

**Premier:** Madam Speaker, you know, I'm pleased on one hand to see that the Leader of the Opposition has finally become interested in this issue after quite a number of months! (APPLAUSE) It's seems to be a bit a of a pattern with his party to have kind of put this issue on the back burner and hasn't seemed to have been much priority at all while our government has been devoting a lot of, a lot of energy, a lot of time, a lot of money. To the extent Madam Speaker, that, in fact, this crisis has been a contributor to the fact that we did not have a balanced budget for the year we're just completing. And while it's not the only reason Madam Speaker, it is a contributing factor.

Madam Speaker, if the honourable member was looking at the budget numbers from last night he will have noticed that for next year alone we're increasing the budget for the Department of Agriculture by about \$10 million---I think the largest increase on a percentage basis in any department in the provincial government. And Madam Speaker, we've taken this matter very seriously. As the Minister of Agriculture said, it's quite likely that this potato wart problem originated from what was a home garden that was incorporated into this large field last year. We don't know that absolutely and we may never know that absolutely. But it appears that may have been the case.

There's a possibility that potatoes, in fact, may have been planted in that home garden that came from Newfoundland at one point in time---maybe as many as 40 or 50 years ago. I don't know that anyone will absolutely ever know that for sure. But we do know that potato wart had been in Newfoundland and we know that somehow or other that virus was transmitted to that plot within PEI.

I think what's really important here Madam Speaker, is that quick action was taken by the province to hire the world's best expert, as the Minister has said, Mr. Ken Proudfoot, to deal with this problem. And you know, we thought we should go further. We should hire the

best expert that the United States had to deal with this problem. And we went to...we knew there were 3 states in the United....in the U.S. that have had potato wart problems themselves. So Madam Speaker, we went to see who they had engaged to deal with their problem. And guess what? They had engaged Mr. Ken Proudfoot, the gentleman we already had hired to work for ourselves from Newfoundland.

So, we've engaged the best specialist possible. They've been working on this problem. We think...we're absolutely convinced, based on over 10,000 soil tests---maybe it's 12 or more Madam Speaker---that have been carried out that, in fact, the wart problem did not expand beyond that plot where the....where these potatoes were found. And of course, all kinds of measures have since been taken in terms of isolating the field, cleaning up the equipment, making sure that this is not, not expanded. But I do appreciate the fact that the honourable member is now interested in the problem.

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

**10:33 a.m.**

**Leader of the Opposition:** There goes the Premier again! He's got a short memory! I believe I stood in this House here and introduced a Resolution. I believe, if the Premier can recall, I did an interview with Ian Pitrie, saying we had a major problem facing us when this was first found and your government didn't see fit to put out \$1.2 million to get a \$8 million export deal. That was your government. And I said I hope in the spring, if they keep going the way they are---the Premier, just refreshing his memory---that we don't be having to bury these or put these potatoes on in the field.

So, a new question to the, to the Minister of Agriculture, seeing that the Premier is not up to speed on the issue, other than he knows he wrote out a cheque. He cut a cheque. The thing is, to the Minister of Agriculture. When do you think we'll know, is there any sort of time frame set out that we can commit to, that we can tell Islanders? A lot of people are wondering what's the source, where the potato wart came from or what the source was. I think it's very important to find out. Will you give us a time frame here today?

**Speaker:** The honourable Minister of Agriculture and Forestry.

**Hon. Mitch Murphy (PC):** No Madam Speaker, that's an impossibility to do. The top scientific minds on this file have certainly indicated to us that they may never know where the fungus originated from. But I would point out to the honourable Leader of the Opposition with....and it's my....it's primarily the dealings of the Canadian Food Inspection Agency to deal with it. But I would point out that when wart was discovered in that field, it was the province that got things up and rolling with regards to the testing etc. etc.

We Madam Speaker, incredibly enough, we had to go out and purchase equipment for the Canadian Food Inspection Agency so they could run these tests. We hired the people to go out and collect the soil samples-- --some 300,000 samples that were put into 10,000 separate samples. It was us that went out and hired Mr. Proudfoot, the renown expert on potato wart. So if it hadn't been for the quick actions of the province Madam Speaker, in getting the soil sampling done and getting the test results done we still may be dealing with the scientific agency on this story. So I want to commend the work that the provincial government has done on this file, in getting the testing done so rapidly. (APPLAUSE) Now we have had excellent cooperation from the Canadian Food Inspection Agency once we got things up and running and they became partners on the project with us.

But with regards to the question about giving a date when we're going to ascertain, you know, where the fungus came from or where it originated from, the top scientific minds on this say that we may never know. So it's impossible to provide an answer to that question.

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

**Leader of the Opposition:** A new question to the same minister. The minister is quite correct that his department did get up and get the tests going. The question is, is there's a *Plant Health Act* here in the Province of Prince Edward Island. You're responsible for the *Plant Health Act* in the Province of Prince Edward Island. And the question I have is, why can't you find out where this potato wart originated from?

That's the big question that's left there. I know you spent millions of dollars and that's great. That's fine. But where has the wart started or come from? Surely to heavens with all your experts you have got hired and all the testing you have done you can put that down to a time frame when we should know where the potato wart actually originated from.

**Speaker:** The honourable Minister of Agriculture and Forestry.

**Hon. Mitch Murphy (PC):** As I indicated Madam Speaker, the top scientific minds in this tell us that we may never know where the origin of the fungus was. So again, to answer the honourable Member's questions, I mean, it's, you can't put a time frame on when you're going to identify where it came from because you may never know where it came from.

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

**Leader of the Opposition:** A new question, same minister. And I might add that it was your government that introduced inspection fees for our trailer trucks that were coming in here. It was your government that charged more for inspection fees for these trailers that were coming in from other provinces. Now that you went to user pay, that's your government.

Now a new question to the same minister. I know it's touchy over there for the \$5,000 clappers but just hold on for a second here! What is going on right now within your department, the Department of Agriculture, to make sure that this one isolated incident won't pop up elsewhere in the Province of Prince Edward Island? What is your department under plant health doing to make sure this doesn't happen again?

**Speaker:** The honourable Minister of Agriculture and Forestry.

**Hon. Mitch Murphy (PC):** Well Madam Speaker, with regards to the infected portion of a field, I think for Islanders it would be interesting to understand that what happened was that there was approximately 72 potatoes or tubers found in a section of a field that would be about the same size as this Legislative Assembly. Now what's happening to that particular field is that that particular field has been taken out of

agricultural production, not just the section where the potatoes were found but the whole field—some 60 plus acres of the field---has been taken out of agriculture production. And that will be covered, I believe the plan is to reforest that field or plant it in trees. It will never again be in agriculture production.

International scientific protocol tells us that what we need to do in that particular case is to take the field out of agriculture production and establish a small buffer around the field. That's what's being done.

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

#### SALE OF PEI MUSSELS TO THE U.S.

**Leader of the Opposition:** A new question to the Premier. There's are some concerns in another border issue Madam Speaker. This one could be serious as well. Could the Premier update this House on what's happening with the investigation into the Prince Edward Island mussel entering the USA?

**Speaker:** The honourable Premier.

**Premier:** Madam Speaker, the, there's quite a bit of activity taking place in this issue. I know at the present time there are discussions between the federal representatives from PEI with their colleagues in Ottawa and with representatives in the United States. Our own Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture is in touch with various parties on this issue. We are treating it as a serious problem, something we're concerned about. And while the minister is not here today, I expect he'll be able to give a full update the first of the week. But we are following it closely. I know there's been a lot of discussion between Canada and Washington already on this issue. And I'm sure that will continue until the matter is fully resolved.

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

**Leader of the Opposition:** A new question to the Premier Madam Speaker. I'm getting a lot of calls from people Madam Speaker, about the potato wart and this mussel investigation. People want to know what the government is doing. Are you all concerned about the possibility of tariffs? Are you concerned about the possibility of tariffs on your mussels entering the U.S.?

Mr. Premier, will you answer that question?

**Speaker:** The honourable Premier.

**Premier:** Madam Speaker, once again, as I've indicated to the honourable member already, this is not just a matter involving the provincial government. It's a matter involving the federal government and trade relationships between Canada and United States. And so while we are involved, there's a major, major role here for our federal counterparts as well. And those discussions are underway. We're asking that they be dealt with expeditiously. Unfortunately it seems when you come to deal with trade, that it takes a long while sometimes to resolve this issue.

There's some suggestion this matter, you know, would...we're hoping it can be dealt with without getting getting bogged down in all kinds of panels and courts. But I don't have the absolute answer for that at this point and would be happy to get that information, as much as we can for the honourable member for first of the week.

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

**Leader of the Opposition:** A new question to the Premier. Mussel shipment from Prince Edward Island to United States is worth \$14 million a year. Is that correct Mr. Premier?

**Speaker:** The honourable Premier.

**Premier:** Take the honourable member's word for that. I don't know the exact dollar value in terms of shipments. I think it's at least that. And of course the mussel industry has grown very rapidly. I recall when Joe Vandembrent, who was a tobacco grower, started experimenting with producing mussels on a cultured basis on PEI. And you know, that wasn't very long ago and we now have a multi-million dollar industry here, which we're very proud of.

**10:43 a.m.**

**Premier:** Now Madam Speaker, the problem that exists in United States is, is part—I want to explain it this way—in that, as I understand it, some of the complainants from the U.S. are actually not dealing with

cultured mussels. They are dealing with bottom mussels or, you know, mussels that are just harvested from the shores—a different product than Prince Edward Island produces for the marketplace. And of course we believe we have the best mussels in the world. We've been very successful at producing them and that's created a lot of competition amongst producers here. And of course, when there's competition then, then the marketers, you know, sometimes use pricing to try to enhance their position in the marketplace.

So we may not, in fact, be dealing with exactly the same product. Although that's what it appears that Maine producers have been looking at. And so, I say again, there are some questions here about whether we're dealing with the same product. I don't think we are. We're dealing with cultured mussels; they're dealing with mussels that are harvested off the shore, off the rocks, that sort of thing. A different product entirely.

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

**Leader of the Opposition:** Another question to the Premier Madam Speaker. Can the minister tell this House...the Premier tell this House how many Islanders are earning a living in the mussel industry?

**Speaker:** The honourable Premier.

**Premier:** Well I can tell him this Madam Speaker, that if it wasn't for the mussel industry parts of Prince Edward Island would have serious employment problems today. I know in my own area, southern Kings and Queens, it wasn't too many years ago we had a tobacco industry and, of course, that was an industry that his party sort of let down as well. But fortunately Madam Speaker, the mussel industry has been developing over the years and picked up a lot of the labour that used to be employed from the tobacco industry. So there are thousands of people working either directly or indirectly in the mussel industry in PEI today. It's been a very good industry for us. And it's our intentions to do everything we can to keep it at a high level.

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

**Leader of the Opposition:** So I'd like the Premier to take

back the number of exactly how many people are working in the mussel industry, seeing that he's not sure.

Now, another question to the same Premier. Some figures were recently used in the media that the investigation could cost each of the mussel producers named in the complainant up to 400,000. That's a lot of money for any company. I'm sure everybody will agree with that! So Madam Speaker, then if there's tariffs as well it could cause some trouble for this very important industry in the province, which you alluded to the thousands that are working in it. Has the Premier spoken directly to any of these companies to find out first hand what's going on here?

**Speaker:** The honourable Premier.

**Premier:** Madam Speaker, I don't know what the legal costs might be. There's been a lot of supposition about that. We're hoping that, perhaps, it won't get to that stage. And as I pointed out already, it's our view that, in fact, the U.S. action is based on a different product to start with and so it's a whole different situation. But of course the cost to the industry in terms of fighting this case might depend on how much fighting they have to do, who they would have to engage, what the costs of legal services and so on would be. But we will be keeping a close eye on the matter.

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

**Leader of the Opposition:** Another question to the Premier Madam Speaker. What is your government doing Mr. Premier, to make sure that these companies, this important industry in the Province of PEI, doesn't suffer from the U.S. actions?

**Speaker:** The honourable Premier.

**Premier:** Well Madam Speaker, I know that the department has had extensive discussions already with the companies that are marketing mussels from PEI. They're talking to the federal counterparts, as I've indicated. They're trying to make sure that they understand the action that may be....that is originating from south of the border. And they're doing everything they can to stay on top of the issue.

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

#### SPECIAL WARRANTS

**Leader of the Opposition:** Madam Speaker, a question to the Premier. A little more than a week ago you and your government cabinet authorized close to 20 million in Special Warrant spending. Will you please explain to Islanders what a Special Warrant is?

**Speaker:** The honourable Premier.

**Premier:** I'd be happy to do that Madam Speaker. And while the Treasurer might be able to give the technical definition better than I could--I'm sure she could---I can tell you generally what a Special Warrant is. A Special Warrant is an allocation of funds that wasn't anticipated when the budget was struck or presented to the House. And so the Special Warrant is used to cover extraordinary expenditures. And you know, the Opposition Leader went on at great lengths in his response to the Throne Speech last night about Special Warrants. Well Madam Speaker, I'll give you two examples of why Special Warrants are used and why they're necessary. And it's interesting he led this morning with his first question in regard to the potato wart situation.

Well Madam Speaker, we wouldn't have been able to put money into potato wart situation had we not used a Special Warrant. We did not anticipate when the budget was brought down last spring that we would have this crisis in the potato industry. And so to put money into the potato wart situation the Department of Agriculture had to have new money. And so a Special Warrant was used Madam Speaker, to flow through that money. We even used a Special Warrant, as I understand it, so that we could make sure that the money that came from Ottawa---finally came from Ottawa---also flowed through. So money came into the government and went out from the government again. So it all appears as an extra expenditure by the province and yet we also...we had revenues for at least part of that money that went into the Special Warrant. So, as the honourable member could quickly determine, a lot of the Special Warrant money that he was complaining about went to the potato industry. And I'm surprised that he would be, even want to bring this up.

Special Warrants have been...are used to cover other extraordinary expenditures and we've had some of those in health because we felt it important to introduce additional programs for people of Prince Edward Island in the health care sector. And I'd be happy to elaborate further if the honourable member so wishes.

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

**Leader of the Opposition:** Yes Madam Speaker. There's the Premier going. And if you listen to the comments I have made, I said that the potato situation was a prime example where you would use a Special Warrant for emergency funds. Emergency spending that falls outside the normal budget process and it's supposed to be for emergencies. And the Premier is quite correct when he tries to camouflage all this millions he spent on the potato diversion. But it was 10 million I believe at that time.

When the Provincial Treasurer was in Opposition she used to get very upset about Special Warrants. My question again Madam Speaker, is to the Premier. Why does your government use so many Special Warrants? We know the potato industry fell within the criteria of a Special Warrant. But why do you use so many Special Warrants? That is the question I have.

**Speaker:** The honourable Premier.

**Premier:** Well Madam Speaker, we've used them to take care of important issues. I mentioned health care being one of those. You know, again, he's complained about funds that we've set up to carry out certain initiatives. And of course, one of those Madam Speaker, was to hire more nurses, to expand front line services on PEI. We were able to, by setting up the special fund, and using Special Warrant for expenditure to hire 60 additional full-time equivalent nursing positions in the province. Had we not done that we wouldn't have been able to make that kind of expenditure. We are using Special Warrants when necessary to provide the kinds of services that Islanders tell us that they want.

And Madam Speaker, there's always a very transparent process here. We indicated in the budget process that special funds would be set up and we've used those funds for what they were intended and, when

necessary, used Special Warrants to spend that money.

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

**Leader of the Opposition:** Madam Speaker, I notice now that he went from the potato wart situation where we knew you needed Special Warrant to the nurses which we need. But I would think that people know that we had a scarcity of nurses. I think you would be able to budget that in to your budget that we need more nurses. We need more doctors.

Now, last year, the Auditor General said your government had to change the way it dealt with Special Warrants. This is the Auditor General speaking. What has the Premier done to satisfy the Auditor General's concerns?

**Speaker:** The honourable Premier.

**10:53 a.m.**

**Premier:** Well Madam Speaker, we continually adjust the actions of government to respect the recommendations of the Auditor General. And Madam Speaker, you know, we haven't always known exactly how a program should evolve at the start of the year. A lot of times discussion and planning is still taking place about how a program should work. And so sometimes that's why, you know, the exact dollars have not been set aside in a department for the specific program because if the program is still in the works at the start of the year. But I want to point out that the honourable member is wrong in suggesting that these funds were not budgeted for. They were budgeted for but in special funds and thus Special Warrants.

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

**Leader of the Opposition:** If you're, Mr. Premier, if you're concerned about Special Warrants and why does your government use them more than any other government in the history of the Province of Prince Edward Island, if you're using them. Why is that? Can you answer that question?

**Speaker:** The honourable Minister of the Provincial Treasury.

**Hon. Pat Mella (PC):** Madam Speaker, that's not true to begin with. But the reality of Special Warrants is this. Governments at budget time set out the fiscal program as closely as they can to what they're going to be spending during the year. Life doesn't just keep going in a straight line. It takes some twists and turns. Governments, like individuals, have to accommodate that. Special Warrants are a mechanism to allow flexibility so that governments can respond to issues during the year. And so if we want to address the fact that we had a very difficult winter and we had more snow plows and more workers, which we didn't anticipate, then that particular budget item will be higher than it would have been at budget time. That requires a Special Warrant.

If the fuel costs in the province go up by 48% and we didn't anticipate that back when we put the budget in, it has to be paid. The only way it can be paid is a Special Warrant. So there are costs that come up within government that were not in a budget that give a government the flexibility to address those issues. The potato wart is a conspicuous one of course, but there are others. There are deficits, for example, in school boards. There are programs where drug costs go up by perhaps 2 million over what we thought they'd be. The bill has to be paid. So therefore, it does require a Special Warrant.

So the Warrants, as the Premier rightly described, include federal money received and the funding we put in the special funds. Those are not hidden. They're on page 9 of the budget document. Clearly outlined how much and what they are to be used for. They were not hidden. They were put in the budget. So Madam Speaker, in order to take money out of those funds the technical way we can do it—the only way—is to issue a Special Warrant. So they really get reported twice.

So Madam Speaker, yes, I, I do have a concern about Special Warrants in the sense that every government should try to constrain the use of Warrants as much as possible. But I'm quite prepared to read out the list of what the Warrants were spent on. And the people of Prince Edward Island, in some cases, have asked us to do these things and in other cases nature has required us to spend money that we didn't think we were going to have to spend. (APPLAUSE)

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

**Leader of the Opposition:** Well, I want to thank the Provincial Treasurer for giving her show there! She might have known that—we've had no snow for a number of years—she might have known that! You had the money....

**Hon. Pat Mella (PC):** Did you know how much (INDISTINCT) last summer?

**Leader of the Opposition:** I didn't put any contracts out this year, I'll tell you that! It was done by the hour! (LAUGHTER) I'll tell you that much! But the thing is, the Special Warrants, she hides behind the clouds all the time—her and the Premier. And we know it's an all-time record this government has been spending on Special Warrants and we'll get back to that at another day.

A new question to the Premier. You once talked about the need for politicians to respect the Legislative Assembly. You changed since those days Mr. Premier, since you made those statements. Why did you wait for the House to be open....why didn't you wait for the House to open---it was only another week; another few days. You could have opened yourself. You had the authority to open the House---take 20 million spending to the floor of the House. Why didn't you do that? Why did you choose to spend \$20 million dollars behind closed secret doors, which you've got a record of doing, which is an all-time high in the Province of Prince Edward Island.

**Speaker:** The honourable Premier.

**Premier:** Well Madam Speaker, I am flabbergasted with the honourable member and his approach. You know, here he is again talking two sides of the story at the same time in the same Question Period. He starts off by criticizing or trying to find some fault with the way the government has dealt with the potato wart situation. When we clarify that for him then he says, well, we shouldn't have spent money before the budget was introduced. Does he want Madam Speaker, that we would have held off, like the federal government, until it was too late for the potato industry? We put through \$30 million, or close to it, in Special Warrants for the potato industry so that they could deal with, try to deal

with this in a timely manner. We've put our money up as quickly as we could once we had a program from the potato industry in terms of how to deal with this problem. We dealt with the issue. We spent the money in Special Warrants. We didn't wait for a new budget. And Madam Speaker, now he's saying, well, you shouldn't be spending money under Special Warrants. What's he suggest? We leave the potato industry out there languishing in despair as the federal government would do Madam Speaker? (APPLAUSE)

**An Honourable Member:** Here! Here! (APPLAUSE)

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

**Leader of the Opposition:** There goes the Premier again, hiding behind everybody but taking responsibility himself! It was 10 million in the budget last night for the potato industry. Now he's up to \$30 million to the potato industry. I'm sure the farmers will be looking for that extra \$20 million!

A new question to the Premier. I know we'll eventually discuss these Special Warrants at a later date but that discussion will be going on long after the House closes. So again Madam Speaker, why did the government, your government, insist on so much secret spending behind closed doors? Will you answer that straight-forward instead of hiding behind the \$10 million potato industry?

**Speaker:** The honourable Premier.

**Premier:** Well Madam Speaker, the answer to the question is quite simple. Islanders needed the money. That's why the money was spent. Do they think that people who clear snow shouldn't get paid? Do they think that the potato farmers are in crisis shouldn't get paid? Do you think we shouldn't hire nurses when we need nurses? That's why Special Warrants have been used Madam Speaker, and we'll use them when they have to be used in the future as well.

**An Honourable Member:** Here, here! (APPLAUSE)

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

**Leader of the Opposition:** Madam Speaker, there goes his arrogance! We'll do what we want to do! We got

the cabinet! We got the power! I don't think this government cares too much about the accountability Madam Speaker. A large number of very thoughtful people in this province has expressed concerns, not only to me but to Islanders and even on the radio today of closed-door spending. But it never changes. It's been going on since you got in power. Will the Premier commit today that he will end this secret spending process and once and for all, use Special Warrants only for emergency, the potato wart situation or if it was a major problem in the health. Will you make a commitment today in the House Mr. Premier?

And I will ask you an extra question. It's probably two in one. You know, you talk about the Special Warrants and how important they are. I see you put in 2.4 million into job creation, EDA, under Special Warrants but yet you cut it back this year to about 2....you cut it back by 2.4 million. Is there no more jobs? Election is over. No more jobs that can be bought out there or what? Will you answer that question?

**Speaker:** The honourable Premier.

**Premier:** Madam Speaker, I appreciate the honourable member raising that matter. Actually, the...what's happened is because our government has been working hard to create economic opportunity on PEI that our economy has been expanding. That's meant that there are more jobs available than ever before. In the month of February just past Madam Speaker, unemployment rate fell to 11.7%. That might be the lowest level that our unemployment rate has ever seen in the month of February.

Madam Speaker, that's because of aggressive opportunities being pursued. Government aggressively pursuing opportunities in terms of economic development. I was noticing as I drove into Charlottetown this morning Madam Speaker, that in two different places businesses had signs up "Help Wanted". And this is in one of the slowest times of the year Madam Speaker. So we've adjusted our spending accordingly.

**11:03 a.m.**

You know, the EDA Program was started by the honourable member's government so he knows all



about it. We've been amending that program as we go. We've been encouraging people who have yet to use the program because they haven't been able to get enough employment to get into training. We're working with those people to get them some skills so they can get some long-term jobs. We've been encouraging them to pick up year-round jobs in the private sector. And Madam Speaker, this approach is working. And that's why we're not spending as much in EDA this year as we had previously. And Madam Speaker, we intend to continue that economic activity so that, hopefully, that trend will continue.

**An Honourable Member:** Here, here!

**Speaker:** The honourable Leader of the Opposition. Final question.

**Leader of the Opposition:** Yeah. It's great that the election is over Madam, Madam Speaker. That the Premier sees he doesn't have to double the EDA job creation funds. (INDISTINCT) a report from former politicians and the sitting Lieutenant Governor now and I'll give you just one quick snapper here for the Premier. And we'll continue this at a later date and we'll get into the Special Warrants and that also.

#### NUMBER OF LAWYERS EMPLOYED BY THE PROVINCE

**Leader of the Opposition:** Roughly, how many lawyers does government employ full-time, not counting the Attorney General of course. How many lawyers does your government have working there full-time?

**Speaker:** The honourable Premier.

**Premier:** Madam Speaker, I'll take that question as notice and bring the answer back on Tuesday.

#### SPEAKER: END OF QUESTION PERIOD

11:04 a.m.

#### STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

None

#### PRESENTING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

None

#### TABLING OF DOCUMENTS

**Speaker:** Statements by Members....sorry Ministers. Presenting and Receiving Petitions. Tabling of Documents. The Honourable Minister of Agriculture and Forestry.

#### ANSWERS TO WRITTEN QUESTION NO. 1

**Hon. Mitch Murphy (PC):** Madam Speaker, by leave of His Honour the Lieutenant Governor, I beg leave to table the answers to written question No. 1, and I move, seconded by the Honourable Premier that the same be now received and do lie on the table.

**Speaker:** Shall it carry?

**Honourable Members:** Carried.

#### ANSWER TO WRITTEN QUESTION NO. 13

**Hon. Mitch Murphy (PC):** Madam Speaker, by leave of His Honour the Lieutenant Governor, I beg leave to table answer to written question No. 13 and I move, seconded by the Honourable Premier the same be received and do lie on the table.

**Speaker:** Shall it carry?

**Honourable Members:** Carried.

**Speaker:** The Honourable Minister of Tourism.

#### ANSWERS TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS NO. 43, 45, 51, 53

**Hon. Greg Deighan (PC):** Madam Speaker, by command of His Honour the Lieutenant Governor, I beg leave to table answers to written questions No. 43, 45, 51 and 53 and I move, seconded by the Minister of Community and Culture Affairs that the said documents be now received and do lie on the table.

**Speaker:** Shall it carry?

**Honourable Members:** Carried.

**Speaker:** The Honourable Minister of Transportation

and Public Works.

**ANSWERS TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS NO. 11, 23,  
39, 46, 60**

**Hon. Don MacKinnon (PC):** Yes, Madam Speaker, by command of His Honour the Lieutenant Governor, I beg leave to table the answers to written questions No.'s 11, 23, 39, 46 and 60 and I move, seconded by the Honourable Provincial Treasurer that these documents do now be received and lie on the table.

**Speaker:** Shall it carry?

**Honourable Members:** Carried.

**TABLING OF QUESTIONS FOR ANSWERS (Leader  
of the Opposition)**

**Leader of the Opposition:** Madam Speaker, I would like to...

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

**Leader of the Opposition:** .....to table or present my written questions. I've got them on a disk....to the Clerk of the House.

**REPORT BY THE CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER re  
BY-ELECTION FEBRUARY 26<sup>th</sup>, 2001.**

**ANNUAL REPORT OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST  
COMMISSIONAIRE (First Annual Report)**

**Speaker:** Shall it carry? Pursuant to Section 119-2 of the *Election Act*, I table the report of the Chief Electoral Officer for the by-election of the 26<sup>th</sup> February 2001 in the District No. 2. And pursuant to Section 3-1 of the *Conflict of Interest Act*, I table the first annual report of the Conflict of Interest Commissionaire.

**ANNUAL REPORT COUNCIL OF MARITIME  
PREMIERS 1999/2000.**

**ANNUAL REPORT DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
(Period ending March 31, 2000)**

**PUBLIC ACCOUNTS OF PRINCE EDWARD  
ISLAND, Volume 2 (Period ending 31 March,2000.)**

**RESPONSE TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS NO. 2, 4, 5,  
8, 9, 14, 16, 17, 20, 21, 26, 29, 32, 37, 52, 54, 55, 56, 57**

**Clerk:** Madam Speaker, and Members of the Legislative Assembly. Please be advised that pursuant to rule 80 (k) of the rules of the Legislative Assembly of Prince Edward Island the following documents are received by the Office of the Clerk since the House last met on 20<sup>th</sup> December 2000.

The Annual Report of the Council of Maritime Premiers 1999/2000. The report required pursuant to Section 195-5 of the Criminal Code of Canada 2000. Annual Report for the Department of Education for period ending 31 March 2000. Public Accounts of Prince Edward Island, Volume 2 for year ending 31 March 2000. The office has also received a (INDISTINCT) responsive to the following written questions; 2, 4, 5, 8, 9, 14, 16, 17, 20, 21, 26, 29, 32, 37, 52, 54, 55, 56 and 57.

#### REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

None

#### INTRODUCTION OF GOVERNMENT BILLS

None

#### GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

None

#### ORDERS OF THE DAY (Government)

**Speaker:** Reports by Committees. Introduction of Government Bills. Government Motions. Orders of the Day Government. The Honourable Minister of Agriculture and Forestry.

#### ADJOURN DEBATE ON THE BUDGETARY MOTION

**Hon. Mitch Murphy (PC):** Madam Speaker, I would move, seconded by the Honourable Leader of the Opposition that the First Order of the Day be now read.

**Speaker:** Shall it carry?

**Honourable Members:** Carried.

**Clerk:** Order No. 1, adjourn debate on the Budgetary Motion.

**Speaker:** The Honourable Deputy Speaker. The Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

#### POINT OF ORDER

**Leader of the Opposition:** Just on a Point of Order here, I'd like to get unanimous consent of the House that we go to Motion No. 16.

**Speaker:** Shall it carry? Do we have unanimous consent Honourable Government House Leader?

**Elmer MacFadyen (PC):** No we don't Honourable Madam Speaker. We have called Order No. 1. We weren't aware that the Leader of the Opposition wanted to deal with the emergency Resolution which was tabled last night.

#### DEBATE (continued)

**Speaker:** Honourable House Leader, we are then on to the Adjourn Debate of the Budgetary Motion which is No. 1. So the Honourable Leader of the Opposition, are you ready to continue your debate on Budgetary Motion?

**Leader of the Opposition:** Yes.

**Speaker:** You wish a podium? Yes. The Honourable Leader of the Opposition continuing your debate from last night, your response message.

**Leader of the Opposition:** Madam Speaker, this just shows how this Government would not give unanimous consent for the Potato Wart Resolution which I had here... was seconded by the Honourable Member. Emergency Resolution if the House Leader understood would mean, emergency, and it was coming on today and that's why we...I got it on the order paper. But I guess they're not concerned this Government. They try to use all kinds of excuses, blame everybody else, and they're not concerned about the Resolution where I wanted to have on here today.

This is a prime example why this Government here has got to be a \$1 billion mark. This is a \$1 billion Minister of Finance that the debt has gone up. If you look at the way this Government can waste monies and wasting time, it's no wonder the people can't trust this Government anymore. If you look at a very important Resolution like this that affects all Islanders....

**Speaker:** Honourable Member, would you go to the Budgetary response please.

**Leader of the Opposition:** That's what I'm doing.

**Speaker:** Okay.

**Leader of the Opposition:** I'm using money, wasteful money. And you know the Premier talked about putting \$10 million.....

**Hon. Pat Mella (PC):** By the way, it was a billion in '93/'94.

**Leader of the Opposition:** One billion....one billion dollars. The high.... it's the billion dollar lady. That's what she is. A billion dollars. Look at them, look at them, look at them roar. They're getting very touchy in here.

**An Honourable Member:** Table the document.

**Leader of the Opposition:** And you know, if you look at the Budget and the debt and interest rates are at an all time low, and you're saving about 9 or 10 million dollars less in interest payments. But what did she do? She puts it out and squanders it in golf courses. Golf Courses! Our future children's education. Their priorities is their friends. Their priority isn't the Potato Wart Resolution which I brought up. WHEREAS estimated potato industry generates a \$100 million to the economy of Prince Edward Island, and it looks like it's going to decrease by 50 million this year. And I'm sure the Provincial Treasurer would have her hands in those farmers pockets in taxes and increases...would be coming to the Provincial Treasurer. But they're not concerned about that. That's why the House voted down that.

And if you look at this here revenue and this Government brought in. You know the special warrants every year....more and more. The Auditor comes down, the Premier of the Province tries to blame it all on the potato wart but the farmers aren't going to take that blame. It's a fact of life. We knew...and all people know when you get elected that nothing is going to run smoothly all the time. But we do know that this Minister has increased the debt on the province since she took over by 30 million dollars, put us over a billion dollars in debt. What happens down the road....she's not worrying....because they have their friends, their

golf courses to look after. They have major commitments where there's millions of dollars have been invested non-wisely. This is a Government that likes to do things behind closed doors, secretive Government, the most secretive Government they tell me, anywhere's in Canada, is this Government right here. And that's a fact. And the way they control... they use...waste money out of the Executive Council by paying the \$5,000 clappers another 10% I believe or something....500 extra, so they will have their crowd to clap and roar. But you know that's not a very good attitude especially when there's 5000 roughly....\$5,000 roughly....5000 people without a doctor still in the Province of Prince Edward Island. And our out-patients are full. And the problem with not putting the money in there and being able to (INDISTINCT) the doctor, is you got to start giving them a respect.

Look at our front-line workers. They give their Deputy Ministers 14%....14% wages, yet they want our Resident Care Workers, our LNA's, our people that work in the front lines to settle for 2%. You know that's ridiculous, that this Government is so cold hearted as they are. It's no wonder they got their heads down low now. 'Cause it's starting to sink home. They already refused unanimous consent on a major dollar value...the Province of Prince Edward Island... that comes here... the potato wart issue to get the borders open. That's not important to them. They'd rather have more time so they can go and whine about it and that's what they're doing, Madam. This is what they're doing.

I know there are some good things in the Budget when you look at the rinks. I will give full credit for....organizations, that's good. But you know the Provincial Treasurer...I was talking about Special Warrants, and I remember looking at one of these special slush funds she had, and she went in and took the money out for a sewage I believe and water...infrastructure in her own riding. That was found out here on the floor of the House. And who did she have to go through to get it? Herself. And I believe maybe the Deputy Minister was from that area. That's what she thinks of these Special Warrants. If you look at this Government here. They have had an opportunity to put PEI as the leader. Their income has risen 154 million a year, up to 201 extra a year, from \$760 million to \$961 million. And what have they got to show for it? They have nothing to show for it. There is still a line

up. There is still 14 weeks to see a specialist. There is still students in our schools that have a teacher ratio of about 29 to 34 teachers teaching students. They'll use all kinds of information to try to camouflage it. They'll use their spin doctors...I believe there is over 4 million they put out on spin doctors just trying to make them look good. I believe that lady that phoned today and asked the Provincial Treasurer "how much it would cost you for these shake and smile consultants you brought in" and she said "well, I'm really not sure. You know, I don't think that was in my department". And there's the Premier today, he's not up to speed. There's more the Premier has got to do in this province than to go in behind closed doors and approve Special Warrants and the second most thing he's famous for is running behind Lawrence MacAulay, cutting ribbons after Lawrence is bringing some money in here from Ottawa. You'd almost get trampled in that particular area.

And when you look at the Budget that came down, the new French School, it's great for it to come down. A lot of that money came from Ottawa again. If you look at many parts of the Government Budget here, Ottawa has really been increasing funding here. Now, I'm going to use a projection. If you students were working or got an allowance and in 1996 your allowance was \$10 a month or \$10 a week say. And all of a sudden it went up by 20 or 30 % every year. In other words, \$760 million to come into the province here between taxes and transfer payments from Ottawa, taxes from hard earning teachers, nurses, whatever and they got nothing to show for it.

Our roads are a mess. Just take a drive down to Kings County. Just take a look. All you got to do is go to the Eastern School Board office and the people there are reporting for work in unsafe conditions, the air conditioning problems. The papers...all you got to do is read the papers, the people are coming out. And all the Minister of Education can do...he likely took a tour. He sniffed around for a little while and he didn't smell anything so he left. He figured there was nothing wrong. Well he's got another thing because his Deputy said there was nothing wrong either. But they have no problem spending \$400,000 to move the Tourist Department closer so the Minister of Tourism wouldn't have to walk or drive as far to meet his staff, there is some of them out at the Industrial Park. He wanted that more. It's like a power, they're on like a power trip in there and this is wasting Government money. This is

wasting money that could have been put into education. This is wasting money that could have went in to better air quality in our schools. There's a large supply of teachers out there right now that aren't working. So, there is no excuse for having the ratio the way it is.

The Provincial Treasurer talked about the Internet...every school would be on the Internet. My question is; How many of these schools have computers in the classrooms that work? It's great to have the Internet. But I know from my particular riding and the other ridings that there is not enough computers in our Island schools. They'll get up and they'll make all kinds of excuses. They love to go on these radio shows...one of themselves, nobody else. I believe the Provincial Treasurer reported the Budget came down... I was phoned by the CBC and they asked me to go on with the Provincial Treasurer and I said I would go on and we'd talk about the Special Warrants and that. No, didn't want to do that. No, no, no. She said, I'll go on last and he can go on first. And you know what that means. I'd be on there and you'd have no way to contradict. She'd just come on and go out with more blarney as she did today. It's a fact of life. I'm amazed that...I'm very amazed that... you know... MLA's don't even keep their word. There's one Member in this House that...last election now found the lady a job for 14 weeks, he gave her four. (INDISTINCT) that lady up there...four weeks. And then when he was pushed and embarrassed into it I think it was another four weeks came out. (INDISTINCT) of these Members in this House sitting here made commitments that they would increase people's salaries on the EDA work from \$6.99 to 8 or \$9. And you saw where that fell. No.

The minimum wage...I asked the Premier to increase the minimum wage so our students... You'd give them what, \$8 a week and he brags about it. Somebody working in a full time job gets \$8 more a week when the minimum wage came up. When (INDISTINCT) things went up. These Ministers...there's the Minister of Transportation there, they made a commitment to the people in Brookvale. He made a commitment and he consulted with them. Well some consultant. He shoved it down their throats, that's what he tried to do. That's what he tried to do. There's the Member that wasted money, went around and payed I believe \$10,000 fees..the whole property. The Waste Watch Commission has wasted millions of dollars. And the

Minister of Transportation has a problem with owning up to it. When the Brookfield residents invite them to a meeting, they don't show. They don't show. He hasn't even had another Town Hall meeting. I believe you cancelled the one you had and it's never been in the paper since. He's sort of running and hiding, the Minister of Transportation. Oh, he gets cocky down here in the House, he's in behind the rail and he'll make all these little remarks but when he gets outside when those residents want him he's no where's to be found. He's hiding. He hides. I don't know what he's doing when he's hiding but I know that they're looking for him out in Brookvale, they'd love to have him out there. He's looking at putting an intersection in in an unsafe area, their highway. How much money, millions of dollars is that going to cost is another thing.

But you know this Government...one of the reasons this Government is in debt over \$1 billion dollars in debt and we came through. And we came through. The most...we came through more prosperous growth. Everybody knows it. Even the United States, even Europe, all the third world countries are picking up. Now we're starting to level out. But we came through this. What can this Government do...spend millions on their friends...\$15,000,000 on golf course. They're now probably going to be involved in the blunder down at Crowbush where they put in place a thing out for tender, a building out for tender, a new motel or something. I hear they might be sued there.

Wendy Youens, they fired her. How much did that cost you? Probably a \$100,000 or less. This is all money that this Government has squandered. If you look at the Provincial Treasurer...her idea of doing budgets... and you can check it... '97 and '98, '99, they projected about 40 to 50 million less per year coming in in revenue. And the reason they did that was, they wanted to spend the money behind closed doors. ...

**11:25 a.m.**

**Leader of the Opposition:** ...if you were allowed allowance of say \$15 a week and all of a sudden you picked up another...a job, and you pick up another \$10 a week, that's \$25 a week, you have extra income. So what this Government has done is trying to... so the teachers don't get their rightful raise, so the front-line workers don't get their rightful raise. They try to paint

a picture that everybody's poor, the province is poor. But yet they're rolling in dough. They tried to paint...the Premier here today, you know we just come through probably the best times we have as far as job creation and everything all across Canada, United States and third world countries. The Premier gets up and he had to budget an extra...near \$3 billion extra for EDA jobs; that's where they give people \$6.99 an hour and put them to work for anywhere's from two weeks to ten weeks or twelve weeks to qualify them for UI so they get off the provincial system onto the federal.

There was a group of people that were working there were looking to get a raise, not a big raise maybe \$8.00 an hour, \$9.00. This Government said no, no, we can't afford it. But yet during the election year, and the graphs are there, their hiring in EDA went away up. And that's why they doubled the funds in EDA. Now there's no election for another three years so they deleted it back to the normal \$2.5 million budget that they have in EDA. This is what a Government is doing here in the Province of Prince Edward Island.

And as you see, more and more of the backbenchers are starting to speak out at this Government. I was at Brookfield where the Honourable Member's were there and they saw what the Honourable Minister of Transportation was trying to do. And it'll be interesting to see if it's still followed through or if they got a little raise to be clappers again, I'm not sure. But there's all kinds of Resolutions.

You people are great witness here today, because we have the Minister of Education here and what we need is more computers in the schools; in the classrooms we need more teachers and more teacher's assistants. That's what we need. And that's what we need.

And if you look at statistics, we are in a problem with the nurses; and I'm not going to blame it all on this Government either, but there's a scarcity of nurses. The reason there was a scarcity of nurses is the Government over the last number of years ignored of giving them full time jobs. And you can work in a part-time position, whatever, but after awhile they got to have security. So all of a sudden we find out there's not enough people going into nursing fields because there was no full-time jobs.

Do you know they're predicting in the very near future,

there's going to be a scarcity of teachers in Canada and the USA. For the simple reason that a teacher cannot depend on substitute teaching, they cannot depend. That's fine, maybe the first year get a little bit of training or whatever to help them out but after that when they settle down they got to have full-time employment. And it's not that we don't have the schools, the schools are there. But this Government will try to use everybody working the school board, including probably the people that are plowing the snow, to justify how many teachers ratio they have in the classrooms. And that is wrong. They'll take out economists; if you look at... the Premier was talking there about...questions I'll have for him tomorrow, but he was talking about how Special Warrants...my question was, how many lawyers does this Government employ full time, not counting the Attorney General? I believe it's an all-time high, could be as close to 60 lawyers to this little province.

You know, last year your Government budgeted 2.7 million in rainy day funds; and that's where funds where they could go to if they have a problem, we know this as Slush Funds...2.7 million that they give out to their friends and I gather they spent it all. And I'll be asking the Premier here to justify that spending by giving me a list.

If you look at the Department of Transportation which the Honourable Member over there is in charge of, 4 or \$5 million he hands out to his friends in political contracts.

**Hon. Don MacKinnon (PC):** That's not true.

**Leader of the Opposition:** Four or five million dollars that he hands out. If you look at people with...your buddies with the trucks and the roads in the summer, the backhoes, it's just come on in, you're a PC you get the job if you're a friend of the Minister of Transportation. If the Minister knows how much it is...and this is where this Government is doing. Just think if that was out for tender, \$4 million and you saved 30%, is \$1.2 million that could go into extra teachers in the classrooms or extra computers.

I know there was a...the Minister after...going after him for a number of years...time since he's been in the House, I will give him thanks for putting an extra 900,000 I believe it in to hire extra teachers in the classrooms.

But as long as they don't use it in administration staff cause they were very very smooth on the way they do these things. They probably...the Minister of Education was even looking at a...making sure he hired the new superintendent. There must be some Deputy Ministers around, PC Deputy Ministers that got no jobs, so they see them and put them in retirement home. Look at the Worker's Compensation Board and the money that was wasted down there. Who's the Chairman of it? Former Premier, Jim Lee. The Provincial Treasurer, after they were done of him as being a Provincial Treasurer, Phil MacDougall, they sent him out on a boat in the Charlottetown Harbour here for a couple of years and paid him \$95,000 a year and left the car with him. But that wasn't good enough cause you didn't like being called captain. Because he didn't even have a motor, they just give him oars. So then they moved him into Workman Compensation Board.

This is what you look at. If you look at the appointments to the Workman Compensation Board, PC's, former candidate that ran against me out there that lost, appointed. I do believe her brother-in-law got appointed to the grain grower board or something lately, he ran against Joe McGuire, he lost. So they all got to take out the money and look after their friends. This is why this Provincial Treasurer has got 201 million extra increases between Ottawa. One year alone, there was over \$60 million extra in transfer payments come down from Ottawa, just like a gift. They didn't even know they had it. So they had to tuck some of it away so they could use it at a later time so the unions...they'd try to settle the union agreement by buying them off at 2 - 2 1/4%.

**An Honourable Member:** (INDISTINCT) saying...

**Leader of the Opposition:** This Government here...this Government here spent \$700,000 to hire a consultant group, HR...whatever it is, to negotiate with the unions. It's just an arms length of Government. They've...that's what they've done. Because they can't sit in there and negotiate. And then they hide behind it.

You know, it wouldn't have affected this Budget as much but when these people from UPSE put a request out for their MLA's across the province to attend their meetings for very much information meetings, the MLA's all hid. You know why they hid? Cause the 5<sup>th</sup>

floor told them to stay home and that's what they did. That's what they did, you know what's happening. You even went farther than that, you never even had your Town Hall meeting yet. You had your Town Hall meeting planned one night in the paper and you heard the people from Brookfield were going to attend and what did you do, you cancelled it. And you never had it since, you ran and you hide. All you got to do is, you want to talk about the Minister of Transportation go out and travel on our roads. I hope there's none of you from the Souris area because I'll tell you that road from St. Peters down to Fortune is... I'll tell you what that's good for. I'll tell you what that's good for, that's good for the bodywork and the wheel alignment.

**An Honourable Member:** Gave all the money to the (INDISTINCT).

**Leader of the Opposition:** That's what is going on. That is exactly what's going on. The Minister of dumps over there can't even get the dumps going yet. He just tries to shove it down. That's what we call him, the Minister of Dumps. Wasted millions of dollars.

And one of the problems of this Government, consultants. If you look at Special Warrants, they spent \$416,000, I believe, in one of those Special Warrants for hiring consultants, extra. You just sort of lumped it all in, I just forget what word they used. They just sort of lumped it all in.

The Minister of Transportation there when he put in last year's Budget; and some of the reasons the 6 millions...is he was going to lease the buildings but he found out he was wrong and they had to pay off the building or borrow the money and bring it into their deficit of \$6 million. The same Minister of Transportation has got to be the biggest political slush fund in the history of the Province of Prince Edward Island is the Department of Transportation. They put out the Court House for their special little friends. They ran over \$800,000 extra. Six million and another \$800,000 extra in overruns and they tell me it's still leaking.

This is why nobody's farther ahead than they were 5, 10, 15 years ago. People are just making from one paycheck to the other. And if you happen to get in the business, you just happen to make it for a year, the Provincial Treasurer and the Cabinet will be in your

pockets the next year. That's exactly where they'll be.

**An Honourable Member:** RCMP.

**Leader of the Opposition:** Pat Mella said there was no...Pat Mella said there was no increases in taxes. I believe they're projecting \$3 million more in sales tax. Two million dollars more...two million dollars more coming in in property tax. Well, property tax means that if you're living in a house, cause people got to be or apartment, you're renting it so you got to pay more on your rent.

**An Honourable Member:** (INDISTINCT)

**Leader of the Opposition:** You got to pay more in your rent or if you own you got to pay more in property tax. But no, they'll hide behind that.

This is the Government that's very concerned about the potato wart. But to Budgetary matters...to Budgetary matters, this is the same Government that charged...charging trailers that were coming in from Newfoundland, trailers were coming in from all provinces, a user fees to get potato pallets in the trailers inspected. And now they go along and say they don't know what happened. This is what it is when you look at it. This is the Government that cut all these health issues, plant health issues possibly to the bone and brought in user fees. The potato wart originated in Newfoundland, that's why we disinfect the pallets and that, but no. And we all know that there was even known facts that there was trucks had tickets that never got disinfected at that particular time. And then they get up and (INDISTINCT)

Now last fall in November, December, I went on and I (INDISTINCT) for the Government to assist farmers in finding new markets for exports. But the Minister of Agriculture, no - no, don't need that. So for \$1.2 million we could've generated \$750,000 in wages paid out to our employees that grade and pack potatoes, another \$800,000 to the truckers that would've hauled them to the boats, another \$750,000 to the people that manufacture the board, but no. This Government has no foresight in where they're going. This is the Government that's been very wasteful.



**An Honourable Member:** (INDISTINCT)

**Leader of the Opposition:** And there's the Minister of Tourism over there. (Laughter) That doesn't even put out a beer contract but won't release the tenders cause he wants his friends to get the job and you know that.

**Hon. Greg Deighan (PC):** Come back another day.

**Leader of the Opposition:** The Minister of Tourism who stood in this House and told the Honourable Leader of the Opposition that he would take back the information but the 5<sup>th</sup> floor told you not to take back the information, so you listened to your master, the Premier on the 5<sup>th</sup> floor.

Then what does he do? He decides he needs a contract so he takes this beer contract and rather than tender it to save money, he gives it to the PC President of the western part of PEI that was just, plead guilty to fraud or something, was that right? I'll have it checked in. Do you have a PC President up there, plead guilty to fraud or something?

**An Honourable Member:** Never.

**Leader of the Opposition:** I don't know. These are things that'll have to come up. But to give a beer contract, to give him a beer contract. And he wasn't available apparently for comment because he was down in Florida sunning himself on all the money he made on the beer contract.

So you know, this is the Government that's had probably more RCMP investigations in the history of the Province of Prince Edward Island when you look at the Minister of Tapes, the Minister of kind of...EDA. No I wouldn't call it EDA, the Minister that made commitments that didn't follow through with them. And...or the Member. The Member from up western PEI.

You know, this is a Government here that brags about giving people minimum wage, they get \$8.00 more a week.

**Hon. Don MacKinnon (PC):** How much do you pay (INDISTINCT) potato plant?

**Leader of the Opposition:** But yet they got...they got...

**Hon. Don MacKinnon (PC):** (INDISTINCT) potato (INDISTINCT).

**Leader of the Opposition:** Why don't you come out and look someday? I'll show you the books.

**Hon. Don MacKinnon (PC):** (INDISTINCT) off jobs in Government (INDISTINCT). That's what I think.

**Leader of the Opposition:** Ah, you poor guy...

**Speaker:** Honourable Member.

**Leader of the Opposition:** ...you poor Member. The poor Member, he couldn't hire...when you were in your own business they tell me you couldn't even hire anybody to work for you in the consultant business. You had to do it in piece works, the poor guy, the poor fellow.

Now, this here Government gives their Deputies \$14,000 - \$15,000 more a year cause they worked hard. The Premier said they work hard. We might lose them. Well I'll tell you, Mike O'Brien, I don't know if he's here or not, but he left the private field and came to work with Government, he knew he was going to get \$75,000 or \$80,000 or \$90,000 whatever it was. Jim Johnson from down in Montague worked for Rodd's, he knew what he was going to get when he took that job. And it's not only that there's many more, like Elaine Noonan is working there, she's a retired teacher. They knew what they were going to get when they got the job but, you know, the Premier says we had to give them more money. But our people that are working in our summer tourist business, the people that are working in a lot of these jobs that the Premier and the Minister of Industry brags about creating are \$6.00 to \$7.00 an hour jobs. That's what they are.

So if you got a minimum wage job, minimum wage, how could you expect at \$8.00 a week is good. That's the Tory way, that's why we're Liberals, that's why the Federal Liberals won all the seats here in the Province of Prince Edward Island. And you talk about Joe Clark, and you talk about Alliance when you look at them. Here the major problem we have next year, I see, is whether this border opens or not. Tourists could be up

or down 4 or 5% percent, I hope, no more; I hope they're up... but a fluctuation. But this potato wart is the major crisis of the farming community.

And what's this Government doing? They're feeding Joe Clark information, find out whether Chretien owned the golf course or he didn't own the golf course. Whether he owned it or whether he didn't; whether he played it or he didn't. Where they should be taking on the Americans to get the border open. When Brian Tobin was here last night speaking at the Liberal Fund-raising Dinner, I sent the message that Islanders want the Prime Minister, the Minister of Industry and them to get all this foolish debate in the House whether who sold what and look after Island concerns and get the border open and put the Prime Minister to work along with the President and get this border open.

Because I'll tell you if we don't get this border open, the Honourable Provincial Treasurer is not.. going to be able follow through on her Budget again. We need the spinoffs, we know how important it is. We know not only to the machinery companies but also to the car dealerships, the laborer people that work there and the many people in the service industry, whether it be electricians or whatever. And that's what the Provincial Treasurer likes to see cause when an electrician comes into your potato warehouse she picks 10.7% tax up on his...on his...10.7%. So you pay an electrician 40 bucks an hour, the Provincial Treasurer gets \$4.28 an hour on every laborer that's working in potato warehouses that are doing services such as electrician work or whatever.

**Philip Brown (PC):** (INDISTINCT) GST Centre.

**Leader of the Opposition:** Listen to this guy, (INDISTINCT) GST Centre.

**Speaker:** Honourable Member, let the Leader of the Opposition continue, please.

**Leader of the Opposition:** Well, from what I seen you were hiding in the background in case some of them farmers walked over to talk to you, and you weren't even out in front.

But you know, these are the spinoffs. Now I know farmers have...and business people, some of them have exemptions from certain taxes but there's a great

revenue spinoff. The same with the fuel taxes or whatever. You don't pick up much fuel tax...

**11:45 a.m.**

**Leader of the Opposition:** ... when the potatoes are hauled out to the field and dumped. But if those potatoes were hauled into a grading plant, recycled, people go to work and everything, that's what the economy is about. And that's why I hope we get this border opened. I hope that we get this border opened before the farmers plant this spring because there's a lot of people, not only in the agricultural community that are worrying about this situation.

You know, I'll probably go back ... Executive Council, Attorney General. You know they even brought in Island Regulatory and Appeals Commission, that's a user pay. And I have a letter here was handed to me last night. Probably ... oh here it is. But here's something interesting. The Provincial Treasurer should look up to this one. Why insurance rates have gone up? We have ... this is the seniors and that are inquiring about why insurance rates have gone up, many people we know have gone up. We have recently have had a rate change that means your rates have increased. Why? The Provincial Government, which is you people, have increased the fees (INDISTINCT) on every auto insurance policy in the Province of Prince Edward Island. The fees is used .etc. etc. I will be bringing that up in a Question Period at a later date... Insurance Company Canada.

Now it's quite obvious that this Government's got their hands in every person's pockets they possibly can. They're even into the insurance company now and it's policies. This Government will ... You Pages, watch out your wallet not out when your leaving here. Don't leave it on the table anywhere's because the Provincial Treasurer loves to be able to raise money. Now if you look at the Provincial Treasurer believe, in places that she's back ...Department of Agriculture. It's great to see the Budget increase by the tune of \$10 million and I will give the Premier or the Minister of Agriculture full marks for that. What you got to remember is this is the Government that cut the Agricultural Budget worse in the Province in the history when they first came in. And that's the way it is. Well they did.

It's good to see that we have the Federation of Agriculture really starting to work there. Some of the former employees there that worked there, always use to try to protect the Government. Now he's an Elective Member so... I don't see him protecting the farmers too much, he runs and hides. But it's good there that the Federation is on the right wave length.

You know motor vehicles, license, permits, this is the Government that raises by probably... What did you raise motor vehicles, permits and registration ... Did you raise that up about 100% when you first came in. Do you remember. The registering of your car. How much did you raise that? Raise that quite bit when you first came in.

**Hon. Pat Mella (PC):** I forget what it was that year ...

**Leader of the Opposition:** It was a lot. It was a lot. This is a Government here that's been addicted to gambling. They get addicted to the extra money that's coming in from gambling.

**An Honourable Member:** Who took them out of the corner stores?

**Leader of the Opposition:** And the revenue went up. See this is the problem you have with here. Is that Honourable Member said "Who took them out of the corner stores?" They did. But the revenues have gone up by \$2,000,000 so that means more people are gambling. So what the Honourable Member is telling me from the Summerside area it's fine to have these gambling machines as long as you don't see them going in to get a pop or paper in corner store. Behind closed doors. To save (INDISTINCT) \$41,000,000 in Special Warrants . Behind closed doors. Everything great, just shove it under the rug. I don't think you farm anymore, but I'd hate to see your barn, you'd have all that stuff shoved into one little corner. As long as you couldn't see it, it was alright.

You know this Government here, current projected revenues, lotto revenue, a million- and- a- half, they're forecasting. Budget estimated \$15,000,000. So for Government to Budget \$13,500,000 in revenue from gambling, it's estimated they'll be \$15,000,000 in the year 2001. That is one pile of dollars extra. Yet they have a building over there with no gambling addicting set up

yet. They got the building. The Liquor Control, current revenue was \$10,216,600. You remember the Government saying they had to spend their friends at remodeling the Liquor Store, and how they had to fix up the Liquor Store for their friends down there? Well liquor is only up a 100 and some thousand in sales. So that tells me something. They use one excuses, then another. Forestry sales. They're going sell more forestry products. Others, total sales, taxes.

Sales taxes, they're predicating \$153,000,000 coming into sales tax this year. Next year they're going raise it another \$3,000,000. Well, that means that people gotta pay an extra \$3,000,000. And these are the Provincial Treasurer figures that are her's, this is her book. Real property taxes, they projected \$43,500,000. They air... forecast and they're going to take in \$44,700,000. Another major increase. And you know what they say, well we didn't raise the rate, they just go to the computer and they raise the assessment, that's what they do. They go to the little computer and push this button and they move the assessment up. So if you look at property taxes, real property tax, they're up about 2 and a half million dollars more than they budget for this year. Coming out of whether you're renting a building, or whether you own or your own house or your trailer, or whatever, and she says no tax increases. Gasoline tax, gasoline tax ...the same. Income corporate taxes, she's Budgeted for \$30,262,000, she actually took in \$36,485,000 but next year she believes that corporate tax is going to go down to \$28,500,000. So she's way over the math. There's near \$9 million in corporate taxes, she's not going get as much this year. She's claims ... that's what she claims. But she's up over \$6 million in income (INDISTINCT) corporate tax from what she budgeted last year. That came out of business. (Audio problem) tax on liquor is staying about the same. She's up about \$5 hundred thousand which she budgeted last year \$6 hundred thousand. Corporate tax again she's the same, fire convention, environment taxes the same.

You know, this Government here can get up because what you got in Legislative Assemble ... you got questions here, you don't have to answer. They can tell you whatever they want. I could ask them question out there and they could say that it's raining out there. They only have to prove it cause there in behind closed

doors, in behind the rail. They can do whatever they want to. That's why the Premier, if you notice the Premier, the most important things he does is follow Lawrence MacAulay and cut ribbons. That's his number one job. He didn't know much about any of his departments. He didn't know much about the potato wart. All he knew was he was (INDISTINCT) the was Federal Government. But yet in her Budget, they brag how our sales to New England, was New England States, went from 1.1 million to 15 million. He took credit for increase in sales in United States. The same Premier if you look in the Budget, ... the Government or the Legislative Assembly has now become part of an organization, I think believes in New England Governors, or something like that. He don't notice, you know... I don't know why he goes on these trips, or who he talks to, but he must be done of site seeing by now. If you look at your Budget, they even took part for Holland College signing the deal in China. When you turned on TV, here you have the Federal Government and the Premier, so when that great lawyer before us under Freedom of Information, I asked how much did the Province put in to creating that deal in China? He said "nothing".

**Hon. Pat Mella (PC):** Who do you think (INDISTINCT)?.

**Leader of the Opposition:** He said "nothing". If it's Federal money 100%. That's what he said. It's was your PC Lawyer, Eugene Rossiter, who made that statement and it's in the records. And then I asked the School Board, why would the Premier be there? I saw him sign the (INDISTINCT) Oh, he had to go to witness it. We all know that anybody can witness a signature. I would imagine. But we flew him over there to witness the signature in China . He let on that he (INDISTINCT) that his Government did it. But yet the fact is that the Federal Government has sent him. That's what it is. And this is why this Government ... This is why this Government is a billion dollars in debt. This is why they're a billion dollars ... in debt because they fly people... Talk about the wine faces. What about flying to China to witness a signature that anybody could witness a signature. Imagine... I don't even know if you have to be a Canadian Citizen to witness a signature. But when it came on TV it looked like....Oh! the Premier put the deal together. What a bunch.

And then the guys behind me ... this is really amazing. The guy that's sitting behind me... the \$5500 clapper, this is what he said in the House, "that he was very honored when the Fixed Link was built. He was very honored because he got to talk to Gianellia remember that? Gianellia the person who built the Fixed Link. You was very honored the fact that you got to talk to him. The fact that you got invited to a meeting. He was very honored about it. He thought that was great. But what I want to find out how much the revenue is that Islanders paying is going up every year. It's up to \$37 or something a car now. They don't want to have any part of that.

**Elmer MacFadyen (PC):** You should (INDISTINCT) when you were in there to make sure you get the information.

**Leader of the Opposition:** They vote the Resolution down. That's what they do. When you go to Freedom of Information, they block everything out. I think Don Large at the meeting the other day ... said that it takes a lot of questions to get to the bottom ... get to the bottom of what this Government is doing. And that's why I've got it today, I tabled 1208 questions for him. I put it on disk. So at least you won't have a big pile of papers. If you look at the Minister of Education and I asked them about the questions on (INDISTINCT) I forgot that book, but he is not here. I need it. They sent me back a coloring book but apparently it was the Minister of Education's coloring book is that he was using in the office, and I will have to give it to him at a later date. But that's one of the questions he sent back when I was looking for teacher/ratios in the schools, etc. etc. What did he do, I get back a coloring book from the Minister, and they phoned about it and they tell me it was actually the Minister own personal coloring book that he was using. Apparently he likes to color pictures so....there was no crayons so I will give it back to him.

This is where this Government has wasted millions, but yet they brag about they move the minimum wage up, they move the minimum wage up by \$8 a week. So you young students, if you get a job, minimum wage, your getting \$8 a week more. But yet their deputies get 14, \$15,000 increase, over and above 85 or \$95,000 they're getting now. This is the Government that... this PC Government... a right-wing Government, they look after

themselves and their friends, and Islanders can't afford it. We can't afford ... we can't afford to look after them. Islanders can't afford to pay taxes to this Government. No, Islanders can't afford it. We can't afford this Government in hard times when it comes, because they're at an all time high in their debt. And the Provincial Treasurer should be very pleased that she's the first Provincial Treasurer, female Provincial Treasurer, that hit the billion dollars.

**Elmer MacFadyen (PC):** No, no, that's wrong.

**Leader of the Opposition:** Yes.

**Elmer MacFadyen (PC):** That's wrong. We have the document in '94 it was 1 billion.

**Leader of the Opposition:** Who was the finance in '94, minister?

**An Honourable Member:** Your Government.

**Leader of the Opposition:** Who was it? I said female, the first female that ever hit the billion dollars. You're not even listening to me. A billion dollars. I'm not sticking up for Mr. Cheverie. You're not listening.

**Hon. Pat Mella (PC):** That's gender (INDISTINCT) . (Laughter)

**Leader of the Opposition:** She has (INDISTINCT) the record that the Honourable Wayne Cheverie has (INDISTINCT).

**Speaker:** Alright Honourable Members.

**Leader of the Opposition:** This here is a Government that has all time high (INDISTINCT) . You know, when you go through this, and you know I can't see why the Member from Souris -Elmira would not try to get unanimous consent on that important potato wart motion to get the borders open in the Province of Prince Edward Island, but no, no they just...

#### POINT OF ORDER

**Elmer MacFadyen (PC):** Point of Order, Madam Speaker,

**Speaker:** Point of Order.

**Elmer MacFadyen (PC):** Earlier before the men... the Leader of the Opposition started to speak in reply to Order No. 1 which we had called, he said something when I had left the Chambers, and I believe what he had said was, "he thought that the Resolution was going to be called". Last year and previous years, I've been called as Government House Leader here in this Chamber saying that "I should let them know what's going on". Well, I would ask the Honourable Leader of the Opposition to afford me the same courtesy in calling me this morning to say that he wanted to call the emergency Resolution, which we would have consented to do. Because we had called Order No. 1, which is the reply to the Budget address, I felt that it was only appropriate to move onto his remarks in hoping that he would conclude. But if he so desires to call the emergency Resolution, our side of the Government is more than willing to do so. Thank you.

**Speaker:** Honourable Leader of Opposition.

#### POINT OF ORDER

**Leader of the Opposition:** Anyway, Madam Speaker, just on a Point of Order, I give the Resolution to the Honourable Member, maybe he misunderstood me, but I wanted it signed. I gave it to you last night. I said it was an emergency Resolution and that I would assume I would be calling it today. Maybe I didn't state that, but when I give it to you I said I'd like it signed, you got the Honourable Member...you came back and said that 's very quick action, which it was. And then I figured that you would inform your House that the reason I would get the Resolution signed yesterday was only to bring it on today.... and give notice that tomorrow he will Move....well it is tomorrow, and the day is here. So what you're saying is "If I adjourn this debate now, we can move back and get unanimous consent for this Resolution"?"

**Honourable Members:** I have no problem with that.

**Speaker:** The Honourable Government ...

**Leader of the Opposition:** It's 9 o'clock. I'll adjourn this until a later date and I'll Reply to the Speech from the Throne. No problem at all, we'll go on to this.

**Speaker:** The Honourable Government House Leader.

**Elmer MacFadyen (PC):** I'm a little confused in his last comments. I thought last night when he gave me the Resolution to have it signed, I did get it signed that he asked us to do as Government, I do support the Resolution that he is putting forward and so do all of our Government. When we called the First Order for continuing the reply to the Budget, I thought he wanted to adjourn his remarks today, or finish his reply to the Budget. If he wants to adjourn them, that's his prerogative, but our Government is prepared to debate and move on to the Resolution.

I'd also want to point out that any Resolution can be classified as an emergency. We do not have anything that defines in the Rules and Privileges Committee that I am Chairman of that says that a Resolution is an emergency Resolution. It's a little different in this Chamber as compared to the House of Commons, but if you do so want to move onto the Resolution, Government is prepared to do so.

**12:05 p.m.**

**Speaker:** Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 16 THE POTATO WART**

**Leader of the Opposition:** Alright I would adjourn my reply to the Budget and ask that unanimous consent for No. 16 to be given.

**Speaker:** Do we have unanimous consent for the Resolution 16?

**Elmer MacFadyen (PC):** Yes we do, Madam Speaker.

**Speaker:** Honourable Government House Leader...the Clerk.

**Clerk:** Motion No. 16.

The Honourable Leader of the Opposition gives notice that tomorrow he will move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Agriculture and Forestry the following Motion:

**WHEREAS** the agriculture industry is the single biggest economic generator in Prince Edward Island;

**AND WHEREAS** the potato sector generates more revenue than any other agricultural component in the provinces's economy;

**AND WHEREAS** potato wart is a soil-borne fungal disease that affects the appearance of potatoes, making them unmarketable;

**AND WHEREAS** approximately one million...one dozen potatoes affected by potato wart were discovered in one small section of a Prince Edward Island potato field October 20, 2000;

**AND WHEREAS** a result of the discovery of potato wart, the United States Department of Agriculture closed the border to shipments of PEI potatoes October 31, 2000;

**AND WHEREAS** Prince Edward Island potato shippers...growers ship approximately eight percent of their total crop to the United States;

**AND WHEREAS** the closure of the United States border has seriously hampered efforts to ship PEI potatoes to other markets;

**AND WHEREAS** Statistics Canada estimates the potato industry generated over \$150 million in farm cash receipts in the year 2000, a decrease of about \$50 million from the year before;

**AND WHEREAS** the inability of the PEI producers to ship to the United States has had a significant impact on the overall economy of the province;

**AND WHEREAS** there is an overwhelming scientific evidence to suggest that the potato wart is isolated on one small area of one potato field in PEI;

**AND WHEREAS** the United States border remains closed to shipments of PEI potatoes;

**AND WHEREAS** many potato growers in Prince Edward Island are attempting to plan their crop for the coming season;

**AND WHEREAS** the Federal Government has had little success in pushing the United States Government to allow shipments of PEI potatoes to resume;

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that this Assembly urge the Federal Government to increase its efforts to resolve the closure of the United States border to Prince Edward Island potatoes.

**Speaker:** The Honourable Leader of the Opposition to open the debate.

**Leader of the Opposition:** First, Madam Speaker, I want to thank the Honourable House Leader...seeing that the House opened probably last night there could be confusion on my part and yours. The House Leader has normally been very cooperative, it's good to see it and I'm not going to get in to that. I'm pleased that this more important issue is coming to the floor of the House here. Farmers today...in another months time they're going to plant their crop. It's going to mean a lot on what those farmers plant and how many acres they plant and what they're doing, and on the bankers also, the financial institutions whether that border is open or not.

We have got to get the border reopened to the US. The Federal Government has tried some tactics like shutting potatoes out from coming in from Texas and looking for a certain (INDISTINCT) and maybe another state. But we got to get more pressure on the Federal Government. I believe...I wasn't part of the meeting, but I believe there was a group of farmers did meet with the Honourable Brian Tobin last night, the Minister of Industry for Canada, and he did mention in his speech that we got to try and get the effort to get that border open. This affects PEI like the cod situation in Newfoundland.

If the border opens in the fall and the Americans...I don't...the Americans...they're very protect (INDISTINCT). If you look at the history of the US versus Canadians, Canadians are more friendly group of people, like to turn the other cheek if there's a problem. Where the Americans are more...that every war you look at they got their hands in it. If you look at the history of them, they started with the natives when they went in and they fought with them. Then when you look at the next war and then the next war they fought with themselves when there was nobody else to fight with. And that does make the country strong that they're ambitious. And maybe the problem of us as Canadians is that we are Canadians, we are the most like

country I would say anywhere in the world and it's proud to be a Canadian when you go to some of these foreign countries. But also, by we being the most liked, maybe we're not as aggressive as we should be at the Federal level. This is a major issue and it's very important and I would like to get this Resolution passed today, and I'm sure that the support is here.

But the Canadian Government, whether it be inspection services or whether it be industry and trade, it has to get tougher on American stand. That's our solution. I brought it up in Question Period here. Our Premier can help. Our Minister of Agriculture can help. Our Premier could help with his contacts in New England or whatever. But the final...buck stops with our Federal Government on this trade issue.

And that's why I sent the message last night to tell the Conservatives (INDISTINCT) Joe Clark and the Alliance that...put this golf course off for a later date if they want to bring it back up, but let's look after taking on the Americans and try to get this border open for Prince Edward Island. It was the Prince Edward Island potato farmers that took the hit for the rest of the province by agreeing to the US laws that were laid down in order to even ship to our own provinces in Canada. Our Minister of Agriculture, Potato Board, have worked his staff very hard on these issues. I know I can say I suggested some things I think should have been done, they weren't, that's fine they still work fairly hard, the Department of Agriculture and our Potato Board, our potato producers and the farmers in the Province of Prince Edward Island. It's very devastating.

I'll give the province full marks here for coming out with the diversion up front. I think the Minister of Agriculture deserves a lot of credit for that. He had to be able to get that through his Cabinet. (Applause) And I don't imagine it was all that easy even though we know how important it is. But there's major issues facing the Province of Prince Edward Island, this is one, so I too give the Minister of Agriculture credit for that. But what we got to do is whether it takes the Premier with his friends in the US, our Federal counterparts in Ottawa, we got to be able to get tougher with the Americans. I want to give our stores in the Province of PEI full marks so when that lady, I believe is from York, brought up the attention that Island...US potatoes were being sold here, major stores removed them from the

market. But as you know we've only got 137 thousand people... at 39 thousand, 137...but goes to the 1.2 million or so, 1.1 million in the summer when the tourist season are here. But if you look at a place like Ontario where one small city has more population than we have in the province. That's why we are Canadians. That's why we're part of Confederation. That's why all Canadians across Canada got to stick together. That's why we have got our Fathers of Confederation. Because in numbers you are stronger and you can see that in the amount of Tories in this House when a vote is called. In numbers you are stronger. In cooperation you are stronger

So with that I want to thank the Minister of Agriculture for thanking this Resolution, and I hope it passes.

**Speaker:** The Honourable Minister of Agriculture and Forestry to second the Resolution.

**Hon. Mitch Murphy (PC):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I do rise in the House to second the Resolution put forward by the Leader of the Opposition. I think it's a Resolution that everybody in this House can be supportive of. But as he said it's dealing with a very serious issue to the provinces number one industry and that is the potato industry. This has been quite a tale, I don't know if people anticipated that when wart was found in that field in Travellers Rest, I believe on October 24<sup>th</sup> of last year, that events would unfold as they have. But to have it on the record of what has transpired is that when wart was detected in that field, some tubers, CFIA Canadian Food Inspection Agency, a division of the Department of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, were notified of these tubers. Tubers went to a CFIA credited lab in Fredericton New Brunswick for a final diagnosis, a... I guess a determination was made that that infact was what you were dealing with was potato wart fungus. As a result of that, under trade agreements between the two countries, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency notified the United States of Agriculture that, indeed, there has been an outbreak of potato wart crisis or potato wart fungus, sorry, on PEI. And that happened on, I believe, October 28<sup>th</sup> thereabouts.

Now what people sometimes do not know is that there were two inspectors sent up from APHIS, which is the Animal Plant Health Inspection Service of the United

States Department of Agriculture. Two people came to PEI in late October of last year and they looked around, saw what Canadian Food Inspection Agency had done in terms of putting a quarantine on that field, putting the controls in place, what mechanisms they had, what the industry had also done and the province through the inspection station in Borden-Carleton. And the end result of that was, they left the province saying that look, you know, all the accusation was taken very swiftly, everything that was done certainly is done to our satisfaction and...but we do have a suggestion for you that all shipments of PEI potatoes entering the United States, enter at the border crossings at Houlton, Maine. We have 24 hour USCA inspectors on at Houlton, Maine, and if you enter somewhere else you might have a truck sitting there for 8 to 10 hours until there's an inspector comes on to have a look at that truck. But we're going to have a look at 2 or 300 tubers per load etc., carry on.

Well the very next day when they returned to the United States, CFIA received word on October 30 that the border...United States border was closed to PEI potatoes. Now what happened from the time the USDA people said that and they left Prince Edward Island, from the time that they got back to the United States. Well, I'll tell you exactly what happened, Madam Speaker. The National Potato Council in the United States is an industry lobby organization in that country. Here they had a perfect opportunity because potato wart is a quarantineable pest, a reportable disease under international phytosanitary protocol. Here they saw their opportunity to keep Prince Edward Island out of their markets in the United States. They lobbied the United States Department of Agriculture to put a ban on PEI potatoes entering that market, and they were successful in that lobby and we've been out ever since.

I remember doing an interview earlier on on this here on...I believe with Wayne Collins on *Island Morning*. I made the statement that this is probably about 10% science and about 90% potato politics. But at that point and time on October 30<sup>th</sup>, it was incumbent upon us....and when I say us, I mean the Federal Government and the province and the industry, to prove that potato wart, that fungus was isolated. So as a result, between October the 20<sup>th</sup> and really the first of December, there was 300 thousand soil samples taken, many from that field, but not only from that field, from contact fields.



So, fields from where the equipment that had been used to plant those potatoes were used...from buffer zone fields or within the buffer around there, from potato ware houses from across PEI and I think there was a visual inspection completed almost in every potato in the province. At the end of the day, there was nothing found outside of that small portion of one field. So science certainly concluded that this was isolated, everybody had acted properly, this is nothing to worry about. The best scientific advice on it said, you know you don't pose a threat to your own industry or to anybody else. Because our initial concern was not that of the Americans. Our initial concern was we had to satisfy ourselves that this was not a threat to the PEI potato industry throughout the province.

The end result being, on November the 20<sup>th</sup> after about 10,000 samples had been done, I went to...I had a meeting in Toronto with the Federal Minister of Agriculture, Mr. Vanclief and at that meeting he agreed from the scientific point of view that it was not an issue, that it was no longer a science base issue and that we should move forward in presenting the scientific information that we had to APHIS in the United States, and that this thing should be settled based on the science that we had done. But there was a meeting that took place with APHIS officials that resulted in a letter coming back to us on December 13<sup>th</sup> which basically said; the work that you have done in terms of science, okay, has you proving your case scientifically, with a few minor restrictions you can start moving your product back into the United States. Needless to say, people in the industry had a huge sigh of relief. In fact, they had some trucks that were loaded in warehouses and they put them on the road to head for Houlton, Maine, the US border crossing at Houlton. But when they arrived at the border the border had not been notified of word from APHIS that PEI potatoes were allowed back in. Because what happened after December 13<sup>th</sup> decision made by the scientist at APHIS, so once again, the National Potato Council, the industry lobby organization in the United States intervened politically and got APHIS's political masters to overturn the scientific decision they made. The official explanation that came back was that the person who signed the authorization for PEI potatoes to re-enter the United States did not have the authority to do so. Well, which is complete and other nonsense. The fact of the matter is the National Potato Council lobbied their

people in the political masters of APHIS overturned that decision.

So at that particular point in time (INDISTINCT) even subsequent to that, we had asked the Federal Government to intervene with what we call retaliatory measures. The Federal Government doesn't like the use of the word retaliatory. They prefer to use the word equivalent or equivalent measures. Well, call it what you want.

We wanted them to start shutting some American potatoes out of Canada. Now that's another interesting story, Madam Speaker, on where that process went. There were a series of conference calls across the country which was set up by the Potato Committee of the Canadian Horticultural Association, the Chair of that Committee was a gentleman by the name of Wayne Dorsey out of Ontario. And I remember the first call that we had, across Canada conference call with that Committee, unanimous consent within that Committee to take retaliatory measures against the United States. Well, that didn't sit to well at the Federal Government, because there was certainly a sense of nervousness amongst the trade officials to do anything. Now to put that into perspective; The balance of trade in the potato sector between two countries is in Canada's favour. So we send about a half a million dollar more product to them than we take in from the United States. And that's right from fresh to french fries to everything. But if you look at the National Trade picture, we're doing somewhere around a billion dollars a day in trade between Canada and United States. And the trade balance is in our favour, we're sending more frolics there, certainly in the agriculture sector. So, Ag. Canada.....

**2:25 p.m.**

**Hon. Mitch Murphy (PC):** ...and the trade people did not in any resolve to take retaliatory measures or equivalent measures against the Americans. So where did that leave us, then? Okay, let's look at this from the American's prospective. They're sitting down looking and watching what Canada's going to do. What is the motivation if you're a potato grower in the United States or if you're the United States Government or if you're the scientific agency in the United States to allow Canada in to compete in your market when they're not

putting any hindrance on your product moving up to Canada. There's no motivation for them to do anything, so they didn't.

I remember later, I think it was January or February, I ended up at the meeting in Washington, and I had breakfast with the Commissioner of Agriculture from Maine, the Commissioner of Agriculture from Idaho and they were astounded that Canada hadn't taken any retaliatory measures against that. They were astounded because I think the general consensus south of the border was, you know, that within a matter of days of the science being proven if the border didn't reopen then Canada would retaliate. We'd keep the Wisconsin potatoes out of the Toronto market, we would keep the Michigan potatoes out, we wouldn't let the new California fresh product come into Canada to compete against our potatoes.

They thought that they could keep us out of the Thanksgiving market. When they saw that they could keep us out of the Christmas market, they were overjoyed. Now, they're down there laughing their heads off because we're still out and we still haven't taken any retaliatory measures.

Well, I should correct myself, Madam Speaker, and the Honourable Member, Leader of the Opposition alluded to it in his remarks; but we have taken retaliatory measures against American potatoes. We've shut out New Mexico. Well how many pounds of potatoes did New Mexico send to Canada last year? Zero, Madam Speaker. That's playing the game with a big stick. That's playing the game with a big stick. We're not allowing New Mexico potatoes into Canada. Well, we don't take any anyway. Texas, we're going to shut Texas potatoes out from coming into Canada. Well how many pounds of Texas potatoes came into Canada last year?

**An Honourable Member:** (INDISTINCT)

**Hon. Mitch Murphy (PC):** Oh no, it wasn't zero, we had about a million dollars worth of potatoes from Texas to come into Canada. Well I can tell you Madam Speaker...

**Premier:** It was a big potato though (Laughter)

**Hon. Mitch Murphy (PC):** ...we got about \$40 or \$50

million worth of potatoes going into the United States, so that's certainly playing the game with a big stick. I'm sure they're south of the border, they've got all their fingernails chewed off and they're shaking like leaves on what Canada did for retaliatory measures.

But, let's talk a little bit about Phytosanitary issues. Within trade agreements we have Phytosanitary agreements. In this case, it's called D9605. Now what does that mean? It means D is directive, 96 is the year, and 05 is the month in which it was passed. So, in the United States we have areas of the United States that have quarantinable pests or quarantinable diseases as potato wart is a quarantinable disease. California has Columbia root knot nematode, extremely devastating to the industry. They have brown rot in the United States. They have golden nematode in United States and in Pennsylvania, Maryland and West Virginia they have a history of potato wart. But guess what, Madam Speaker, all those states I've mentioned, we bring potatoes in, into this country from those states. So what has the Federal Government done to slow down the importation of potatoes from those areas in United States? To use a colloquialism, Madam Speaker, they've done diddley. They haven't done anything. We still take potatoes in from those parts of the United States even though they're blocking the shipment of potatoes from Prince Edward Island.

Now I want to go back, Madam Speaker, and talk a little bit about the impact this has had here and about what I see, you know, some of the nonsense that is going within trade Canada and within the Federal Department of Agriculture.

You know, nobody wants to, in my opinion, step to the plate on the Federal side and take the lead on this. We've asked for retaliatory measures. Our MP's have called for retaliatory measures. The Leader of the Opposition has called for retaliatory measures. We haven't seen any. The smoke screen, New Mexico and Texas, it means nothing. The industry has called for retaliatory measures. They're not going to take it. Okay, right now CFIA has auditors down auditing what's going on in the State of Washington and what's going on in the State of California. You know, I think they're scared they might find something and then they'd have to do something about it.

But, on November 7<sup>th</sup>, just to backtrack, there was a regularly scheduled meeting in Portland, Maine between Canadian Potato Council and some of their eastern US counterparts. Obviously, potato wart was the main topic of conversation at that meeting. And at that meeting, the United States stood up and said, unless PEI agrees to these voluntary restrictions and movements of their potatoes then we're going to close the American border to every potato from Canada. Well, Prince Edward Island industry was represented at that meeting by the General Manager of the Potato Board who voluntarily agreed to put the restrictions on movement on PEI potatoes. Which I think support him, think it was a right decision to make. I still think it was a right decision to make.

In some of those restrictions, you know included ridiculous things that we move about a significant number of potatoes off Island to go to the processing plants. So, you had to wash all bulk movements of potatoes that were leaving the province to go the wash plants. On table movements to the rest of the country they wanted them to be washed and sprout nipped. They wanted the containers, the size of the containers that we ship products in to be restricted, you know, 50 pound packs or less, and initially on November 7<sup>th</sup> it was 20 pound packs and less. What's the logic? Well, we're afraid that if you send them in bigger containers other provinces are going to take your potatoes and re-pack them in their boxes and put their labels on them, you know. So we said to CFIA, "this is absolutely ridiculous that United States Department of Agriculture is dictating what we can do domestically on movement within our own country". They don't have the authority to do that, you know, you shouldn't support it. And they said, "oh we're not supporting it, we didn't put those restrictions on", etc.

But here's the reality of the way it worked. I'm a seed grower on Prince Edward Island. I had a seed contract with somebody in Ontario to buy my seed. They were going to take my seed and grow chip stock potatoes or potatoes that were going to be made into potato chips. And they were going to sell their potatoes to the plant in upstate New York. Well guess what the plant in upstate New York told the grower in Ontario? If you buy your seed and produce your crop with PEI seed, we're not taking your potatoes. So what did the grower in Ontario say to the seed supplier on Prince Edward

Island? Sorry, I don't want your seed. So, even though United States Department of Agriculture does not have any jurisdiction in Canada, they may as well have in this case because the implications of the conditions put on and the market influenced what happened. Some other conditions imposed.

The zones that were created were absolutely ridiculous. Anyway, there has been, I don't know how many countless letters, how many countless meetings between the Premier and all Ministers of the Provincial Government with their counterparts, how many interventions personally by the Premier with the Prime Minister on this file, how many meetings with MP's, etc. etc. and still the border is not open

(INDISTINCT) -FIA and the Federal Minister of Agriculture have made numerous interventions to try and get the border open. But it's always been my contention until you start playing the game with the same tools then you're not going to get anywhere. So, until you push back as hard as you're being pushed, I really don't see the file moving forward.

As of last week, there was 323 million hundredweight of potatoes in storage in the United States. We had a Canadian scientist, Solke DeBoer from Charlottetown accompany three American scientists on a trip to Scotland and the Netherlands to have the European scientists have a look at what CFIA had done. Well, the minutes of the Standing Committee meeting the other day in Ottawa, Dr. Bob Carberry, one of the heads of CFIA, I don't know if he's a doctor but Bob Carberry testified at the meeting that the...what the Europeans said that the CFIA science was that protocol was wonderful, they had no questions about the Canadian science; in fact, we've done above and beyond what happens in Europe when they have a case of potato wart fungus and that, you know, the restrictions, there was no scientific basis for the restrictions. So Canada took that information back to a meeting in the United States and the APHIS people said well, you know, we're not sure the science. Well, I don't think so. I think it's the National Potato Council in the United States that says, you know, we didn't do anything with regards to it.

So I agree with what the Honourable Member has said in his Resolution, that we continue our efforts in

lobbying the Federal Government to push the United States to allow shipments of PEI potatoes to resume, you know, I think we do that. Now I have been at times extremely critical of the efforts particularly of Agriculture Canada and the Department of International Trade have made on this file cause I don't think they've been aggressive enough on our behalf, I don't think they've been tough enough on our behalf despite the interventions made by everybody.

But by the same token, I think we should remember it wasn't the Federal Government that closed the border, it was the Americans. So we have to support and do everything that we can to help the Federal Government in their efforts to get the border open. And I think that continue to put the pressure on them, to lobby them, and so forth. So I am pleased, Madam Speaker, to support the Leader of the Opposition's Resolution. Thank you. (Applause)

**Speaker:** The Honourable Premier to speak to the Resolution.

**Premier:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'm pleased to rise to support this Resolution, as well. I feel that the Resolution can't do anything but help. It's obviously a very serious problem, one of the most serious problems our province has ever faced.

This province, whether some people like to or understand it or not or admit, depends on exports. We cannot possibly consume all the potatoes we produce. I think that's pretty obvious, one good potato farm on PEI could more than fill the Island's needs of it's 140,000 people for a year or perhaps more. And what do we do with the other 700 or so registered growers, Madam Speaker. For that very reason, we have to push hard on this export issue, we have to push hard to get back into the United States. Granted, it only took 8% of our shipments last year, but I think it's important to note that the closure of that market hampered our efforts to market to other jurisdictions. And not just other countries, Madam Speaker, but have an immediate impact on our movement of potatoes into other provinces. Obviously, other provinces were concerned that they might lose the opportunity to export to United States once Prince Edward Island potatoes were not moving or the fear was as raised by the United States Animal Plant Health Institute that perhaps PEI potatoes

would be re-packed in other provinces and shipped into the United States.

Well, Madam Speaker, I guess the important thing here is that we get, number one, the United States market back, we continue to expand into other markets and I am pleased we've finally seen a boat in the Charlottetown Harbour loading some potatoes in the last number of days. I don't know quite exactly how all of that came about but for a good period of time we were shut out of other countries like Venezuela and Mexico, Argentina, traditional areas where we have also been shipping. And we know that that's partly because of the world surplus of potatoes this year but it's also because some of these other customers have been concerned about the US action and whether, in fact, there was any validity to their case about being fearful of potato wart.

Now Madam Speaker, I don't want to recount all of the information which the Minister of Agriculture has already said; in fact, I won't do that. But I want to say how disappointed I am in the failure of the Government of Canada to understand how serious this issue is. Number one, it's serious to our provincial economy and we can see that by the Treasurer's Budget last night. We can see it by the plant workers who don't have a job this year. We can see it by the trucks that didn't roll through the winter. We can see it from the secretaries, the legal contracts, the economists, the accountants that would be working on these loads. We can see it by the farmers. We can see it by the farm machinery dealers. We can see it by the people that produce the bags that the potatoes go into. The spinoff consequences are tremendous. And it seems, I'm sure to all Islanders and I think to all Canadians, that it has to be very distressing that the Federal Government fails to understand the implications of this decision, something that we had no control over but that is now controlled and yet they have failed to properly respond.

But an even bigger concern for us, Madam Speaker, than the implications to our economy in this short term are the implications for Canada. And I say that, Madam Speaker, because what has been clearly evidenced as a result of the inaction by the Government of Canada with the United States on this file is that Canada's...the respect that should be shown to Canada in terms of our trade relations with our biggest neighbour, the United States, has been seriously encroached upon. The US

Government has had a hammer here, it wasn't a hammer to start with it was only a little twist that allowed them to throw off our regular marketing plan. But as a result of the inaction of the Federal Government, a serious problem has developed. And I attribute that in part, Madam Speaker, to the belief by some people in the Government of Canada that because Canada has a trade surplus with the United States and it's in the billions of dollars, that we don't want to ruffle the feathers of the Americans over PEI potatoes.

Now, Madam Speaker, that's unacceptable. That's unacceptable, not just to Prince Edward Islanders, that should be unacceptable to every single Canadian because Prince Edward Island potatoes are as important to Prince Edward Island and to Canadians as softwood lumber should be people of British Columbia or Quebec or Ontario, or as apples should be to the people of British Columbia or any other product.

And you know Canada has a terribly record in standing up for the producers of this country when they're unjustifiably hurt by American trade practices. And that wasn't the intention of the North American Free Trade Act, it was to open up the borders; and yet, we're seeing that really hasn't meant a thing at all. If Canada doesn't stand up on these issues then, you know, we are the big losers. The country is a big loser. And you know, what's so disappointing about this is that we know that Canada can act quickly. It was only days after the little kerfuffle over Embraer from Brazil and the fact that the Government of Canada decided to support the construction or fabrication building of airplanes in Canada that would be sold against the Brazilians and that didn't go over very well with the Brazilians that the Canadian Government immediately reacted to ban the importation of Brazilian beef. It took days to do that, Madam Speaker. There was little question, there was little debate, there was little evidence, in fact there was no evidence that there was any problem with Brazilian beef...

**12:45 p.m.**

**Premier:** ... what-so-ever. So the Canadian Government acted very quickly to shut the border. And so we have seen that issue come and go. As far as I know the Brazilian beef rolls back into Canada, no problem what-so-ever. And yet we have not moved to let our potatoes

back in.

I remember a few years ago, Madam Speaker, when some Islanders were trying to get into the garlic business, production of garlic here, and PEI is a very good place to produce garlic. And anyway, based on market conditions and what the market was prepared to pay for garlic and industry was growing here and expanding quite nicely. All of a sudden we saw garlic flooding into Canada from China at rock bottom prices and that basically destroyed the market and the opportunity that garlic producers here in the province had. And why did that happen, Madam Speaker? It happened because up until that Chinese garlic came in, one of the biggest producers in the world was California. And some people in California thought that they could get garlic even at a lower price by having it grown in China. And they did, they had the garlic growing in China. But what happened? The Chinese became so efficient at growing garlic that they started shipping it back into the United States for much less than other garlic producers in the US could produce for. And so the California lobby got upset. This Chinese garlic was coming into the United States at less than they could produce it for.

So what happened? The lobbyist ran off to Washington, asked the Government of the United States to shut the market to garlic from China. So they did. And what happened? Those boats that were on the water taking garlic in to United States diverted, came into Canada, came in to Montreal, came in to Vancouver, came into Toronto, all the big food terminals and shipped that garlic in for about half the prices our producers could even grow the garlic for. Well that spelt the demise of the garlic industry on PEI, except for some people who are growing organically today. And I don't want to prolong that point, Madam Speaker, but the point is that the Federal Government did not respond to the Americans in that case either. And we lost on that issue as well.

So I'm saying, Madam Speaker, that it's important that the Government of Canada stand up for producers in this country, stand up for the people of Canada on these important issues. We can't let the Americans take us to the cleaners every time they turn around because they got a few powerful lobbyists like the garlic lobbyists in California, or like the potato producers in Idaho. I don't believe for a minute that the potato producers in Idaho

thought they could get away with this for this long. As the Minister of Agriculture indicated, they probably thought they could get the Thanksgiving market from us which is a very big market in the United States and they thought if they were lucky they could get Christmas out of it. Well, Thanksgiving and Christmas are gone and the Federal Government has not acted and this has huge implications for Canada.

So I know some of my colleagues want to speak, Madam Speaker, and I think it's important that they do. And I just ask the Government of Canada for once, please do something right and stand up for Canadians and Prince Edward Island. (Applause)

**Speaker:** The Honourable Deputy Speaker.

**Andy Mooney (PC):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. My comments will be quite brief because I believe both the Leader of the Opposition, our Minister of Agriculture and Premier basically covered pretty well every point that could be covered. But basically not only being an elected Member but also a potato farmer, I can't stress the importance of getting this resolved very quickly. And speaking to some of the growers in my area, one gentleman said you know, over the years, you know our farm or some farms in the area may have had because of certain conditions financial troubles, and he said he was worried, but said never in the history of the potato industry have we seen our whole industry in such peril. And you know he said, all we can hope is that the right moves are made to get this border open to save the industry. And he said if our industry is saved there will probably be a place for you and I in it. You know and it's...even on our own farm in the fall we started shipping russet norkotahs into the US bulk. And just an example of what it meant to our farm alone, just in our lower warehouse with 3 million pounds, the buyer in the US wanted the whole kit-and-kaboodle (sic). He was very pleased with the first load, we were very impressed with the quality we had dug this fall and we thought we were going to have a decent winter. Right now we're selling 50's for around \$2.30 a 50. If the border was to open at 5 o'clock this evening we'd be getting over \$4.00. The thing is Idaho and Washington have potatoes and more potatoes down there but they're so far out of the market that we're not really a factor. You know, if they give their potatoes away for nothing we can still ship into New England probably for a lower

cost. So it's imperative that we get the border open.

The Member from Borden-Kinkora, yourself, Madam Speaker, and myself were in Washington for the centre of Legislative Exchange meetings and met with a lot of Senators from the US, and the one thing that we stressed to them is that the potato wart issue is every bit as important to the Government of Prince Edward Island and to the people of Prince Edward Island than it is to the people in the US. We've been taking it very seriously and have taken every step to make sure that this is not a threat to our Island and to anyone else. And basically we stressed that we just want to live and let live you know.

We think we've done everything and kept things very safe, and there is no reason to keep the border shut. And one gentleman from Idaho basically stated that if the science out of Europe came back in our favour that we were no threat that you know everything in his power will be done to help get the border open. And this gentleman was from Idaho because he just thought doing right is the best thing. But you know, the science did come back in our favour and still nothing moved.

But, Madam Speaker, I'm going to cut my comments short because there is a few other people would like to speak before the day is out. But I can't stress enough the importance of getting this border open and the bottom line is. If our Canadian Government were to move faster, even with the diversion and got all these access potatoes off the marketplace back in January, we'd be getting more for the potatoes we have left because right on the heels of the announcement this week, that this diversion was going to take place, already there's farmers that were selling for 55 cents a 10 pound bag said, we're not going to take any less than 75 cents, because now the buyers and brokers across the country don't have us over the barrel. They basically figured we have potatoes we couldn't get rid of. They're offering us any dirt low price and because we have no idea of the Federal Government coming through with any assistance, the farms had to take it. And you know, it's so frustrating, you know, when you feel you've been let down by your Federal Government that are suppose to be doing more for us.

But I'll cut my comments short and I would like to, on behalf of the farmers in our area and across the

province, thank our Minister of Agriculture and our Premier for basically moving fast and doing what had to be done on a provincial level and also for keeping our farmers very well informed. And our Minister has logged in tremendous has logged in tremendous hours. Any hour of the day, seven days of the week you could contact him and he would fill you in on what's been taking place and what's not been taking place, you know, with our Federal Government. Thank you, Madam Speaker. (Applause)

**Speaker:** The Honourable Member from Borden-Kinkora.

**Eric Hammill (PC):** I'd like to rise in support of this Resolution. I know that the discussion has been long and hard and I know the hurt that's out there in the farm community and I just hope that this is only the beginning of a much larger discussion that goes not only on the floor of this Legislature but all across the country. You know there is no question about it. There are many things that Canada can do in retaliation to the United States. We haven't even thought it seriously. You take the potato growers in Idaho that are growing these large amounts of potatoes per acre. They're doing it with Canadian water you know, that's just one example that I mentioned. You take most of the energy used in the United States comes from Canada. So there are many things that we can do to support our growers and our Canadian farmers. And I think we're only beginning that.

So, Madam Speaker, I want to support this Resolution and hope that there will be a great deal more discussion because there is still a lot of unanswered questions. For instance one big question in the farm community is why is that report from the scientists from both Canada and the United States not being made public. When we were in Washington, they assured us...I think it was going to be made public on Friday of that week. So there is quite a few Fridays gone by and we haven't heard about it. So I think that's something that we have to push for. Thank you very much. (Applause)

**Speaker:** The Honourable Member from Belfast-Pownal Bay.

**Wilbur MacDonald (PC):** Madam Speaker, I rise to make a few comments. First of all, to thank the Government for their tremendous work in this whole situation. And

secondly, I would like to, if it's agreeable with the mover and seconder, on the first page the last WHEREAS, it seems to me that we should emphasize that we're almost in a traditional time of planting potatoes and if we could add to the Resolution, AND WHEREAS many potato growers in Prince Edward Island are attempting to plant their crop for the coming season, which traditionally...I would like to add, which traditionally starts from mid-April to the last of April; because in the eastern end of the province, generally speaking, we're almost, not this year I'll have to admit, but generally, last year I think we planted potatoes on the 8<sup>th</sup> of April. So, if people would read this and realize that we're almost into the area of planting, it might strengthen the Resolution, somewhat, if the mover and seconder would agree to that.

**Leader of the Opposition:** Good.

**Wilbur MacDonald (PC):** Okay. And secondly, Madam Speaker, I had had the opportunity of meeting...

**Speaker:** Honourable Member, do you have a seconder for that...

**Wilbur MacDonald (PC):** I was just asked that the mover and seconder would agree.

**Leader of the Opposition:** No problem, I'll second it.

**Speaker:** Okay, moved and seconded.

**Wilbur MacDonald (PC):** And secondly, I had an opportunity a number of years to visit the northeastern governors, so I thought if we had some lobbyist somewhere's in the United States helping out so I called Executive Director, Alan...I can never get his last name...

**Speaker:** Sokolow

**Wilbur MacDonald (PC):** How do you pronounce that. Sokolow. And Alan had been here a number of times and I asked him what he could do for us and he suggested, as you know Madam Speaker, in United States the Speaker has a very very important role in the Legislative Assemblies of the United States, so he suggested with the help of the Speaker that we could get a letter off. And I understand that a meeting is taking place this week or sometime this week in the United States of the southeastern...northeast

governors which includes, by the way, Quebec, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick and I think Newfoundland is also joining. I'm not sure whether all those provinces are representative.

So possibly, this is my way of trying to help out. It's possible that we might have some results from that meeting and there may be some lobbyist from that area in the United States helping out. I know that it's a tremendous problem to get this border open, and I certainly agree with all the speakers that there's so much that could've been done by the Canadian Government to try and raise the stakes a little bit on our behalf. And hopefully this Resolution which I hope before we're done that the Resolution will be decided where we should send the Resolution and maybe, Madam Speaker, it could be faxed immediately to all the people that...like the Prime Minister, all the MP's from the province, the Senators and all the Ministers maybe in Ottawa to try and get...and even, it might even want to be faxed to someplace in United States, to the Secretary of Agriculture in United States and other people so that... There's not much sense if we pass the Resolution if it doesn't get to as many people as we can then the Resolution becomes much more important. So I thank you, Madam Speaker, for the opportunity to say a few words. (Applause)

#### **VOTE ON AMENDMENT...RESOLUTION NO. 16 THE POTATO WART**

**Speaker:** Before we ask the Honourable Leader of the Opposition to close the debate, we need to vote on the amendment to the Resolution. So all of those in favour of the amendment put forward by the Honourable Member from Belfast-Pownal Bay would you say Aye.

**Honourable Members:** Aye.

**Speaker:** Those opposed, say Nay. Resolution amendment has passed. Now the Honourable Leader of the Opposition to close the debate, please.

#### **CLOSING DEBATE...RESOLUTION NO. 16**

**Leader of the Opposition:** Well, it was a very great debate and there was a lot information that was presented here to some of the other MLA's and people in the province that not all this information gets out

through the media outlets to the farm group. So I think that it was echoed that our Minister of Agriculture and the staff here have...did the best job and the Potato Marketing Board and the producers and also our four MP's have tried very hard. But the Premier was quite right when he said that, and I had mentioned to it earlier, is that our Canadian Governments haven't been tough enough on Americans when it comes to trade and that. And some of the reasons that I did mention was why we are so well liked in other parts of the world or anywhere's being a Canadian is maybe, is that we are not maybe as aggressive as our cousins to the south of the border are.

So I won't hold anybody up, I'm just glad this Resolution went through. I figured it would be. I think the Honourable Member from Pownal area made a good suggestion there that we send this Resolution to, not only as many Members of Parliament, but also to the group of US Senators that were even here at a earlier date in the House.

To make an (INDISTINCT), they're quite right. Those farmers down in Idaho, if you asked many of them what was going on here in the Province of PEI, they wouldn't know much about the potato wart. It's a trade issue, the trade issues have been done by the province of Maine, etc. etc. and this is one excuse. I want to thank you very much. (Applause)

**Speaker:** Do we have the question, please? Those of you in favour of the Resolution, please say Aye.

**Honourable Members:** Aye.

**Speaker:** Those opposed to the Resolution, please say Nay. Resolution has passed unanimously. Honourable Government House Leader.

#### **ADJOURNED**

**Elmer MacFadyen (PC):** Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Member from Borden-Kinkora this House adjourn and stay adjourned until Tuesday at 2:00 o'clock.

**Speaker:** Shall it carry?

**Honourable Members:** Carried.



**Elmer MacFadyen (PC):** I move this House now adjourn.

**Speaker:** Shall it carry?

**Honourable Members:** Carried.