

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY



Speaker: Hon. Colin LaVie

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MATTERS OF PRIVILEGE AND RECOGNITION OF GUESTS	4864
STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS.....	4867
LEADER OF THE THIRD PARTY (Climate Leadership Act).....	4867
CHARLOTTETOWN-BRIGHTON (Grow Home – Mortgage-Free Home).....	4867
ORAL QUESTIONS	4868
LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION (Corporate profiteering and struggling Islanders)	4868
LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION (Support to local producers and retailers)	4868
LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION (Expand plans for public housing).....	4869
LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION Supports to Islanders re: inflation)	4869
CHARLOTTETOWN-BELVEDERE (Maintaining of existing forest areas).....	4870
CHARLOTTETOWN-BELVEDERE (Protection for native bird species).....	4870
CHARLOTTETOWN-BELVEDERE (Priority of biodiverse forestry)	4871
MERMAID-STRATFORD (Non-compliance with building permits).....	4871
MERMAID-STRATFORD (Accountability for adherence to building permits).....	4872
TYNE VALLEY-SHERBROOKE (Programs to encourage volunteerism).....	4872
TYNE VALLEY-SHERBROOKE (Support for non-profits re: technology)	4873
CHARLOTTETOWN-VICTORIA PARK (Details on low-barrier shelter).....	4873
CHARLOTTETOWN-VICTORIA PARK (Partners for low-barrier shelters).....	4874
CHARLOTTETOWN-BRIGHTON (Legislation for owning windmills)	4874
CHARLOTTETOWN-BRIGHTON (Landowners and own energy system).....	4875
TYNE VALLEY-SHERBROOKE (Update on paid sick leave programs).....	4875
TIGNISH-PALMER ROAD (Options for tourist transportation on PEI)	4875
TIGNISH-PALMER ROAD (Programs for tourist operators re: COVID).....	4876
TIGNISH-PALMER ROAD (Tourism job fairs and labour gaps).....	4876
LEADER OF THE THIRD PARTY (Taxable income re: support (further).....	4877
LEADER OF THE THIRD PARTY (Province paying CRA for support).....	4877
LEADER OF THE THIRD PARTY (Reason for timing of relief cheques)	4877
O'LEARY-INVERNESS (Ambulance coverage time and new hires).....	4878
O'LEARY-INVERNESS (Providing ambulance response coverage).....	4878

O'LEARY-INVERNESS (Publishing of EMS response times).....	4878
MONTAGUE-KILMUIR (Middle-income Islanders/cost of living).....	4879
MONTAGUE-KILMUIR (Expanding of home heating program).....	4879
MONTAGUE-KILMUIR (Freezing of property taxes).....	4880
SUMMERSIDE-WILMOT (Counsellor/student ratio in schools).....	4880
SUMMERSIDE-WILMOT (School counsellors and teaching assignments).....	4881
SUMMERSIDE-WILMOT (Counsellors in schools each day).....	4881
SUMMERSIDE-WILMOT (School counsellors/teaching assignments (further).....	4882
TYNE VALLEY-SHERBROOKE (Extension to Special Leave Fund).....	4883
CHARLOTTETOWN-VICTORIA PARK (Food security for seniors (further).....	4883
TABLING OF DOCUMENTS.....	4883
REPORTS BY COMMITTEES.....	4884
RULES, REGULATIONS, PRIVATE BILLS AND PRIVILEGES (Fourth Report – Parliamentary Calendar).....	4884
SUMMERSIDE-WILMOT.....	4884
CHARLOTTETOWN-BELVEDERE.....	4885
ORDERS OF THE DAY (GOVERNMENT).....	4886
SECOND READING AND COMMITTEE.....	4886
BILL 60 – An Act to Amend the Climate Leadership Act.....	4886
TABLING OF DOCUMENTS (further).....	4901
ORDERS OF THE DAY (GOVERNMENT).....	4901
SECOND READING AND COMMITTEE.....	4902
BILL 62 – Vaping Products Taxation Agreement Act.....	4902
BILL 63 – An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act (No. 2).....	4903
BILL 64 – An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act (No. 3).....	4906
BILL 65 – Appropriation Act (Current Expenditures) 2022.....	4916
BILL 66 – Supplementary Appropriation Act 2022.....	4918
BILL 19 – Temporary Foreign Worker Protection Act.....	4919
THIRD READING AND PASS.....	4922
BILL 56 – An Act to Amend the Education Act.....	4922
THIRD READING AND PASS.....	4923
Bill No. 19 –Temporary Foreign Worker Protection Act	
Bill No. 46 – An Act to Amend the Building Codes Act	
Bill No. 52 – Miscellaneous Statutes Amendment Act, 2022	
Bill No. 54 – An Act to Amend the Highway Traffic Act (No. 3)	
Bill No. 58 – An Act to Amend the Business Corporations Act (No. 2)	
Bill No. 59 – An Act to Amend the Provincial Court Act	
Bill No. 60 – An Act to Amend the Climate Leadership Act	
Bill No. 61 – An Act to Amend the Tobacco Tax Act	
Bill No. 62 – Vaping Products Taxation Agreement Act	
Bill No. 63 – An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act (No. 2)	
Bill No. 64 – An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act (No. 3)	
Bill No. 65 – Appropriation Act (Current Expenditures) 2022	
Bill No. 66 – Supplementary Appropriation Act 2022	
Bill No. 125 – An Act to Amend the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act	
ROYAL ASSENT.....	4925
Bill No. 19 –Temporary Foreign Worker Protection Act	

- Bill No. 46 – An Act to Amend the Building Codes Act
- Bill No. 52 – Miscellaneous Statutes Amendment Act, 2022
- Bill No. 54 – An Act to Amend the Highway Traffic Act (No. 3)
- Bill No. 56 – An Act to Amend the Education Act
- Bill No. 58 – An Act to Amend the Business Corporations Act (No. 2)
- Bill No. 59 – An Act to Amend the Provincial Court Act
- Bill No. 60 – An Act to Amend the Climate Leadership Act
- Bill No. 61 – An Act to Amend the Tobacco Tax Act
- Bill No. 62 – Vaping Products Taxation Agreement Act
- Bill No. 63 – An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act (No. 2)
- Bill No. 64 – An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act (No. 3)
- Bill No. 66 – Supplementary Appropriation Act 2022
- Bill No. 123 – An Act to Amend the Real Property Tax Act
- Bill No. 124 – Emancipation Day Proclamation Act
- Bill No. 125 – An Act to Amend the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act
- Bill No. 200 – An Act to Amend the St. Dunstan’s University Act

The Legislature sat at 10:00 a.m.

Matters of Privilege and Recognition of
Guests

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier King: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

For those who might be tuned in at home that might not have a broad look at what happened here, the rousing thunderous applause wasn't for my anticipated arise, but for the arrival of our Canada Games mascot, Wowkwis, and her handler, Lynn Trainor; they are here today. There is still opportunity for volunteers to step up; we're hosting the 2023 Canada Winter Games.

Although we've just been through a difficult winter, and spring is a little slower kicking into gear, and not that we're wishing the summer and fall away, but before long, the Canada Games will be here, so just wanted to say welcome. It's going to be a celebration, not just of the best athletes of their age across the country, but PEI will showcase its arts, its culture, its history, and its heritage here. It'll be on full display in communities across Prince Edward Island. It's exciting to welcome Wowkwis here and I know she has been traveling throughout communities across PEI to spread the good word.

So, welcome to Lynn and Wowkwis.

I also wanted to say that Fredericton is hosting the ECMAs this week and that's another exciting week and a great opportunity for our Island artists to be showcased. I know Andrew Waite performed at the awards show and won the Solo Recording of the Year; and of course, Dylan Menzie, who has now won bag loads of ECMAs and other awards, won for Song of the Year as well. I'm so proud to see this event taking place, and so proud of our Island artists who are participating. Just extremely proud and encouraged by those Island artists who have been through some difficult times, who continue to share music and story with so many. We've needed the last few years more than ever and I think really, we need it more than ever now.

I also wanted to say that it was exciting for Atlantic Canada to be named as the host site for the World Junior U20 Hockey Championships. Halifax and Moncton will host, but there will be opportunities I think for locations such as Prince Edward Island and some communities to host some training opportunities for some of the teams that will be joining there in some exhibition games. So, we're excited to see what could happen with that. It's important for our region to showcase not just our love of sport but also our hospitality, so that's really exciting.

I also just wanted to say that Mother's Day is this Sunday. I know there's been some talk on the radio of people calling in and offering the best advice their mother gave. I think this would be our third Mother's Day without our mom. She always told me that a smile will get you through, and as difficult as you think life is, there's always someone out there who is worse off than you. That's always been good advice for me, and I think it's good advice for everybody in here.

Just to all the moms in our lives, to Jana, Jana's mother Kathy, and all the moms in our lives and those people in our lives who step into the role of mom, I just want to say I hope you're celebrated every day, but especially extra pampered this Sunday on Mother's Day.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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

I, too, would like to welcome Wowkwis to the Legislative Assembly this morning. Of course, much of the Canada Winter Games will happen in District 17 and I'm really looking forward to all of the improvements that have been made in Brookvale for the skiing events that will happen there. As the Premier said, there's still room for lots more volunteers to come forward and help out with those amazing games, no doubt, that will happen next February. I'm looking forward to that and I encourage all Islanders to come forward.

This Sunday of course is Mother's Day, and as the Premier said, we – I look around this

House and I see the mothers in here and realize particularly for those who have young children, what a difficult life balance that is. I want to wish everybody a happy Mother's Day, and particularly those in the House who have children.

Speaking of advice from mothers, one of the things my mom said when she was a councillor in the little village that she lived in in Scotland, and many, many years ago, she said, "Don't get involved in politics."

Some Hon. Members: [Laughing]

Leader of the Opposition: Generally, I follow the advice of my mother during my life, but on that one, of course, I didn't. Anyway, I miss my mom like crazy.

At this point, I'd just like to mention the mother of my own children, Ann, of course, who is working away. She's actually emptying a sea ship container this morning of some of our chairs and furniture and stuff like that. She's an amazing person who does all kinds of wonderful things to keep our family together and in the community. So, thank you, Ann.

One of the things synonymous with Mother's Day, of course, is lobster and we all look forward to a feed of lobster this weekend. I'm glad that setting day went as well as it did. I understand catches are good and I'm looking forward to a feed of lobster on the weekend. Particularly want to wish the fishers of Lennox Island, who will be embarking on the Island's first moderate livelihood fishery, a safe and successful moderate livelihood fishery this year.

Finally, I want to thank – I'm sure we all want to thank the staff in our offices, who support us in all kinds of ways. They support us by giving us wonderful words to say, they support us emotionally, they support us politically in this crazy world that we all do. And I want to pass on my personal thanks to everybody up in the office on the second floor here who work in the official opposition office and do such a wonderful job of supporting all of the MLAs who sit on this side of the House. Thank you all very, very much.

And finally, to the media who – it's always a strained relationship with the media, and no

doubt, we are all looking forward to a little bit of time apart from each other this summer. I read, many years ago a book by Allan Fotheringham called *Birds of a Feather*, which looks at that strained relationship between the media and politicians, and it's a really interesting read. For those who might have some time off shortly and are interested in looking into such a thing, I would highly recommend that book. It's funny as heck, but it's also a really great look at that relationship that exists.

I want to thank the media who come into the people's House and convey what happens in here to the people of this Island, to Islanders. They do a fantastic job and we're very lucky to have them.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Mr. Gallant: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I, too, want to welcome our mascot, Wowkwis, to the Legislative Assembly. It's not that often we see a mascot come in here, so certainly welcome, and all the best in the Canada Games. I'll have to get online and volunteer. I keep saying that, and the weeks are going and slipping by.

Anyway, I had the pleasure last night to attend the 4-H Regional Communications Competition. I must say, it was very impressive, and to watch the youth, the juniors, the seniors, the intermediates, it was just phenomenal. I want to congratulate all the winners and all the participants for the fine job they did. It was held at the Linkletter Community Centre and it was a great turnout.

Also, I want to congratulate all the graduates at UPEI this weekend. It'll be the first time in the last couple years they have an in-person graduation, and there's about a thousand students graduating. So, I wish them all the best and a wonderful weekend.

Also, I want to wish all mothers a special Mother's Day. I have a very special mother in my life, my wife, Linda, and she's the mother of our three sons; and her mother, Mary. I want to wish them all a very happy

Mother's Day, and all mothers across this province.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Fisheries and Communities.

Mr. Fox: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's a pleasure to rise and say hello to everybody in District 19. But I want to wish my mother, Edna, and Rosie a great weekend, and a special shout-out to Debbie. She's a great mother to our kids and she's always somebody I can always depend on. But all mothers are special, and I wish that all to everybody. But it's not very often that I get to welcome a distant relative to the Assembly.

Some Hon. Members: [Laughter]

Mr. Perry: Closer than you think.

Mr. Fox: So, thank you very much for attending and all the best to the Canada Games. I hope everybody takes advantage of the opportunities to volunteer as they go forward.

This is going to be a great photo op in a minute, so, thank you very much.

Mr. Bell: Even got the same haircut.

Premier King: One Fox is usually enough in here.

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

Mr. Henderson: Thanks, Mr. Speaker.

I wanted to welcome Wowkwis. It's always a proud moment to see our Canada Games here, as the minister that played a bit of a responsibility in actually getting the Canada Games to PEI for 2023. As many might recall, it was scheduled for 2031.

Anyway, I also want to wish a happy Mother's Day to the mothers in O'Leary-Inverness. Obviously, I have my wife, Sandra, as a mother, and now I've got two daughters that are mothers now, Chantel Noye and Sara Speth, who's – this will

actually be her first Mother's Day and she's back in Germany.

And while I'm talking about Germany, I do want to mention Morgan Ellis. Morgan was our only O'Leary-Inverness Olympian, and he is the start defenseman on *Deutsche Eishockey Liga*, German Ice Hockey League, at championship cup for the team *Eisbären Berlin*.

Thanks, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton.

Mr. Hammarlund: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I have way too much to say about mothers, so I'll instead focus on the key element of Mother's Day celebrations; our almost unlimited supply of world-class lobster and other shellfish. We are so incredibly fortunate to have this local and natural resource as well as the fishermen that bring it to us. So, let's continue to keep our environment clean and healthy so that this resource will be available for all future Mother's Day celebrations.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Ms. Compton: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Welcome everyone here in the Legislature. Welcome everyone watching from District 4. Beautiful day out there for the fishermen.

I just want to wish everyone a happy Mother's Day. My aunt, Jeanette Cantelo who is like my mom – he's my mom's sister. My mom's been gone for a long time. She fills in that role every day, and I'm looking forward to a little trip with her when the House closes. And also, to Carolyn Mills, the mother of our grandson; thank you, Carolyn, for being such a wonderful mother and I hope you enjoy your weekend as much as we will.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Statements by Members

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Climate Leadership Act

Mr. Gallant: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Today we will continue debate the *Climate Leadership Act* and the inexcusably poor carbon plan being brought forward by this government nearly a month after it was legislated to be done.

This is yet another example of the mismanagement and disorganization of this Conservative government, and their ability to put in the effort needed to work out a good deal for Islanders. It's also been discussed recently how the Premier views the vote on the *Climate Leadership Act*, a vote of confidence for his government, further showing that, indeed, the Premier doesn't make the rules of the Legislature, but also clearly does not understand them.

If this act is anything, it is a tactic by this Premier to opposition parties and his backbenchers to support his plan, or he will waste taxpayers' dollars by calling an election and inherently breaking yet another election promise of being the first Premier to abide by fixed elections.

A premier with a majority government should not be worried about confidence votes in the first place, of course, unless members of his own party even agree that it's not in the best interest of Islanders.

I would also like to remind Islanders, this is really the first major decision and project this Premier has been tasked with since beginning his term.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Mr. Gallant: As this government is proud of saying themselves, all the hard COVID decisions were made by the experts, and this is the best he can come up with?

This Premier is showing his true colours each and every day, and I believe Islanders are starting to see this.

In response to a question from the opposition member yesterday, the Premier ever so politely pointed out that our party is without a leader if an election was called. Well, I'm standing here as the leader of our party.

Mr. McNeilly: Oh, yes.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Mr. Gallant: So, in response, I say it's the fundamental characteristics of leadership that make a leader: humility, respect for others, and integrity – not just a title. The Premier should take note of this.

And I must remind people, the Premier and his party go on about heckling and all this stuff. Well, you heard some as I was speaking, and we hear it every day.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. McNeilly: Oh.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton.

Grow Home – Mortgage-Free Home

Mr. Hammarlund: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

While tourists can choose between five-star luxury to roughing it at campgrounds, there is no such flexibility for Islanders looking for housing. Every stick has to be stamped lumber, and water and sewer systems have to meet exacting standards. Generally, codes do not allow occupancy until the building is completed and many municipalities require that the building be completed in one year.

When I first came to PEI, lots of my friends started their own dwellings in the woods, most often built with wood harvested on their lot. Their simple structures were typically occupied as soon as closed in and more often than not, without any services whatsoever. Outhouse in the woods, no power, but a wood stove for heat and cooking, no water except what you carried in and weekly showers in the nearest government campground.

These humble beginnings now have all transformed into fully serviced homes, but

being built gradually, most often without a mortgage. Imagine, a home without a mortgage.

We need to set up a system that allows people to start their own homes on a shoestring and allows occupation of incomplete structures so the rent saved can be used for growing a home; growing a mortgage-free, affordable home.

This is not a building code issue. It's a regulatory issue. If people are allowed to suffer lack of comfort in a campground, why should the same people not be allowed to suffer the same lack of comfort while building their own home?

Yes, safety codes must be observed, such as using an approved woodstove and chimney installed correctly. But flush toilet or water heater? Surely, they can be dispensed with on a temporary basis.

Building your own home like the pioneers and back-to-landers did in the past is not for everyone, but why not help those who want to? Help Islanders with woods continue to build their own home gradually and without a mortgage, as they have always done.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: End of statements.

Responses to Questions Taken as Notice

Questions by Members

Speaker: For our first question, I'll call on the hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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

In my member statement yesterday, I talked about how the cost of living is far and away the number one concern of Islanders that I speak with, and one area, of course, where those costs have skyrocketed is at the grocery store, where Islanders are struggling as prices rise and their incomes flatline; all the time, of course, big chains reaping record profits.

Corporate profiteering and struggling Islanders

To the Minister of Finance: You have a seat at the federal/provincial/territorial table. What leadership or pressure are you exercising at the federal level to push for stronger action against corporate profiteering on the backs of struggling Islanders?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Ms. Compton: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. member, every time we meet, I advocate for Islanders, for everything that we can do for Islanders, and I'll continue to do so. The federal government have regulations in place as far as corporate greed, I guess you could say, with taxation, but if it doesn't meet what the hon. member's opinion of what should happen, I'll be happy to bring that back as well.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thanks, Mr. Speaker.

One sector of our community that is struggling a lot are primary producers, like farmers, who are struggling because of the soaring cost of inputs, and they have no choice in many cases but to absorb those extra costs.

And again, farmers are getting squeezed at a time when grocery chains and shareholders are reaping record profits.

Support to local producers and retailers

A question to the minister of agriculture: Have you been lobbying your colleagues in Cabinet to take initiatives to support local growers and consumers alike by, for example, promoting coupons for local stores and farmers' markets to encourage Islanders to support local producers and local retailers?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Land.

Mr. Thompson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I have this conversation with my Cabinet colleagues almost daily. I think in the next few days, we should have some notice of some supports coming out with the skyrocketing cost of living.

But this isn't unique to Prince Edward Island, of course. This is Canadian-wide, and just recently had – Monday – had a meeting with my fellow colleagues from across Canada, and this was a topic of a conversation with them, the record costs for farmers to endure. This is an issue that we'll continue to work on.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thanks, Mr. Speaker.

Housing is another area where prices have gone through the roof, and this morning, we find out that the biggest supplier of private builds on Prince Edward Island, Killam, is thinking of suspending any new construction until the costs of labour and materials cool down.

This, of course, will only exacerbate things for Islanders –

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Leader of the Opposition: – looking for –

An Hon. Member: You got what you wanted.

Leader of the Opposition: This, of course, will only exacerbate things for Islanders who are looking for affordable housing, whether that be in the rental or the ownership market.

Expand plans for public housing

To the Minister of Social Development and Housing: The fulfillment of basic human needs cannot be dependent on market forces. Will this government step up and expand its plans to build more public housing?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Social Development and Housing.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

When it comes to developing social housing or public housing, we've got a number of initiatives underway and we're making very good progress on that. We're going to address needs into the future. We have, not just a short-term plan but a long-term plan in place, and we're going to be refreshing that strategy here this summer. Of course, we will do that.

I should mention, it really is the focus of my department, is to help the most vulnerable, but across our departments, we're going to be addressing the general housing needs on the Island.

Thank you.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thanks, Mr. Speaker.

And yet another area where prices are hurting Islanders, of course, is at the gas pumps, and just today, we saw another eight-cent rise in gasoline prices on Prince Edward Island. And like the grocery store chains, this has not meant bad news for the big fossil fuel companies who are seeing profits triple as prices soar, but it is certainly bad news for everyday Islanders.

Supports to Islanders re: inflation

A question to the Minister of Finance: It's possible that this House will close today, and it won't reconvene for months. With no end in sight for our nation-leading inflation, what is your plan to support Islanders over that time, if, indeed, you have one at all?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier King: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I appreciate the questions from the Leader of the Opposition. We are the only province in the country who has responded to the cost of living with \$20 million initially. We are committed to coming out with more in the days ahead and we will continue to be there for Islanders.

I do find it ironic that this leader would get up and talk about the increased cost to things like trucking and things like furnace oil

when they're going to lobby later today, as they have for the last month, to actually put that price 16 cents even higher. I can't quite —

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Premier King: — understand where he's coming from. He's asking the Minister of Social Development and Housing about Killam. They've been trying to kill Killam in here for the whole session and now they're complaining that Killam was not building.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Premier King: I don't understand where this hon. member comes from, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Belvedere.

Ms. Bell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Matt Betts, a professor of forest ecology at Oregon State University, is studying the decline of bird species caused by deforestation in the Maritimes and the replacement of diverse Acadian forests with one type of tree.

We're still waiting and waiting for the PEI State of the Forestry Report, but we already know deforestation is significant and devastating for PEI. The Betts study has found 28 million hectares of habitat were lost over the last 35 years across the three Maritime Provinces.

Maintaining of existing forest areas

Question for the Minister of Environment, Energy and Climate Action: It is critical we increase new forestry areas, maintain existing forest areas, and stop clear-cutting. Will your government commit to take immediate and decisive action and not just table more plans?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Environment, Energy and Climate Action.

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We actually didn't table a plan. We put words to action and people in our department are working on that. I've said this numerous times in the House.

We are implementing a plan. We are working with the Woodlot Owners Association of Prince Edward Island. We are looking at making standing woodlots profitable by not forcing Islanders to clear-cut them. We're looking at making them creditable through a carbon credit system.

The hon. member talks about this report like she knows what's going to be in it. We have experts working at it, which she's not. You know what, Mr. Speaker? When the report is done by experts, it will be tabled in this House.

Not only that, the great department that I represent will continue the great work that they've done. It's not a report on the table; it's people doing real work for real Islanders right here on Prince Edward Island.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Belvedere.

Ms. Bell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The study also looked at habitat and populations of 54 native bird species in New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and PEI, and shows some bird species have seen a population decline of up to 70% since 1985, with more common bird species at least a decline of 50%. That's a loss of between 35 million to 100 million birds.

Protection for native bird species

Question for the same minister: Our native bird species are a critical part of our ecosystem and we don't have species at risk legislation. How will you ensure we protect native bird species?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Environment, Energy and Climate Action.

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As I said in our Budget estimates, we do have, on our legislative plan, legislation. That said, it won't be coming this session and it may not come in the fall session. It depends on whether we're ready to move with it or not.

But on top of that, we have been working – and I've said this numerous times in the House – we had a million dollars put towards land conservation in this province through Island Nature Trust and the Nature Conservancy in Canada. We did that last year; we're doing it again this year.

We believe that they're good partners to help us protect habitat. We believe that they're the ones who are able to target specific areas and buy it and put it under permanent protection. We think that's important.

A million dollars has been able to buy a lot of land year over year and we will continue those relationships with those organizations to ensure that we do offer a real protection that's long-standing with groups that believe, like I believe, that protection should happen.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Belvedere.

Ms. Bell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

There's a lot of looking at, working on, waiting for; we're three years in, no legislation, no clear tangible thing, nobody's been forced to clear-cut, but you know what? It would be so much easier to just actually deliver.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Bell: It's clear that just planting trees to replace clear-cut forests is not good enough to protect our ecosystem.

Our forest and species that depend on them need mixed biodiverse planting, like an Acadian forest model, to thrive. Ecological forestry is a balance of quality and quantity.

Priority of biodiverse forestry

Question for the same minister: We have to stop planting single variants like white spruce. When will biodiverse forestry be a priority for this government?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Environment, Energy and Climate Action.

Mr. Myers: You know, it's funny listening to the hon. member over there talk about how we're not doing anything when I just finished saying we spent a million dollars year over year, partnering with someone who bought land. They bought it. It's done. They own it. It's protected permanently, Mr. Speaker. I don't know what about that party (Indistinct) –

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Myers: Thank you, because I don't know what else I could say to that party that would show to them action. A million dollars to buy land, a million dollars to return those forests to Acadian forests, a million dollars to protect habitat so it's there for our future and our children and their children and their children and their children.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Mermaid-Stratford.

Ms. Beaton: Mr. Speaker, when someone applies for a building permit, they need to submit an application that outlines in detail what they're building. The expectation is if someone applies for a building permit to build a building of a certain size, they are going to actually build to the specs they applied for.

Non-compliance with building permits

Question to the Minister of Agriculture and Land: What happens when the structure being built is not in compliance with the building permit the person applied for?

Ms. Bernard: Good question.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Land.

Mr. Thompson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

In most cases, there's a stop work order and they reevaluate the situation.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Mermaid-Stratford.

Ms. Beaton: Mr. Speaker, the minister is correct.

But I'm hearing from Islanders who live in the vicinity of Bessie Willow Lane in Point Prim who have been following that story for four years, and the families have been following up with government over and over to see how this is going to be resolved.

For years, there's been a stop work order. For four years, there's been a stop work order, and the unfinished building remains as an eyesore in their backyard.

The non-compliance to provincial laws has been completely mishandled by this government.

Minister, what takes four years to resolve a situation like this?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Land.

Mr. Thompson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I am well aware of the property that the member is talking about and it has been a challenge, for sure. That permit was denied, and we are still working on resolving that situation. It's taking a lot longer than it should, and everything from legal action to everything that we can do within our powers, Mr. Speaker, will be done.

Thank you.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Mermaid-Stratford.

Ms. Beaton: Mr. Speaker, everything, this government takes longer than it should.

The most recent update they received from the Province was that the new building permit was, in fact, denied, as the minister stated, and the decision was being appealed to IRAC. So, they reached out to IRAC to find out what that process was, but IRAC's

response was that they no longer hear appeals on building permits.

Accountability for adherence to building permits

Minister, this is was exactly what your department told them when they followed up. This process is ridiculous. It has taken four years and still no resolution. How will you fix this so people are held accountable when they do not adhere to building permits they're issued?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Land.

Mr. Thompson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I agree with the member across. We'll definitely take action and we'll get this resolved.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Altass: According to the Community Sector Network, volunteers make up over half of the labour resources of PEI's not-for-profits.

Unfortunately, there's been a reduction in volunteers engaging with these organizations since the pandemic that is yet to return to pre-pandemic levels.

Programs to encourage volunteerism

Question to the Minister of Economic Growth, Tourism and Culture: What new policies or programs have been implemented to encourage and support volunteerism on PEI?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Economic Growth, Tourism and Culture.

Mr. MacKay: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thanks, hon. member, for the question.

COVID has obviously impacted so many things, and this is obviously one of them, between the mandates put in place and what was taking place around the world, hon. member.

What the department has done, we've increased our supports with numerous non-profit organizations through ourselves and the minister next to me, as well as upscaled some skill funding and Job for Youth funding, as well, to help these organizations (Indistinct)

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Altass: The pandemic has also presented new challenges and opportunities for not-for-profits to improve service delivery, data analysis, support remote learning, automate processes, and better manage volunteers through the use of new technologies.

However, not-for-profits without sufficient funding to implement technological innovations are being left behind.

Support for non-profits re: technology

Question to the Minister of Economic Growth, Tourism and Culture: How is this government supporting not-for-profits to access, provide training, and implement these developing technologies?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Economic Growth, Tourism and Culture.

Mr. MacKay: Thank you, hon. member.

That is something we've heard when we took over government here about three years ago. A lot of these organizations couldn't plan, so one of the very first things we had done when we came in government is gave all these organizations that wanted the long-term funding, the core funding that they've been asking for for years, we made that happen, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. MacKay: We have a great relationship with all the organizations and work with them day to day.

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct)

Mr. MacKay: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Victoria Park.

Ms. Bernard: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Earlier this sitting, the Minister of Social Development and Housing talked about the low-barrier shelter that he says will be in place for this coming winter. I'm wondering what details have been hashed out, and if this will continue after the winter.

Details on low-barrier shelter

To the minister: Can you give us any details or timelines on your plans?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Social Development and Housing.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

To be clear, what we have right now are low-barrier shelters, but we need to lower the barriers. We need to get them as close to no barriers as possible, which, of course, is probably and possibly completely no barrier.

But I said before that I was targeting this winter, and that's what I'm going to continue to do. We are making some progress in the department right now. I believe we have a person who we've been able to second to begin work on that project. We've talked to some non-profit organizations that we were hoping to involve, but we're not sure we can get them on board.

But Mr. Speaker, we're going to make progress and we're going to continue to lower barriers so that we can provide shelter to as many people as possible.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Victoria Park.

Ms. Bernard: (Indistinct) discussed in here how many times, shelter is a human right, and I can understand why organizations are hesitant to work with your government on this because I don't think you fully understand what that means.

One of the things that we have heard over and over again is around the services provided by the Salvation Army. While they are known in the community to be

supporters of some of the most vulnerable, they may not be in the best position to run shelters. They just do not have that expertise.

Partners for low-barrier shelters

To the same minister: Given the history of the Salvation Army and shelter services in this province, who will you be partnering to offer this low-barrier shelter service in Prince Edward Island?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Social Development and Housing.

Mr. Trivers: Mr. Speaker, once again, we hear the Member from Charlottetown-Victoria Park basically going after the Salvation Army, basically slugging that organization. They're a fantastic organization. They do great work.

Ms. Bernard: (Indistinct) going after you.

Mr. Trivers: No organization is perfect. I don't know if we'll be working with the Salvation Army on this one, but as I said, we've got a person in place who's going to explore all options. As she mentioned, organizations are reluctant to get in this area –

Ms. Bernard: Because of you.

Mr. Trivers: – because safety and security is a huge concern.

Ms. Bernard: (Indistinct)

Mr. Trivers: And we've seen recently what happens when you have people that are highly vulnerable and high at risk when you have things like stabbing. This is why it's so important we do this right.

Thank you.

Ms. Bernard: You're right.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton.

Mr. Hammarlund: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

This province has established a monopoly, the Energy Corporation, which is

effectively, aside from the City of Summerside, the only one able to build windmills and at the same time be able to receive a favourable rate for the power produced, yet countries like Denmark get better acceptance from the community by allowing communities and local investors to own the windmills themselves.

Legislation for owning windmills

Question to the Minister of Environment, Energy and Climate Action: Why are you not changing the legislation to allow communities and local investors to participate in owning windmills?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Environment, Energy and Climate Action.

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I don't think the legislation necessarily needs to be changed for somebody to build a windfarm. We're working with groups now that aren't government that are moving through their process. They've talked to landowners. They're in (Indistinct) base. They haven't announced it yet and it's not for me to announce for them, but I think we're doing exactly what you're suggesting without changing legislation.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton.

Mr. Hammarlund: I don't believe that's true. For instance, there's a 100-kilowatt limit on –

An Hon. Member: Do you believe it's true?

Mr. Hammarlund: Anyway, one limitation on making larger buildings, like schools, net zero is the current 100-kilowatt limit on systems. This arbitrary limit prevents the installation of solar collector systems of sufficient size and prevents the installation of economical and large windmills.

Question to the minister: Why do you not change the legislation so that collector systems and windmills can be sized to meet the net zero goals of the province?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Environment, Energy and Climate Action.

Mr. Myers: Well, as the hon. member knows, we don't have any carbon outputs on our energy systems because we buy power from New Brunswick. That doesn't mean that we shouldn't build renewables and that doesn't mean we're not building renewables.

That also doesn't mean that we can't put the type of system up on buildings that they require. If you go to the new school that was built in St. Peters here recently, they have solar collectors that run that entire school. That's a net zero campus. I believe it may be the first net zero campus in eastern Canada, for sure, and I would argue maybe across the whole country.

I'm not sure what makes you think that people can't build large systems, but they can.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton.

Mr. Hammarlund: I believe the net zero school that you are building right now isn't net zero because you're not allowed to put the sufficient amount of collectors on the roof.

The Energy Corporation has helped PEI grow its windmill system. That's great, but only as a tightly controlled monopoly. The Energy Corporation could use its expertise to help communities and landowners to own their own sustainable energy plants.

Landowners and own energy system

To the minister: Do you see a role for the Energy Corporation in actually helping communities and landowners build their own energy systems?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Environment, Energy and Climate Action.

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Yes.

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

Ms. Altass: As I mentioned last week, the Canada Recovery Benefits Act allows Canadians to access the Canada Recovery Sickness Benefit until May 7th, after which workers will no longer be eligible. Without the CRSB, any worker who needs to take more than 50% of a week off will have no sick leave coverage.

Last week, the minister said the department is quite prepared to fill in the gaps and do what we need to do. The deadline to fill the gaps is tomorrow.

Update on paid sick leave programs

Where is the minister's update on provincial paid sick leave programs?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Economic Growth, Tourism and Culture.

Mr. MacKay: It's ready to go.

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

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

The minister of tourism has said numerous times this session how PEI is gearing up for a record-breaking tourism season, which I hope is true. However, I remain concerned about how PEI is equipped to handle the influx of tourists that the minister expects in many ways.

Options for tourist transportation on PEI

Question to the minister of tourism: How many people have registered for the Turo car-sharing program to date, and can you provide an update on additional options for tourist transportation that you have secured?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Economic Growth, Tourism and Culture.

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

I don't have an update on the exact number, but what I can tell you, it's a significant amount. It's more than the company had

ever expected here on PEI, which is a great thing.

There's a working group together that is working with all sources of transportation – the bussing side of it, the taxi side of it, as well as other rental car companies – to make sure we're prepared for this summer's tourism season.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

I look forward to that Turo program coming – helping everybody on the Island, actually, and helping the tourists.

Tourism operators are going to face many challenges regarding the various stages that people are at with precautions of COVID-19. Courses like Safe Haven, a program that is being offered by TIAPEI, are being helpful tools to ensure standard practices are being followed for cleaning and disinfecting appropriately for COVID-19.

Programs for tourist operators re: COVID

Question to the same minister: How many tourism operators have signed up for this program?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Economic Growth, Tourism and Culture.

Mr. MacKay: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I don't have the exact number with me, hon. member, but I'll certainly get it to you; a significant amount. This has been great uptake all during COVID, not only government, TIAPEI, but all ministry have worked great together to get through this and make sure we have a successful tourism season.

It's positive. We're looking forward to a significant amount of visitors this year. It's going to be a good year for tourism.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Perry: I certainly hope it's a good year for our tourism, also.

However, the labour shortage that our province is experiencing can be very harmful to tourism. If someone receives poor service due to staffing shortages, it affects both the business owner and the province's reputation, and it can affect future growth, not to mention the staff working during shortages are ran off their feet and are at higher risk of burnout, injuries, and more.

Tourism job fairs and labour gaps

Question to the same minister: What was the result of the recently held tourism job fairs, and what do the labour gaps look like for this season?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Economic Growth, Tourism and Culture.

Mr. MacKay: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

That is certainly a great question. We certainly have a labour shortage here on PEI as well as the whole country. Every province is dealing with the same thing right now.

We did have two successful job fairs. There's no doubt that the tourism industry is the one that's being impacted the most here right now.

We're being creative; doing everything we can. We have a new immigration stream that is going to help with some of that as well. We are going to increase our programming to help a lot of these tourism operators be able to hire more and operate longer into the season.

But there's definitely going to be a shortage of labour, there's no question of that. We've just got to keep working through it.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Mr. Gallant: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As I'm sure everyone on this side of the House can agree, receiving timely and clear answers from government can be quite the challenge. I'm not sure if this is due to the lack of prioritizing, transparency, arrogance, general will, or just a sign of disorganization of this government.

A few weeks ago, I brought a question to the House that was asked by some of my constituents, and I still not have received an answer.

Mr. McNeilly: Simple.

Taxable income re: support (further)

Mr. Gallant: Question to the Minister of Finance: Will the \$150 emergency payment by CRA be taxable, yes or no?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. member, I couldn't answer that at the time because we weren't sure how the payment was going to come out, but I can assure the hon. member and I can assure your constituent that, because it will be part of the CRA payment, it will not be taxable.

Thank you.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Mr. Gallant: Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, the old saying goes that nothing in life is free, and I would have to think that this request the Province made to CRA would require a reasonable amount of work for them and their resources.

Province paying CRA for support

Question to the Minister of Finance: Is the Province paying the CRA to do this work, and if so, how much?

An Hon. Member: No.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Ms. Compton: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

It's my understanding that we are not paying CRA, but I will confirm that and get back to you.

Thank you.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Mr. Gallant: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The proposed amendment to the Income Tax Act as it relates to our carbon tax and emergency relief payment that were given out yesterday indicated that individuals who make less than \$70,000 a year are now eligible for the \$150 emergency payment, up from the proudly announced \$50,000 that our caucus said was far too low from the start.

Reason for timing of relief cheques

Question to the finance minister: Is the reason the payment could not be made sooner by CRA because we didn't have the legislation to allow them to do so?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Ms. Compton: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. member, as I said earlier, we're working with CRA to ensure that we can do this in a timely fashion. It's unfortunate we haven't done it yet, but we will get that payment out as of July 5th.

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

Mr. Henderson: Mr. Speaker, I hate to see the minister of health not get a question in QP for a day, so here goes.

A few weeks ago, the minister of health boasted about the new paramedics Island EMS was hiring, and Island response times would be improving. He said 13 new paramedics were hired recently.

Yet, yesterday, I was hearing that there were response calls taking over an hour to arrive, and in fact, last night, there were no ambulances available west of Charlottetown. Even as we speak, there are only three available in the entire province right now.

Mr. McNeilly: Wow.

Ambulance coverage time and new hires

Mr. Henderson: Minister, how come your big hiring announcement has not resolved the issue within a month after the hiring, and have you looked into the apparent lack of ambulance coverage since the staff started?

Mr. McNeilly: Good question.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Hudson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I do thank the hon. member for the question.

The hon. member, as yesterday, it's always great that he keeps me in mind, keeps me front and centre. Didn't give me the dapper approach today, but that may be coming in the next question. I'm not sure.

But anyway, yes, there are 13 new hires, and with an additional four.

Our paramedics do a great job. Yes, when there are a number of calls come in, certainly, that is going to impact the number of ambulances that are available out there. But the hon. member says that as of now, three; you know, that is going to vary from hour to hour, minute to minute by times, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

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

Mr. Henderson: That's good to know. So then, after hiring these 17 graduates for this spring, already, paramedics are telling me their vacation schedule requests have been denied, and there were trucks sitting empty this week. And last night, there were actually zero ambulances in the O'Leary zone, and none available, once again, west of Charlottetown.

Providing ambulance response coverage

To the same minister: With no new paramedics graduating for another semester and expected tourism numbers to increase this summer, what are you going to do to

provide Islanders with a reasonable ambulance response coverage?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Hudson: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and again, thank the Member from O'Leary-Inverness for the question.

To cut to the chase, yes, I do, I agree with how he's coming forward, the premise of his questions. We do have to provide that service in conjunction with Island EMS.

The Premier and I had what was by times a difficult conversation with Medavie, just like we have to make sure that those services are there for Islanders and we have work with our partners to make sure that they are.

Thank you.

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

Mr. Henderson: Mr. Speaker, this minister has to provide some results and outcomes here. They've done the hiring. Now we're sitting here with the problems a month after the hiring.

Once again, I had asked questions about the minister not publishing the Island EMS response times for various ambulance zones on PEI. After I had pressured the minister in March, he reluctantly published the 2021 response time.

But here we are again in May and the response times have not been published for the first quarter of 2022.

Publishing of EMS response times

Minister, why has your department published the response times on your government website – or why haven't you? Are you afraid that you will see worsening numbers from the December '21 numbers or are you just waiting for the Legislature to close?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Hudson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

No, certainly, we're not waiting for the Legislature to close, absolutely not.

Premier King: Will it ever close?

Mr. Hudson: Yeah.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Speaker: Minister.

Mr. Hudson: Mr. Speaker, I will endeavour to get those response times. I do not have them in hand right now, but I will endeavour to get them to the hon. member as fast as possible.

He insinuates, though, that we have done nothing.

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct)

Mr. Hudson: Could be nothing further from the truth. As I've said here before, if you want to sit here for 10 or 15 minutes and if the Speaker would grant me that time, I'd go through –

Some Hon. Members: No. No.

Mr. Hudson: – I could go through the accomplishments that we have made in the health care system in three short years.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Deagle: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I want to continue on the topic of the cost of living and how Islanders are being stretched thin right now. I know we do talk a lot about providing help to low-income Islanders, which is definitely needed, and I know we have provided that.

But what's often forgotten about is those in the middle-income bracket because they don't qualify for many of these programs.

Middle-income Islanders/cost of living

Question to the Minister of Finance: What are we doing to help middle-income Islanders through this cost of living crisis?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Premier King: (Indistinct) borrow the money from them, yeah.

Ms. Compton: Hon. member, it's something that I bring up regularly during Cabinet and in caucus, that we do need to do more for middle-income Islanders.

You can look at reducing child care, lowering the basic personal amount, toonie transit; all things that middle-income Islanders can access.

We continue to expand programs and we will continue to do so as long as it's fiscally responsible.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Deagle: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

One of the programs that many Islanders don't qualify for is the home heating program. Now, it's a good program, but you have to make under a certain amount, and I think it's around \$45,000.

However, if you actually went out and talked to a family, to the parents that made even 50 or \$60,000 each, they can't afford to put \$2,000 in their oil tank. This is spring; we're coming out of winter and they can't afford it.

Expanding of home heating program

A question to the Minister of Finance: Can you look at expanding the thresholds for the Home Heating Assistance Program so that those that earn a middle income on PEI will qualify for it?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Ms. Compton: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

We know home heating oil is one of the big challenges we've got. The hon. opposition would like to increase that by 17 cents, which –

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Ms. Compton: – then they can pay their increases with that rebate cheque, but we still won't be any closer to carbon neutrality.

Hon. member, we're discussing it on a regular basis as to how we can increase thresholds. I will work with the Department of Social Development and Housing and all departments to make sure that we're there for Islanders.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Deagle: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Another way we could help Islanders is if we froze property taxes, which this year will actually go up significantly because they're tied to CPI.

CPI in March was 8.9% in PEI, the highest year over year increase since 1991, the year I was born.

An Hon. Member: What?

Freezing of property taxes

Mr. Deagle: Will the Minister of Finance commit to freezing property taxes to provide relief to Islanders who need it right now?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Ms. Compton: Mr. Speaker, hon. member, you're making me feel old.

Seriously, the increase in property taxes is tied to CPI. The increase cannot be any more than 5%, but hon. member, I will state right here that we will freeze the increases to property taxes for this coming year.

We know Islanders are challenged and this is one way that we can help. I am working with my department – we have been now for a couple of months – to try and figure out

how we can do that. I will make that commitment in the House today.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Summerside-Wilmot.

Ms. Lund: Mr. Speaker, I'm still hearing from school counsellors who tell me they're responsible for more students than the department's ratio say they're supposed to have under their care, and next year's allotment doesn't look any better.

Counsellor/student ratio in schools

A question to the minister of education: How many schools are still not meeting the new ratio set out by your department?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Education and Lifelong Learning.

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

Certainly, school counsellors has been a topic of discussion here in the Legislature, and certainly an important one, given what they do for our students and our school communities. We certainly appreciate all the work that they do.

As I've suggested or I've said in this Legislature a number of times, last year, we added 11 new school counsellors to the system. That is historic in nature. It hasn't been done in decades, and I'm really proud of that.

We did decrease the ratios. I think it was from 400 to about 331 –

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct) you have to follow it.

Ms. Jameson: – and we are meeting those ratios –

An Hon. Member: You're not.

Ms. Jameson: – so I'd be interested to hear from the hon. member regarding which schools she's referring to, but certainly, we are meeting those ratios, and again, we are

investing in the mental health and well-being of our students. I'm really proud of that.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Summerside-Wilmot.

Ms. Lund: (Indistinct) it could be that the minister of education doesn't know that we have schools in the province that are not meeting the ratios that are (Indistinct) by her department.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

School counsellors and teaching assignments

Ms. Lund: A question to the same minister: How many school counsellors, many of whom are responsible for more students than they're supposed to have already, are also responsible for carrying a teaching assignment?

Ms. Bernard: Good question.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Education and Lifelong Learning.

Ms. Jameson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We certainly recognize that this year, our – this morning, actually, I just spent the morning at three teacher association AGMs, and it was my opportunity to thank all of our school staff across the board who have been doing incredible work in our schools to keep our students in the classroom, learning and enhancing and being there for their well-being.

If I look at the investment that we've made in our school counsellors – and of course, we've had to redeploy some of our staff within the department, and both the school authorities, they've stepped up. It's been all hands on deck, and if I look at the absenteeism rates across the board this week, 11% absenteeism –

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct)

Ms. Jameson: – which is normal. We have had a successful –

Speaker: Okay.

Ms. Jameson: – school year.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Summerside-Wilmot.

Ms. Lund: Mr. Speaker, I don't know what question I asked that that's the answer I just got.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Lund: I'm going to ask again.

Counsellors in schools each day

To the same minister: How many schools do not have a counsellor physically in the building each day? Let's try that one.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Education and Lifelong Learning.

Ms. Jameson: Yeah, thanks again, Mr. Speaker.

As I keep reiterating here, 11 new school counsellors to our system –

Ms. Bernard: That's not the question.

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct)

Ms. Jameson: – and something we can –

Ms. Bernard: You don't know.

Ms. Jameson: – be extremely proud of. There are a couple of schools across the board that share counsellors, and we recognize that these school counsellors, you know, they do such tremendous work across these schools, and again, I'm really appreciative. I want to thank my colleagues in here for supporting –

Ms. Bernard: Oh, my God.

Ms. Jameson: – the increases to the budget, and across the floor, as well, for supporting last year's budget in adding these additional counsellors to the system.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Summerside-Wilmot.

Ms. Lund: Mr. Speaker, this is totally unacceptable. This is two questions I have asked that the answer I got doesn't even relate to what I'm asking.

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct)

Ms. Lund: I'm going to ask you again.

Mr. Myers: (Indistinct)

School counsellors/teaching assignments (further)

Ms. Lund: How many counsellors in our school –

Mr. Myers: (Indistinct)

Ms. Lund: – are also carrying a teaching assignment? That's the question.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Education and Lifelong Learning.

Ms. Jameson: Thanks, Mr. Speaker.

Again, 11 school counsellors –

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Ms. Jameson: – that's really impressive. Again, in decades, we haven't seen that –

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct)

Ms. Jameson: – so I'm really proud of that investment.

Ms. Bernard: (Indistinct) embarrassing.

Ms. Jameson: And as long as I'm in this chair, I'm going to continue advocating for it.

As it relates to the hon. member's question across, I can certainly bring that back, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you very much.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Summerside-Wilmot.

Ms. Lund: Mr. Speaker, this is a bizarre experience, I have to be honest with you. This is recorded, minister.

Premier King: (Indistinct) she'd bring it back.

Ms. Lund: I'm going to tell you –

Premier King: She said she'd bring it back.

Ms. Lund: After four times of being asked, she said she'd bring it back.

Mr. Speaker, the minister has told this House that she's having no problem filling counselling positions, but we are hearing from counsellors on the other side that are struggling. We are being told that we are not meeting allotments that are set out by your department now, and that you're not on pace to do it next year.

To the same minister: Since you're having no difficulty recruiting people, will you ensure that every school is meeting the allotment that is set out by your department to have?

Ms. Bernard: Good question.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Education and Lifelong Learning.

Ms. Jameson: Thanks, Mr. Speaker.

Yeah, I'm really proud of the HR staff at both of our school authorities who have been able to fill these counselling positions so we have had a full allotment.

Again, looking back, 11 school counsellors –

An Hon. Member: Wow.

Ms. Jameson: – we're going to keep advocating for them –

Ms. Bernard: Can you repeat that one more time?

Ms. Jameson: – we're going to keep adding them to the system in the future.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Ms. Jameson: – and I do appreciate the hon. member's question and her advocacy on this matter.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Altass: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's great to hear the minister let us know that there will be coverage for Islanders now that the federal Canada Recovery Sickness Benefit is ending, but I'm surprised that there isn't more information being provided in an announcement because this is certainly good news. I have to ask for more details here.

Extension to Special Leave Fund

Will this be an extension of the Special Leave Fund or a new program? How long will this coverage last, and what exactly will you be covering?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Economic Growth, Tourism and Culture.

Mr. MacKay: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Like we committed to do exactly what we said last week, that we'd be ready when the federal program runs out, and that's exactly what we did.

There's going to be an announcement at approximately 2:00 p.m. this afternoon.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Victoria Park, final question.

Ms. Bernard: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I've had seniors who live in my district reach out to ask when the Seniors' Food Security program would be starting again. They had no idea that this was a pilot program for Kings County only. They're not able to afford food, and getting to the food

banks is a huge, impossible challenge for some in some cases.

Programs such as these definitely make elders feel more independent and less of a burden on their families. Quote.

Food security for seniors (further)

Question to the Minister of Social Development and Housing: How long will seniors who do not live in Kings County wait for food security?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Social Development and Housing.

Mr. Trivers: Mr. Speaker, we've talked about this before in the House. The Member from Charlottetown-West Royalty asked questions, big proponent of seniors' food.

Ms. Bernard: (Indistinct) answer.

Mr. Trivers: It's been very successful. We already committed to doing it in not only Kings County; we're going to roll it out across the Island as soon as possible.

I think the hon. member should stay tuned for an announcement in the near future.

Speaker: End of Question Period.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Statements by Ministers

Presenting and Receiving Petitions

Tabling of Documents

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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

By leave of the House, I beg leave to table a report titled, The Canada's Economic Growth Opportunities Report and An Atlantic Canada Perspective, and I move, seconded by the Honourable Member from Tyne Valley-Sherbrooke, that the said document be now received and do lie on the Table.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Minister from Economic Growth, Tourism and Culture.

Mr. MacKay: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

By Command of Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor, I beg leave to table responses from questions yesterday for programs, activities and services for international students, and I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Social Development and Housing, that the said document be now received and do lie on the Table.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Member from O'Leary-Inverness.

Mr. Henderson: By leave of the House, I beg leave to table a document from the PEI Government website published on Ground Ambulance Response Times on May 6th, 9:00 a.m., and I move, seconded by the Honourable Member from Charlottetown-West Royalty, that the said document be now received and do lie on the Table.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Reports by Committees

Speaker: The hon. Member from Summerside-Wilmot.

Ms. Lund: Mr. Speaker, as Chair of the Standing Committee on Rules, Regulations, Private Bills and Privileges, I beg leave to introduce the 4th Report of the Second Session of the said committee, entitled Parliamentary Calendar.

I move, seconded by the Honourable Member from Charlottetown-Victoria Park, that the report be now received and do lie on the Table.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Ms. Lund: Mr. Speaker, I'm seeking unanimous consent to proceed to the motion to adopt the report of the committee without proper notice.

Speaker: Hon. members, does she have unanimous consent to continue?

Some Hon. Members: Yes.

Speaker: Hon. member, you have unanimous consent.

Ms. Lund: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As Chair of the Standing Committee on Rules, Regulations, Private Bills and Privileges, I move, seconded by the Honourable Member from Charlottetown-Victoria Park, that the report of the committee be adopted.

As a result of its deliberations, your committee has presented this report for three recommendations, which I'll summarize for the House.

Recommendation No. 1 changes the start date of the fall sitting from the third Tuesday in October to the first Tuesday in November.

Recommendation No. 2 deletes the rule relating to planning weeks. This means the House will meet from the start of the sitting pursuant to Rule 3.(1) and (2) until the House is adjourned for the sitting, except for the week prescribed by the *School Calendar Regulations* under the *Education Act* for the mid-term break.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Lund: Your enthusiasm is noted, minister.

Recommendation No. 3 outlines guidelines for the calendar that is published by the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly on or before September 30th of the next calendar year.

As mentioned in Recommendation No. 2, the House shall not meet during the week prescribed by the *School Calendar Regulations* under the *Education Act* for the mid-term break, which will be reflected in the published parliamentary calendar.

In addition to the House not meeting during the week prescribed for the mid-term break, the report also recommends that standing and special committees of the Assembly follow the additional guidelines and should not meet during the following times, except in urgent or extraordinary circumstances: the mid-term break, which is March Break; the

week prior to the start of the winter-spring sitting; and the week prior to the start of the fall sitting.

Also, the report strongly suggests that committees aim to follow the school calendar and governmental holidays when scheduling meeting times.

Your committee advises that, following the adoption of the report, these rule changes will be effective immediately and arrangements will be made to update and reprint the *Rules of the Legislative Assembly* for distribution to all members, but in the interim, an updated version of the Rule Book will be posted on the Assembly's website.

For additional clarity, this will become effective immediately upon adoption of this report. Next week, May 10th through the 13th, initially scheduled as a planning week, would become a regular week, if required.

Speaker: Is there anyone else that would like to speak to the report?

The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Belvedere.

Ms. Bell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Just a couple of short comments in terms of planning and looking at the repercussions of changes.

Moving the start of the fall session to later in the session, which, obviously, had come from study and so on before, has a couple of other repercussions that may bring challenges. This is part of the process that we review; we see what the impact is and then we change, again, if necessary.

It shortens the time period, potentially, between the fall session and spring session, which is already a very short space, which puts more pressure on committees and the time that they have to meet and do their important work between sessions, and also puts more pressure on staff, including the legislative staff, those who work in Legislative Counsel, in preparing between those sessions, particularly for the legislative agenda.

The other piece around that is that – we've heard about the timing of this – both the fall session and the spring session is predicated on the need to be able to address the budgets, but there seems to be an ongoing narrative that the budget is the most important work that happens in the floor of the House.

While it is obviously critical for government to be able to have authorization to proceed with the supply of funds through appropriations, it is not the only work that we do here. Obviously, this sitting is a little different, being very light on a legislative agenda.

But whether or not the budget is ready at the beginning of the session in the fall shouldn't predicate when we start that session. We always have other work to do and that includes the work that happens on this side of the House with holding government to account, as well as government's responsibility bringing forward meaningful legislation and allowing enough time for that to debate.

The budget is one piece of the work that we do, and the timing of that budget availability should not be determining when we begin that session. I am genuinely concerned about the reduction in time that's being made for committee meetings and for the prep that the House needs to be able to do to effectively deliver its legislative agenda.

I appreciate that that's not shared by others in the House, but I think it's important that we recognize thoughtful approach that's being brought forward by the rules committee is also informed by the opinions that maybe don't necessarily always make it forward when that report comes through.

I really appreciate the work of the rules committee that they've done in having really good and long conversations about this. But I wanted to ensure that I had the opportunity to share these thoughts because these are ones that we have discussed in and out of this space.

They're also things that are addressed in other legislatures across the country, which are very comfortable with planning weeks with calendars that align with the school calendar, as ours does, and are perfectly able

to deliver on committees, budgets – thoughtful budget deliberation – and a legislative agenda without needing to remove the opportunity to meet and discuss as we currently do with our planning week schedule.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to discuss.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: Is there anyone else that would like to say a few words?

Shall it carry? Carried.

Introduction of Government Bills

Government Motions

Orders of the Day (Government)

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I move, seconded by the hon. Member from Morell-Donagh, that the 18th order of the day be now read.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk: Order No. 18, *An Act to Amend the Climate Leadership Act*, Bill No. 60, has been moved that it be read a second time, and debate was adjourned by the hon. Member from Charlottetown-West Royalty.

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

Mr. McNeilly: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'll be very brief. Wake up on a nice day, a sunny day today, we see that there's increases at the pumps again. This is going to affect Islanders and it comes down to the bottom line. This bill is a revenue bill. It does not deal with the plan to spend the money and that's the real issue.

There's not only two options; there are other options. The most logical option would be to change the spending plan, how much money we're able to give back to Islanders. Be realistic with how much money we should set aside for green projects – very important.

But we see that all that money wasn't spent before, in the past – \$500 EV rebates. Can we get the cars? Can we get those in? These are some of the questions that we have to ask.

Take some money, go back to your budgets and shore up your departments, look for any additional spending. When you see padding there, make sure that money goes back to Islanders, and that's really what we're saying here.

Sharpen your pencils and we'll put more money back to Islanders. I said an increase from 140 to more like \$500 going back to Islanders would be the start of this conversation and that could be an option.

That's all we're talking about – understanding reducing our carbon is important, but we understand, too, that Islanders are trying. They're doing everything they can. I want to see them get more money so that they can pursue environmental concerns and make sure that we understand that there's a middle ground there.

Saying that, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to conclude my remarks and thank you for the opportunity to speak.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton.

Mr. Hammarlund: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

First of all, I'm also very opposed to keeping any of the carbon tax in government hands. In fact, the carbon tax is not really a tax as long as the government returns all the funds to people. It's really a distribution of funds, but I'll get back to that later.

First, some history of government support of gas prices. This is a completely Liberal idea introduced by the Ghiz government as part of their campaign promises. About 10 years ago, they implemented a gas tax cut of 4.4 cents per litre. Is it not ironic that this is exactly the same amount that we are now talking about implementing as carbon tax?

When implemented, the Ghiz tax reduction, which I believe is still in effect, would exactly cancel the new carbon tax, so Islanders will still be absolutely nowhere when it comes to reduce the use of gas, now seven years past the Paris Accord.

Then the next Liberal government introduced another gas tax reduction of a little over two cents, matched with a similar carbon tax for absolutely zero effect. This is not the kind of net zero Islanders are looking for.

As we know, the new Conservative government continued this tax reduction for three more years to this day, and it's my understanding it will last another year.

What has this government largesse done for Islanders? Well, the lower gas prices has benefited Islanders putting more money in their pockets. This is like lowering liquor prices. I'm sure that would be very popular and I'm sure people would consume more liquor, as a result, and end up with a hangover, or worse.

Similar results with lowering gas prices. Islanders have bought new gas-guzzling cars as never before. Islanders are now waking up to huge increases in gas prices and totally unprepared to deal with this. The government has obviously, successfully, over the last 10 years, with the help of gas subsidies, told Islanders to love gas cars.

Now, let us look at how much the government spent lowering gas prices over the past 10 years. Lowering the gas price by about two cents cost about 13 million last year, so double that for four cents a year and multiple it with 10.

Suddenly, we see that the government spent well over \$200 million subsidizing gas. Just think if this had been spent on housing instead of lowering gas prices, we might have made a dent in our housing shortage –

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hammarlund: – or some other worthwhile progress like reducing poverty.

Recently, both the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition agreed that subsidizing gas was a bad idea. The third party leader had

suggested that the government subsidize gas in response to the recent gas price increases and he was clearly disappointed that he got no support.

There are three problems with supporting gas prices. The first one is the huge expense, a reduction of say 20 cents per liter would cost well over \$100 million a year; secondly, any subsidy would encourage consumption at the time when we are trying to reduce consumption –

An Hon. Member: That's right.

Mr. Hammarlund: – and thirdly, the subsidy would not flow to lower income people, people who need help the most.

So, while we should enjoy that the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition did agree on something, the Premier, despite what he is saying, is in fact subsidizing gas prices – has been supporting gas prices for the past three years and intend to continue for one more year. He is doing this at the same time as he is imposing a carbon tax, the effect of which is completely nullified by the gas subsidy. I believe the only words to describe these actions are unparliamentary, so I won't utter the words, but it has succeeded in completely confusing the public.

But let's get back to the carbon tax. The entire purpose of a carbon tax is to make carbon emitting fuels more expensive. Increases in the price of carbon emitting fuels would automatically make other and better options more attractive just by being more expensive savings, from say, taking a bus will simply increase the more expensive the carbon emitting fuel is.

Economists, especially conservative ones, worry that a new carbon tax could have a negative impact on the economy, so they all insist that all the carbon tax collected be returned to the public making it a non-tax as the government gets no new revenues to spend.

The Province of B.C. has done this for a decade, reducing regular taxes by the same amount as collected from carbon taxes. However, this is not as popular as simply returning the cash directly to people. People somehow don't trust government and all

their tax refund; cash in hand is more real to people, so this is the way to go.

Carbon taxes with matching carbon credits are the most effective action governments can take because there's a completely clear connection between carbon tax and emission reduction without the government spending any new funds. Let us compare a \$5,000 subsidy for an electric car with potential annual savings generated by carbon taxes.

As I mentioned before, the purchase subsidy only guarantees the purchase of an electric car, but it in no way guarantees a certain reduction in emissions. The person buying the electric car may only drive a few thousand miles a year and with it, the considerable embodied energy of electric cars there may never be any bonus to the climate. Additionally, people choosing not to drive getting no subsidy at all even though not having a car, is clearly by far, the best action environmentally speaking.

Compare this to carbon tax, which will have a much bigger impact on those driving more miles or driving more efficient cars. Basically, the more people drive, the more they will save as well, whether the option be purchasing an electric car or using public transportation. Notice that people will be deciding their own best action instead of the government doing it for them. Notice that people who make the best choices, such as avoiding a car altogether, are rewarded the most. Know that getting just \$1,000 per year in carbon credit is way better than a purchase subsidy in the long run.

The same argument goes for all other subsidies for equipment. We don't know if people install heat pumps because of the less expensive heat, or simply because they want the air conditioning in the summer, causing a bigger use of energy instead of a smaller one.

This is why carbon tax is the most effective and the cheapest, by far, method at combatting climate change, but only if all the carbon taxes are returned to the people. After all, people know best.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: Is there anyone else that would like to speak?

If not, I'll go back to the mover of the motion.

The hon. Minister of Finance to close debate.

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I move, seconded by the hon. Premier, that we close debate on this.

An Hon. Member: Call the question.

Speaker: Hon. members, the question is on. Shall the bill be read a second time?

All those opposed say, 'nay'.

Some Hon. Members: Nay!

Speaker: All those in favour say, 'aye'.

Some Hon. Members: Aye!

Speaker: All those opposed, raise your hand.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Speaker: Yes, you can get clarification we're – yes, what's your question?

Ms. Beaton: This bill has not yet gone to Committee of the Whole House. Is that what happens after we do this vote?

Speaker: Yes.

Premier King: We're voting to bring it into committee or not.

Speaker: This question is on. Shall the said bill be read a second time?

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Ms. Beaton: Yes, okay.

Speaker: All those opposed say, 'nay'.

Raise your hands, sorry, raise your hands.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Speaker: All those opposed raise your hands.

Ms. Beaton: We're reading it a second time.

Speaker: All those in favour, raise your hand.

Premier King: You just spent the last month doing it.

Clerk: *An Act to Amend the Climate Leadership Act*, Bill No. 60, read a second time.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Member from Tignish-Palmer Road to chair the Committee of the Whole House, please.

Chair (Perry): The House is now in a Committee of the Whole House to take into consideration a bill to be intitled *An Act to Amend the Climate Leadership Act*.

A request has been made to bring a stranger onto the floor.

Shall it be granted? Granted.

Would you please state your name and position for Hansard?

Ryan Pineau: Ryan Pineau; I'm the Provincial Tax Commissioner.

Chair: Thank you very much and welcome.

Minister, would you like to begin by giving a brief statement on the bill's intent?

Ms. Compton: Sure. Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

This is an act to ensure that the Department of Finance can collect the tax that we need to for the *Climate Leadership Act* and the bill to establish a new price for carbon.

Chair: Hon. members, is your wish that we proceed reading the bill clause by clause, or just open up for general questions?

Open up for general questions? Okay. I will start compiling my list now.

The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Belvedere.

Ms. Bell: Thank you, Chair.

Can you give us an overview of your carbon pricing strategy as presented in this bill?

Ms. Compton: Sorry, could you repeat that?

Ms. Bell: Can you give us an overview of your carbon pricing strategy, please?

Ryan Pineau: I don't think we have a carbon strategy as part of this bill. This bill is for collection of revenues.

The pricing of the carbon that are derived from the federal climate leadership, or the *Greenhouse Gas Pollution Pricing Act*. So, with the governments carbon pricing, or carbon policy of moving to a \$50 a tonne regimen on carbon pricing, this act is what's put in place to collect that revenue at \$50 a tonne and put a price on carbon at that level.

Chair: Promoter.

Ms. Compton: Thank you very much, Chair.

I just want to – first, since we're going just general questions, I do have two amendments.

The first one is:

Section 2 of Bill No. 60 is amended in the proposed Table 1 – Rates of Levy on Fossil Fuels by the deletion of the heading of the last column, "31-Mar-22", and the substitution of the new heading, "3 Days After the Date of Assent".

Chair: Do you have copies?

Ms. Compton: Yes.

Chair: Copies will be circulated, so we will deal with one amendment at a time, minister.

Ms. Compton: Okay. Yeah.

Chair: So, just give us a moment to circulate that.

Ms. Compton: So, Chair –

Chair: Yes, minister?

Ms. Compton: I'll just clarify that this relates to the fact that we didn't implement this the 31st of March. So, we'll do it upon assent; three days after assent.

Chair: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Belvedere.

Ms. Bell: So, is this to speak to the amendments?

Chair: Yes.

Ms. Bell: Okay. So, obviously, good to see these coming forward, otherwise we would have had to seek them given the delay in bringing this back to the floor has taken us well passed the date that was originally in the legislation as it was. And I know, I think we're just doing the first one first, which is removing – one references the other, so looking at them both. So, even though we've only got the one on the table right now, Chair, one amendment references the other amendment. So, just my understanding on this is, you were saying this will take assent on – this will become proclaimed on Royal Assent.

Ms. Compton: Three days after.

Ms. Bell: So, we're removing – right, and that the effect of this in terms of implementation is three days after assent. Is that correct?

Ryan Pineau: The original bill had an actual proclamation date, whereas this one removes it, which will push the bill coming in force on assent, but then the table is assent plus three days. So, that essentially just gives us an opportunity to notify the Island Regulatory and Appeals Commission as well the retailers and wholesalers to implement the cash register changes that are required for this.

Ms. Bell: And you have confidence that three days is enough for them to be able to do those changes?

Ryan Pineau: Our concern was, if it fell on a late Friday afternoon, that pushes us at least until Monday, so that they could have notice to get somebody in, (Indistinct) three days would be sufficient.

Ms. Bell: Yeah, those were my only questions. I was going to ask if there was back dating and so on, but I think effectively, you were just saying this is the day that this is becoming effective from. And then, we'll save the other questions then on the bill as amended for afterwards.

Thank you.

Chair: Any further questions on the amendment?

Shall the amendment carry? Carried.

Back to the bill as amended.

Ms. Compton: I have another.

Chair: Minister.

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The second amendment is:

Section 3 of Bill No. 60 is deleted.

So, the motion amends – the bill is intended to come into force on assent. So, basically as the hon. member said, that one is tied to the other.

And we do have copies.

Chair: So, hon. members, again, copies are being circulated, and I will open the floor once all members receive.

The floor is now open for questions.

Ms. Bell: I already covered my questions, Chair. I'm good.

Thank you.

Chair: Shall this amendment carry? Carried.

We're back to speaking to the bill as amended.

The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Mr. Gallant: Just for clarity minister.

So, you referred to it today in Question Period. So, the federal backstop, could you give us like how much a litre that would be if you choose to go with that? And how much exactly is this one going to be when the increase comes into effect after we pass this bill provincially?

There's already a tax on this now from a few years back. So, could you give us the exact amounts just for this House so (Indistinct)

Ryan Pineau: The full amount that will be in effect, or the increase from this bill.

Mr. Gallant: The full –

Ryan Pineau: Really, there are 26 fuels listed within the *Climate Leadership Act*. Really on PEI, we only deal with a couple of them. So, in terms of the ones that are relevant, gasoline and diesel.

If you look at your table one, gasoline will be 11.05 cents and your diesel also found on there is 13.41 cents. So, that's the equivalent to \$50 a tonne. It'd be the same rate that's within the *Greenhouse Gas Pollution Pricing Act*, which is the federal backstop, those rates.

Mr. Gallant: So, those are the total rates with the four cents before, and the four and a half cents you're putting on.

Ryan Pineau: Right. So, in terms of the increase that this bill puts in to bring us from the existing \$30 a tonne that we're at, to the \$50 a tonne that we're going to, it's 4.42 cents on gas and 5.36 on diesel.

Mr. Gallant: So, to refer back to the comments that the finance minister made, if you go with the federal backstop, 13 cents right away. Is that on top of what's there or does it take in the four cents that's already there off of that, which makes it nine? How does that work?

Ryan Pineau: So, you have to first repeal the *Climate Leadership Act*, otherwise the

federal backstop would come on top of this. So, if the federal government were to put us into the backstop, in theory, they don't do a partial, they would put the full 13 cents on top of what's existing there now. So, for gasoline the existing rate is 6.63 cents, so you would be adding another 11 cents of the federal backstop on top of that. Unless you also repeal the *Climate Leadership Act* at the same time.

Mr. Gallant: So, why would be adding 11 cents if the federal backstop is 13?

Ryan Pineau: Sorry?

Mr. Gallant: Why would you be adding 11 if the federal backstop is 13?

Ryan Pineau: The 13 is on diesel. Sorry, I'm using gasoline as the –

Mr. Gallant: So, the minister used diesel then when she made her comments.

Ryan Pineau: Okay, so, 13. You would – for diesel, you're at eight currently, 8.05 on the climate leadership. It's going to 13.41. If the backstop were in place, it would be 13.41. So, that 13.41 would go on top of the 8.05 as it stands without repealing the *Climate Leadership Act* at the same time.

Mr. Gallant: One other question.

From the briefing we had – so, certain fuels are exempt now, but they're not going to be exempt going forward?

Ryan Pineau: All the existing exemptions were maintained in this iteration of the agreement which is a one-year agreement. So, the biggies there would be for furnace oil as well as propane to a lesser extent, but the main one being furnace oil. They're in the levy list in table one, but at a rate of zero. So, that has continued again for this round of the carbon pricing agreement with the federal government.

Under the *Greenhouse Gas Pollution Pricing Act*, the federal backstop, those are already on the table, so they do have a rate associated with them and the rate for furnace oil would be the same as the rate for diesel. Those fuels are the same fuel, so it would be 13.41 cents for furnace oil under the federal

backstop, whereas under the *Climate Leadership Act*, it's zero right now.

Mr. Gallant: You say it's a one-year contract. What happens in a year? Is that going to go to 13% or is it going to go to five? It's not going to stay at zero, is that correct?

Ryan Pineau: Our department isn't the ones responsible for undertaking those negotiations. The department of environment deals with their federal counterparts in the department of environment federally to do those negotiations, but the next deal that is being worked on is a longer term deal. It's not a one-year. They have to submit a plan to get them to 2030.

Mr. Gallant: I'll pass for now.

Thank you.

Chair: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Belvedere.

Ms. Bell: Thank you, Chair.

Following on from the Leader of the Third Party's questions, I know you had said that this bill is just for the one year. It's like a bridging thing between – while those other negotiations are ongoing. We're already a year late with this. This was actually due last year. Is that correct?

Ryan Pineau: I'll clarify that this bill will continue on for more than one year. Once the rate is set, it doesn't have an end date, until a new agreement is in place with the federal government. But the federal government – the deal that's in place is, in theory, for the next year before the next round of negotiations.

Ms. Bell: And those next round of negotiations are happening now?

Ryan Pineau: As I understand it, yes.

Ms. Bell: The target is to have a new plan in place for 2023 to 2030.

Ryan Pineau: That's my understanding and that we would be looking to bring back something, potentially in the fall, if not the

spring, with the next iteration of the negotiations.

Ms. Bell: Do it all again, shortly. Okay.

Ryan Pineau: Glad to be here.

Ms. Bell: Why did it take three years to negotiate this because we knew this was coming? We knew with the previous administration that this was going to have to come up. This is not a surprise. Why has it taken three years?

Ryan Pineau: Again, I'm not involved in those negotiations. I know it's been back and forth trying to get the best deal possible for the Province. We continue to do calculations as to the impact of various things over time, but they've just continued those negotiations with the federal government.

I know there was a delay due to the federal election where there was kind of a stand down on any of that back and forth that but beyond that, unfortunately, I can't provide any more insight into that.

Ms. Bell: To be clear, again, following from the Leader of the Third Party's questions, the best deal for the province in this case is, we have exactly the same rates as the federal backstop and the exception is that zero rates were applied to home heating oil, propane and for cruise ships.

Ryan Pineau: We have –

Ms. Bell: If we repealed this and we have a federal backstop, this table would look the same.

Ryan Pineau: The table would look the same with the addition of those two fuels, furnace oil and propane.

We also, within the provincial *Climate Leadership Act*, we have some further exemptions for items that aren't exempted under the federal existing *Greenhouse Gas and Pollution Pricing Act*. The *Greenhouse Gas and Pollution Pricing Act* covers that agriculture, fisheries. The provincial has added in aquaculture to that mix. That's not part of the federal *Greenhouse Gas and Pollution Pricing Act*.

So, there's a few little nuances like that that aren't driven by the table rates. The table rates would be the same, but there are some exemptions that would also be eliminated by virtue of going to that federal backstop.

Ms. Bell: To be clear, the agricultural rate is actually across the country.

Ryan Pineau: Yes.

Ms. Bell: That's not unique to PEI. What other ones are there? It's furnace oil, it's propane, it's the cruise ship exemption and the addition of aquaculture. What else?

Ryan Pineau: I would have to double check on the cruise ship exemption, whether that's PEI-specific. I think that's interjurisdictional travel and it's exempted under the *Greenhouse Gas and Pollution Pricing Act*, as well. I could be wrong on that –

Ms. Bell: I would appreciate you checking on that. I guess the difference being that, you know, these are – obviously, they're very important pieces in terms of negotiating the best deal.

It's very difficult to see how this is negotiating the best deal when it's taken three years, because you're carrying on the exemptions that were in the legislation that had been determined by the previous government – it's the same exemptions. There isn't some magic new thing that's happened in here and if we repeal the climate leadership, these numbers would be exactly the same.

So, the continual narrative of bringing in the federal backstop would be significant, huge additional increase. It's not actually true.

Ryan Pineau: The big issue there would be the furnace oil and propane. That does equate to a large number in terms of the overall cost to Islanders. I think somewhere to the tune of \$18 million in additional taxes.

Ms. Bell: Which is going to take effect as soon as the new plan comes into place.

Ryan Pineau: (Indistinct)

Ms. Bell: Right. So, you've bought a year. You've got an extra year. We have an extra

year of a plan that provides that relief, which absolutely, people need right now. But then, next year or whenever the new plans comes in, we're going to be at what price per tonne?

Ryan Pineau: The table, or the *Greenhouse Gas and Pollution Pricing Act* federally, goes out to \$50 a tonne. That's the ending point of the *Greenhouse Gas and Pollution Pricing Act*. The federal indications are that from \$50 a tonne forward, so, we have been on a \$10 a tonne annual ramp. That's going to change to a \$15 a tonne annual ramp as it ramps towards \$170 per tonne by 2030. You go from 50 to 65 (Indistinct)

Ms. Bell: Sixty-five. When we see that new one come forward, which is being negotiated currently, we're going to be seeing the current table plus that going from 50 to 65 and then we're going to see going from zero to whatever the rate is. Well, it would be equivalent to whatever we see for diesel right now, right, with home heating oil. Where we're at 13 cents –

Ryan Pineau: Unless they're able to negotiate an additional –

Ms. Bell: Right.

Ryan Pineau: – that would be subject to the negotiation, obviously, but –

Ms. Bell: Obviously, yeah.

Ryan Pineau: – if they weren't able to renegotiate that, it would fall under the same table rate as diesel.

Ms. Bell: Got you. It does give us an idea of what we can begin to prepare for in terms of Islanders needing to get ready for that sticker shock that's going to happen.

As I was saying, we have, obviously, the advantage of PEI is in that carrying forward that – just buying another year. I know you can't speak to negotiations. It makes it very difficult to ask these questions after being bumped so many times to here and still not being able to ask the questions because this does feel very much like a bill that is an interim space until we get to the real thing that's going to come next year.

Do we have any indication, or do you have any idea whether things like that cruise ship – that federal travel piece that exempts cruise ships currently, for example – is going to continue? I guess we just don't know. That would be department of environment.

Ryan Pineau: Yeah. Our focus in terms of this – it's a revenue act – is implementing the revenue increase that's necessary to put that price on carbon. You'll see with one of the amendments in Section 1, we're actually even moving that purpose out of the *Climate Leadership Act* because we now have the *Net-zero Carbon Act* –

Ms. Bell: Right.

Ryan Pineau: – which is kind of the home now of the province's carbon policy. At the time that the *Climate Leadership Act* came in in the first place, there was no home for that.

Ms. Bell: No.

Ryan Pineau: The only logical place for those targets in emissions reductions were climate leadership, so that is moving out to the *Net-zero Carbon Act*, which actually has a firmer target than what exists currently in the *Climate Leadership Act*. Really, it will drive it towards being a revenue-only bill, which would be consistent with the other revenue bills. They're not really policy bills, they're a revenue bill.

Chair: Hon. Member from Charlottetown-Belvedere, I'm going to give you one more and then I'm going to move to others on the list. I can come back to you if you choose.

Ms. Bell: That'd be great, yeah. You know what, just move on for now, Chair, because I (Indistinct) the subject.

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

Mr. Henderson: Just a little more clarity on the marked diesel, marked gas situation. That's for non-agriculture, fishery and aquaculture users of marked fuel? Is that correct?

Ryan Pineau: Under our existing *Gasoline Tax Act* on Prince Edward Island, we have

some users outside of agriculture, fisheries and aquaculture that are eligible users of marked fuel.

Take golf courses, for example – can use marked fuel. That's not an exemption under the carbon levy. They are fully exempted under our *Gas Tax Act*, but they are subject to a rate under the carbon levy and they're not one of the listed exemptions under the *Greenhouse Gas and Pollution Pricing Act* that would automatically lead to –

Mr. Henderson: You mentioned golf courses. Can you give me a bit of a list? I think you know where I'm coming from this, i.e. West Point and sawmills and stuff. Can you give me a bit of a rundown of those that would be exempt?

Ryan Pineau: Not off the top of my head.

Mr. Henderson: Okay. I believe sawmills was one, though, was it not?

Ryan Pineau: There's some forestry operations would be the main user outside of agriculture and fisheries. The rest of them are pretty trivial, such as the golf courses. That's not a big volume amount, but forestry would be one of the big ones. We do have a list posted on the website but (Indistinct) –

Mr. Henderson: And that may be not a fair question to ask that much. But I guess where I'm heading from this – if I look at a company in my riding that manufactures agricultural equipment in West Point, H.F. Stewart's, my understanding is they don't qualify for marked fuel. But yet they have no electrical options. They have to go with a generator. Is there anything that can be done to alleviate their issue because they're going to be hit with an increase here, as well. I mean, regular diesel is the same increase of 5.3 cents.

Ryan Pineau: I think if you look at the increases that have gone across the board, not even tax related, but just in pricing on diesel, we've had a lot of reach-outs over the last couple of weeks from, we'll call it non-road users of fuel, looking to sit down and discuss just that, in terms of whether there's could be an exemption. So, we're planning some discussions with some of the associations to go over their concerns and do

a jurisdictional scan to see how we compare to that with a viewpoint –

Mr. Henderson: But you see my point when you've got a company that would love to go (Indistinct) three-phase power, would like to do its real big impact on not adding carbon emissions into the atmosphere, but it has no alternative. And it employs 40 people in a rural community, and now it's going to be hit with another 5.36 cents a litre. It just doesn't seem quite fair, I guess, only because there's no other option. I mean, if they wanted to go that route, that's fine, but without three-phase power, they can't do that. So, I just think that's something, as a minister, take into consideration in the future.

I'm looking at this marked diesel increase. If you wanted to reduce that increase, say as an example, if that was the proposal, you would have to put a higher increase on other items. Would that basically equal your total carbon emissions tonnage that you'd use?

Ryan Pineau: So, essentially –

Mr. Henderson: So, I guess what I'm coming at, you got 5.36 for marked diesel – or well, all diesel, and then 4.42 cents for gasoline.

Ryan Pineau: Essentially, whenever, as I understand it, through the negotiations, when they're putting those prices on the various fuels, they're trying to ensure a coverage level on all emissions through the province. So, if you're taking it off of one thing, you should be, in theory, making it up (Indistinct) –

Mr. Henderson: Right, so, it's basically a negotiated rate that the department of environment has with the federal government. I mean, you're just trying to implement what they've negotiated, so I get that. I guess it was just helpful for me to know that there was some flexibility at one time. This is what you've chosen; I can appreciate that. I guess my only ultimate end of the conversation would be, when you're negotiating with future users of fuel and things like that, I think there should be some caveat that says, if you don't have any other choice – I go back to the H.F. Stewarts because there's no three-phase power options to provide them any other option;

they're kind of caught, so I think that would be fair, in my opinion.

Thanks, Chair.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Mr. Gallant: Thank you, Chair.

For our understanding, this was supposed to be implemented the first of April. Is that correct? And there was an extension granted?

Ryan Pineau: The prior bill would have had the rates come into effect on March 31st, '22.

Mr. Gallant: When this does get signed, is it going to be an 11-month deal, or is it going to be a 12-month deal from the day it gets signed?

Ryan Pineau: I don't know that.

Mr. Gallant: Okay, and this is not a disrespectful question –

Ryan Pineau: No.

Mr. Gallant: – please don't take it that way, but there's questions that – this bill is brought forward by you folks because it's a money bill and it's a tax bill. Why wouldn't the minister of climate be on the floor with you so we can ask some of these questions about the negotiations? These are important questions for us. So, for the record and for the people that are watching today, why wouldn't it be dual thing? Why isn't that department on the floor?

Mr. McNeilly: Intervention. Intervention.

Ryan Pineau: I don't know.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Mr. Gallant: That's it for now.

Thank you.

Chair: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Belvedere.

Ms. Bell: Thank you.

(Indistinct) this is the revenue aspect of the carbon tax approach.

There's been a lot of discussion in this House and across the country about whether carbon tax plans should be revenue neutral, and revenue neutral generally means that all the money is collected by the taxes and returned to the people directly and there's no increase in government revenue. So, this should not be going into general government or any other government space; it should be going to the people.

Do you think that this approach is revenue neutral?

Ryan Pineau: The *Climate Leadership Act*, as it stands now, has a use of proceeds clause in it and it's not spelled out that it is to be revenue neutral. It lays out that there are ways for that revenue to be used and that's to return them to Islanders, Island taxpayers and businesses, municipalities through rebates and other adjustments.

As part of that, we don't spend that money through the Department of Finance with the exception of the gas tax reduction that happened back in 2019; that does flow kind of through our department. But the Auditor General looks at the planned uses or the uses that have been allocated to those revenues and reports back to the Legislature on them. But neutrality, is not defined within that use of proceeds clause. It does have to be returned as part of that clause, but there are various options for that return.

Ms. Bell: I know that the use of proceeds is required from the federal government in terms that this kind of meeting the conditions of the federal negotiation that there has to be, I think that 90% has to be used for individuals and then 10% can be allocated. Could you just kind of – I can't remember the – I'm just looking at my notes, but trying to remember what it is, but there is a requirement of split in the way the funds can be used.

Ryan Pineau: I can't really speak to it. It happened prior to me being the Provincial Tax Commissioner, but as I understand it, the original negotiations may have gone down that road, but there was never an actual requirement to do a 90/10 split or anything like that.

If you look at the other Atlantic Provinces, they don't have this use of proceeds. Ours is

the most restrictive of any of our Atlantic counterparts; it's modelled after, potentially, what was proposed at the time from Alberta whenever the climate leadership was first being debated, but Alberta no longer has that use of revenue clause. If you look at our counterparts in New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Newfoundland, theirs does go into general revenues.

Ms. Bell: I wouldn't argue that the use of proceeds and how it's being interpreted is restrictive. I mean it's pretty flexible in what you can choose to do with those funds as we're seeing because obviously there – I that it's a bit of a difference of opinion there; however, there's – what is the projected revenues from this current approach? What are we expecting that to look like this year?

Ryan Pineau: 31.15 million was the full year projection, given that the increase was to come into effect March 31st, so we would have had a full year with that 4.4 and 5.3 cents. The reality is that we're a month out, or six weeks out from that, so there will be a reduction in the carbon collected from that increase that's put on. The full amount that's there now is still continuing to be collected, but those increases on gas and diesel have not happened for six to seven weeks at this point in time.

Ms. Bell: What's the revenue from the increase, the projected revenue from the increase alone?

Ryan Pineau: It's six and half million dollars.

Ms. Bell: Pardon?

Ryan Pineau: Six and half million, I think.

Ms. Bell: Okay, thank you.

Ryan Pineau: I can bring that back.

Ms. Bell: Right now, we have, with the revenues, you've got within – that use of proceeds, it's not specific in the bill. That's still determined within government of what that looks like and we've seen that – that wasn't shared with the House, but it was shared with media, so now we do have it, and we've discussed that as a – the bulk of the funds go to the gas tax rebate, which is

part rebate at the pump, which, as you said, carried forward from the previous administration. It's just been kind of grandfathered all the way across. We then have a portion that's going to be rebated to Islanders, which is coming under the income tax amendment No. 3, and then the remainder is kind of going into a number, a varied suite of programs and services and rebates and so on and so forth.

Can you speak to what the percentage is? What's the percentage of the total that we're getting in that's rebated at the pump?

Ryan Pineau: In terms of the rebated, like the reduction gas tax?

Ms. Bell: Yes.

Ryan Pineau: That's about 13.7 million –

Ms. Bell: Okay.

Ryan Pineau: – of the total.

Ms. Bell: So, that's 40%?

Ryan Pineau: Yeah. And increased, more like 12 million. I said six and half; it's more like 12.

Ms. Bell: Okay, that makes more sense, yeah.

How does that exemption help reduce emissions?

Ryan Pineau: We don't really track emissions in the tax office, but that was part of the original negotiated deal so that has continued. The way that excise tax essentially reduction happened, it was an actual decrease, so it's not done by virtue of a rebate after the fact, it was an actual decrease to the tax revenue, so the tax rate is just lower at this point in time. It's now set at that level, so the negotiation would have to be to increase the tax rate on gasoline otherwise. It's not that you pull a rebate, you would actually just have to increase that tax rate.

Ms. Bell: To be clear, when we have a new negotiated plan within the next year, we are not only going to see the increase of the fund going from \$50 a tonne to a \$65 a tonne price reflected at the pumps, but we're

also going to – it is highly unlikely that this is going to be allowed to continue on a long-term basis. It was a special exemption made for PEI and so we're also going to see that increase come off. That tax rate is going to have to be renegotiated.

I can't see any way that you're going to be able to continue with that because it is a subsidy on a fossil fuel. You're going – this bumping it down the road is going to actually mean a bigger increase at the pumps when you finally get your next plan.

Ryan Pineau: My understanding from some correspondence we've had from the federal government is that the original reductions would be allowed to remain. No further reduction should happen, but that the original ones that were happening – because they're not tied to the climate leadership bill at all. They were done separate as a tax reduction. They would be allowed to remain.

Ms. Bell: That would be pretty magic math if you managed to pull that off because they were – I mean, this was a negotiated package along with free drivers' licenses in the original *Climate Leadership Act*. I am really concerned that that is, again, some sleight of hand that's happening with the tax (Indistinct). I guess we'll have to wait and see what the environment minister manages to negotiate.

Part of this approach, climate leadership – and the name of the bill itself is meant to be that as climate leaders, we are incentivizing a change of behaviour through the application of policy, fiscal policy. It's the core function of how carbon tax works. This part of it undermines the function of how a carbon tax works.

There's also a really clear correlation between a person's income and their level of emissions. This is also not an equitable decision because it gives money to people who already have more money, that can burn more fuel. We're not just determinants-incentivizing using less gas but we're rewarding people for burning more fossil fuels.

How does that – and I understand your tax policy – but this is the bill that we've got where I can talk to you about this. How does that work in terms of a price signal? Can

you get that there is a mixed message in this price signaling?

Ryan Pineau: I can understand the concern.

Ms. Bell: Subsidizing fuel is, obviously, not the only way that we can help deal with the cost of fuels to consumers. You are planning a partial carbon rebate and I think, looking at my math here, about 25% of the revenue from this tax is what's going to be rebated. Is that about right?

Ryan Pineau: That's probably about right. I think it is about 8.2 million, maybe, for the carbon rebate out of the 31.

Ms. Bell: We're doing our math on the fly here.

Ryan Pineau: Accountants don't like math on the fly.

Ms. Bell: I know, well, doing my best. Not an accountant.

What was the decision point around only rebating 25%?

Ryan Pineau: That bill will come next – the rebate portion. I don't – the *Income Tax Act* is not part of the provincial tax commissioner's stable of acts, actually. It's through another individual but it doesn't really tie back into – it wasn't determined in relation to using a percentage.

My understanding is working towards the increased revenues, under the move from the \$30 a tonne to the \$50 a tonne, were determined to go towards rebate. That was the go-forward point. The existing \$30 a tonne envelope to be used towards the other items that were there, but to continue with the increases towards the rebate piece.

Ms. Bell: Right. I mean, money that you didn't have, you're okay with putting that back out the door, but the money that was already allocated to existing programs, we need to keep spending that money. I can understand the logic in it; it doesn't mean it's a good decision, but I can understand the logic in it.

Subsidizing gasoline and giving money back through programs that give more back to those who can afford it makes it very

difficult to reconcile this. I do come back to wondering how those negotiations are going to go in this next one. Are we going to see a really hard thump into reality with those next set of negotiations? I don't think you can speak to that because you don't have the table for that.

Has there been any indication that we may actually end up with the federal backstop after all, given the various different accommodations that are being made?

Ryan Pineau: No indication that I have. I mean, from our perspective, we have the *Climate Leadership Act* and we have an infrastructure and staffing within taxation and property records to administer that. We do that at our fullest extent.

Ms. Bell: Do you have anyone else on your list?

Chair: Yes, I do.

The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton.

Mr. Hammarlund: Thank you, Chair.

Just on exempt fuels – I assume that aviation fuels are exempt as well.

Ryan Pineau: Interjurisdictional aviation fuels are. If the starting and stopping point is within the province, they're not exempt. The amount of fuel that is captured under that in-province travel is very, very small. It's just inter-jurisdictional.

Mr. Hammarlund: You use the words "best deal" a couple of times. Could you define what you mean by best deal?

Ryan Pineau: I'm just using the language that has been expressed within this House. Again, I'm not privy to the negotiations but my understanding is that is the best deal that was extracted.

Mr. Hammarlund: I'm a little confused with that when the title of the bill is what, *Climate Leadership Act* or something like that. But it sounds like the way you speak about the best deal is to do as little as possible to reach the goal of the climate (Indistinct). The less we raise the fuel, that's the best deal, which is a little bit

contradictory to the – what’s the intent of the leadership act. I was just wondering if your department has been looking at how, actually, be the best and do due leadership.

B.C., for instance, introduced a carbon tax way before the feds did and had no problem doing it, as far as we could see. Have you been considering upping the yearly charge per tonne and helping people deal with that and change, or is all about having the, quote, “best deal” to do as little as possible?

Ryan Pineau: Again, it’s a revenue bill where the intention is to put in place a price that reflects the deal that was struck with the federal government. The *Greenhouse Gas Pollution Pricing Act* lays out the equivalency factors by fuel. Really, it’s applying those equivalency factors under that deal to match on a per tonne basis the output on those particular fields.

Chair: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton.

Mr. Hammarlund: I’m good, Chair.

Chair: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Belvedere.

Ms. Bell: With the projected revenues from this, we have the – you have the tables and you have a really clear picture of where they’re going. There had been some questions about whether the revenues actually – the math on the revenues actually work.

I know we had a clarification on tabling from the Budget documents that came in. There’s been an Excel error, but they still seem to be low considering – I’m trying to make math work and I’m missing something, somewhere about the projections. I’m seeing that we would project higher revenue. Is there – are you being very conservative in terms of looking at usage or is this –

Ryan Pineau: In terms of this year’s Budget on 31?

Ms. Bell: Yeah. It just seems really low.

Ryan Pineau: Whenever we looked at the projected go-forward, we’re looking at the trends in consumption.

Ms. Bell: Okay.

Ryan Pineau: We get consumption data on a monthly basis in terms of all the different types of fuels and we are seeing declines in consumption happen.

In particular now, with the increase in prices, for example, in January to March, that’s leading to really significant declines in the overall consumption. But there is a downward trend in consumption that has occurred over the span now.

COVID obviously had a real big dip in consumption and that brought consumption down, but we’re not recovered in terms of consumption back to pre-COVID levels. Essentially, in terms of where the Budget’s at, we’re about 93% of pre-COVID –

Ms. Bell: Okay.

Ryan Pineau: – in terms of the projected consumption on those fuels, particularly around gasoline. Diesel has remained relatively static.

Ms. Bell: I appreciate that. I had looked at it being at least 10%. So, that would make sense. And I do appreciate how hard it’s going to be to do projections when we’ve not had a normal year (Indistinct)

Ryan Pineau: A lot of factors going against each other right now.

Ms. Bell: Yeah, and obviously, more money, more revenue coming in. But we want to see that those numbers are going down, because that’s actually the trend we’re looking for in terms of climate outcomes.

Ryan Pineau: Yes.

Ms. Bell: But also, we have made commitments to expand those on what are critical programs. And then I guess the other question there is, within that use of proceeds allowance, does that allow for government to subsidize the committed expenditures from other places if that revenue target isn’t achieved?

Ryan Pineau: I don’t know that the use of proceeds clause would allow that, I think that would be budgetary debate. But if I look

at the Auditor General reports from the last couple of years, in both cases the expenditure has exceeded the revenue collected. It's gotten closer, but it's still – the expenditure piece is higher than the revenue collected. So, through the budgetary process I guess that has happened, but I don't know that the use of proceeds clause in and of itself would direct that. Those programs have to occur.

Ms. Bell: Okay. No, and that's fair. It's just looking at the very specific allocation of buckets that we're seeing, it's just wondering sort of, what happens if? And I guess that's something we can bring back House as well as we see the year progress.

Chair, I think I'm clear with the responses that I've had to the questions I needed to have answered on this piece and I'm good.

Thank you.

Chair: Shall the bill carry? Carried.

Ms. Compton: I move the title.

Chair: *An Act to Amend the Climate Leadership Act.*

Shall it carry? Carried.

Ms. Compton: I move the enacting clause.

Chair: Be it enacted by the Lieutenant Governor and the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Prince Edward Island as follows.

Shall it carry? Carried.

Ms. Compton: Mr. Chair, I move the Speaker take the chair and that the Chair report the bill agreed to with amendment.

Chair: Shall it carry? Carried.

Mr. Speaker, as Chair of a Committee of the Whole House, having had under consideration a bill to be intituled an *Act to Amend the Climate Leadership Act*, I beg leave to report that the committee has gone through the said bill and has agreed to same with amendment. I move that the report of the committee be adopted.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Ms. Beaton: Standing vote. Standing vote, please.

Speaker: It was carried.

Ms. Beaton: No, I said standing vote.

Speaker: Before – I guess I didn't say carried?

Ms. Bernard: No, standing vote.

Speaker: No, standing vote.

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct)

Speaker: Hon. members, Sergeant-at-Arms, you may ring the bell.

[Bells were rung]

Ms. Altass: The opposition is ready for the vote.

Mr. Henderson: The third party is ready for the vote.

Mr. Deagle: Government is ready for the vote.

Speaker: All those voting against, please stand.

Clerk: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-West Royalty, the hon. Leader of the Third Party, the hon. Leader of the Opposition, the hon. Member from Summerside-Wilmot, the hon. Member from Mermaid-Stratford, the hon. Member from Charlottetown-Victoria Park, the hon. Member from O'Leary-Inverness, the hon. Member from Tignish-Palmer Road, the hon. Member from Charlottetown-Belvedere, the hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton, the hon. Member from Tyne Valley-Sherbrooke and the hon. Member from Summerside-South Drive.

Speaker: All those in favour, please stand.

Clerk: The hon. Member from Cornwall-Meadowbank, the hon. Minister of Fisheries and Communities, the hon. Member from Morell-Donagh, the hon. Minister of Finance and Deputy Premier, The hon. Premier, the hon. Minister of Environment, Energy and Climate Action, the hon. Minister of Transportation and

Infrastructure, the hon. Member from Charlottetown-Winsloe, the Member from Montague-Kilmuir, the hon. Minister of Education and Lifelong Learning, the hon. Minister of Agriculture and Land and the Minister of Justice and Public Safety, the hon. Minister of Economic Growth, Tourism and Culture, the hon. Minister of Social Development and Housing and the hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Speaker: Carried.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The hon. Minister of Finance.

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I move seconded by the hon. Member from Morell-Donagh, that pursuant to Rule 28, that the House revert to tabling of documents for the purpose of tabling executive responses to reports by committees.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Tabling of Documents

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Ms. Compton: Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Rule 110 (9) of the *Rules of Legislative Assembly of Prince Edward Island*, I'm pleased to respond on behalf of government to the recommendations by the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, and I move seconded by the Honourable Minister of Fisheries and Communities, that the said document be now received and do lie on the Table.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Minister of Environment, Energy and Climate Action.

Mr. Myers: Pursuant to Rule 110 (9) of the *Rules of Legislative Assembly of Prince Edward Island*, I'm pleased to respond on behalf of government to the recommendations made by the Standing Committee on the Natural Resources and Environmental Sustainability and I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure, that the

said document be now received and do lie on the Table.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Land, Minister of Justice and Public Safety and Attorney General.

Mr. Thompson: Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Rule 110 (9) of the *Rules of Legislative Assembly of Prince Edward Island*, I am pleased to respond on behalf of government to the recommendations made by the Standing Committee on the Health and Social Development, and I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Education and Lifelong Learning, that the said document be now received and do lie on the Table.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Minister of Education and Lifelong Learning, Minister Responsible for the Status of Women.

Ms. Jameson: Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Rule 110 (9) of the *Rules of Legislative Assembly of Prince Edward Island*, I am pleased to respond on behalf of government to the recommendations made by the Standing Committee on the Education and Economic Growth, and I move, seconded by Minister of Agriculture and Land, Justice and Public Safety and Attorney General, that the said document be now received and do lie on the Table.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Hudson: Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Rule 110 (9) of the *Rules of Legislative Assembly of Prince Edward Island*, I am pleased to respond on behalf of government to the recommendations made by the Standing Committee on the Health and Social Development, and I move seconded by Honourable Minister of Social Development and Housing, that the said document be now receive and do lie on the Table.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Orders of the Day (Government)

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I move, seconded by the hon. Premier, that the 20th order of the day be now read.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk: Order No. 20, *Vaping Products Taxation Agreement Act*, Bill No. 62, ordered for second reading.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I move, seconded by the hon. Premier, that the said bill be read a second time.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk: Bill No. 62, *Vaping Products Taxation Agreement Act*, read a second time.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir to chair the Committee of the Whole House, please.

Chair (Deagle): The House is now in a Committee of the Whole House to take into consideration a bill to be intitled *Vaping Products Taxation Agreement Act*.

Do you have a stranger to bring on the floor, minister?

A request has been made to bring a stranger onto the floor.

Shall it be granted? Granted.

Chair: If you could you introduce yourself or your title and name for Hansard, please.

Ryan Pineau: Ryan Pineau; I'm the Provincial Tax Commissioner.

Chair: Minister, do you have an overview?

Ms. Compton: I do, yeah. This bill will grant me the authority as finance minister to enter into a taxation agreement with the federal government to enable it to collect and administer a tax on vaping products.

Chair: Thank you.

Questions?

The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Belvedere.

Ms. Bell: Thank you.

Is there an agreement with the federal government in the works on vape products?

Ryan Pineau: Not yet. We had initial conversations with them.

They announced this, I believe, in their 2021 budget originally, and at that point in time, it was one dollar per 10ml. It went to a consultation phase and that was a very light rate at that point in time. They did a consultation and came back in budget 2022 with an updated proposal, which was a dollar per 2ml up to the first 10, and a dollar per 10 after that, and at that point in time, invited the provinces that they could also join in on that.

But the actual negotiation process hasn't begun. We've had an initial meeting just to describe where they see this happening. We'll have some future meetings as well to flesh it out, but they don't have draft legislation or anything together for us to review to tie back into. But the rates that they're now proposing are a little more in line with where the other provincial vape taxes that exist are as it stands right now. They're more in line with that.

Ms. Bell: Jurisdictional scans, they're very useful.

Ryan Pineau: Great thing.

Ms. Bell: Section 3.(2) authorizes the minister to make payments from the operating fund in accordance with an agreement. Do those expenditures need to go in budget line or through the legislation? How does that work?

Ryan Pineau: I asked on this one because this – we drafted this based on the existing Canada’s taxation agreement, which also had that clause, and the purpose of that clause is if there’s actual expenses around the negotiation itself, to allow for the expenditure of those items. It’s not for the after expenditures of the actual implementation phase. It sits around the negotiation piece itself.

Ms. Bell: Yeah, because the Cannabis Corp. is obviously – it is a corp. So, it has a different –

Ryan Pineau: Right, different budget process.

Ms. Bell: Their budget process is going to be different.

Ryan Pineau: If we had to go into a vaping corp or something like that, it doesn’t authorize that piece. It’s just around the negotiation process.

Ms. Bell: So, if there was anything that would need to be on that, we would see that in the budget as an expenditure, but otherwise it allows for that kind of flexibility in terms of negotiation space.

Yeah, that makes sense. That’s all I’ve got.

Chair: Any further questions?

Shall the bill carry? Carried.

Ms. Compton: I move the title.

Chair: *Vaping Products Taxation Agreement Act.*

Ms. Compton: I move enacting clause.

Chair: Shall it carry? Carried.

Ms. Compton: Mr. Chair, I move the Speaker take the chair and the Chair report the bill agreed to without amendment.

Chair: Shall it carry? Carried.

Be it enacted by the Lieutenant Governor and the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Prince Edward Island as follows.

Shall it carry? Carried.

Mr. Speaker, as Chair of a Committee of the Whole House, having had under consideration a bill to be intituled *Vaping Products Taxation Agreement Act*, I beg leave to report that the committee has gone through the said bill and has agreed to same without amendment. I move that the report of the committee be adopted.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Minister of Finance.

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I move, seconded by the hon. Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure, that the 22nd order of the day be now read.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk: Order No. 22, *An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act (No. 2)*, Bill No. 63, ordered for second reading.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure, that the said bill be now read a second time.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk: *An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act (No. 2)*, Bill No. 63, read a second time.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Winsloe to chair the Committee of the Whole House.

Chair (Z. Bell): The House is now in a Committee of the Whole House to take into consideration a bill to be intitled *An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act (No. 2)*.

Minister, do you have stranger that you would like to bring on the floor?

Ms. Compton: I do.

Chair: Minister's been requested to come on floor.

Shall it be granted? Granted.

Chair: Welcome. I'll just get you state your name and your title for Hansard, please.

Nigel Burns: Nigel Burns, director, Department of Finance.

Chair: Okay, perfect. Thank you, Nigel, and welcome.

Before we get into this, maybe if the promotor can give a quick word just to tell us about what the bill's intent is.

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Chair.

The bill covers a few things. It would double the firefighter tax credit from 500 to a \$1,000 and extend the benefit to Search and Rescue volunteers. It also increases the basic personal amount to 12,000 with proportionate increases to the spouse and spouse-equivalent amounts. And finally, it would make several housekeeping amendments to ensure alignment between federal and provincial legislation.

Chair: Okay, perfect.

Is it the committee's wishes to go section by section, or just open it up to general questions?

General questions, perfect.

An Hon. Member: Carry the bill.

Chair: I'll start composing my list and I'll start with the hon. Member from Charlottetown-Belvedere.

Ms. Bell: Thank you.

Can you give us the expected tax expenditure for raising the basic personal amount? How much revenue are we losing with that?

Nigel Burns: Approximately 6.2 million.

Ms. Bell: Six point two, okay.

What's the threshold if someone needs to be able to see a benefit from this? Do we have a threshold?

Nigel Burns: Someone – it'd be approaching \$15,000 when they start to pay provincial income tax.

Ms. Bell: Okay. This basic will then apply for everybody who pays income tax above, all the way up, right? So, if they're \$150,000 a year, they still get this exemption.

What other measures did you consider for providing tax relief for Islanders other than this, in terms of the *Income Tax Act*? Was there anything else?

Ms. Compton: It was definitely a campaign commitment that we wanted to reach all Islanders. We've had the opportunity to do that through this change.

Ms. Bell: Yeah, but you're not reaching all Islanders because anybody who earns less than \$15,000 isn't going to get the exemption. That means the lowest-income Islanders don't get reached. We've talked about that before. But all Islanders doesn't mean all Islanders in this context.

Are there any further platform commitments for this? Is this like an ongoing platform commitment, or is there a different approach that we could go to once we finish platform commitments?

Ms. Compton: Hon. member, we'll continue to look at how we can make things better for Islanders. We do that on a daily basis.

Ms. Bell: One of the other pieces in here that you've got is about – it says authorization to share information with the federal government. What's that in relation to?

Nigel Burns: There had been information sharing for many years until very recently. The provision to share that was reviewed and it was determined that it should be made clearer that information should be provided and could be shared with Finance Canada for the purposes of formulating economic and fiscal policy.

Ms. Bell: Yeah, we've talked a lot about the need to be able to share information both ways, to federal but also, like we've heard, about not having this linked data that we needed recently to be able to assist with making payments to Islanders and vice versa or making assessments of income thresholds and that kind of thing.

It's good to hear that we're doing that, but does that include any information on individual tax files? Are there any privacy concerns to be considered in that change?

Nigel Burns: The information sharing will still be subject to Section 241 of the – which protects taxpayer information. There are hard guards on privacy.

Ms. Bell: Pretty solid. Yeah, I know they are pretty significant.

Do we maintain ownership of that data, though, when we're sharing that, that's coming from us out? Do we maintain ownership of that? Do we decide, or is there a blanket agreement in terms of what is being shared?

Nigel Burns: They would be shared. There are various streams of information. This one would be for, specifically, the PEI-specific credits.

Ms. Bell: Is there any other data that we're going to get back with this change? Is this all for data to go out?

Nigel Burns: It's one direction, but there are other agreements and possibilities for sharing information both ways.

Ms. Bell: Okay. Would those need to come back to the House or can they be done internally? Does that also require a legislative change?

Nigel Burns: Would not.

Ms. Bell: No.

Nigel Burns: Legislation is already there, down to – agreements would need to be in place to specify what information and with whom and sometimes for what.

Ms. Bell: Yeah. That makes sense. It helps get a better picture. There was just a bit of concern there about why and what that data is going to be used for. But at the same time, we very much want to see data being used for policy decisions.

There's a number of different dates when different parts of the bill come into effect in Section 11. A lot of those are retroactive. I guess one of the concerns we have in this is just, are there any of those changes going to require anybody to adjust or refile their tax returns?

Sometimes, when we see retroactive dates in income tax, it can actually affect people. You have to go back and redo it. There's a notice of a reassessment or something. I'm just sort of concerned there that that might be the case. What's the context, I guess?

Nigel Burns: The retroactive pieces, these are housekeeping. As the federal legislation evolves, as things happen, as things get added, in the interim, PEI's act maintains continuity until we change our act to formally write it in.

The style of our act incorporates many of the federal changes by default, except in some areas where it doesn't. We have to go back after the fact to write it in, but it maintains continuity with the practice, thus far.

Ms. Bell: That's very reassuring. I was just worrying about potential impact in terms of benefit eligibility, for example, something where that application of things and the readjustment can sometimes cause people to become ineligible for a benefit they may receive. If there's a continuity of delivery, then we don't have that concern, and that's what I think I'm hearing. Is that right?

Nigel Burns: Yes.

Ms. Bell: Okay. Thank you for that clarification. I'm good for now, Chair.

Chair: Shall the bill carry? Carried.

Ms. Compton: I move the title.

Chair: *An Act to Amend the Income Act (No. 2).*

Shall it carry? Carried.

Ms. Compton: I move the enacting clause.

Chair: Be it enacted by the Lieutenant Governor and the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Prince Edward Island as follows.

Shall it carry? Carried.

Ms. Compton: Mr. Chair, I move the Speaker take the chair and the Chair report the bill agreed to without amendment.

Chair: Shall it carry? Carried.

Mr. Speaker, as Chair of a Committee of the Whole House, having had under consideration a bill to be intitled *An Act to Amend the Income Act (No. 2)*, I beg leave to report that the committee has gone through the said bill and has agreed to same without amendment. I move that the report of the committee be adopted.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Minister of Finance.

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I move, seconded by the hon. Minister of Environment, Energy and Climate Action, that the 21st order of the day be now read.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk: Order No. 21, *An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act (No. 3)*, Bill No. 64, ordered for second reading.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Environment, Energy and Climate Action, that the said bill be now read a second time.

Clerk: *An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act (No. 3)*, Bill No. 64, read a second time.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Environment, Energy and Climate Action, that this House do now resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole House to take into consideration the said bill.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Member from Tignish-Palmer Road to chair the Committee of the Whole House.

Chair (Perry): The House is now in a Committee of the Whole House to take into consideration a bill to be intitled *An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act (No. 3)*.

A request has been made to bring a stranger onto the floor.

Shall it be granted? Granted.

Good afternoon. Would you please state your name and position?

Nigel Burns: Nigel Burns, director.

Chair: Thank you, Nigel.

Promotor, would you like to begin by giving a brief statement on the bill's intent?

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Chair.

The bill would implement a carbon rebate of a \$140 to Island households that will be paid in addition to the regular July payments for the Prince Edward Island sales tax credit. The proposed amendment to the bill will add an emergency support payment of up to \$150 per individual that was first announced in the Legislature on March 8th to assist Islanders with the rising costs of living.

The carbon rebate: Island households making up to 50,000 will receive the full amount, while households with incomes between 50 and approximately \$70,000 will receive a partial amount. This is a one-time amount for this coming year while the details of an ongoing carbon rebate for future years is developed.

And the emergency support payment: Islanders with income under approximately 70,000 will each receive \$150; Islanders with income above 70,000 receive a partial payment.

And I do have a motion.

Chair: Okay, hon. minister.

Ms. Compton: This motion amends Bill 64 by amending the proposed clause 36.3(8.1)(a) to substitute a different factor in the formula and by deleting the proposed clause 36.3(8.1)(b) and substituting new proposed clauses 36.3(8.1)(b) and (c) to specify the value of amount B in the formula and the percentage to be used to determine the amount D in the formula, respectively.

Chair: Okay, hon. members, a copy of the amendment is being circulated. I'll give you one moment to look at it and then we'll open the floor for debate.

Okay, the hon. Member from Charlottetown-Belvedere.

Ms. Bell: Thank you.

So, to be clear, speaking to the amendment, Chair?

Chair: Exactly.

Ms. Bell: The amendment gives us the math that supports the change that you're adding the previously announced emergency support payment to the already proposed carbon tax rebate.

So, I guess two things around that. One of them is that, originally, that rebate that was announced for emergency pay was going to go to individuals, and it was going to go to individuals with a different income level than is in this.

So, you're significantly changing who's eligible. This doesn't align with what you originally announced, and I just want to be really clear, you're using this opportunity with this amendment to make a one-time carbon tax payment and you're adding a one-time payment that had previously been announced, but which is completely different from what you previously

announced. It's \$150, but the eligibility is very different.

Is that correct?

Nigel Burns: On March 8th –

Ms. Bell: I was asking the minister, okay, but you go ahead.

Nigel Burns: As originally announced, the \$150 would go to someone making up to 35,000, and then from 35,000 to 50,000, it would \$100. This would provide the full \$150 out to approximately 70,000 of income, and then it would phase out over the range from 70 to 100.

Ms. Bell: And I appreciate that. I think in terms of an administrative perspective, it's a much more elegant way to do it because clearly, there was a problem with the way it was – my point is, I'm happy to see that the threshold has increased and it makes sense to do something with using tools we already have, but when it was previously announced, it was to go to individuals. This is not going to go to individuals. This is going to go to a household. That fundamentally changes the program that you previously announced.

That's a very different thing. Not saying it's bad, it's just very different, and we're literally hearing about it today.

Nigel Burns: Perhaps to clarify, it will be paid to the person making the claim. It will also – \$150 will be paid to the spouse. So, it's different than the carbon amount in that it's 150 for the individual claiming the credit, 150 for the spouse, and it's also being extended to the equivalent-to-spouse, so for the case of perhaps a single parent, could qualify for the first child.

Ms. Bell: How does this amendment do that, because that's not what this amendment says? What the minister has read to us as the description – obviously it's very difficult because the amendment itself is the actual math, but the written introduction says: Island households making up to 50,000. And there's nothing in there that says what you've just said, so I don't see how you can confirm that that's what's going happen when that's not what this amendment says.

The carbon rebate is not that. The carbon rebate, we understand, is \$140 to a household flat. It doesn't go to a spouse, it doesn't go to an equivalent-to-spouse. But you're doing the 150 emergency in this same amendment, under the same eligibility guidelines, but it's going to be allocated differently.

How is that? When you've only got one formula, how is that possible? Is there an extra secret bit that we need to see to kind of explain how that's going to be delivered?

Nigel Burns: The carbon amount is just for the household, and the only part of this formula that's changed there is that base amount. To add the spouse and the equivalent-to-spouse, those are defined in parameter B of that formula, and that's what that amendment does.

Ms. Bell: Parameter B doesn't say that.

Mr. Howard: It just says B.

Ms. Bell: Yeah, it just says parameter B, the value of amount B is 655.

If you can do that without (Indistinct) actually word by word saying that in the amendment, why can't you do the carbon tax as a spouse and equivalent-to-spouse too? What's the difference? If they're all being covered under the same amendment, why are they different?

You have to understand, this is the first time we're seeing this. I appreciate the elegance of rolling it into here because then we don't have to just keep waiting for what's going to happen. We know. But this is not clear. These are two different payments with two different sets of eligibility and two different ways in terms of how they're going to impact households.

Why and how can they be that different?

Nigel Burns: It is the same eligibility, but the intent of the carbon rebate is to provide a flat amount, a set amount, for a household. The emergency piece is to provide the amount to each individual, so the self and the spouse in the household, if there is spouse. And if it's a single parent, that the first child would qualify as the equivalent-to-spouse.

Chair: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Belvedere, I'll acknowledge for one more, and then I'll move to others and put you on the list if you wish.

Ms. Bell: If it's that easy to do that with this simple amendment, why doesn't the carbon rebate meet the same eligibility criteria? Why aren't you doing that for spouse and equivalent-to-spouse too? Why not put additional money in and it'll be – because there's nothing here legislatively that we are not already doing.

Why is the carbon tax only \$140 for the entire household? Other than a policy decision by this government not to give the carbon tax back.

Nigel Burns: Trying to fit the policy expression into an existing formula, this is what is possible. So, we've converted a – or have a carbon rebate that's designed to be a per-household amount, and that's what the original amending bill would do. The amendment to the bill adds on this per-individual amount for the emergency rebate, or the emergency support payment.

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

Mr. Henderson: I'm just trying to get my head around this a bit too, so I'm very comparable to the other member there. I'm going to kind of put it in my mind here. So, \$140 carbon levy is going to be based on a household income, about 50,000 household income, and then it can go up a little bit if you're up to 70,000 and then phases out to zero.

Now, if you're within that household and you make less than 50,000, you'll get another \$150 in that house. So, depending on what the income breakdown and the number of people – but I guess my biggest issue is it still comes back – it's hardly anything. Like I say, it's a tank of gas and maybe a second tank of gas. It's not a whole lot.

I get the whole concept of how you're trying to do this. You're trying to balance how much money does the Province keep to give out for what it chooses to give out for the free heat pumps and toonie transit, and how much you want to give back to people who

are going to be hit by these extra costs that are coming forward, plus inflationary issues that we're dealing with on the 150.

I guess in the end of the day, I get the concept, if I'm correct in what I'm saying, and it sounds like the nods that I am. I just think it's simply not enough. I want to see Islanders get money; I just feel that it's not a fair shake-down in the way that the deal comes here.

So, with that side of it, I appreciate what you're doing. I won't support it, but I mean, it doesn't mean that it's not the way you needed to have it done to achieve the government's objectives.

Thanks, Chair.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Chair.

Like everybody else who's spoken beforehand, I'm deeply confused about what we're doing here. Nine weeks ago, there was an announcement with great fanfare that we were going to give certain Islanders, up to \$35,000 income, \$150, and those between 35,000 and 50,000, \$100. And we had budgeted \$20 million to accomplish that. We're now saying that the eligibility is up to \$70,000 and then tapering off, although we don't know to what extent and how. I'm assuming this is hugely more expensive than the \$20 million that we budgeted up front.

How much is this going to cost?

An Hon. Member: Good question.

Nigel Burns: We estimate it's \$15 million.

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct)

Leader of the Opposition: Well, logically, that makes no sense, Nigel. So, either the initial budget which was announced in this House of 20 million was an overestimate, or 15 million is not going to cut it.

So, was the original estimate an overestimate, the 20 million that we heard in this House?

Nigel Burns: Expanding the parameters out will catch a few more people. Under the original, as announced, the bulk of the people were under the original parameters, which, expending it out to cover additional people, does cost a little bit more, but it will look like it will be in about 15 million.

Leader of the Opposition: Just so I'm clear, you said it will cost more. So, when you say 15 million, it's not 15 million on top of the 20 that we've already – no.

Nigel Burns: No.

Leader of the Opposition: So, you're saying it's costing more, but it's actually costing less.

Nigel Burns: The entire package, if I recall from that day, was 20 million –

An Hon. Member: That's correct.

Nigel Burns: – of which 15 was designed to be the rebate.

Leader of the Opposition: (Indistinct) this is news as well. So, what was the other five million for?

Ms. Compton: We have a number of other programs that we are working with Islanders to ensure that we help them, and that's included.

Leader of the Opposition: Well, that's not at all the message that was delivered here by the Premier when he made that announcement. This was \$20 million in direct payment to Islanders as an emergency relief fund due to the hyperinflation that we have here. We're now hearing that actually it wasn't 20 million at all; it was only going to be 15 million. And I even doubt that figure because we're now extending the parameters and saying that it's still going to cost 15 million. I can't get my head around that.

So, I think that Islanders who were admittedly and understandably confused by this, nine weeks after the announcement, are now even more confused than they were, and I include the 27 people sitting in this House. I can't get my head around this, and I'm deeply concerned that you would bring a substantial amendment to a piece of

legislation which none of us have seen before which mathematically does not make any sense.

I have a couple more questions on this, Chair.

Chair: Sure.

Leader of the Opposition: Nigel, you referred to the money going to people, and these new parameters, as I understand it, it will go to an individual and their spouse, is that correct? If it's a –

Nigel Burns: Yes, in the case of a couple.

Leader of the Opposition: – couple, or a partner I should – I imagine, common law, they would apply as well.

And if that situation does not exist in the household, it would go to the individual and a minor dependent, and that would be the same.

Is there a further payment if there are additional minor dependents or people in – because household costs for a household of five or six are very different from household costs for an individual or a couple. So, will extra money go if you have extra kids?

Nigel Burns: No.

Leader of the Opposition: Okay. Another point of confusion: we've been told all along that the delay here was because we are working with CRA in order to coordinate these payments and get them out.

Is this new – I hesitate to call it a plan – is this new idea also being coordinated through CRA?

Nigel Burns: Yes.

Leader of the Opposition: Can you explain how, Nigel?

Nigel Burns: So, the Province has an existing sales tax credit that is paid quarterly. The first payment of the benefit year starts in July, and then every quarter thereafter.

We could amend an existing program to make changes within the same structure of

the formula. So, we can change the numbers of the formula. We just can't change the formula with very tight timelines. So, if we have more time, we could change the formula; tight timelines, we can just change parameters of a formula.

So, within the existing sales tax credit, we can change the basic amount and we can provide an amount for the self, we can provide an amount for the spouse, or the equivalent to spouse. And we can do that to add an amount to this existing program that will automatically go out for people who file their income tax return or a benefit return to access this benefit on a timely basis that would cover perhaps 90-some thousand benefit payments.

Leader of the Opposition: And that's a number we've heard a lot, is the 90,000; presumably the number of Islanders who will actually qualify for this relief fund. Is that correct?

Nigel Burns: Yes.

Leader of the Opposition: Okay. So, now that we've changed the parameters, and I stand to be corrected, but all along we've been told that with the previous eligibility requirements of 35,000 and 50,000, that that would reach 90,000 Islanders, and now you're telling me that with the new eligibility criteria, that number stays the same. Where's the error here?

Nigel Burns: I can assure you, there's no error. The difference being, for a single person, if their income is \$35,000 – the sales tax credit is based on couple income, a family income. So, if you have two people both earning \$35,000, they would be both getting 150 each, 300 in total. That lines up with this \$70,000 threshold for two earners making 35,000 each.

So, it looks like a massive expansion, but when you go from reviewing a file individually to as a couple, the 35,000 for an individual times two gets you out to 70,000; same result. –

Leader of the Opposition: What I hear you saying: This is a fundamental change, that we're no longer looking at this as an individual payment to Islanders but as a payment to households. Is that correct?

Nigel Burns: Yes, based on amounts for individuals.

Leader of the Opposition: Look, I'm totally in favour of getting this money out. I was in favour of getting it out nine weeks ago. I'm disturbed and dismayed that we're having this discussion here in this House on perhaps the last day of the sitting with no background information, no warning that this was coming forward, and a lot of changes that I can't get my head around.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Leader of the Opposition: I have no more questions, Chair. I'm just upset that we're doing this here today.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Mr. Gallant: Thank you, Chair.

I have some grave concerns with this, as well. I just want to be clear at the start, I fully believe we need to help Islanders. I'm not in favour of the amounts here you have, but Islanders are in a crunch right now with the price of fossil fuels, and gas went up again today. As a little relief, furnace oil went down and diesel went down, but gas keeps going up. Most of us all have to use gasoline to get somewhere.

Could you tell this House – and you said \$5 million went to other programs – I had a gentleman ask me a question three weeks ago how come he didn't get his cheque because someone he knew got theirs. I asked the question, how could somebody have gotten their cheque? Did social assistance recipients get a cheque already?

Nigel Burns: Yes.

Mr. Gallant: Is that part of the \$5 million for other programs?

Nigel Burns: (Indistinct)

Mr. Gallant: That is.

Like the Leader of the Opposition, it's hard to get you head around this. You are giving more money, or the same amount of money but to more people, and you're still going to be able to do it with \$15 million. And, to my question earlier, now that things have

changed, is this going to be taxable? None of this is taxable?

An Hon. Member: Neither one.

Nigel Burns: No. The current sales tax credit is a non-taxable benefit paid by the Province of PEI. The carbon rebate is non-taxable, and the emergency support payment is not taxable.

Mr. Gallant: Just one other comment. Trying to look at the act and the amendment to try to follow it. Could you explain – A equals one quarter times – now it's going to be 270 instead of – can you tell us that? Can you explain that formula to us, the plus B, the plus C, the minus D? Maybe a bunch of people in this room know that, but we don't know that.

Nigel Burns: There is some math gymnastics.

Some Hon. Members: [Laughter]

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

An Hon. Member: Front page, top bold.

Mr. Gallant: (Indistinct) I'm trying to be serious, that we know what this formula is?

Nigel Burns: It's a quarterly formula. The amounts are stated in terms of annual amounts and then it gets broken up and paid out in quarterly amounts. That's why there is this one-quarter parameter at the beginning of the formula. That works for a quarterly benefit. Then everything would drop in nice and clean.

But where these two additional payments are lump sum, we have to basically take the amount that we want paid, multiple it by four so that when you multiply it by a quarter, you get the right amount.

In the case of parameter B, in the legislation, it's \$55. It's being amended to \$655 because the \$150 amount

An Hon. Member: Times four.

Nigel Burns: – times four gives you 600. Add on the 55 from what you started with, there's your 655.

The \$600 amount paid in this amendment, which only will apply for the July issuance, 2022, is 600 times one-quarter, which will give you your 150 amount payable.

Mr. Gallant: I think – I don't know if I'm any –

Ms. Compton: Hon. member, to do it through CRA, we have to use that formula but change the numbers so you get the amount that we promised Islanders.

Mr. Gallant: Okay, your quarter of your 655, or your 600, then the plus B, the plus C, the minus D, so can you finish that out or did you just explain that?

Mr. Henderson: (Indistinct) is 600. D is.

Mr. Gallant: D is 600?

Mr. McNeilly: Good question (Indistinct)

Nigel Burns: You won't get 600. When you get the quarterly amount – since we want it paid all in one issuance in July, for the math to work, you have to start off with a number that's actually four times what you intend for it to give you the one-quarter amount that's desired, the 150.

Mr. Gallant: So D is \$150?

Nigel Burns: So, D – you're looking at parameter D?

Mr. Henderson: Yes.

Nigel Burns: D, this is the part of the formula that defines the phase-out of the benefit. As it goes from, in this case, \$150, it phases out to zero over a range of income, and that's defined by parameter B.

Mr. Gallant: Parameters of what? I guess, in all due respect, can you walk me through A equals one-quarter times 670, which is changed to a different number, plus B, plus C, minus D. What is that transaction? That's what I'm (Indistinct) get my head around.

I can understand that B is \$655 but what is plus C minus D?

Nigel Burns: For a single person – maybe we'll just keep it (Indistinct) – a single person, let's say they make \$50,000. They

will qualify for the 1,270, which is – there's three amounts here combined: the original sales tax amount, the carbon amount, and the emergency amount. When we add those up, you get the 1,270.

Chair: Hon. members, I'm just going to remind. We got a little bit sidetracked here from the amendments, so we're actually speaking about the amendment. Great questions, and we can get back to them after the amendment is carried or not, but we need to speak about the amendment that was put forward.

The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Mr. Gallant: The amendment was, you're deleting 670 and you're putting 1,270 in there, right?

Nigel Burns: Correct.

Mr. Gallant: Times a quarter, right? Then plus B, which is \$655, right? Plus C – what's C?

Nigel Burns: C is not being amended in this bill.

Mr. Gallant: What is C?

Nigel Burns: In the sales tax credit, there is a top-up or a supplement for people making, I believe, it's over \$30,000.

Mr. Gallant: Okay, so that's C. It would differ for everybody. Is that correct, C would differ?

Nigel Burns: Depends on your circumstance, yes.

Mr. Gallant: So then, minus D is what you had indicated earlier.

Nigel Burns: The D is the phaseout. This benefit declines as income rises.

Mr. Gallant: That's it. Thank you.

Chair: The hon. Member from Summerside-South Drive.

Mr. Howard: Thank you, Chair.

I can understand that before, we had individuals up to 35,000 getting a rebate,

and now, we have households up to 70,000 getting a rebate being pretty much equivalent.

What I'm having trouble with is, what would I have gotten without this amendment if I was a single father making \$60,000 a year with a dependent? What would my rebate have been?

Nigel Burns: Under the original? Nothing.

An Hon. Member: Right.

Mr. Howard: And under this amended version?

Nigel Burns: They'll be getting three –

Mr. Howard: (Indistinct) rebates?

Nigel Burns: Yeah.

Mr. Howard: (Indistinct)

Nigel Burns: Yes.

Mr. Howard: So, they're getting \$300 whereas before, the household was getting nothing, but our budget is exactly the same? It's really hard to get your head wrapped around.

Are we helping more Islanders with the same amount of money? It's really hard to understand what we're doing here. This sounds good. I just want to understand it.

Nigel Burns: The cost of this program, we estimate to be \$15 million.

Mr. Howard: And the original program, you estimated the cost at \$15 million with the same rebate program?

Nigel Burns: As announced on March 8th.

Mr. Howard: But if I'm a single father with a dependent making \$60,000 a year, I'm now getting \$300 from a household I didn't get before, and everybody that was \$35,000 or less is now also still getting the same amount of money. Everybody that used to be getting the money is still getting the money and people that weren't getting the money before are getting money.

Where is the money coming from?

An Hon. Member: Good question.

An Hon. Member: Magic.

Nigel Burns: There might not be that many. There's more scope here, but it's within reasonable estimates and what we think the cost of this program will land.

Mr. Howard: Was that answer implying that there's going to be a little bit more go out but it's going to be within a margin of error of what your original estimates were?

Nigel Burns: Yes. We don't know with precision what this will actually cost – with precision.

Mr. Howard: But we know it would be more.

Nigel Burns: And it's – in the world of estimating, it's perhaps close enough.

Mr. Howard: Okay. I guess I'm done. I'm still a little bit confused on how the estimates can't go up when we know the payments are going up, but okay.

Chair: The hon. Member from Summerside-Wilmot.

Ms. Lund: Thank you, Chair.

I think my questions were very similar to Summerside-South Drive, but I have made up a different analogy to try out. I like the idea that more people would be eligible. I think all of us would like to see more Islanders supported. Do you have an estimate of how many more people this amendment would support?

Nigel Burns: I don't have that.

Ms. Lund: I suppose what we're all finding confusing is we're getting this information on what's supposed to be probably the last day or so of the sitting. This is a totally different formula than what we understood before.

It does seem like it would include a lot more people, unless we're assuming virtually everyone lives with someone else as a partner, which is plainly not true. And yet, there isn't additional money allotted for this. I think that we're making a lot of

assumptions about what people's home lives look like and just assuming it would be such a small percentage of people that there would be no additional money required, but we don't have any information to back that.

I guess my question is more to the minister. Does this feel like a fair thing to be giving us on the last day?

Ms. Compton: Well, since we made the announcement, we've heard over and over again that it's not enough, so we did go back to the department, but we have to work within the parameters of the CRA in how we disperse the money. If there are more funds needed, we do have some leeway within the Budget to incorporate that; I will say that as the minister. We will make sure, but we want to expand and increase what we are giving out to Islanders and this will do it, to a certain extent.

On March 8th, we did announce that it would not just be a cash payment. It would be, you know, toonie transit. There are a number of other ways we are helping Islanders. But we did expand the parameters, but we have to work within the CRA rules, and that is what we're doing here.

This is a different – this is not the same as the carbon rebate. This is a separate amendment to the bill but this is a way for us to get the funds out through CRA, which is what we want to do.

Ms. Lund: You've said twice you want to expand and increase this, and we agree with that. You just didn't come with more money to do that expansion and increase.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Compton: As my stranger has said, we don't know exactly what that will be. We have an estimate and we will make sure that the people that are part of this expansion will get the funds. I think that is the bottom line that all Islanders want to see. We will work on where that will bring us with the budget, but we do have some room there to expand. We are expanding and increasing. We've become more flexible to get the payments out to households. That will be part of the budget.

Ms. Lund: I just have one more quick question on this. You say you have an estimate. I was just curious if we could have the estimate.

Ms. Compton: I don't have it with me, but I will bring it back. We're working on this as we speak.

Ms. Lund: I see that.

Ms. Compton: We've said it before, giving money is not the easiest thing, we've discovered, because we do not have a way to do that within the parameters of the Province, as far as distribution goes.

It's not the same as emergency payments we did through economic development during COVID. There are many more people, and it is a challenge, I will be the first one to admit it. But we want to do it. We want to get the money out. We know we can do it July 5th but we need to make an amendment to the legislation to do that.

Ms. Lund: I'm good.

Chair: The hon. Member from Charlottetown –

Ms. Bell: I have nothing else to say on this amendment. I'd prefer to speak to the original bill.

Chair: Okay. The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton.

Mr. Hammarlund: Just one question. I think it's downright ingenious, although a little bit confusing, how you try to get the bill to deliver something that obviously it wasn't designed for.

But my question is – you're describing how you're raising your number to \$600 so it will get the immediate effect and this one (Indistinct). My only question is: What you do then in the next quarter? How do you void that payment to repeat itself?

Nigel Burns: This amendment creates a one-time instance –

Mr. Hammarlund: Oh, just one-time. Okay.

Nigel Burns: It only applies for July (Indistinct)

Mr. Hammarlund: Okay, thanks. I'm fine.

Chair: Shall the amendment carry? Carried.

We're back to speaking on the bill as amended.

The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Belvedere.

Ms. Bell: Thanks, Chair.

I have a couple of final comments. There's an aspect of "told you so" in this, minister, because we were really clear when you announced this that the devil is going to be in the details. It's pretty clear that you didn't talk to CRA before you announced it and now found out it's a lot harder and you've had to make a really big change to literally the whole structure of it.

When you ask us to bring forward solutions, it would be great if you would just listen because this could have been so much easier to actually get money out there.

The other point in there is that the way you help more Islanders, you expand and increase (Indistinct). You give them more money more often. This doesn't do that.

You have the mechanism to do quarterly payments. Absolutely cannot get my head around why you are not doing quarterly payments. The mechanism is there. You've made this so much more complicated in your refusal to see that the way the help Islanders is to give them money on a quarterly basis.

We had talked about the revenues not being rebated back directly and the funds are there to do that. What assurance do we have that government is actually going to spend the other revenues that aren't being rebated on carbon reduction? There's use of proceeds in the other bill that we saw. We've already seen and understand in terms of revenues going back to Islanders. What assurance do we have that any of those other revenues that you're collecting are actually going to be spent on carbon reduction?

Ms. Compton: Finance will work with the department of energy and climate change to ensure that that happens, and we'll review it on a constant basis.

Ms. Bell: We've waited so long to debate this and to have to spend our limited amount of time on algebra is really bizarre.

I am appreciative of the efforts to get money out to Islanders. I am absolutely not appreciative of the shenanigans around this, around waiting this long, making people wait until July, making them conditional on what they can get, not giving them the money that they could have, not giving it when they need it.

You have always had the mechanism to do something provincially. You have chosen not to. This is a policy choice.

How does any of this support small business? This is entirely about *Income Tax Act*. Where is the support for small business reflected in your finance department, minister?

Ms. Compton: We have reduced the small business tax rate. That is something we're doing. Through economic growth and tourism, they work every day with programs to help small business. That's not part of the purview of this particular act, so, maybe direct those questions to –

Chair: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Belvedere.

Ms. Bell: I'm done. Thank you.

Chair: Shall the bill carry as amended? Carried.

Ms. Compton: I move the title.

Chair: *An Act to Amend the Income Tax (No. 3).*

Shall it carry? Carried.

Ms. Compton: I move the enacting clause.

Chair: Be it enacted by the Lieutenant Governor and the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Prince Edward Island as follows.

Shall it carry? Carried.

Ms. Compton: Mr. Chair, I move the Speaker take the chair and that the Chair report the bill agreed to with amendment.

Chair: Shall it carry? Carried.

Mr. Speaker, as Chair of a Committee of the Whole House, having had under consideration a bill to be intituled *An Act to Amend the Income Tax (No. 3)*, I beg leave to report that the committee has gone through the said bill and has agreed to same with amendment. I move that the report of the committee be adopted.

Speaker: Shall it carry?

Some Hon. Members: Carried.

Some Hon. Members: No.

Speaker: Show of hands?

An Hon. Member: Show of hands for –

Speaker: Everybody say no?

Ms. Bell: Yes, I said no.

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct)

An Hon. Member: Show of hands.

An Hon. Member: Do you want to carry this or (Indistinct)

Mr. Trivers: Is this no or yes?

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Speaker: Hon. members, shall the bill carry?

Some Hon. Members: Carried.

Ms. Altass: No.

Speaker: Hon. members, bill is carried.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The hon. Minister of Finance.

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk: Order No. 23, *Appropriation Act (Current Expenditures) 2022*, Bill No. 65, ordered for second reading.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Health and Wellness, that the said bill be now read a second time.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk: *Appropriation Act (Current Expenditures) 2022*, Bill No. 65, read a second time.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Member from Tignish-Palmer Road to chair the Committee of the Whole House, please.

Chair (Perry): The House is now in a Committee of the Whole House to take into consideration a bill to be intituled *Appropriation Act (Current Expenditures) 2022*.

A request has been made to bring a stranger onto the floor. Shall it be granted? Granted.

Good afternoon. Would you please state your name and position for Hansard?

Gordon MacFadyen: Gordon MacFadyen, assistant secretary to Treasury Board.

Chair: Thank you very much, Gordon.

Promoter, if you would like to begin by giving a brief statement of the bill's intent.

Ms. Compton: It gives approval for the Legislature to spend the moneys allocated in the Budget.

Speaker: Hon. members, it is now open for debate.

The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Belvedere.

Ms. Bell: Thank you.

Just one quick question. As we had heard in the final parts of the debate in General Government, that there is a \$41 million in contingency funds – a big bucket of contingency funds, which includes potato wart contingency fund, COVID contingency fund, and then general. We have had confirmation that we have already allocated over \$20 million of that through the emergency relief.

When will we be seeing a special warrant to cover that contingency fund expense, that emergency fund expenditure, to ensure the other contingencies remain available for the remainder of the fiscal year?

Gordon MacFadyen: The \$20 million program that had been discussed at some length had two components to it, a component for fiscal year '21-'22 and for '22-'23, of which I think the split was about five and 15, which would put 15 related to the payment that's going to be going out the door. The other five would be the home heating and some of the payments to individuals, and that was accounted for in the old year.

We have that ready to go. We have some funding for schools committed; about I think \$3 million committed so far in the COVID-19 contingency for '22-'23. We will get to – when the spending happens – if we get up over the threshold available for the vote, we'll be to Treasury Board for a special warrant. Now, that can't happen until 30 days after the House closes. So, we're watching the clock very closely to make sure that we are onside with that provision.

Ms. Bell: Thank you. That's all I needed to ask.

Chair: Shall the bill carry? Carried.

Shall the schedule carry? Carried.

Ms. Compton: I move the title.

Chair: *Appropriation Act (Current Expenditures) 2022.*

Shall it carry? Carried.

Ms. Compton: I move the enacting clause.

Speaker: May it please Your Honour: We, Her Majesty's dutiful and loyal servants, the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Prince Edward Island, towards appropriating the several supplies raised for the exigencies of Her Majesty's Government and for the other purposes hereinafter mentioned, do humbly beseech that it be enacted:

Be it therefore enacted by the Lieutenant Governor and the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Prince Edward Island as follows.

Shall it carry? Carried.

Ms. Compton: Mr. Chair, I move the Speaker take the chair and the Chair report the bill agreed to without amendment.

Chair: Shall it carry? Carried.

Mr. Speaker, as Chair of a Committee of the Whole House, having had under consideration a bill to be intituled *Appropriation Act (Current Expenditures) 2022*, I beg leave to report that the committee has gone through the said bill and has agreed to same without amendment. I move that the report of the committee be adopted.

Speaker: Shall it carry?

An Hon. Member: Standing vote.

An Hon. Member: Carried.

Speaker: A standing vote was called.

Sergeant-at-Arms, you may ring the bell.

[Bells were rung]

Ms. Altass: The opposition is ready for the vote.

Mr. Henderson: The third party is ready for the vote, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Deagle: Government is ready for the vote, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Hon. members, those voting against, please stand.

Clerk: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-West Royalty, the hon. Leader of the Third Party, the hon. Leader of the Opposition, the hon. Member from Summerside-Wilmot, the hon. Member from Mermaid-Stratford, the hon. Member from Charlottetown-Victoria Park, the hon. Member from O'Leary-Inverness, the hon. Member from Charlottetown-Belvedere, the hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton, the hon. Member from Tyne Valley-Sherbrooke, and the hon. Member from Summerside-South Drive.

Speaker: All those for, please stand.

Clerk: The hon. Member from Cornwall-Meadowbank, the hon. Minister of Fisheries and Communities, the hon. Member from Morell-Donagh, the hon. Minister of Finance, the hon. Premier, the hon. Minister of Environment, Energy and Climate Action, the hon. Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure, the hon. Member from Charlottetown-Winsloe, the hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir, the hon. Minister of Education and Lifelong Learning, the hon. Minister of Agriculture and Land, the hon. Minister of Economic Growth, Tourism and Culture, the hon. Minister of Social Development and Housing, the hon. Minister of Health and Wellness, and the hon. Member from Tignish-Palmer Road.

Premier King: Hear, hear! Hear, hear!

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: Hon. minister, it passed.

Mr. Deagle: (Indistinct) to that side.

Speaker: Carried.

An Hon. Member: He's back.

Premier King: (Indistinct) trying to save us.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I move, seconded by the hon. Premier, that the 24th order of the day be now read.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk: Order No. 24, *Supplementary Appropriation Act 2022*, Bill No. 66, ordered for second reading.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I move, seconded by the Honourable Premier, that the said bill be now read a second time.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk: Bill No. 66, *Supplementary Appropriation Act 2022*, read a second time.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Member from Tignish-Palmer Road to chair the Committee of the Whole House, please.

Chair (Perry): The House is now in a Committee of the Whole House to take into consideration a bill to be intituled *Supplementary Appropriations Act 2022*.

A request has been made to bring a stranger onto the floor. Shall it be granted? Granted.

Good afternoon, and welcome. Could you please state your name and position for Hansard?

Gordon MacFadyen: Gordon MacFadyen, assistant secretary to Treasury Board.

Chair: Thank you very much.

Promoter, would you like to begin by giving a general statement of the bill's intent?

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Chair.

The schedule attached to this act lists the total amount of special warrants approved under the authority of the *Financial Administration Act* since the last sitting of this House.

Chair: Thank you.

The floor is now open for questions.

Shall it carry? Carried.

Shall the schedule carry? Carried.

Ms. Compton: I move the title.

Chair: *Supplementary Appropriation Act 2022.*

Shall it carry? Carried.

Ms. Compton: I move the enacting clause.

Chair: May it please Your Honour:

Be it enacted by the Lieutenant Governor and the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Prince Edward Island as follows.

Shall it carry? Carried.

Ms. Compton: Mr. Chair, I move the Speaker take the chair and the Chair report the bill agreed to without amendment.

Chair: Shall it carry? Carried.

Speaker: Running out of gas.

Ms. Beaton: Getting your steps in.

Chair: Mr. Speaker, as Chair of a Committee of the Whole House, having had under consideration a bill to be intituled *Supplementary Appropriation Act 2022*, I beg leave to report that the committee has gone through the said bill and has agreed to same without amendment. I move that the report of the committee be adopted.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Minister of Finance.

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I move, seconded by the hon. hon. Premier, that the 2nd order of the day be now read.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk: Order No. 2, *Temporary Foreign Worker Protection Act*, Bill No. 19, in committee.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Member from Tignish-Palmer Road to chair the Committee of the Whole House, please.

Chair (Perry): The House is now in a Committee of the Whole House to take into consideration a bill to be intituled *Temporary Foreign Worker Protection Act*.

A request has been made to bring a stranger onto the floor. Shall it be granted? Granted.

Hon. members, we left off – this has been under debate previously, on page 17, Section 33. That section has been read, and again, is currently under debate.

Would you please state your name and position for Hansard?

Patricia McPhail: Patricia McPhail, Director of Labour and Industrial Relations.

Chair: Thank you very much, and welcome.

I'm going to ask the House members again: Do you wish to have this read section by section or part by part?

Some Hon. Members: Carry the bill.

Ms. Altass: Part by part.

Chair: Part by part. Okay, so, I just need to go back here to make sure I'm in the right part.

We are in Part 7.

The hon. Member from Tyne Valley-Sherbrooke.

Ms. Altass: Thank you, Chair.

And I just want to take a minute to recognize Eliza MacLauchlan who is here in the gallery with us from the Cooper Institute. Eliza has done an incredible amount of work on this bill. So, I just want to say hello to Eliza and thank you for being here.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Altass: I just have a couple of more questions. Patricia, it's lovely to see you today. I'm so happy to see you.

Some Hon. Members: [Laughter]

Ms. Altass: One of the questions we've had is around the requirement to file a complaint in writing. So, can you just explain a little bit about why in writing is essential – it's essential it be in writing?

Patricia McPhail: So, for our operational purposes, our office is set up currently to take complaints in writing. It allows for proper record keeping under RIM. We are not really under something where we can move away from complaints in writing right now.

Our office will help employees, including temporary foreign workers, with filling out forms if necessary. We've done that before with employment standards, so we're prepared to do that with this as well. Or if needed, we can offer out services of other agencies that might be able to assist with filling out forms. But keeping it in writing allows for proper record keeping. So, it's very important with RIM practices right now.

Chair: Hon. members, just a reminder, we are on Part 7. We left off on Section 33. At that particular time, the promoter had put an amendment forward, so we are speaking to

that amendment. I just want to remind people of that.

Ms. Altass: Apologies, Chair.

Chair: No problem.

Ms. Altass: I have nothing to say on the amendment.

Chair: Okay. Shall the amendment carry? Carried.

Okay, back to – shall Part 7 –

The hon. Member from Tyne Valley-Sherbrooke.

Ms. Altass: Just a couple more questions.

I'm just wondering, can you just clarify when an inspector would disclose identifying information where the disclosure isn't necessary for the purposes of a proceeding under this act, or the inspector considers the disclosure is in the public interest? When would that happen?

Patricia McPhail: For the question regarding the disclosure in the public interest, I don't have an example of when that would ever come into play, but it's there just for the purposes – it would only occur if there was an actual public interest. To meet that kind of threshold would be quite extraordinary. I couldn't predict what situation that might occur in at this point in time. It's not been something that's occurred in other jurisdictions, but it is there if necessary to protect the public interest.

The proceeding under the act – it may be necessary if we were to undertake an offence proceeding under the act, the disclosure might be necessary in that case to actually have a prosecution take place. Otherwise, it may stall that process and it would be important – if it's a prosecution, it's a violation of the legislation so egregious that it really needs to be done to protect the general public; temporary foreign workers, in particular. It would only be in limited circumstances that that would occur.

Ms. Altass: It is so important to get these answers on the record since this is a brand new bill. Another question here, very quickly, on Section 37 to 39. These sections

deal with the determinations and orders by an inspector. but these are not made public, these determinations. Why is that?

Patricia McPhail: Determinations aren't made public at the first instance, at the branch level, because they are subject to an appeal to the Employment Standards Board. If they got overturned after being released to the public, you'd be releasing information that might become overturned by the board.

Also, the determinations contain a significant amount of personal information, such as workers' names, payroll information, things like that. At that branch level, and this is across other jurisdictions, as well, we don't tend to release information from branch level orders.

Ms. Altass: That is all for this.

Chair: Shall the section carry? Carried.

Shall this part carry? Carried.

Part 8. Any questions on Part 8?

The hon. Member from Tyne Valley-Sherbrooke.

Ms. Altass: Yes. Oh, sorry. No, sorry, not –

Chair: Shall Part 8 carry? Carried.

Part 9. Any questions on Part 9? I'm just giving you a second to get through, yeah.

Ms. Altass: No, you're good.

Chair: Shall Part 9 carry? Carried.

Part 10. Any questions on Part 10?

Shall Part 10 carry? Carried.

Part 11. Any questions on Part 11?

The hon. Member from Tyne Valley-Sherbrooke.

Ms. Altass: Yes, one quick question. One of the questions that came up in committee, there was a lot of discussion on this, was around the need to develop a code of conduct for recruiters and employers who are operating under this act.

Are there any plans to develop such a code of conduct?

Patricia McPhail: That was something that, in the department's response to the committee report, we indicated that we will be looking at that during our consultations on the regulation-making process.

Ms. Altass: Okay. There's no official decision on that but it will be something that's considered in the consultation. Okay. That's all. Thank you.

Chair: Shall this part carry? Carried.

Part 12.

The hon. Member from Tyne Valley-Sherbrooke.

Ms. Altass: One question on this. Here's the one piece that does concern me most of all, is that there is no proclamation date for this in this bill. Can you tell me why that is?

Patricia McPhail: There are a significant number of regulations that need to be developed that go along with this bill before it can become in force. With that, we don't have control over the time constraints of Legislative Counsel Office, and we need to go out to members and consult. There may be some back and forth in redeveloping the regulations over time. So, because we can't strictly adhere to a finite timeline in that process, because we don't have control over all the factors, there isn't a proclamation date.

It may also be that we need to enact parts of the act before the other, as they did in B.C. For those reasons – and they are quite significant – for those reasons, we don't have an enforcement date in this legislation.

Ms. Altass: Okay. I can appreciate that answer. Thank you, Patricia. But I will say, it does still really make me very nervous because there have been examples in the past – pretty significant examples, not necessarily with this government – but where important legislation like this has been passed and then never proclaimed. Without having that proclamation date, I hope that this will be something that actually does come to fruition.

Can you give me some timelines expected, anticipated timelines on when the regulations should be ready and the bill proclaimed (Indistinct)?

Patricia McPhail: Subject to the availability of Legislative Counsel Office, the plan is to start working on some model regulations within the next two months and then go to consultations with the stakeholders with those draft regulations. Some might not be fully drafted. We might not have the code of conduct fully in place because that's going to require some consultations almost on top of the regulations because, although they're connected, they're not the same thing.

The plan is roll out over the next six months to get this done as quickly as possible, but because I don't have control over the resources needed, I can't guarantee that it would be done in that time, but that is what we're proposing to try to do moving forward.

Ms. Altass: Just to confirm, minister, that timeline is reasonable to you, as well? That is – yes? Okay.

Mr. Thompson: Yeah, certainly, we're going to do our best to get this done as quick as we can.

Ms. Altass: All right. I really would have liked to bring an amendment to this, but I know it won't pass and I understand that you have your reasons for that, so I will end my questioning at this point.

Chair: Shall this part carry? Carried.

Shall the bill carry? Carried.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. MacKay: I move the title.

Chair: *Temporary Foreign Worker Protection Act.*

Shall it carry? Carried.

Mr. MacKay: I move the enacting clause.

Chair: Be it enacted by the Lieutenant Governor and the Legislative Assembly of

the Province of Prince Edward Island as follows.

Shall it carry? Carried.

Mr. MacKay: Mr. Chair, I move the Speaker take the chair and that the Chair report the bill agreed to with amendment.

Chair: Shall it carry? Carried.

Mr. Speaker, as Chair of a Committee of the Whole House, having had under consideration a bill to be intituled *Temporary Foreign Worker Protection Act*, I beg leave to report that the committee has gone through the said bill and has agreed to same with amendment. I move that the report of the committee be adopted.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Minister of Finance.

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. Premier, that the 16th order of the day be ordered for third reading.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk: Order No. 16, *An Act to Amend the Education Act*, Bill No. 56, ordered for third reading.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I move, seconded by the Honourable Premier, that the said bill be now read a third time.

Speaker: Shall it carry?

Some Hon. Members: Standing vote.

Speaker: Standing vote's being asked.

Sergeant-at-Arms, you may ring the bell.

[Bells were rung]

Mr. Henderson: Third party is ready for the vote.

Ms. Altass: Opposition is ready for the vote.

Mr. Deagle: Government is ready for the vote.

Speaker: Hon. members, those voting against, please stand.

Clerk: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-West Royalty, the hon. Member from Charlottetown-Belvedere, and the hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton.

Speaker: Hon. members, those voting for, please stand.

Clerk: The hon. Member from Cornwall-Meadowbank, the hon. Minister of Fisheries and Communities, the hon. Member from Morell-Donagh, the hon. Minister of Finance, the hon. Premier, the hon. Minister of Environment, Energy and Climate Action, the hon. Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure, the hon. Member from Charlottetown-Winsloe, the hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir, the hon. Minister of Education and Lifelong Learning, the hon. Minister of Agriculture and Land, the hon. Minister of Economic Growth, Tourism and Culture, the hon. Minister of Social Development and Housing, the hon. Minister of Health and Wellness, the hon. Leader of the Third Party, the hon. Leader of the Opposition, the hon. Member from Summerside-Wilmot, the hon. Member from Mermaid-Stratford, the hon. Member from Charlottetown-Victoria Park, the hon. Member from O'Leary-Inverness, the hon. Member from Tignish-Palmer Road, the hon. Member from Tyne Valley-Sherbrooke, and the hon. Member from Summerside-South Drive.

Speaker: Hon. minister, carried.

Premier King: You look like you're out of steam, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: (Indistinct)

[Laughing]

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I move, seconded by the Honourable Premier, that the said bill do now pass.

Speaker: Hon. members, this is a bill introduced by leave of the House, read a first time, read a second time, committed to a Committee of the Whole House, reported agreed to without amendment, read a third time and it is now moved that the bill do now pass.

All those in favour, say 'aye'.

Some Hon. Members: Aye!

Speaker: Contrary, 'nay'.

Carried.

The hon. Minister of Finance.

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I move, seconded by the hon. Premier, that the 2nd, 3rd, 5th, 8th, 13th, 14th, 18th, 19th, 20th, 21st, 22nd, 23rd, and 24th orders of the day be now read.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

[The following bills were ordered for third reading]

Clerk: Order No. 2, *Temporary Foreign Worker Protection Act*, Bill No. 19;

Order No. 3, *An Act to Amend the Highway Traffic Act (No. 3)*, Bill No. 54;

Order No. 5, *An Act to Amend the Business Corporations Act (No. 2)*, Bill No. 58;

Order No. 8, *Miscellaneous Statutes Amendment Act, 2022*, Bill No. 52;

Order No. 13, *An Act to Amend the Provincial Court Act*, Bill No. 59;

Order No. 14, *An Act to Amend the Building Codes Act*, Bill No. 46;

Order No. 18, *An Act to Amend the Climate Leadership Act*, Bill No. 60;

Order No. 20, *Vaping Products Taxation Agreement Act*, Bill No. 62;

Order No. 21, *An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act (No. 3)*, Bill No. 64;

Order No. 22, *An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act (No. 2)*, Bill No. 63;

Order No. 23, *Appropriation Act (Current Expenditures) 2022*, Bill No. 65;

Order No. 24, *Supplementary Appropriation Act 2022*, Bill No. 66;

Pardon me, and Order No. 19, *An Act to Amend the Tobacco Tax Act*, Bill No. 61.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I move, seconded by the Honourable Premier, that the said bills be now read a third time with unanimous consent where required.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

[The following bills were read a third time]

Clerk: Bill No. 19, *Temporary Foreign Worker Protection Act*;

Bill No. 54, *An Act to Amend the Highway Traffic Act (No. 3)*;

Bill No. 58, *An Act to Amend the Business Corporations Act (No. 2)*;

Bill No. 52, *Miscellaneous Statutes Amendment Act, 2022*;

Bill No. 59, *An Act to Amend the Provincial Court Act*;

Bill No. 46, *An Act to Amend the Building Codes Act*;

Bill No. 60, *An Act to Amend the Climate Leadership Act*;

Bill No. 61, *An Act to Amend the Tobacco Tax Act*;

Bill No. 62, *Vaping Products Taxation Agreement Act*;

Bill No. 64, *An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act (No. 3)*;

Bill No. 63, *An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act (No. 2)*;

Bill No. 65, *Appropriation Act (Current Expenditures) 2022*; and

Bill No. 66, *Supplementary Appropriation Act 2022*.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I move, seconded by the Honourable Premier, that the said bills do now pass.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Hon. members, these are bills introduced by leave of the House, read a first time, read a second time, committed to a Committee of the Whole House, reported agreed to with and without amendments as each case may be, read a third time, and it is now moved that the bills do now pass.

All those favour, say 'Aye'.

Some Hon. Members: Aye!

Speaker: Contrary, 'nay'.

Carried.

The hon. Member from Tignish-Palmer Road.

Mr. Perry: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I move, seconded by the hon. Leader of the Third Party, that the 30th order of the day be now read.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk: Order No. 30, *An Act to Amend the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, Bill No. 125, ordered for third reading.

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

Mr. Perry: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Leader of the Third Party, that the said bill be now read a third time.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk: *An Act to Amend the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, Bill No. 125, read a third time.

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

Mr. Perry: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I move, seconded by the Honourable Leader of the Third Party, that the said bill do now pass.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Hon. members, This is a bill introduced by leave of the House, read a first time, read a second time, committed to a Committee of the Whole House, reported agreed to without amendment, read a third time and it is now moved that the bill do pass.

All those in favour, say 'aye'.

Some Hon. Members: Aye!

Speaker: Contrary, 'nay'.

Bill is carried.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Ms. Compton: Mr. Speaker, I wish to advise that this concludes the business that government wishes to conduct during this, the winter-spring sitting of this House.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Hon. members, I have been advised that the Honourable Lieutenant Governor will be arriving at the George Coles Building shortly. I will leave the Chair and invite Her Honour to join us in the Chamber to receive the House and the Royal Assent to the various bills passed by the House.

I will also request at this time, all members, please wear your masks for the remainder of the day.

Some Hon. Members: [Laughing]

Speaker: Is that (Indistinct)

Some Hon. Members: [Laughing]

[recess]

Clerk: Your Honour, the Legislative Assembly has passed certain Bill's during this, the 2nd Session of the 66th General Assembly and now begs your Honour's consideration of the grant of Royal Assent for the following Bills:

Temporary Foreign Worker Protection Act, Bill No. 19;

An Act to Amend the Building Codes Act, Bill No. 46;

Miscellaneous Statutes Amendment Act, 2022 Bill No. 52;

An Act to Amend the Highway Traffic Act (No. 3), Bill No. 54;

An Act to Amend the Education Act, Bill No. 56;

An Act to Amend the Business Corporations Act (No. 2), Bill No. 58;

An Act to Amend the Provincial Court Act, Bill No. 59;

An Act to Amend the Climate Leadership Act, Bill No. 60;

An Act to Amend the Tobacco Tax Act, Bill No. 61;

Vaping Products Taxation Agreement Act, Bill No. 62;

An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act, (No. 2), Bill No. 63;

An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act, (No. 3), Bill No. 64;

Supplementary Appropriation Act 2022, Bill No. 66;

An Act to Amend the Real Property Tax Act, Bill No. 123;

Emancipation Day Proclamation Act, Bill No. 124;

An Act to Amend the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, Bill No. 125; and

An Act to Amend the St. Dunstan's University Act, Bill No. 200.

Her Honour Lieutenant Governor

Antoinette Perry: In Her Majesty's name, I assent to these Bills.

Speaker: May it please Your Honour, we, Her Majesty's loyal and dutiful subjects of the Legislative Assembly of Prince Edward Island in session assembled, approach Your Honour at the close of our labours with sentiments of unfeigned devotion and loyalty to Her Majesty's person and government. We do humbly beg for Your Honour's acceptance of a bill to be intituled *Appropriation Act (Capital Expenditures) 2022*, thus placing at the disposal of the Crown, the means by which government can be made efficient for the service and welfare of the province.

Clerk: Her Honour, the Honourable Lieutenant Governor, doth thank Her Majesty's loyal and dutiful subjects, accepts their benevolence, and assents to this Bill in Her Majesty's name.

Her Honour Lieutenant Governor

Antoinette Perry: Please be seated.

Thank you.

I wish to commend all hon. members for the conscientious manner in which you have conducted your deliberations at this point of the 2nd Session of the 66th General Assembly of the Province of Prince Edward Island.

Je tiens à vous exprimer ma reconnaissance pour votre dévouement au bien-être des Insulaires, surtout face aux défis présentés pendant cette pandémie et cette période de recouvrement de la pandémie et du redressement économique que nous vivons actuellement.

I would like to express my gratitude for your dedication to the wellbeing of Islanders, especially in light of the challenges presented during this pandemic and its recovery period, as well as the economic recovery we are currently experiencing.

On behalf of all Islanders, I wish to express to all of you my gratitude and appreciation for your leadership and care in guiding us and helping us to deal with the challenges of

this pandemic, especially the protection of our health and the recovery of our economy.

At this time, I pray that until the Legislative Assembly again meets, each of you enjoy good health and prosperity and that peace and freedom for all people shall be more clearly achieved.

Passez une très agréable saison d'été.

I wish you a most enjoyable summer and hopefully family reunions will rejuvenate all of us.

So, thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Morell-Donagh.

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I move, seconded by the hon. Premier, that this House adjourn and stand to the call of the Speaker.

Speaker: Hon. members, just before I carry it, I'd just like to say thank you to all staff. I'm going to be very brief, very quick because I know it's been a very long session and we're running late today. So, I'll be very, very brief.

I just want to make sure everybody is thanked, and I'm not going to start naming names, because I'm scared I'm going to miss somebody. But I want to especially thank the Pages; not only the ones that are here, but the ones hopefully are watching online, and thank them very much for all the work they have done. They kept us fed, watered through this long process.

Hon. members, I want to thank you also. It's been a long run; probably one of my longest House sittings, or is the longest House sitting I've done. But there was a debate in here. There was a lot of good debate back and forth and I've listened to it all back and forth and it was all good. It was respectful and we got a lot of work done here today, as you can see. I see some chuckles, but you know, I've been in those seats and I've been – that's how democracy works. It's back and forth and at the end of the day, we're going to walk out this door, we're all going to

shake hands here today and say we're having a good day. So, with that, it's respectful.

So, hon. members, I want you to enjoy your time off before we return and get regenerated, because there's more work to be done.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

The Legislature adjourned until the call of the Speaker.