

# PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY



Speaker: Hon. Darlene Compton

Hansard, Published by Order of the Legislature

First Session of the Sixty-seventh General Assembly

Wednesday, 29 November 2023

MATTERS OF PRIVILEGE AND RECOGNITION OF GUESTS .....	2425
STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS.....	2428
O'LEARY-INVERNESS (Oversight of Maritime Electric).....	2428
CHARLOTTETOWN-BELVEDERE (Birt & McNeill's 30 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary).....	2428
RUSTICO-EMERALD (North Rustico Lions Club – Service Dog Guides).....	2429
RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS TAKEN AS NOTICE.....	2429
HOUSING, LAND AND COMMUNITIES (Incident reports from outreach centre) .....	2429
ORAL QUESTIONS.....	2429
LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION (Open drug use at outreach centre) (further) .....	2430
LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION (Support and plan for outreach centre model) (further).....	2430
LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION (Housing unit purchases by government) (further) .....	2430
LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION (Former curling club building appraisal).....	2431
LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION (Open drug use at outreach centre) (further) .....	2432
LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION (Emergency response to outreach centre).....	2432
LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION (Support and plan for outreach centre) (further) .....	2433
LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION (Off-Island medical expenses) .....	2434
CHARLOTTETOWN-WEST ROYALTY (Access to shelters) (further).....	2434
CHARLOTTETOWN-WEST ROYALTY (Transitional housing) (further) .....	2435
O'LEARY-INVERNESS (Specified BSE risk materials).....	2435
LEADER OF THE THIRD PARTY (Support for injured health care workers) .....	2436
LEADER OF THE THIRD PARTY (Review of WCB processes) .....	2437
NEW HAVEN-ROCKY POINT (Economic challenges in farming) .....	2437
NEW HAVEN-ROCKY POINT (Regulatory changes for land development).....	2438
TYNE VALLEY-SHERBROOKE (Free Heat Pump Program).....	2439
KENSINGTON-MALPEQUE (GFL waste management services).....	2440
CHARLOTTETOWN-WEST ROYALTY (Shelter and housing in Summerside) (further) .....	2441
CHARLOTTETOWN-WEST ROYALTY (Addressing the housing crisis) (further) .....	2442

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS .....	2442
FISHERIES, TOURISM, SPORT AND CULTURE (Aquaculture Exhibition at Eptek Center) .....	2442
TABLING OF DOCUMENTS.....	2444
REPORTS BY COMMITTEES .....	2445
Education and Economic Growth (Adoption of report on Committee Activities).....	2445
Natural Resources and Environmental Sustainability (Adoption of report on Committee Activities).....	2445
Health and Social Development (Introduction and adoption of report on Committee Activities).....	2447
CHARLOTTETOWN-WEST ROYALTY .....	2449
Reverting to Natural Resources and Environmental Sustainability (Adoption of report on Committee Activities).....	2450
RUSTICO-EMERALD .....	2450
Public Accounts (Introduction and adoption of report on Committee Activities) .....	2451
ORDERS OTHER THAN GOVERNMENT .....	2452
Third Reading and Pass .....	2452
Bill 106 – An Act to Amend the Employment Standards Act.....	2452
Second Reading and Committee .....	2452
Bill 110 – An Act to Amend the Farm Machinery Dealers and Vendors Act .....	2452
MOTIONS OTHER THAN GOVERNMENT .....	2458
Committing Bill 110 to the Standing Committee on Natural Resources and Environmental Sustainability.....	2458
ORDERS OTHER THAN GOVERNMENT .....	2458
Second Reading and Committee .....	2458
Bill 112 – An Act to Amend the Planning Act (No. 3).....	2458
MOTIONS OTHER THAN GOVERNMENT .....	2460
Motion 77 – Keeping ATVs off the Confederation trail) (further) .....	2460
NEW HAVEN-ROCKY POINT .....	2460
LEADER OF THE THIRD PARTY .....	2464
KENSINGTON-MALPEQUE .....	2465
NEW HAVEN-ROCKY POINT .....	2465
CHARLOTTETOWN-WEST ROYALTY .....	2466
HOUSING, LAND AND COMMUNITIES .....	2467
TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE .....	2468
SUMMERSIDE-WILMOT .....	2468
CHARLOTTETOWN-WINSLOE.....	2468
FINANCE.....	2469
O’LEARY-INVERNESS.....	2469
NEW HAVEN-ROCKY POINT .....	2470
ORDERS OF THE DAY (GOVERNMENT) .....	2471
Capital Estimates .....	2471
Justice and Public Safety (further) .....	2471
Social Development and Seniors.....	2472
Transportation and Infrastructure .....	2475

Supplementary Estimates.....	2483
Second Reading and Committee .....	2491
Bill 43 – Appropriation Act (Capital Expenditures) 2024.....	2491
Bill 44 – Supplementary Appropriation Act (No. 2) 2023 .....	2492
Third Reading and Pass .....	2493
Bill 43 – Appropriation Act (Capital Expenditures) 2024.....	2493
Bill 44 – Supplementary Appropriation Act (No. 2) 2023 .....	2494
Bill 26 – An Act to Amend the Financial Administration Act (No. 2).....	2494
Bill 38 – Loan Act 2023	
Bill 39 – An Act to Amend the Real Property Tax Act	
Bill 40 – An Act to Amend the Planning Act (No. 2).....	2495
Royal Assent.....	2495
Bill 3 – An Act to Amend the Health Information Act	
Bill 7 – An Act to Amend the Police Act	
Bill 8 – An Act to Amend the International Commercial Arbitration Act	
Bill 9 – Arbitration Act	
Bill 10 – An Act to Amend the Roads Act	
Bill 11 – An Act to Amend the Highway Signage Act	
Bill 12 – An Act to Amend the Environmental Protection Act	
Bill 19 – Adult Guardianship and Trusteeship Act	
Bill 20 – Public Guardian and Trustee Act	
Bill 21 – Powers of Attorney and Personal Directives Act	
Bill 22 – An Act to Amend the Legal Professions Act (No. 2)	
Bill 23 – An Act to Amend the Opioid Damages and Health Care Costs Recovery Act	
Bill 24 – Government Reorganization Act	
Bill 25 – An Act to Amend the Agricultural Insurance Act	
Bill 26 – An Act to Amend the Financial Administration Act (No. 2)	
Bill 27 – An Act to Amend the Archaeology Act	
Bill 28 – Mental Health Act	
Bill 29 – An Act to Amend the Amusement Devices Act	
Bill 30 – An Act to Amend the Police Act (No. 2)	
Bill 31 – An Act to Amend the Liquor Control Act	
Bill 32 – Child, Youth and Family Services Act	
Bill 33 – An Act to Amend the Adoption Act	
Bill 34 – An Act to Amend the Intercountry Adoption (Hague Convention) Act	
Bill 36 – An Act to Amend the Workers Compensation Act	
Bill 37 – An Act to Amend the Municipal Government Act.....	2496
Bill 38 – Loan Act 2023	
Bill 39 – An Act to Amend the Real Property Tax Act	
Bill 40 – An Act to Amend the Planning Act (No. 2)	
Bill 44 – Supplementary Appropriation Act (No. 2) 2023	
Bill 106 – An Act to Amend the Employment Standards Act	
Bill 109 – An Act to Amend the Employment Standards Act (No. 3)	
Bill 200 – An Act to Amend An Act to Incorporate Amalgamated Dairies Limited	
Bill 43 – Appropriation Act (Capital Expenditures) 2024.....	2496
ADJOURNED.....	2496

The Legislature sat at 1:03 p.m.

[Hon. D. Compton in the chair]

Matters of Privilege and Recognition of  
Guests

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Hon. D. King:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

Welcome back to my colleagues for Wednesday debate in the provincial Legislature, to all of those who are tuned in at home, and to all who tuned in today in our public gallery. I see the Member from Tyne Valley-Sherbrooke has a great cheering section here today, but just to remind them that you can't cheer loudly externally. You can do as best as you can internally, but you'll have to mind your p's and q's in the public gallery. Welcome, nonetheless, to everybody who has joined us today.

While I had the privilege to attend the Remembrance Day services at the Kings Playhouse in Georgetown recently, it became known to me that John Connolly will be taking over as the general manager of the Kings Playhouse. John, who's a tremendous, successful, creative artist in his own right, will do a wonderful job there following in the shoes of Haley Zavo and Catherine O'Brien, who have laid a great foundation at the Kings Playhouse. I just wanted to wish John the best of luck. He'll be welcome with open arms in – still in my heart, at least – the capital of Kings County, in Georgetown.

[1:05 p.m.]

I also wanted to say that it was tremendous to read the story today of Nicole Drakes – originally from Jamaica who moved to PEI a couple of years ago to study at the Culinary Institute at Holland College – opening a bakery in the beautiful village of Morell. I just wanted to wish Nicole the best of luck and to let her know that she will be a great addition to a wonderful community in that village in Morell. I wish everyone to get out and support that wonderful initiative of entrepreneurship.

I also wanted to say a special hello to the staff and students at Summerside Intermediate School who will be hosting, this weekend, the 46<sup>th</sup> Annual Glenn Edison Memorial Tip-off Basketball Tournament. This honours the memory of Glenn, a former teacher, principal, and longtime basketball coach at Summerside Intermediate. All the best to all the teams participating.

I wanted to say, finally, that it was really nice to hear from my colleague, the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure, that the Bargain Nook in Alberton recently held its grand opening on November 20<sup>th</sup>; a thrift store in Alberton which opened first in 1986, operated by the Western Hospital Health Care Auxiliary, raising money for the Western Hospital. So, I wanted to congratulate all of the auxiliary, Emanuel, Lillian, all who were there. And of course, our Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure; we know him in our caucus to be very thrifty with his dollars, and likely so with his choice of wardrobe, so I'm sure he'll be a regular there. [Laughter] It was good to see him at the grand opening.

I wish the Bargain Nook on Main Street in Alberton continued good luck raising hundreds of thousands of dollars on an annual basis for the Western Hospital.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

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

**Hon. H. Perry:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

It's a pleasure to rise today and welcome all those who are watching online and those in our public gallery. It's nice to see people from up west in the House.

While we're talking about up west, and I guess in particular the guests that we have from District 23, Grand River Ranch in the Member from Tyne Valley-Sherbrooke's area, we have a few individuals from my district who attend there three days a week to do some horse riding. I want to thank Grand River Ranch for everything that they do. They're so inclusive. In talking to my constituents, they can't wait to get on the bus, to go down to the farm and participate in every event they have, whether it's from

crafts, whether it's from cleaning out the stalls, to grooming the horses, and to riding the horses. They do a wonderful job. So, I just want to put a shout-out to everybody that works there and all the wonderful things they do to help Islanders.

Usually, I leave Tignish around six in the morning. Today I was up a little earlier. The dog cooperated, so I was able to get out at 5:25, and it's a wonder: Eugene's Drive Thru opens at 5:30. I was on Church Street waiting to get in off of the street that goes into the drive-through. So, there's that many people that are out and about in our area. I don't normally see that that early in the morning unless it's fishing season, and then it's at four o'clock in the morning. It's nice to see that everybody's out and about and active in the town of Tignish.

Miminegash Christmas: yesterday I mentioned a few that were happening in the area. Miminegash parade will happen on December 15<sup>th</sup>, so just to let everybody know. If you want to put an entry into the parade, it's December 15<sup>th</sup> at 6 p.m. starting in St. Louis, following Union Road up to Miminegash Fire Department where they will meet a special guest and there will be treats provided. I'm hoping to have the buoy tree ready for lighting on that night also.

With that, I'll welcome everyone to the Legislature today and we have some work to do. Thank you.

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

**K. Bernard:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Welcome back to all my colleagues and everybody tuning in from around the Island and Charlottetown-Victoria Park especially, and welcome to everybody joining us in the gallery today. It's good to see some faces in there.

I don't see her here right now – I know I spoke about it yesterday in my greetings – but I just want to officially congratulate Emmeline Stanley for winning the Frank Zakem Rotary Youth Parliamentarian Award.

[Applause]

**K. Bernard:** I can tell you, there were a lot of deserving students in there. Emmeline, good job.

Just very briefly, the City of Charlottetown is in the next phase of community engagement for updating their cultural policy. They're inviting the public into an arts and culture open house today from 3:00 to 6:00 p.m. in the auditorium at the Charlottetown Library Centre. There, you'll have the opportunity to review and respond to the new cultural policy draft and contribute to developing collective vision for arts and culture in Charlottetown.

[1:10 p.m.]

So, if you have some time and you're in any way interested, please pop into the Charlottetown Library Centre to have your say.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

**H. MacLennan:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I'd just like to welcome everyone that's watching from District 23 Tyne Valley-Sherbrooke.

I just want to point out, as the Premier had mentioned, a couple of guests in the House there. Welcome to everyone in the gallery, but a good district supporter of mine, Anne Christopher, is here today, and of course, my biggest supporter would be my wife, Marlene.

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

**H. MacLennan:** I know I wouldn't be here without her support. Thanks.

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

**G. McNeilly:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I just rise to say hello to everybody in District 14 and everybody watching from the gallery. It's great to see everybody. To my friend Alan Sparks, thanks for coming in this session so many times. It's great that

you participate in democracy. For me, we're going to be here for you; we're going to push.

I just want to say hello to a special constituent in my area that was on the radio this morning. Anybody who knows him knows his voice right away. George Halliwell was on there this morning talking about the great programs he's done for a number of years regarding hockey gear for kids that – you know, finances should never be a barrier to participation. George and his brother have done an incredible job with this. I want to say hello to him and just say that the next time I get a pair of skates, he puts them on the wrong way. I don't play much hockey and I don't know why he did that. No, he didn't do that. But anyway, listen George, thanks a lot for all you do for PEI. You're one to follow.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

**B. Trivers:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

It's a pleasure to rise today and welcome everyone watching from District 18 Rustico-Emerald, and those in the gallery, as well. It's nice to see you folks. Anne, good to see you. Of course, you have a connection to North Rustico as well, with your sister Estelle being there, so nice to see you in the gallery.

It's nice to see three District 18 constituents in the gallery here today: Winkie Park, who is the president of the New Glasgow Community Corp. and lives in New Glasgow, of course. Then we have a couple of new constituents, relatively new to Rustico. Came from the east; the Minister of Finance's district, I believe. It's nice to see Jane Farquharson and Doug Crossman here, two of the driving forces between the North Shore Climate Action for Resilience group, and in fact, we may see some cooperation between the New Glasgow Community Corporation and the NSCaR group as it's going in the future, so stay tuned.

I wanted to say that tonight, in fact, NSCaR has collaborated with Gulf Shore Consolidated School as part of a climate challenge funds initiative. Elder Matilda

Knockwood is having a dinner there tonight at 5:30, talking about traditional ecological knowledge on climate resilience and environmental conservation. That's going to be an excellent milestone in that project, as well.

I wanted to congratulate Kate MacQuarrie, also from District 18; such a great expert in wildlife. She won the Janice Simmonds Award from Friends of the Farm in recognition of significant contribution to the protection, preservation, and management of public green spaces on PEI. I wanted to congratulate her.

I won't even go into all of the wonderful Christmas events that are happening in the district today, Madam Speaker.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from New Haven-Rocky Point.

**P. Bevan-Baker:** Thank you. We all thank you for that, Rustico-Emerald.

Welcome, everybody, to the gallery and everybody to another day of great debate here in our Legislature.

I want to celebrate some special women today. I'm going to start by adding my congratulations to Emmeline Stanley for winning the Frank Zakem Award. I was sitting in your chair, actually, Madam Speaker, for part of the Rotary Youth Parliament – lovely view from up there – and Emmeline was sitting in this chair, actually. There was some fantastic debate in this Legislature by these young Islanders. Campbell McNeill was another, minister of environment, energy and climate action; a less blustery one than we're used to in this House, but he did – [Laughter]

In all seriousness, it was a really fantastic event. It was a pleasure and honour to be a part of it.

[1:15 p.m.]

The second spectacular woman I would like to mention is Soleil Hutchinson, from my district. Soleil lives on the South Melville Road. She has a farm, Soleil's Farm. She was recently married. She and her wife run this fantastic farm. She recently joined the PEI Advisory Council on the Status of

Women. She will be a huge asset to that group. Thank you, Soleil.

And finally, Maudie Wigmore – I'm begging your indulgence, Madam Speaker – celebrates her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday at the Haviland Club this Sunday on December 3<sup>rd</sup>. Maudie is an amazing woman. She lives in the Burnside Community Care Centre in Clyde River, in my district. That event is going to happen at the Haviland Club. There will be, no doubt, some good chat, and some food and drink, and maybe even some dancing. Maudie is still up for that at 100 years old.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

### Statements by Members

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

### **Oversight of Maritime Electric**

**R. Henderson:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I have been asking questions in this Legislature of Maritime Electric, a subsidiary of Fortis Incorporated, on how Islanders receive electricity, how much Islanders pay for electricity, and will it be a reliable and cost-effective service in the future. I want to note that Fortis, who wholly owns Maritime Electric, has holdings and assets exceeding \$66 billion and operates in areas all across North America and the Caribbean. They posted revenue of \$8.69 billion for the year ending June 2023.

To be clear, I am not against corporations making a reasonable profit. Taking risks and being innovative in delivering a service to its customers is important. But what we have witnessed under this government is no willingness to protect Islanders from corporate monopolies, which is exactly what Maritime Electric is to over 84,000 households.

During the upcoming hearings with IRAC, Fortis is seeking yet another rate increase to cover \$37 million in clean-up costs that resulted from a hurricane. The minister responsible for energy has the option to request intervenor status. He needs to defend Island ratepayers by holding large corporations to account. He needs to make

sure this is not an attempt to bill Islanders for issues that were caused by negligence in not maintaining their infrastructure up to industry standards.

It's the minister's responsibility to make sure Islanders' expectations of reliable delivery of electricity is effective regardless of where they live in PEI. To prove my point, I tabled pictures in this Legislature yesterday that we see power poles well past their life expectancy and vegetation growing up through the electric lines. Maritime Electric's CEO recently stated in an interview that trees that fell on lines were outside his responsibility. Why didn't Maritime Electric ask landowners if they could do extra trimming of risky vegetation?

This company has other issues. Do they have the capacity to deliver three-phase power where needed? We are moving toward electric cars and heat operations. Does Maritime Electric have the ability to balance the load if extended periods of cold found their way to the Atlantic region? Will rolling brownouts be a reality on PEI in the coming months? Will battery storage be a possibility?

To conclude, why should Maritime Electric get a guaranteed 9-point-plus percent margin on a capital investment on distribution lines that came down due to vegetation management that was significantly below industry standards? How is that a replacement of infrastructure that already existed?

There are many unanswered questions around this essential service. It's time to expect better of those responsible for answering these questions, and it's up to government to do its job by monitoring this company with proper oversight.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Belvedere.

### **Birt & McNeill's 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

**S. Dillon:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

It is a pleasure to rise today to recognize Kim McNeill and Nancy Birt, a 30-year milestone of practicing law in Charlottetown.

Birt & McNeill was a law firm formed in what many might know as Sherwood with partners Nancy Birt and Kim McNeill in 1993. There was a focus on real estate, wills, estates, and adoption law.

As well as practicing law, Kim had interest in helping her community as a member of Habitat for Humanity Prince Edward Island and the Sherwood Home and School. Nancy was active in her community as a volunteer, being involved with Canada Winter Games and the national gymnastics championships. Both spent time teaching business law at UPEI as sessional professors.

Kim and Nancy not only spent years supporting the community, they are both lifelong friends. I am excited to see both ladies exploring new options and perhaps enjoying a little more time with family and friends.

Thank you both for all that you've accomplished over the last 30 years, and congratulations on reaching this milestone.

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

[1:20 p.m.]

### **North Rustico Lions Club – Service Dog Guides**

**B. Trivers:** Madam Speaker, today I am pleased to recognize the North Rustico Lions Club for their ongoing support of service dog guides. Service dog guides assist Canadians who are 14 years or older and have a physical or medical disability. These dog guides are trained to fetch objects, open and close doors and appliances, push automatic buttons, and get help by barking or activating an alert system.

Each year, the North Rustico Lions Club holds a dog walk for guide dogs in support of the Lions Foundation of Canada Dog Guides. Last year, with the help of clubs like North Rustico, the Canada-wide Pet Valu Walk for Dog Guides raised \$1.2 million.

In addition, this year on November 4<sup>th</sup>, 2023, a delegation from the North Rustico Lions Club travelled to Oakville, Ontario to visit the Lions Foundation of Canada Dog Guides in person. Through the success of the

North Shore Chase the Ace, they were able to make a \$10,000 donation. This donation will go towards a new dog kennel, and the delegation was very pleased to get a wonderful tour of the facility.

Lion Randy Pineau is a longtime advocate for service dog guides but was unfortunately unable to make the trip. However, at the Lions Club meeting on November 16<sup>th</sup>, Randy was recognized for his dedication and passion toward this cause and was presented with two gifts from the Lions Foundation of Canada Dog Guides school: a hat and a vest.

Madam Speaker, a huge thank you to the North Rustico Lions Club and Randy Pineau for your work supporting service dog guides, and the big difference it makes in our communities.

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

### Responses to Questions Taken as Notice

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

**Hon. R. Lantz:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The opposition has been waiting impatiently for something I committed to take back to them, and I'm happy to say that staff are finished compiling the incident reports from the Charlottetown outreach centre. They've been reviewed, compiled, put together, and I expect they'll be delivered to me from the printer upstairs here shortly. I intend to table those later this afternoon.

### Questions by Members

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

**Hon. H. Perry:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker, but I think he made the same statement a few weeks ago on a different ask, and we have yet to receive it. So, we'll wait to see if it gets here today or not.

Question to the Minister of Justice: Last week, the minister said it was important for citizens, or anyone, to report illegal activities. "If the member sees something illegal, report it. If your constituents see



something illegal, report it.” Those are pretty clear directions, and they come from the province’s chief law enforcement officer.

We know that the Minister of Housing was aware of the illegal drug use at the outreach centre property in Charlottetown this summer.

**Open drug use at outreach centre (further)**

Did the Minister of Housing report this illegal activity to the Minister of Justice?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Justice, Public Safety and Attorney General.

**Hon. B. Thompson:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

No.

Thank you.

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

**Hon. H. Perry:** Madam Speaker, I’m sorry. I did not hear that response. Could I have the member please stand up and respond again so I can hear it clearly?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Justice, Public Safety and Attorney General.

**Hon. B. Thompson:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I’ll speak a little louder, but no, I have not.

Thank you.

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

**Hon. H. Perry:** Okay, the answer was no.

The question was: Did he report any illegal activity to you? You said no, you have not.

[Interjections]

**Hon. H. Perry:** Your response was no, you have not.

So, Madam Speaker, we’ll move on to another question to the same minister.

The Minister of Housing said he had phoned a number of landlords... Actually, no. I’m going to change it to the Minister of Housing for this one.

**Support and plan for outreach centre model (further)**

The Minister of Housing said that he had phoned a number of landowners about potential sites for the Community Outreach Centre in Charlottetown. Will the minister table this list of landowners he contacted and the nature of these discussions?

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

**Hon. R. Lantz:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Yes, I did inform this House at some point that, informally, in an effort to come up with potential options, I did some touring around the city. Indeed, I did speak informally with a number of property owners about what may or may not be available. At this time, those are just informal discussions that have gone nowhere. Potential that I might have to explore those in the future, depending on how things play out.

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

**Hon. H. Perry:** Thank you very much. So, same as the questions I’ve asked from this side to that side; they’ve gone nowhere, Madam Speaker.

[1:25 p.m.]

**Housing unit purchases by government (further)**

To the Minister of Housing again: On November 23<sup>rd</sup>, the minister said that government had purchased 140 units from the private market over a four-year period. I’ve asked the minister for a complete list of those transactions which include the list of purchased properties, the vendors, the listing agent, and the purchase price of each. The minister agreed to bring this information back.

Has the minister brought them back?

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

**Hon. R. Lantz:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

No, I don't believe that staff has completed that work yet, although I know that they took note of it when the request was made. Like everything else, it takes time to pull together information and data. I'm sure that we'll have an opportunity to share that with the member when it's available.

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

**Hon. H. Perry:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

I would assume that that wouldn't take very long to do.

#### **Former curling club building appraisal**

Question to the Minister of Transportation: We are still looking for the appraisal that was done prior to the purchase of the curling club in Charlottetown. I'll point out, the minister agreed to bring this information back and it still hasn't been brought back. I'm going to ask the minister: Have you brought back that appraisal?

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

**Hon. E. Hudson:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

After the hon. member, Leader of the Opposition, had asked for that information, I went back to my department. The appraisal was not carried out by Transportation and Infrastructure.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

[Interjections]

**Hon. H. Perry:** Madam Speaker, this is taxpayers' dollars and there's over \$1 million on it.

**Speaker:** The member has the floor.

**Hon. H. Perry:** If the Minister of Transportation said that he did not or their department did not do an appraisal on the property, did anyone do an appraisal on the property?

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

**Hon. E. Hudson:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

As I understand, yes, there was an appraisal done on the property.

Thank you.

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

**Hon. H. Perry:** Again, Madam Speaker, he knows an appraisal has been done. He has access to it. Will the minister bring back that appraisal? Why didn't you bring it back if you had access to it?

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

**Hon. E. Hudson:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

As I had stated in the answer to the hon. Leader of the Opposition's first question, I went back to the department and my department did not carry that out. That does not mean that I have access to that appraisal.

Thank you.

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

**Hon. H. Perry:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

I'm not sure who would have done that appraisal, so I'm going to ask the Minister of Transportation. You know that there was an appraisal done, so you must know who did the appraisal. Who has that appraisal? Who has the appraisal?

[Interjections]

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

[Interjections]

**Hon. E. Hudson:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Was there an appraisal done, Madam Speaker? Yes, there was.

Thank you.

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

**Hon. H. Perry:** Madam Speaker, this is very serious. This is over \$1 million of taxpayers' dollars that was paid for a building, and this minister wants to play a game on this? I've asked several times. The first time I asked was a few weeks ago, about the appraisal. He said he was going to look into it and bring it back. He never did. Now today, he won't answer a question and he thinks it's a joke. This whole outreach centre thing, they think it's a joke.

I'm going to ask a question to the Minister of Health. I've asked this before too, and like so much from this do-nothing, no-answer, avoid-responsibility government, no information has come back.

#### **Open drug use at outreach centre (further)**

Again, how many overdoses occurred at the Community Outreach Centre during the free drug use episode during the summer?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

**Hon. M. McLane:** Thank you, Madam Speaker, and thank you for the question.

We did table the EMS reports a week or two ago, I believe, that do outline the responses by our paramedic teams. It does not give it by specific location.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

**Hon. H. Perry:** Obviously, he's not concerned about it.

#### **Emergency response to outreach centre**

Again, to the Minister of Health: How many ambulance calls have there been at the Community Outreach Centre since the centre opened?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

**Hon. M. McLane:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Again, we have tabled all the responses from EMS. I'm not sure if we can do any better than that and give it by specific address. That is the way they compile the data and we have provided that information to the House.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

**Hon. H. Perry:** Definitely, this minister is not on top of this file.

I'm going to follow up to that last question.

[1:30 p.m.]

Has the Department of Health or Health PEI conducted any examination of how many ambulance delays elsewhere in the province are due to the repeated and numerous calls at the outreach centre?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

**Hon. M. McLane:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I don't understand the implication that the member is trying to make. We want to serve our citizens no matter where they are with our paramedic services, whether that be at the outreach centre or a hospital or a rink. We want to serve anybody. Every Islander deserves access to our ambulances.

Thank you.

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

**Hon. H. Perry:** Yes, you're damn right every Islander deserves access to an ambulance and timely health care response. These individuals on Prince Edward Island are not receiving that. There's a problem here and you guys are avoiding the problem. You have to address it.

Question to the Minister of Justice: How many incidents have the city police responded to at the Community Outreach Centre since it opened, and further, how many times did the city respond during that time of free drug use?

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Hon. D. King:** Madam Speaker, it is pretty galling to stand here and listen to this opposition leader talk about issues. Now he's sitting here obviously hearing what we've been hearing for the last year or more that these poor individuals who are addicted to drugs or alcohol need our help. They need our help when you're dealing with mental health and addictions.

The third party gets that. The government gets that. I'm awfully glad that the Leader of the Opposition finally gets that. Now he's lobbying for them to get help. That's what we've been trying to do over here. He's been begging me to do nothing. We will not do it. We'll help the vulnerable Island population because they deserve it.

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

**Hon. H. Perry:** So, it's great, Madam Speaker, that the Premier found his way back to the House. He had a listen to my questions –

**Speaker:** Hon. member, you're walking the line, and I'd like you to just rephrase that question please. You're not to bring attention to people who are not in the House and I would prefer if you did not use defamatory language in this House.

**Hon. H. Perry:** My question then will be to the Minister of Justice, Madam Speaker.

I'm going to ask him again: How many incidents have the city police responded to at the Community Outreach Centre since it opened, and further, how many times has the city responded during the period of free drug use?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Justice, Public Safety.

**Hon. B. Thompson:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I don't get those reports from Charlottetown City Police, but I will request and see if I can have access and bring it in.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

**Hon. H. Perry:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

There's going to be one big truck out here some day with all the responses from this government.

#### **Support and plan for outreach centre model (further)**

Going to go back to the Minister of Housing. We know there's a draft of an environmental assessment at the Park Street property. I've asked for that and I am still waiting.

Has the minister brought that back?

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

**Hon. R. Lantz:** Madam Speaker, thank you very much, and thank you for the question.

I know the request was made. I'm not sure; I'll have to speak to staff where they are with that. I wasn't sure of the policy on draft documents being tabled in this House, but someone could stand to correct me on that.

I'll point out that there is still environmental assessment happening down there. I expected someone might ask a question about some of the heavy equipment that's on site down there. They're still drilling cores

to get a better idea of exactly what the situation is on that property.

As we've stated here before, the draft document is enough for us to move forward with the application that we have in front of city council right now.

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

**Hon. H. Perry:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

Question to Premier. Yesterday I brought forward concerns from the Minister of Health's constituent who also reached out to you, but in typical fashion, you did not respond.

### **Off-Island medical expenses**

Question to the Premier: Will you commit to personally responding to the Minister of Health's constituent regarding the \$27,000 of expenses his family has incurred as a result of his child's off-Island medical care?

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Hon. D. King:** Madam Speaker, yes.

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

**G. McNeilly:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Salvation Army is contracted by your department, Minister of Housing, to provide – amongst other things – the following at Bedford MacDonald House: The agency shall accommodate an allowable tolerance of client intoxication; harm reduction model.

[1:35 p.m.]

I will give you one example of many where this did not happen. A man received a list of requirements – and I'll table it – he had to meet before he could access a shelter bed. The first one on the list was to be sober every day for a week. The history of this gentleman is that he was incarcerated 124 times; in the drunk tank some would call it.

Why? Because he wasn't able to access a shelter bed, and the police, showing compassion, had no other option but to take

him to Sleepy Hollow to have a warm place out of the elements.

So many questions. Why wasn't this man given access to case management? And why, given that the shelter is supposed to be operated on a harm reduction model, was he not permitted to access unless he was sober for a week, which is not something he could do? I'll remind you that during COVID, the CPHO opened up liquor stores because they have recognized the danger –

**Speaker:** Is there a question, member?

### **Access to shelters (further)**

**G. McNeilly:** Question to the minister: How is this in any way meeting the requirements of the contract to accommodate allowable tolerance to the client's intoxication when he was told to be sober every day?

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

**Hon. R. Lantz:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I think I know where the follow-up questions may be going on this but let me say that I appreciate the member's question and his advocacy on behalf of this individual.

We need to know when incidents happen that may fall outside the parameters of contracts we have with people in our department. Certainly, I hope that these have been brought to the attention of my staff. We work with our contractors to comply with the conditions of their contracts when we're aware of any breaches.

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

**G. McNeilly:** What I'm saying is that we're not doing a good job. It's a disjointed system. For the Premier to talk about that you're the only one, no, we're not the only one. These questions have to lead us somewhere. Our system, the way that we organize this, has to be done in unison, and people have to be treated with respect.

Will you review the shelter system's policy regarding everything to make sure that it's

coordinating together for our most vulnerable people?

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

**Hon. R. Lantz:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I assure the member that our staff will have a discussion with our partners to ensure that they're operating within the parameters of the contracts that they've signed with us.

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

**G. McNeilly:** Madam Speaker, looking at the Capital Budget we're debating, there's only one allocation for funding, one transitional housing project; that is Smith Lodge, also known as New Roots.

#### **Transitional housing (further)**

Minister, how do you plan to increase the provincial transitional housing stock? Are there any other funds allocated?

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

**Hon. R. Lantz:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

We currently have about 37 beds of supportive housing under construction in the province right now. We do have a particular focus on transitional and supportive housing, and I think I've stated previously here that we may be coming forward with some announcements with that regard. I've spoken about the importance of it, the importance of diverting and preventing people from using emergency shelters when possible, and supportive transitional housing is important in that regard.

**G. McNeilly:** Minister, you have to go down and tour the location. It's not up to standard. It's not there. Yesterday in the Capital Budget, we heard terms like delay, defer, and fiscal prudence, and we heard that about this location, which you're going to add 13 beds to. It's not being done now until '26-27. How is that an investment?

That's the only document that I have to go on, and we see it got deferred, delayed, and pushed down the road when we need it the most. You're saying that we need it. The Minister of Finance says that your department deferred it.

What are we doing with those 13 beds, and will you put them on notice that they will be built now? This was in the capital budget last year.

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

**Hon. R. Lantz:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The member is concerned about exactly where transitional beds will go in the city, and I can assure him that, although I don't share his concern about the specific location, I do share his concern about adding beds in that particular part of the housing continuum here. I assure him that we will be adding beds, we will be adding capacity, and I've already stated my understanding of the importance of doing that.

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

[1:40 p.m.]

**R. Henderson:** Madam Speaker, the Atlantic Beef Products plant in Borden is an Island success story for our agriculture industry. It endured the dark days of BSE, commonly known as Mad Cow, which was detected in Canada in 2003. Following a number of struggling years, it is now a successful business with beef products that have high demand right across Canada. Our local beef industry is benefiting from the plant's viability and the management team there today for their innovative approach for this facility.

However, the legacy of Mad Cow still lives on, as specified BSE risk materials are removed from animals over 30 months of age and need careful disposal. It's highly regulated. Today, at great cost, these materials are shipped to Quebec where high temperature incinerators are found.

#### **Specified BSE risk materials**

Question to the Minister of Agriculture: Has your department explored the idea of helping the beef plant and looking at retrofitting the energy from PEI waste plant here in Charlottetown to meet the protocols and deal with these materials?

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

**Hon. B. Thompson:** Thank you, Madam Speaker, and I thank the member for bringing this question to the House today.

He is right. The beef plant is a success story, and all Islanders and all the industry should take pride in where it is today because it's one small gem that we have in North America. They're doing a tremendous job.

The SRM is a concern going forward. We have an economic review going on, on a digester for the SRM. Hopefully that SRM, along with our deadstock and our seafood waste, can generate energy that can go to the beef plant, can go to small communities, and that it will be an even bigger success story.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

**R. Henderson:** Well, I'm going to say that's positive news, minister, but the reality is those things had started back when I was minister. That's five years ago. We've got to get these things moving here and try to help with this.

Minister, I do know you're a dairy producer, and you know the importance of this issue and the need for a viable beef plant. You understand the complexities of the issue; I have every confidence in you in that.

Has your department had any discussions with the Canadian Food Inspection Agency to see if there are comparable protocols in other jurisdictions that can help the plant dispose of these materials? We are hearing that other jurisdictions don't have the same protocols that we have here in Prince Edward Island.

Can we try to help this plant and make them more profitable, and keep that material here in PEI and deal with it?

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

**Hon. B. Thompson:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I don't know if that file was still open when I got here. It's a new file that we've been working on, but if the member wants to take a little credit for it, I'll give him a little credit.

[Interjections]

**Hon. B. Thompson:** The conversation with CFIA is: Why is Canada still being punished for BSE when the US doesn't have the same strict regulations that Canadian farmers here do? That's the conversation we have to have, but as soon as we get this BioRefinex up and going, it is going to be a great news story. We can get paid for deadstock. We can get paid for our SRM, our waste materials on this island, and make energy, make fertilizer; it's all a great news story.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

**K. Bernard:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

At a recent PEI Union of Public Sector Employees convention, frontline health care workers shared heartbreaking stories of injuries sustained at their work and the treatment they received after. During a time of health care shortage, we cannot stand for any of these valued employees being injured, and if they are injured, they should be given gold-standard support to help them get back to what they do best: caring for Islanders.

### **Support for injured health care workers**

Question to the Minister of Health: What are you doing to make sure health care workers do not get injured, and if they do, that they receive the support and treatment they need to heal?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

**Hon. M. McLane:** Thank you, Madam Speaker, and thank the member for the question.

Certainly, during my tour, I did hear about concerns about injuries both from dealing with patients, and also the public as well, which was very disturbing to hear about violence and stuff in some of our health care facilities.

We do have to support them. We will work with our unions and all of our pieces to help them get back on their feet again because we do value these workers immensely.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

**K. Bernard:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

There are hundreds of health care workers off work due to injury and many of them have spoken out about the disrespectful and substandard treatment they receive when they are sent to the Workers Compensation Board.

### Review of WCB processes

Question to the Minister of Workforce, Advanced Learning and Population: Will you commit to a full review of the Workers Compensation Board legislation and the processes used by this board?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Workforce, Advanced Learning and Population.

[1:45 p.m.]

**Hon. J. Redmond:** Thank you, Madam Speaker, and thank you to the hon. member for the question.

I will certainly go back and look into what's happening and have those conversations with the staff at the Workers Compensation Board.

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

**K. Bernard:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

We need to prioritize keeping workers from getting injured in the first place, but when they are injured, we need to ensure that they are treated with respect, providing support and treatment to help them heal.

Unfortunately, the stories that we are hearing from workers do not paint that picture.

A question to the same minister: Will you commit to speaking with the CEO of Workers Compensation Board, who you know well as past Clerk of the Executive Council, and demand better treatment for injured workers?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Workforce, Advanced Learning and Population.

**Hon. J. Redmond:** Thank you, Madam Speaker, and thank you, again for the question.

I absolutely will go back and talk to and ensure that those that are going there are getting respect they deserve, especially when they're injured.

Thank you.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from New Haven-Rocky Point.

**P. Bevan-Baker:** Thank you so much, Madam Speaker.

New statistics on farm income were released by Stats Canada yesterday. For Island farmers, they reveal an unsettling pattern which we've seen for many years now.

Farm receipts are up, and that's good news, of course, but the revised numbers for 2022 tell us that those farm receipts are actually up over 11 percent. But farm income, which is the difference between those receipts and the expenditures, is down, way down, drastically, by over 65 percent. In other words, Island farmers are working harder and harder, producing more and more food for less and less return.

### Economic challenges in farming

A question to the Minister of Agriculture: We've watched a steady erosion of farm income for years now. Are you concerned that this is having an impact on the number of young farmers entering the workforce and, presumably, hopefully taking over farms on PEI?

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



**Hon. B. Thompson:** Thank you, Madam Speaker, and thank you to the Member from New Haven-Rocky Point for that question.

I am concerned. As he mentioned, the input costs are going up. The money is going up, but the input costs are going up way faster. We have to look at creative ways how we can help our next generation of farmers sustain this industry; the input costs are increasingly getting higher. We have to look at creative ways of helping those young farmers. Hopefully, in working with the Federation of Agriculture and other stakeholders, we can come up with some solutions that we can improve that.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from New Haven-Rocky Point.

**P. Bevan-Baker:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

We all hope for that, minister. Thanks.

There are a number of factors that are making it harder to attract new farmers to the profession. The price of land is a really central one; capital expenses, as the minister just said, and high interest rates, global competition in the marketplace, transportation costs, and, of course, the climate emergency, to name just a few.

If Prince Edward Island is to sustain a viable agricultural sector, and some are suggesting that that may already be in jeopardy, we have to improve the economic environment in which new farmers are entering the profession.

To the same minister: Apparently, this government has given up on the idea of a land bank, but are you open to other policies that would help new farmers, such as lease-to-own models, tax incentives for collective land purchasing, and interest-free loans for new farmers?

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

**Hon. B. Thompson:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

If there was a checkbox for “all the above”, I would check it right now. Some great points

there and it’s something we have to look at as we go forward.

We’ve got to be creative. We’ve got to take our world-class products and we have to process them here. If you go through the ADL model, the beef plant that we talked about already, and Cavendish Farms, those are three major processing facilities here on this Island that we are so proud of, a value-added product that we are shipping off this Island. We have to continue to build on those.

As we look at climate change, let’s sequester carbon and get paid for it. That’s our next generation of farmer. That’s what they’re going to do.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from New Haven-Rocky Point, your second supplementary.

**P. Bevan-Baker:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

One of the other issues that makes farming increasingly hard on PEI, and perhaps the principal one, is the availability of land and, of course, its skyrocketing price. Under this government, over 14,000 acres of farmland are lost every year. That’s taking us in a place that was once known as the million-acre farm to an Island with less than half a million arable acres.

[1:50 p.m.]

### **Regulatory changes for land development**

A question to the same minister: The Land Matters report, which was issued under your watch, made 13 recommendations, but only one of them was termed “immediate”. That was the one to restrict development in areas under provincial control until a province-wide land use plan is developed.

“Immediate” is long gone, minister, but when are we going to see those regulatory changes?

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

**Hon. B. Thompson:** Thank you, Madam Speaker,

Farmland is a valued commodity here on this Island. I do want to say that I know that Statistics Canada file that everyone uses, those numbers, I do have to – after seeing the State of the Forest Report that's going to be released soon, it gives us a more accurate – not only on our forests, but on our agricultural land.

I'm not going to speak anymore on that, but the accuracy is that it's a lot lower number. That's the number that personally I see, and the farming community sees.

But it's something that we have to protect, whether it's through keeping a different tax rate to keep farming agriculture land, Madam Speaker. There are so many options that we have to look at here. I'm working with the Minister of Housing, Land and Communities, and I have a commitment from him to ensure that farmland will be protected for the future.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

**H. MacLennan:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Islanders with an annual household net income of \$75,000 or less are eligible for a free heat pump for their home. The process, as I understand it, is that Islanders who own a home can apply for a free heat pump with information from your most recent tax assessment. The program considers your combined annual household income.

### Free Heat Pump Program

Question to the Minister of Environment, Energy and Climate Action: Is this the process, as I understand it, to determine eligibility for the free heat pump program?

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

**Hon. S. Myers:** Yes, Madam Speaker, basically, that's the process. When we built this program, we tried to remove all the barriers. We took our staff to do all the work so there wasn't a whole bunch of forms to fill out and tried to do as much of it as we could do on the front end. We didn't require

people to go out and get their own quotes on heat pumps. We preapproved, by way of our fee, a number of vendors who could install them for them. We've actually had two, maybe even three calls for RFPs now to add people to it, and we basically removed barriers and 7 million litres of furnace oil this winter.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Tyne Valley-Sherbrooke, your first supplementary.

**H. MacLennan:** Thank you, minister.

Madam Speaker, as I understand it, this is the only program that considers a combined annual household, rather than other programs we offer that only consider the household income of the individual, like the Home Renovation Program or the Seniors Home Repair Program.

The implication for this is that there are scenarios where Islanders are not eligible because the combined income is considering the income of not only those who physically live in the home, but for example, a senior who has moved into a long-term care home but whose annual income counts towards the residence that their spouse still lives.

Question to the Minister of Environment, Energy and Climate Action: Does this process of considering a combined annual income for the Free Heat Pump Program align with the process of other government programs?

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

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

**Hon. S. Myers:** I don't know how they determine in other departments. I know that in our department, we always try to show leadership on files, and we were left with a lot of mess to clean up when the Liberals (Indistinct)

[Interjections]

**Hon. S. Myers:** We made a change in how we approach things. We didn't want to punish people, we didn't want to be mean to

people – which would happen the four years before we came into government, under Wade MacLauchlan – and balanced budget, and sharing sandwiches in airports and that type of thing.

What I will say to you is this; there are two things. One is we have an appeals process, so anybody who has been treated unfairly can absolutely appeal it and get a very fair look when we go through the appeals process. We do our best to constantly update and change the way that we approach the program whenever we find problems in it. We know that we're not perfect. We're trying to put out a number of heat pumps really, really quickly. I know that we have changes coming very, very soon that are going to make further changes and ease more people into the program.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Tyne Valley-Sherbrooke, your second supplementary.

**H. MacLennan:** Thank you, minister.

[1:55 p.m.]

Madam Speaker, constituents of mine are struggling to receive their free heat pump, even though their income qualifies them. This is because his partner has moved to a long-term care, but her income is still considered in the combined annual income of the household, making him just over the limit.

Question to the minister: You might have already answered it, but will you take immediate action to ensure that this situation does not limit the number of Islanders who are able to receive their free heat pump in an effort to help PEI reach their net zero goals?

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

**Hon. S. Myers:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Absolutely, yes. This is a problem that we don't want to have. We want people to stay in their homes. We want them to be able to stay in their homes and we don't want to punish people because they had a family

member who had to move into long-term care. So, absolutely, we'll fix that, remove it from the whole process so that we can have a clearer thing.

Just while I'm on my feet, I might take a moment to note, when I came into this file in 2019, the Liberals had signed onto the Paris Agreement and done absolutely nothing. They sat on it for four years. They gave away free licenses and free registrations to your car. We've reduced furnace oil in this province by 35 percent in five years, which this winter alone will account for \$10.4 million that will stay in Islanders pockets.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

**M. MacKay:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Ever since GFL has taken over waste watch services on our Island, Islanders have been complaining about the quality of the service. Often garbage collection just simply does not happen for certain roads, leading to stress for homeowners and residents on Prince Edward Island.

### **GFL waste management services**

Question to the minister responsible for waste watch: Can the minister explain why the quality of service seems to have taken such a drop?

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

**Hon. E. Hudson:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker, and I thank the hon. member for the question. If I recall correctly, he had a similar question set back a few months ago. With regard to that though, and I hate to answer a question with a question –

[Interjections]

**An Hon. Member:** We love it.

**Hon. E. Hudson:** Okay, I love it.

A suggestion though. First of all, I wonder if the hon. member has indicated to his constituents to reach out to IWMC, to the

customer support line. Also, if they had made this known, a strategic plan process has been undertaken by IWMC, and if the hon. member has made this known to his constituents that have voiced their concerns to him.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

**M. MacKay:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I understand how the opposition feels right now. [Laughter]

Another concern I've heard about is from businesses who pay for commercial hauling who are being peppered – that's right, peppered – with extra fees and charges, often with little or no rationale for them.

Question to the minister: Does our contract with IWMC contain any protections for businesses being nicked and dimed for fees and upcharges?

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

**Hon. E. Hudson:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

Maybe we can give the hon. member a fourth supplementary here. I'm not sure. I'd be happy if that could take place, certainly.

Certainly, with regard to businesses, those contracts are specifically between the business and GFL. IWMC is a Crown corporation, but IWMC is not involved in those arrangements or those contracts with individual businesses.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque your second supplementary.

**M. MacKay:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

We have residential customers who are getting questionable service and now we have small businesses getting fleeced on extra charges.

Question to the minister: Is there anything that you can do in your power as minister to bring some sanity back to these waste services and stand up for Island consumers and businesses?

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

**Hon. E. Hudson:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker, and I do appreciate where the member is coming from in this.

I had referenced with regard to the strategic planning process. IWMC received, I believe, over 3,800 replies. They also had an open forum earlier this fall. One of the things as part of this whole process is the identification of problem areas.

This information will be coming back to me from IWMC with regard to the strategic plan and the identification of these problem areas. The plan will certainly be made public, but I would certainly more than welcome the opportunity to sit down with the hon. member and review the information that is provided back.

Thank you.

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

**G. McNeilly:** Question to the Minister of Housing.

[2:00 p.m.]

Your department would have sent in a request for 25 emergency shelter beds in Summerside, valued at \$2.4 million, to be started in '23-24. Within a week, minister, you've reduced 25 shelter beds down to 10 shelter beds in Summerside. I don't understand what's happening here, and before you say it's transitional housing, there is no transitional housing in Summerside in the Capital Budget. This shows there's no plan.

**Shelter and housing in Summerside (further)**

What do you say about a reduction of 15 beds for the people in Summerside?

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

**Hon. R. Lantz:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Earlier in Question Period we talked about the importance of transitional beds, and now he wants us to forego those for more emergency beds. I've talked about how we need to provide more transitional beds and divert people from falling down to a crisis situation in emergency housing.

What was presented in the Capital Budget was a previous iteration of what we were thinking. I've told you about how we worked on the ground with officials in the City of Summerside to analyze the exact needs there. We've added, very recently, four new beds to the men's shelter on Winter Street in Summerside, the emergency shelter. We have plans for 10 more, and we have plans for more supportive and transitional housing in Summerside, Madam Speaker.

**G. McNeilly:** I don't even know what a previous reiteration means. You're the Minister of Housing.

**Hon. R. Lantz:** Iteration.

**G. McNeilly:** Whatever, I don't use those words. All I want is the beds in Summerside to be there.

In the Capital Budget, I would have loved to have seen those 15 beds under the transitional housing section which, the only project that you have, minister, you punted down the road NFL style to 2026-27. Minister, this is not a plan. Between August and now, this is changing. The minister was going to give you the money; \$2.4 million for 10 shelter beds? This makes no sense. And your process that went out to bidders is not...

[Interjections]

**G. McNeilly:** You said those beds would be in before the snow flies. Is that going to happen, minister?

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

**Hon. R. Lantz:** Well, Madam Speaker, let me just take a quick look out the window. Unfortunately, I have to say no.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Charlottetown-West Royalty, your final question. Let's make it a question.

**G. McNeilly:** This is very serious. This is very serious because I expected more in the Capital Budget. It's not there, across the province. Montague, no shelter beds; Summerside, I don't know what they're going to do with this; Charlottetown, the shelter system is full, minister.

### **Addressing the housing crisis (further)**

What are you going to do, if it's not in the five-year Capital Budget, to guarantee that we have transitional housing, supportive housing, and through the gamut? People don't have a place to live. What are you going to do now?

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

**Hon. R. Lantz:** Madam Speaker, we presented a Capital Budget that is four times what it was just a few years ago. I understand the member's concerns about those most vulnerable in our province, those who are unhoused or precariously housed, and we're working hard every day to provide opportunities for them to get into stable housing in the community and to serve their needs the best we can.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Speaker:** End of Question Period.

### Statements by Ministers

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Fisheries, Tourism, Sport and Culture.

### **Aquaculture Exhibition at Eptek Centre**

**Hon. C. Deagle:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I would like to take this opportunity to encourage Islanders to attend the exhibition called "Aquaculture: Farming the Waters" at the Eptek Art and Culture Centre in Summerside. This display is an excellent

snapshot of how fish farmers on PEI and across the country cultivate fish, shellfish, and seaweed species. It opened Tuesday, November 28<sup>th</sup> and will wrap up on February 16<sup>th</sup>.

As we all know, the aquaculture industry is a vital component of our province. For generations, the industry has benefitted our economy and continues to develop high-quality products that can compete in markets across the globe. To see our industry captured in such an interactive and fun way is something the whole family can enjoy and appreciate.

A great team worked together to make this exhibition possible. The Prince Edward Island Museum and Heritage Foundation, the Eptek Art and Culture Centre, and Canada's Museums of Science and Innovation have done an incredible job collaborating on this project.

I'd also like to mention that the Summerside Art Club will be hosting its AquaVision display during the same time. This exhibit multimedia works centering around the theme of water. AquaVision displays the amazing talent of our Island artists.

[2:05 p.m.]

Both these projects capture the culture and importance of the aquaculture industry, here on the Island and on a national level. I'm sure visitors to these exhibitions will enjoy the very educational and family-friendly environment and appreciate all the hard work it took to make these events happen.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

**R. Henderson:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I do appreciate the minister and his statement, as the aquaculture industry on Prince Edward Island is so important. I know from my perspective, every morning, I get up, I look out into Eel Creek and Frederick Cove. You see a lot of the aquaculture leases, their cages, and they're flipping them or they're shaking them out or sinking them.

But I do find it rather interesting that this minister is actually promoting the fact that aquaculture and the display is actually in a museum, because if you remind this Legislature, I've raised many questions in this Legislature about the issue confronting the aquaculture leaseholders in the Conway Narrows and the ask that they had to try to get moved; I think there was about a half a dozen of them that were impacted significantly by Hurricane Fiona. I will say that it looks like two are going to get moved out of that.

I did arrange a meeting with the minister here the other day, in fact Monday, and I do commend and thank the minister for actually going and hearing them out. But last night on my way home, of course, I thought I'd check with a couple of constituents just to see what they thought of that meeting. They said, I'll say, a favourable comment; they did feel that the minister heard their plight and their situation, although they felt, left the meeting that it doesn't look like there's anything that can be done for them.

If that continues to happen, I know in this particular leaseholder's case, he's got a sizeable investment; I might add, it's with Finance PEI. He said: "I don't know how I'm going to pay this all back if anything like this happens again."

So, I would hope that this minister makes sure that these leaseholders don't become a museum exhibit here in future, in a year or two's time. I just wanted to acknowledge that, Madam Speaker.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from New Haven-Rocky Point.

**P. Bevan-Baker:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I'll be a little more upbeat than my friend from O'Leary-Inverness. [Laughter]

It's a lovely announcement. The Eptek Centre is a wonderful facility. We have so many great spots around the Island. I'm glad that this – I haven't been over to see it, though it just opened on Tuesday, I understand, from the minister's statement, but I hope to. I'll be in Summerside at some point. I was there, actually, last weekend, performing at the Scott MacAulay

Performing Arts Centre at the piping college, there. Another beautiful facility.

Anyway, we have so many great places in PEI, so many great exhibitions, so many great things going on at this time of year. It's great to celebrate our aquaculture industry; as my friend from O'Leary-Inverness says, it's a really important part of not only our economy here, but of the cultures and traditions of this place. I'm glad to see the minister stand up and celebrate this, and I hope to go and have a look at the exhibition of it all.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

### Recognition of Guests II

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Winsloe.

**Z. Bell:** Thank you, Madam Speaker, and I thank you for your indulgence for this.

I just wanted to say hello to someone who just joined us in the gallery, Sam MacLeod. He's a constituent in District 10. He always tries to make it down for at least one day of the sitting in the Legislature, and Sam is actually a former employee here at the Legislative Assembly. Thank you very much for stopping by, Sam.

### Presenting and Receiving Petitions

#### Tabling of Documents

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

**Hon. R. Lantz:** Madam Speaker, by leave of the House, I beg leave to table a report on incidents at the Community Outreach Centre, aggregated by category for client protection, and I move, seconded by the hon. Minister of Health and Wellness, that the said document be now received and do lie on the Table.

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

The hon. Member from Charlottetown-West Royalty.

**G. McNeilly:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

By leave of the House, I beg leave to table a directive from Bedford MacDonald House to Kenny Hoddinott, who struggled with addictions, like so many. This shows an abstinence model, not a harm reduction model, and on the last line, it says not to be at the outreach centre between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m., and I move, seconded by the hon. Leader of the Opposition, that the said document be now received and do lie on the Table.

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

The hon. Member from New Haven-Rocky Point.

**P. Bevan-Baker:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I don't think I tabled this last week. It's a press release from Island Trails, seeking confirmation that the Confederation Trail will remain a greenway.

Madam Speaker, by leave of the House, I beg leave to table the aforementioned document, and I move, seconded by the hon. Leader of the Third Party, that the said document be now received and do lie on the Table.

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

[2:10 p.m.]

The hon. Member from New Haven-Rocky Point.

**P. Bevan-Baker:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

By leave of the House, I beg leave to table a series of pictures taken in the Bloomfield area of damage to the Confederation Trail by folks riding on ATVs, and I move, seconded by the hon. Leader of the Third Party, that the said documents be now received and do lie on the Table.

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

The hon. Member for O'Leary-Inverness.

**R. Henderson:** Is this committee reports?

**Speaker:** No.

**R. Henderson:** I didn't have any tabling.

**Speaker:** Tabling of Documents. Okay.

Hon. members, pursuant to section 38 of the *Ombudsperson Act* and section 5 of the *Public Interest Disclosure and Whistleblower Protection Act*, I wish to advise that I have received the 2022 Annual Report of the Ombudsperson and Public Interest Disclosure Commissioner. I move that the report be received and do lie on the table.

Shall it carry? Carried.

#### Reports by Committees

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

**B. Trivers:** Madam Speaker, as Chair of the Standing Committee on Education and Economic Growth, following receipt of a report on committee activities of the said committee on Tuesday, November 28<sup>th</sup>, yesterday, I move, seconded by the hon. Member from Souris-Elmira, that the report of the committee be adopted.

Your committee is pleased to be presenting its first report of the 67<sup>th</sup> General Assembly. The committee met six times to consider a variety of matters related to the committee's mandate. As a result of its deliberations, your committee is pleased to make the following recommendations to the Members of the Legislative Assembly:

1. Your committee recommends that government urgently develop a province-wide land use plan as the province's population is continuing to grow and additional housing is needed across the province.
2. Your committee recommends that government support municipalities in recruiting and employing professional planners and development control officers.
3. Your committee recommends that government provide municipalities with resources to assist with litigation costs when a development decision is appealed.

4. That the provincial government immediately implement province-wide interim regulations to further regulate subdivision and development in areas without an official plan until a province-wide land use planning framework is adopted, as per Recommendation 8 in the July 2021 Land Matters Report.
5. Your committee recommends that government develop an action plan alongside the framework for population growth.
6. Your committee urges government to ensure all recommendations of the Rubin Thomlinson Report, University of Prince Edward Island Review (UPEI Review), are appropriately and urgently addressed by the University.

On behalf of the committee, I'd like to thank all those who have either provided written submissions or presented to the committee. Their knowledge and expertise has helped to shape the recommendations of this report.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the members of the committee for their work and look forward to the continued work of this committee in the new year.

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

The hon. Member for O'Leary-Inverness.

**R. Henderson:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

As Chair of the Standing Committee on Natural Resources and Environmental Sustainability and following the receipt of the report on committee activities of the said committee on Tuesday, November 28<sup>th</sup>, I move, seconded by the hon. Member from New Haven-Rocky Point, that the report of the committee be adopted.

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

**R. Henderson:** The Standing Committee on Natural Resources and Environmental Sustainability is pleased to present its first report of the First Session of the 67<sup>th</sup> General Assembly. Your committee met 10 times to consider a variety of matters related to the committee's mandate. Your



committee also had the opportunity to take part in a tour during this reporting period.

As a result of the deliberations, your committee is pleased to make the following recommendations to the Members of the Legislative Assembly:

It's a little longer than the previous committee, so bear with us, Madam Speaker.

*On the topic of shoreline protections:*

1. Your committee recommends that government support the implementation and maintenance shore protection works along the waterfronts and coastline to preserve existing infrastructure and development, with the goal of not actively intervening with the coastline itself, but rather working with nature.
2. Your committee recommends that government make strategic science-based decisions to determine the extent of development setbacks from the shoreline.
3. Your committee recommends that government ensure that a reach-based approach is taken to protection versus lot-based protection. Further, your committee recommends that government develop planning rules that account for different types of areas across PEI's coastline.
4. Your committee recommends that government encourage and support the PEI Watershed Alliance to launch an education campaign around the benefits of not mowing the edges of properties, particularly those along coastlines.

[2:15 p.m.]

5. Your committee recommends that government establish mandatory soil erosion control plans for all clearcutting and development.
6. Your committee recommends that government explore the idea of Green Development Standards that require all new developments to ensure green space is preserved for generations to come.

*On the topic of supporting our livestock industries:*

7. Your committee recommends that government make concerted efforts to increase livestock numbers across the province and to explore the creation of a designated Livestock Champion to serve as an advocate and representative for the numerous livestock commodities.
8. Your committee recommends that government provide increased supports to those in the livestock sector to promote efficiency and environmental sustainability, including the development of additional manure and storage areas.
9. Your committee recommends that government create Risk Management Programs for beef producers, like those in other jurisdictions in Canada. We've started that.
10. Your committee recommends that government immediately work to create programs and resources to assist Atlantic Beef Products Inc. in providing Forward Contracting to beef producers as a temporary solution until the price assurance is implemented.
11. Your committee recommends that government find creative ways to support the export of branded Island beef, and its by-products.
12. Your committee urges that government consider alternatives for the disposal of a Specified Risk Material (SRM) rather than the current practice of shipping the waste to Quebec, as it puts Island producers and processors at a sizable disadvantage.

*On the topic of agriculture more broadly:*

13. Your committee recommends that government broaden and expand the agriculture curriculum within schools to engage young people in pursuing a future in agriculture.
14. Your committee recommends that government consider what supports and initiatives will need to be in place when those students begin their careers in the

industry such as land financing and venture capital programming.

15. Your committee recommends that government work alongside the federal government to create industry specific emergency funding plans.

*On the topic of Prince Edward Island's forests:*

16. Your committee recommends that government make concerted efforts to not only replant our Island Forests after Hurricane Fiona, but also strive to emulate the Acadian forests that are indigenous to the province.

17. Your committee recommends that government review the Forest Enhancement Program and the incentives for participating in it. Your committee also urges government to review the qualifications and consider expanding them to include non-profits and municipalities.

18. Your committee recommends that both the provincial and federal governments work with the PEI Woodlot Owners Association to refine the definition of a "commercial woodlot operation" with some applicability to Prince Edward Island.

19. Your committee recommends that government immediately adjust the building code according to the recommendation of the PEI Emergency Forestry Task Force, as outlined in the Minister of Environment, Energy and Climate Action's mandate letter.

20. Your committee recommends that government work with the private sector and other organizations such as the PEI Woodlot Owners Association to grow the province's forest economy by focusing on sustainability, economic viability, and diversification.

21. Your committee recommends that government explore the concept of Forest Banking.

*On the topic of provincial developments within municipalities:*

22. Your committee recommends that government do not impose a development on an incorporated municipality without the support and consent of that municipality, and its residents. Your committee urges government to respect the municipal governments and their democratic process.

In conclusion, Madam Speaker, on behalf of the committee, I'd like to thank everyone who took the time to share their knowledge and expertise that helped us shape these recommendations of this report. I would also like to thank the members of the committee for their work on this report as reflective of quite a productive past few months. I guess personally, I certainly commend – we have three parties, we all get together. We did come up with a consensus report, not that everybody agrees with every letter of the statements here or wording. But I really appreciate that effort that everybody put in place.

**Speaker:** Hon. members, I'm just going to back up here for a minute. Is there anyone who'd like to speak to the report of the Committee on Education and Economic Growth?

**An Hon. Member:** Too late.

**B. Trivers:** It's not too late.

**Speaker:** It's not too late.

[2:20 p.m.]

Is there anyone who'd like to speak to the report that was just tabled?

Okay, we'll move on.

Shall it carry? Carried.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Belvedere.

**S. Dillon:** Madam Speaker, as Chair of the Standing Committee on Health and Social Development, I beg leave to introduce the report of the said committee on committee activities, and I move, seconded by the hon. Member from Tyne Valley-Sherbrooke, that the same be now received and do lie on the Table.

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

**S. Dillon:** Madam Speaker, I would like to seek unanimous consent of the House to proceed with the motion of adoption of this report today.

**Speaker:** Does the member have unanimous consent? Yes.

The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Belvedere.

**S. Dillon:** Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. Member from Tyne Valley-Sherbrooke, that the report of the committee be adopted.

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

**S. Dillon:** Your committee is pleased to be presenting its second report of the 67<sup>th</sup> General Assembly. Your committee met 15 times to consider a variety of matters related to its mandate. Your committee is pleased to make several recommendations resulting from its work during the fall of 2023.

On the topic of health care retention:

1. Your committee recommends that government consider all professionals who work within the health care system when devising retention incentives.
2. Your committee recommends that government improve the timeliness of the collective agreement bargaining process with health care unions.

On the topic of emergency medical services:

3. Your committee strongly recommends that government integrate currently incompatible charting platforms across health care service providers in Prince Edward Island as soon as possible.
4. Your committee recommends that government prioritize investments in primary health care.
5. Your committee recommends that government support emergency medical service providers in expanding care pathways.

6. Your committee recommends that government support a program for low-acuity transfer services for routine out of province patient transfers.
7. Your committee recommends that government consider the implementation of a mobile health bus.

On the topic of the unhoused community and those facing homelessness:

8. Your committee recommends that government decentralize services that provide support for the unhoused community and those facing homelessness.
9. Your committee recommends that government review the service model currently followed by the Community Outreach Centre.
10. Your committee recommends that government make the changes necessary to the services provided at the Community Outreach Centre to ensure the safety of those using the services and the security of the broader community.
11. Your committee recommends that government expand shelter services to ensure they are open 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
12. Your committee recommends that government create additional supportive transitional housing options.
13. Your committee recommends that government improve their data collection process to further understand housing insecurity and homelessness across Prince Edward Island.
14. Your committee recommends that government consider options for creating supports for those who wish to provide housing in their primary residence.
15. Your committee recommends that government commit to increasing housing supply of affordable and attainable housing.
16. Your committee recommends that government ensure individuals and families who reside in provincial social

housing are placed in spaces that are appropriate for their needs.

17. Your committee recommends that government work toward establishing an overdose prevention site in an accessible and appropriate location in Charlottetown following community engagement.
18. Your committee recommends that government consider the recommendations shared by Birchwood Intermediate Home and School to ensure the safety of students, school staff and the greater community.
19. Your committee recommends that government support diversity in those providing shelter and related services through cultural competency training for staff and volunteers, implementing anti-discrimination policies, and encouraging diversity through hiring practices.
20. Your committee recommends that government respect the autonomy of unhoused individuals in making choices regarding their own health and wellbeing.

[2:25 p.m.]

On behalf of the committee, I'd like to thank all groups and individuals who presented on these important topics, as well as those who have provided written submissions which supplemented the committee's work. Thanks is also extended to all who attended and participated in community public meetings across the Island and shared their valuable feedback.

I, too, would like to thank all of the committee members for their valuable input and insight into all of these matters.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

**G. McNeilly:** Thank you, Chair, for that summary of our committee reports. I just want to stand for a couple of minutes to talk about how important the words that our chair just read were. It's really a roadmap to

some areas of this province that we've messed up on.

The unhoused community and those facing homelessness is a growing number in our province and it affects everybody from tip to tip in some way, in some form. We have to do better. The first recommendation was a decentralization of services that provide support for the unhoused community and those facing homelessness. Those aren't the committee's words; that's from the meetings that we went on across the province.

We had four pretty amazing meetings with people who helped fuel this report. We had input from Islanders who helped fuel this report. We went out and spoke to Islanders about this. We showed, hopefully, government how you have to do that. If you do not listen, if you do not go and speak to Islanders, we cannot get ahead.

That's why things in the Capital Budget are so important, so that they can see the plan ahead. If we have no plan, where are we going?

A decentralization is exactly the opposite of what the plan is that we have right now. With the Park Street model, with the outreach centre, we are centralizing everything. PEI just said: decentralize.

There are some things to think about and there's a committee report to take very seriously when we have recommendations in here talking about security of the broader community and Islanders who are trying to use the services. Those are serious. I tabled a document that outlined this.

I'm not saying it's you. Successive governments; we've all messed this up in the past. We can't afford to do it anymore. People are hurting and the little things that you can do – people say: What should we do? You have to make the shelter system 24 hours a day. It says it in here. Islanders have said it; seven days a week. It's not wraparound services to wrap around a clock. We have to wrap around the people, and the only way you do that is you provide them a place to go so that they don't have to come in here if they don't want to and listen to us – jargon – for hours at a time because they have no place to go.

We have to do better and that's something that's going to cost money, but you will not find an opposition on this side of this House that says that's not a valuable investment.

Transitional housing options: there's nothing in the Capital Budget. There's – '26-27, I can tell you what's there. That was in there last year. We have to do better. I mean, the minister could come up – but it's disjointed. There's no plan. The plan was the Capital Budget five-year, and it's not there. That's why I have a big consideration to make what I'm going to do later on the Capital Budget and how I'm going to vote for that.

Data collection: we've been asking for this for a long time. The numbers clearly show that whatever the numbers are, you can multiply that by 3.5 because that's the scope of the problem. Whatever the HIFIS numbers say, multiply it by 3.5 and there's where we can start on Prince Edward Island. If we're not doing everything we possibly can now, we're in big trouble.

We have recommendation 18 from Birchwood Intermediate Home and School. They represent a lot of kids from Stratford, from Charlottetown, trying to get an education in a junior high level, grades 7 to 9. Are we doing we can to protect them? Are we doing everything we can to make sure that they have the best junior high experience ever? That recommendation is in here and I suggest that government read it because it's a very good one, and this committee basically took it almost word for word and put it in here.

[2:30 p.m.]

These are serious matters. The autonomy of the unhoused people: we have to look at this. When we walk by, we have to go down and see; we have to be a part of, we have to understand what their situations are. When we have a 75-year-old person who wants to be in some place warm, we have to do something about it. When you get letters about that, we have to do something about it. These recommendations came from Islanders, and I will fight for the next three years to make sure that their voices are heard – I hope we all do, together – and I'm sure they will.

The last thing I want to thank is: to take a standing committee on the road like that is no easy feat and there are people in here who we barely see, who work in here, who made that happen. I want to thank the clerk and I want to thank those hardworking people who stayed around for very long hours in a very difficult month; you know who they are. Every time I say hello to them, I look at the camera, so I'm not looking at the camera right now.

They did an incredible job and I want to say thank you to them; incredible staff who helped get this done.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Speaker:** Hon. members, I'm going to revert back to the chair of the Committee for Education and Economic Growth. He would like to speak to the report.

**B. Trivers:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I do appreciate that. I was expecting to close debate on that, and there wasn't any, so I appreciate you coming back to me.

I wanted to talk about recommendations 2, 3, and 4, that have to do with municipalities.

They talk about helping municipalities recruit and employ professional planners and development control officers, they talk about helping assist with litigation costs – and I know the Minister of Communities has introduced legislation to try and reduce the amount of litigation that occurs for appeals and things – and then the last one talks about interim regulations to further regulate subdivision and development in areas without an official plan.

I represent a lot of area that is not incorporated, that's not part of a municipality. All these recommendations point towards this idea that we need to incorporate the whole island, and we need to add in that extra layer of governance, and we need to then provide additional resources to support that extra layer of governance to do things like official plans, pay for litigations, and employ professional planners and things.

What my constituents – for the majority – are telling me is that they don't want to be part of new municipalities or existing

municipalities. They don't want to see the whole Island be incorporated. They would like to see the Province take control and perform these functions at the provincial level.

We're 180,000 constituents right now, and they feel that we can be managed as what would amount to a small city in Ontario, that way. That's what's coming here to me, and this idea of forcing amalgamation/annexation across the Island is one that my constituents are going to push back hard against.

So, I just wanted to bring that up and be on the record saying that, because I want to represent my constituents properly. I think that we can probably find a way to move forward, and we can do that in such a way that the services and amenities that are on our Island – like arenas, for example – are paid for by all the people who use them, not just small municipalities.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

**G. McNeilly:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

As Chair of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, I beg leave to introduce a report of the said committee, and I move, seconded by the hon. Leader of the Opposition, that the same be now received and do lie on the Table.

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

**G. McNeilly:** Madam Speaker, I would also like to seek unanimous consent to proceed with the motion for the report's adoption.

**Speaker:** Does the member have unanimous consent?

**Some Hon. Members:** Yes.

**Speaker:** Continue.

**G. McNeilly:** Thank you.

This report is an account of the committee's activities since it was appointed on June 9<sup>th</sup>. The committee has met on 10 occasions since then, and this report summarizes the

purpose of those meetings, the witnesses who appeared before the committee, and the decisions that were made.

The report includes the following recommendations:

1. Your committee commends the work done by the Office of the Auditor General and endorses all the recommendations made in the Annual Report to the Legislative Assembly 2023, the COVID-19 Financial Support Programs Phase II report, and the Performance Reporting – Phase II – Report Content report.
  2. Your committee recommends that Government review its level of financial staffing across its departments and agencies to determine whether it is sufficient to meet workload demand.
  3. Your committee recommends that details of capital expenditures to be incurred by Government Business Enterprises be provided as part of the capital budget process in the legislature.
- [2:35 p.m.]
4. Your committee recommends that Government consider requiring post-secondary institutions to provide more detailed information on their spending plans as a condition of future funding agreements.
  5. Your committee stresses the need for formal agreements between PEI and other provinces on out-of-province medical services and urges Government to make these a priority.

In conclusion, Madam Speaker, I just want to say thank you to the Auditor General and his staff, who do an incredible job. They took on a lot with the COVID reports, Phases I and II, and they do an incredible job for Islanders. Also, I want to thank the Canadian Audit and Accountability Foundation for their professional assistance in helping this committee. It's a new committee. Public Accounts is not easy, and they came in to give us some guidance. I'd also like to thank the vice chair for being vice chair and helping out with that function. I would also like to thank all committee

members for working so hard on this committee.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

Shall it carry? Carried.

Introduction of Government Bills

Motions Other Than Government

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

**Hon. H. Perry:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

I move, seconded by the hon. Member from Charlottetown-West Royalty, that the 15<sup>th</sup> order of the day be now read.

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

**Clerk:** Order No. 15, *An Act to Amend the Employment Standards Act*, Bill No. 106, ordered for third reading.

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

**Hon. H. Perry:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

I move, seconded by the hon. Member from Charlottetown-West Royalty, that the said bill be now read a third time.

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

**Committee Clerk (MacEachern):** Bill No. 106, *An Act to Amend the Employment Standards Act*, read a third time.

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

**Hon. H. Perry:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I move, seconded by the hon. Member from Charlottetown-West Royalty, that the said bill do now pass.

**Speaker:** 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 with 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.”

The bill has carried.

The hon. Member from Charlottetown-West Royalty.

**G. McNeilly:** Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. Member from O’Leary-Inverness, that the 16<sup>th</sup> order of the day be now read.

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

**Committee Clerk:** Order No. 16, *An Act to Amend the Farm Machinery Dealers and Vendors Act*, Bill No. 110, ordered for second reading.

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

**G. McNeilly:** Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. Member from O’Leary-Inverness, that the said bill be now read a second time.

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

**Committee Clerk:** Bill No. 110, *An Act to Amend the Farm Machinery Dealers and Vendors Act*, read a second time.

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

**G. McNeilly:** Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. Member from O’Leary-Inverness, 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 Morell-Donagh to chair the Committee of the Whole House.

[2:40 p.m.]

[S. MacEwen in chair]

**Chair:** The House is now in a Committee of the Whole House to take into consideration a bill to be intituled *An Act to Amend the Farm Machinery Dealers and Vendors Act*.

Member, would you like to make a motion to bring a stranger to the floor?

**R. Henderson:** Not at this time, Chair. Maybe a little later on, but we'll see how this goes. I think I'm fairly up on the bill.

**Chair:** That sounds good. Do you have any —

**R. Henderson:** ...not looking good back there, but — [Laughter]

**Chair:** Do you have any opening comments, or would you like to get into debate on the bill?

**R. Henderson:** I do have some opening comments, just to say that the rationale behind this particular bill is in light of the situation that we're dealing with; the technology advancements in the farm machinery industry. We're certainly seeing technology for computer codes and for the advancements of the technology.

What this issue really boils down to, it comes back to the issue around who has the right to repair a machine that's owned by a particular individual. So, if I said a person, a farmer goes and buys a tractor, combine, and things of that nature, and there's a lot of advanced technology that goes into this in electronics now, when something goes a bit wrong, we're seeing — in some jurisdictions, anyway — that the machinery dealers are saying: "We're not allowing you right to repair that." You have to pay a certain fee to get that, or to get that code.

I've certainly done some research on this regarding the issue. The issue around modifying a machine is one thing. I'm not proposing that in any case in this; it's about repairing the machine. The same thing even for more basic machines: when you go into a farm dealer — I go many times myself — and you ask: "Can I get a picture of the manual or a copy of the parts as they go together?"

On Prince Edward Island, that has not been an issue. They usually show you the computer screen or they'll give you a copy of that. But what happens if a farm vendor/dealer decides not to do that? Is that just? Is it fair?

This legislation would mandate the vendor to at least provide a copy or the codes that it might take to reset a computer and things of that nature. They have to give them either to the farmer or — and we do see companies out there that do farm machinery repair, that's all they do. They don't really sell parts or things of that nature, but they repair machines. So, same thing. If I was to get a third party to come in and repair my tractor or whatever, it would comply the dealer to provide them that information. I'm not saying that they'd have to give it to them for free, but a reasonable cost of the photocopying or something fairly basic in that.

That's the premise behind what I'm trying to accomplish here. You've seen it in many jurisdictions; it's called the "right to repair" legislation. In my research, and when I talked to Neil Ferguson I guess, this more falls under this particular act, the *Farm Machinery Dealers and Vendors Act*. That's why we're putting it in under this.

The premise was to give the minister some legislation here and if there were regulations that had to be required — it gets more specific into the fees that they have to charge or how much notice and things of that nature — then I guess I would have confidence that the minister could have the regulations. That's the premise behind the bill.

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

Is it the pleasure of the committee that the bill be now read clause by clause?

**M. MacKay:** (Indistinct)

**Chair:** Alright, I'll open the floor up for questions.

The hon. Minister of Agriculture.

**Hon. B. Thompson:** Thank you, member.



You were accidentally referred to as the leader of O'Leary-Inverness.

**R. Henderson:** On, O'Leary-Inverness, maybe, but that's about as far as it goes. And there are people who wouldn't agree with that.

**Hon. B. Thompson:** This is intriguing. This is very intriguing, just from my background myself in agriculture. Obviously since I've come into this role, I don't see the books anymore, but my partner who took over the books – who is my wife – she often notes that the repair bills are ungodly.

**R. Henderson:** Way up, yeah.

**Hon. B. Thompson:** And they continue to rise, and this has a lot to do with it. It's not just a certain brand, is it?

[2:45 p.m.]

**R. Henderson:** No, member, I'm certainly not recognizing any particular brand. I do mention this one story though that came out; it came back to the issue around the war in Ukraine. I think John Deere can actually shut down all the machines, all the John Deere equipment and tractors in, say, Russia or Ukraine because of this. That's a lot of power that they have.

Another comment that I wanted to make on it – but just also imagine, you go and buy a machine, you're making payments on it, and maybe you get a little bit behind. Farmers, we have difficulties by times. Maybe you're just about to harvest a crop through your combine and the dealer decides: "You haven't paid enough. I'm going to shut your machine down." Is that just and fair?

I think that's where I'm looking at. There should be notice or something that at least provides the farmer with some process that allows them to get that code back to start the machine back up, finish their crop, those types of things.

I guess what I'm really trying to say is that technology is advancing rather rapidly, and I think that's only going to continue. I think farmers who provide a valuable service and provide food for this globe need a little bit of leverage in trying to deal.

That's the premise, once again, behind the act and why I'm bringing it forward so that Prince Edward Island, at least the farmers in this area, have some sense of protection.

**Hon. B. Thompson:** That is interesting. I know, I'll not mention the name of the tractor, but a custom person that does corn, middle of the night – they harvest 24 hours a day, they just go – his equipment broke down and if they can't fix it, they have to stop. He couldn't fix it until the company hours started, but it was fixed over the internet, which was great if you break down between eight and five, no matter what country you're in. Depends on where your service is.

I'm curious if you looked at – agriculture is important to me and it is important to this Island – but have you looked at the fishing industry to maybe include it in your bill?

**R. Henderson:** You can take this so-called right to repair to farther extremes. I think, actually, the Member from New Haven-Rocky Point had talked a little bit about some legislation around right to repair. It can get into electronics in your home and things of that nature.

I guess from my end, obviously my interests are in agriculture. There is legislation already on record called the *Farm Machinery Dealers and Vendors Act*. I guess that was my premise. I guess it's how many people do you want to take on in this, and I would argue that if this legislation gets to the point where it becomes law, then maybe that's a good impetus for other issues out there that could be done on how far you go with the issue of who has the right to repair whatever machine that a person owns.

I think that's the key I'm really trying to emphasize here. You go buy a tractor, you go buy a combine, is it yours? I would argue that it is. You make payments on it; you borrow the money from a bank or a lending institution and you pay a vendor. What happens, though, when you bring it home and it doesn't work? Do you not have, as the owner of that product, the right to repair it if you have the technological capabilities mentally or whatever? But if the dealer who holds the electronic code, say if it's a computerized thing that you have to adjust, they hold that. But the same thing goes with

a manual; they have that and it's not always easy to get those images and pictures and/or these codes.

I guess I'm trying to argue that if you are the owner of the machine, you should have the right to repair that. I mean, you can work and negotiate and discuss with your owner, the dealer. They're great dealers here on Prince Edward Island, I'm not trying to challenge or question them on that, but where does this go in the future and how far are we allowing them to flex their muscles in something that they own?

[2:50 p.m.]

It's a little different if they lease the machine, it's a little different if they're renting the machine out, but when you actually go and purchase and own it – and my understanding is that most things are for sale. When you go into a dealer, their first choice is to sell it to you. Their second choice might be to lease it to you. Their third choice might be to rent it to you. But when you own it, I think you're paying money that you should have the right to repair and the right to get who you want to repair it.

Like I said, I know there are companies in my area that do farm machinery repairs. They'll choose any machine, it doesn't matter the brand, the make, the model, any of that, and you'll pay them a fee. But they can be limited to what they can do in repairing that tractor because they might need the electronic codes when they put the computer diagnostic equipment on there to adjust that. As we see technology advances, they can do it from the dealership, but if they choose to not, or if they're difficult to get, it can have a significant impact on a farmer's bottom line. That's the rationale, Chair.

**Hon. B. Thompson:** The concept of this, I think, obviously outweighs the negative. The positives outweigh the negative. This is going to only benefit the farmer or the purchaser of this equipment. Are there any implications that you can see that might be an issue with the dealership? Say, Green Diamond in Bloomfield; will you have to go to Moncton if we pass this legislation?

**R. Henderson:** Well, that's hard to predict, whether we do or we don't pass the legislation, we may have to because we're seeing a consolidation of farm machinery dealers. There's less of them around, as there are fewer farmers and equipment gets bigger. But I guess at the end of the day, the things that I would see that are questionable are: What do they charge for those fee codes? What do they charge for a photocopy?

I'm trying to say, in this legislation, that they have to charge a reasonable amount. Ultimately, you as minister responsible – I think it's you that's minister responsible for this particular act – would turn around and say there needs to be somebody you can appeal to, somebody who can determine what's a fair and just fee. It's hard for me to determine that.

I would hope that most dealers would be pretty fair and just on this, but it still goes back to common sense, I would hope. But yes, there are risks, and how far do you go with it, and what's considered farm machinery. I use, certainly, lots of things on my farm that may not be – you'd buy it at a farm dealer, but...

So, I'm just saying, this particular case, we are focusing on the farm machinery dealers who are vendors here on Prince Edward Island.

**Hon. B. Thompson:** This is my final question.

When you do mention if it's in my department, from my conversation with both of my departments today, Justice and Agriculture, the legal opinion was it probably is outside the scope of this act. It's contracts between dealers and vendors. The definitions will have to be looked at. I'd love to see where this goes. I think this is exciting, and I want to thank you for bringing this, but I'd love to do a more in-depth look at this to see if we can go somewhere with this.

**Chair:** Do you want to respond to that?

**R. Henderson:** Well, I guess at the end of the day, I've done work in the respect that I did deal with the legislative tools that I have in the Legislature here, and I did approach to

say this is something I wanted to do as a right to repair for farmers specifically. I did a fair bit of research into other jurisdictions. Ultimately, I guess, the recommendation to me was that this was the legislation location, the *Farm Machinery Dealers and Vendors Act*; does sound kind of close, anyway.

But I'm certainly open to saying if that isn't, and we have to either amend another act or if it would be better in another act to have more influence to your portfolio. I'm certainly open to suggestions, I'm open to amendments; I'm open to a number of things to try to strengthen this particular piece of legislation to meet the needs of our agricultural community of Prince Edward Island.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from New Haven-Rocky Point.

**P. Bevan-Baker:** Thank you, Chair. I'll be brief, but I really appreciate you bringing this to the floor, member.

Three years ago, I think it was, 2020 or 2021, I brought forward a motion to this effect on right to repair. At that time, and I don't know whether this is still true or not, but there were two other provinces that were considering right to repair legislation: Quebec and Ontario. Neither of them had passed legislation at that time, but I think a federal bill just passed in October of this year, an amendment to the *Copyright Act* there, which is a federal jurisdiction, of course, and would have much more wide-ranging implications for all provinces, including ours.

[2:55 p.m.]

When we were looking at this, it looked like, in order to have the biggest impact for consumers, for Islanders, the *Consumer Protection Act* looked like the place to go. Now, I realized you've talked that you're concerned principally – maybe entirely – with the agricultural community here. I mean, I think my neighbour Boyd MacQuarrie has a whole slew of tractors. God knows how old they are, but he's been repairing them all his life, and they're still running. How fantastic is that?

These days it's much more difficult, as the Minister of Agriculture just said. When you

break down, your options to repair it yourself are really limited. So, I love the idea of this coming to floor. I'd love to widen the scope of this, but if we start here and if we are the province to move this forward further than any other has – and I think if this were to pass, that would be indeed the case here – then that's very exciting.

So, I really appreciate you bringing this to the floor, and I look forward to the discussion. Thank you.

Thank you, Chair.

**Chair:** Thank you.

The hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque.

**M. MacKay:** Thank you, Chair, and thank you, hon. member, for bringing this bill to the floor.

It certainly seems like there's some interest to make something work here, and I'm just going to throw this out there. I'm wondering if there would be an appetite, if I was to bring a motion to send it to committee – probably the committee of natural resources – for a review, just to try and strengthen it and make it the best piece of legislation and work towards getting it passed.

**R. Henderson:** Well, from my perspective, like I said, I'm here as a humble MLA from O'Leary-Inverness. That's a pretty big farming community. I have to admit to the Member from New Haven-Rocky Point, I am trying to focus on the agricultural sector. Like I say, how much do you take on in this?

Prince Edward Island; we're a leader in agriculture, certainly in the potato industry and the technology that goes on in agriculture. I think we can be a bit of a trendsetter here. Although, I will say that there certainly have been a lot of different jurisdictions in the farming community, especially in the US, that this has been quite a contentious issue and there certainly have been states that have implemented the legislation there.

But to get back to Kensington-Malpeque, I would say I'm open to suggestions here. I

would hope that this bill doesn't die somewhere; that I can make some good of bringing it to light. I certainly would be receptive to seeing it go to committee.

My only little comment to it is that most of the legislation we've dealt with here was kind of like "it's good enough," and now all of a sudden, we want precision, and it's great. [Laughter]

So, I'm honoured that this particular bill would be the chosen one to do that.

**Hon. B. Thompson:** You just needed leadership on it.

**R. Henderson:** [Laughter] So, like I say, I am open to any motions or amendments, or anything that would only strengthen this bill and try to get it to move forward.

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

**M. MacKay:** So, Chair, I would like to make a motion to move it to committee. How would I do that?

**Chair:** Hon. member, in order to move it to committee, we'd have to report progress as Committee of the Whole, and then that motion would be made forward when we're not in Committee of the Whole.

Now, hon. members, I do have one more person on my list to ask questions, or I guess the sponsor of the bill can report progress at any time. So, I'll put it to you. I do have one more person currently on my list. Do you want to report progress now, or would you like to take more questions?

**R. Henderson:** Well, I think whoever that person is on the list, I'd like to try to hear them.

**Chair:** It's the hon. Member from Tyne Valley-Sherbrooke.

**R. Henderson:** Oh, well, he would be a person who would understand this legislation probably more than most.

**Chair:** But just so you know, you could report progress at any time, and then that motion would have to be made outside of the Committee of the Whole.

**R. Henderson:** Okay.

**H. MacLennan:** Thank you, Chair, and thank you, hon. member, for bringing it forward.

I just have one question. So, this would be equipment, like if you buy something – I'm just thinking of warranty equipment. This would be for equipment out of warranty, or for warranty? Because if you start working on equipment that's in warranty and you don't do it properly, what are the consequences?

**R. Henderson:** Ultimately, when you have a warranty, there's already an implied arrangement between you and the vendor. When you purchase that machine, you've paid for that machine, and there's a warranty that goes with that. This would really be after the warranty.

[3:00 p.m.]

So, what happens after the warranty that they won't give you the codes? You as a farmer have very little influence on a machine after warranty is expired, if the technology is beyond what you can understand, or even to get the images. If I took a manual, as you've looked at many manuals, lots of times the dealer will give you a photocopy of the manual and how that part goes together. They might not tell you a whole lot, but at least you've got that to go by. You at least have some recourse to ask for that information, and they have to provide it to you. Ultimately, it really goes beyond warranty.

But like I say, if you go back to Member from New Haven-Rocky Point, he's talking about a lot of older machines. There was some basic technology there that many of us understood. I know my car today, if there's something goes wrong, it's beyond my capabilities. But I can take it to my neighbour, who's a mechanic, and he has computers to get some of that information. What happens if he wasn't able to get that, right? That's the issue. I hope that explains it in a little more detail.

**H. MacLennan:** That's the only thing I was thinking about. I figured it was after warranty but just making sure, because of problems.

**R. Henderson:** I think with that, Chair, I'd certainly like to report progress on this bill. I thank the members for at least entertaining my time here to bring this forward.

**T. DesRoches:** You're good enough.

**R. Henderson:** [Laughter] Yeah, you like that line?

Mr. Chair, I move that the Speaker take the chair and the Chair report progress and beg leave to sit again.

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

[Hon. D. Compton in the chair]

**S. MacEwen:** Madam Speaker, as Chair of a Committee of the Whole House having under consideration a bill to be intituled *An Act to Amend the Farm Machinery Dealers and Vendors Act*, I beg leave to report that the committee has made some progress and begs leave to sit again. I move that the report of the committee be adopted.

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

#### Motions Other Than Government

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

**M. MacKay:** Madam Speaker, I'm seeking unanimous to move a motion without proper notice to refer Bill No. 110, *An Act to Amend the Farm Machinery Dealers and Vendors Act* to committee.

**Speaker:** Does the member have unanimous consent? Yes.

**M. MacKay:** I move, seconded by Member for O'Leary-Inverness, the following motion:

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that this house commit Bill No. 110, *An Act to Amend the Farm Machinery Dealers and Vendors Act*, to the Standing Committee on Natural Resources and Environmental Sustainability for further study and consultation;

**THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Committee solicit and consider input from any relevant

stakeholders and that the committee determines its workplan to gather input;

**AND THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Committee report to the House with its finding and recommendations at its earliest convenience.

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

Would anyone like to speak to this? Okay.

#### Orders Other Than Government

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

**Hon. H. Perry:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

I move, seconded by the hon. Member from Charlottetown-West Royalty, that the 17<sup>th</sup> order of the day be now read.

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

**Clerk:** Order No. 17, *An Act to Amend the Planning Act (No. 3)*, Bill No. 112, ordered for second reading.

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

**Hon. H. Perry:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I move, seconded by the Honourable Member from Charlottetown-West Royalty, that the said bill be now read a second time.

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

**Committee Clerk:** Bill No. 112, *An Act to Amend the Planning Act (No. 3)*, read a second time.

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

**Hon. H. Perry:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

I move, seconded by the Honourable Member from Charlottetown-West Royalty, that this House do now resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole House to take into consideration the said bill.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Morell-Donagh to chair the Committee of the Whole House.

[3:05 p.m.]

[S. MacEwen in the chair]

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

Member, do you want to make a motion to bring a stranger to the floor?

**Hon. H. Perry:** Yes, I would, please.

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

Welcome back, Robert. Could you introduce yourself for Hansard?

**Robert Godfrey:** My name is Robert Godfrey and I'm the director of policy and research for the Office of the Official Opposition.

**Chair:** Alright.

Hon. member, do you have any opening comments, or would you like to get into debate?

**Hon. H. Perry:** Sure, I'll just give a brief description of the bill's intent.

Basically, the overview of this bill, simply put, is to build more housing quickly. Given the current housing crisis that we see here on Prince Edward Island, I believe it is important to reduce red tape and limit who can appeal a development permit.

The first proposed amendment aims to deter frivolous or speculative appeals to the development permits by introducing the fee to the appellant. This is to solve the issue of needless delays of new residential builds. Additionally, another amendment will limit the ability to appeal development permits to parties and/or landowners who reside within 100 meters of the subject lands.

As the act is now written, someone from Sherwood for example, could appeal a development permit for new housing in

downtown Charlottetown without any reason.

The next amendment will ensure that no appeals lie from the decisions respecting development permits for development permits for affordable housing as set out in the regulation.

Lastly, the final amendment provides that no person who is not a party to the application may appeal a decision respecting a developing permit more than once.

Again, these measures aim to get housing built faster and streamline the appeal process, while ensuring genuine concerns are addressed.

Thank you.

**Chair:** Thank you, member.

Is it the pleasure of the committee that the bill be now read clause by clause?

**Z. Bell:** General questions is fine.

**Chair:** General questions. Alright, my list is open.

The hon. Minister of Housing, Land and Communities.

**Hon. R. Lantz:** Thank you, Chair.

The government brought an amendment to the *Planning Act* just recently that's related to this. We changed the definition of somebody who is dissatisfied with the decision to an "aggrieved person" which limits the scope of who can appeal a planning decision.

Based on these amendments that you're bringing forward, I do have some concerns about how those two definitions of who can appeal a decision can be knit together between the amendment we brought, and now the amendment that you brought.

Does our definition of an aggrieved person still stand in the act? And how does that reconcile with someone who's within 100 meters, subject prior?

**Robert Godfrey:** I think what we've tried to do, minister, is we've tried to go a little

bit further. We've tried to narrow the scope, and this is largely based on feedback received from the City of Summerside, the City of Charlottetown and the Town of Stratford. They have sent a letter in and I believe it's also supported by the Federation of Municipalities who made some of these recommendations.

[3:10 p.m.]

We've formulated this bill based on that consultation and thought that we needed to go further in terms of who should be able to appeal a development permit. I think we both share the desire, from what I've seen in your bill and this bill here, in terms of making sure we get houses built as fast as possible, without delay.

**Chair:** You want to report progress?

**Hon. H. Perry:** Yeah.

Mr. Chair, I move that the Speaker take the chair and the Chair report progress and beg leave to sit again.

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

[Hon. D. Compton in the chair]

**S. MacEwen:** Madam Speaker, as Chair of a Committee of the Whole House having under consideration a bill to be intituled *An Act to Amend the Planning Act (No. 3)*, I beg leave to report that the committee has made some progress and begs leave to sit again. I move that the report of the committee be adopted.

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

#### Motions Other Than Government

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from New Haven-Rocky Point.

**P. Bevan-Baker:** Thank you, so much, Madam Speaker.

I move, seconded by the hon. Leader of the Third Party, that Motion 77 be now read.

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

**Committee Clerk:** Motion No. 77: Keeping ATVs off the Confederation Trail.

Debate was adjourned by the hon. Member from New Haven-Rocky Point.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from New Haven-Rocky Point.

**P. Bevan-Baker:** Thank you again, Madam Speaker.

May I take a moment just to recognize a couple of folks in the gallery?

**Speaker:** Absolutely.

**P. Bevan-Baker:** I'd like to welcome a very pleasantly full gallery to the debate on whether or not ATVs should be granted access to the Confederation Trail. Thank you all for being here today.

I want to especially make note of a couple of folks at the far end of the front row, Bryson Guptill and his partner, Sue. So nice to see you both here today. Bryson is the driving force behind the Island Walk and has done an awful lot of work to both maintain and improve the trail system here on Prince Edward Island.

I'd also like to welcome my friend Bethany Collicutt-McNab, who is here again today. Lovely to see you, Bethany.

Last week, when we started debate on this motion, we didn't have very much time, and I decided that I would part of a press release that was given out by the executive director of Island Trails, Tracey Gairns Brioux. Tracey, I'm proud to say, is a constituent of mine in District 17.

The first part of the letter outlines the history of how the Confederation Trail went from being a railway line which was abandoned by CNR in 1989, to its current condition which is an almost unique trail in Canada, which connects virtually tip to tip of our entire province. I also spoke a little bit about some of the individuals who were instrumental in doing the work required to secure the trail. Not a small piece of work; my goodness.

I imagine everybody in this House, virtually, has travelled at least a certain amount on the Confederation Trail. It crosses roads frequently. It goes through, obviously, a lot of agricultural land. Securing the rights and

all of the work that went into giving us this absolute gem that we have is something that needs to be saluted, and I talked about some of the people who managed to do that work many decades ago.

I'd just got to the point where the trail was granted a \$1 million gift from the Weston Foundation in 2014. That was money which was used to complete one of the arms, a spur off the main line. It finally moved the trail from the 273 kilometres which is the main spine, to its current 450, including all of the spurs.

[3:15 p.m.]

That \$1 million gift from the Weston Foundation came with some strings attached. They wanted an assurance that the trail would remain a greenway into perpetuity. A greenway is a space where non-motorized vehicles only and pedestrians are allowed on.

Because of that, subsequently, the government passed the *Trails Act*. The *Trails Act* regulations which stipulate that the Confederation Trail is indeed a greenway; supports cycling and walking but forbids the use of motorized vehicles such as dirt bikes and ATVs. That's a piece of legislation that we have on the books here in Prince Edward Island.

Again, I'm going to read from the press release of a couple of weeks ago, from Island Trails:

“PEI was the first province to have its entire TCT designated a greenway and we are the greenway standard the TCT is now promoting throughout its 24,000 km trail network.”

For those who aren't familiar with the Trans Canada Trail, it's an astonishing piece of work which connects us. We're a large, disparate, geographically very diverse country, and the Trans Canada Trail is an extraordinary piece of work to connect people from Newfoundland to the Northwest Territories and everywhere in between. We are the place that is considered to be the gold standard of how we should design, maintain, monitor, and control what we do on that trail.

“The PEI ATV Federation states that many provinces are successfully sharing the trails. That just isn't true. At an October 2023 meeting of the International Appalachian Trail in Fredericton, New Brunswick, delegates heard that shared-use trails in N.B. are becoming exclusive-use ATV trails. Cyclists and walkers find shared-use trails are not safe. This is leading hiking and cycling groups to build new trails dedicated solely to non-motorized use.”

These are trails which were mixed-use trails, and now walkers and cyclists are abandoning them because they're just not safe.

Yesterday, I don't know if anybody heard the *Maritime Noon* phone-in which was on this topic. There were even ATV owners and riders from New Brunswick and Nova Scotia calling in to say that we on PEI should not allow this to happen, because – their word – “hooligans” have taken over the trails in their provinces.

“In Nova Scotia the same thing is happening. In a document titled, ‘The Myths and Facts About Shared Use Trails in Nova Scotia’, Nova Scotians Promoting Active Transportation on Community Trails state ‘studies clearly indicate that off-highway vehicles displace physically active users from trails.’ A study conducted at Acadia University concluded that displacement of walkers and cyclists occurs when there is an ‘asymmetrical conflict’ between the user groups. When their safety is at stake, pedestrians and cyclists simply abandon shared-use trails. This will also happen in PEI if ATVs are given access to the Confederation Trail.

“Island Trails raised all these issues with the Government of PEI in 2019.”

This is not the first time we've had this discussion.

“At that time, the ATV Federation assured the government they only wanted to cross the Confederation Trail – not run their machines on the trail itself. They are now saying they need to use the Confederation Trail to connect to



other trail segments at ‘pinch points’ on the Island.

“In 2019, Deborah Apps, the President of the TCT, wrote to Premier Dennis King asking for assurances that the Confederation Trail would remain a greenway into the future. The Premier wrote back on October 23, 2019, stating ‘this government has the full intention of honoring the greenway designation of the Confederation Trail’.”

That’s a pretty unambiguous statement, and I thank the Premier for that. I wish he would reiterate that, because there are many Islanders who are looking for a similarly clear statement. Unfortunately, we’ve had crickets from the Premier.

“For 30 years successive PEI Governments have recognized the Confederation Trail as a greenway that needs protection. Once again, Island Trails is asking the Premier for assurances that the trail will remain a greenway for the benefit of future generations of Islanders.”

That’s the end of the press release from Tracey Gairns Brioux, the executive director of Island Trails.

[3:20 p.m.]

I tabled that document earlier today and I think the wonderful historical context, reading right up to today and what the Premier said just a couple of years ago, is really important in informing the discussion that we’re having in the House today.

This is a really hot topic right now. I don’t know about the inboxes of other members of the Legislature here but mine is, daily, crammed with emails; all I think, almost without exception – perhaps in my case, without exception – people who are expressing concerns about the idea that the Confederation Trail be opened up to motorized vehicles, specifically ATVs.

There’s a petition on the go right now which has well over 3,000 signatures. Islanders love the Confederation Trail; it’s absolutely clear. Some of the letters are very poignant, very beautifully and eloquently worded. They all point to the same thing. The

essence of these emails is that they care about the Confederation Trail, and they care about keeping it safe, and quiet, and available to all Islanders.

The Confederation Trail quite literally connects us all. It is this trail, unique in Canada, which as I said a few minutes ago, basically covers the entire Island. I’ve never been on the trail and not met other people, people who are enjoying the facility, willing to stop and talk and have a chat. It’s the serenity and the peace of the place which allows that to happen.

Two years ago, my wife and I – and this was in mid-COVID – set off on our very not state-of-the-art bikes to cycle the Confederation Trail. We only had a couple of days to do this. Given our advanced age, our lack of preparation, and general fitness, we knew we wouldn’t make it all the way in two days. You’ve got to be pretty super fit to do that.

We made it halfway. We made it from Tignish to Emerald, which is almost exactly halfway along the trail; not bad for two old farts to get basically 200 kilometers or 100-and-something kilometres along the trail.

I carry really fond memories of those two days; perhaps not so much, particularly, the latter part of the second day. Anyway, it was mile after mile of somewhat sweaty serenity through some of the most beautiful parts of our Island. It’s just gorgeous Island scenery everywhere you turn. It’s a real joy to ride. It’s a joy because it’s well maintained, because it’s safe, because it’s peaceful, because it’s beautiful, and again, because of our condition and the state of our bikes, because it’s delightfully flat.

I can understand why the railbed – and of course, it got off to a very rough start; basically ended up bankrupting our province when it was built – that it’s now considered to be this precious gem that anchors the growing and super successful cycling and walking destination that is PEI because it is so well maintained. Kudos to this government and those that preceded it to have the vision and the foresight to recognize what an incredible asset the Confederation Trail could be.

When it was secured back in the '90s, I think it was one of the most insightful and delightful decisions and things that was done here on this Island. It's left us with a very beautiful legacy, one that we must not forego.

In April of 2022, this Legislature passed a motion put forward by the Green caucus at the time called "Motion to establish Prince Edward Island as a cycling destination", and it urged government to expand and accelerate infrastructure investments to create a really comprehensive bicycle path system from tip to tip.

It's really critical to point out when I talk about the enhancement of what are really, in some respects, tourist draws – and I have to again give enormous credit to Bryson Guptill for his vision in creating the Island Walk, the Camino de la Isla, and what that has done to boost tourism here on Prince Edward Island. The Confederation Trail is also of course, similarly, a tourism attraction for so many people.

[3:25 p.m.]

Every time we enhance our province as a place for people to come who are looking for clean, safe, and attractive places to visit, we also of course create a place – for those who are lucky enough to call Prince Edward Island home – that we can, too, use. It benefits our population enormously.

Increasingly that travelling public, the tourism folks, are looking for an interesting, a unique, a safe, a clean, a healthy destination in which to enjoy their vacation and bring their families. Experiential tourism is something identified by experts around the world, and indeed, by the Tourism Industry Association of Prince Edward Island as a growing market sector and a huge opportunity for Prince Edward Island.

It's clear that regular physical activity is both – of course it's important for us physically, but it's also important for our mental health and wellbeing. When we build infrastructure that's bike friendly, it's also inevitably pedestrian friendly. Whether those trails are through a forest, or an active transportation lane in one of our cities – and

we're continuing to expand that and connect various parts – is wonderful.

Every time people get out of their cars and onto a bike or skateboard or rollerblades, or put on their sneakers or their walking boots, they're making healthy choices which are obviously good for them personally; better in the long term for our health system, and even longer term, ultimately, for the bottom line for our provincial budget.

Tourism PEI is solidly behind this idea. From their PEI Tourism Strategy of '22-23, I'm going to quote:

"PEI has recently garnered attention for its walking and biking trails. In some circles, PEI's Island Walk is being compared to 'Camino de Santiago', in Spain, a United Nations World Heritage Site, known for its established network of trails and operators that facilitate related visitor experiences."

Tourism PEI of course is not only interested in the facility itself, but in the economic spinoffs that come from that. It goes on to say:

"While PEI's walking and biking trails are not yet as established as 'Camino de Santiago'..."

And we probably will never get there. Thousands and thousands of people flock there, but my goodness, the numbers have just shot up here on the Island walk over the last few years. So, maybe we will; maybe we'll eclipse the Camino de Santiago. Wouldn't that be awesome?

"...there is an opportunity for PEI to develop a strong and unique product in a similar manner..."

We need to "Work with key walking and bike trail organizers to develop and execute a holistic walking and biking trail strategy and plan", with the outcome of an "Increased number of visitors welcomed in PEI with main activity being experiencing walking and/or biking trails" with the "Additional revenue from higher yield, longer haul travelers..."

Longer haul travelers are people who stay for an extended period of time with significant, 30-plus-night stays; unlike many

folks who will come here just for a weekend, for example.

People who come to enjoy our active transportation links, including the Confederation Trail and our walking trails, tend to stay for a much longer time. They have a much – relatively speaking – larger impact on our provincial economy here in all kinds of positive ways. Whether it’s an environmental, a health, or an economic argument, the benefits of keeping our precious Confederation Trail non-motorized are crystal clear.

Many enthusiastic and eloquent articles on how attractive Prince Edward Island is for folks looking for a unique experience that is built on our existing peace and serenity exist. *The Globe and Mail*, the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), *Forbes* magazine, *Maclean’s*; they all have extensive articles celebrating our trail system generally, and the Confederation Trail specifically.

The title of the *Forbes* magazine article for example, is: “Cycling Through A Bucolic Paradise on Prince Edward Island”. I don’t think the heading of the article would be quite the same if there were ATVs competing for that space.

I can guarantee you that there would very different pieces written if we lose this trail. I look forward to hearing other members thoughts on this important issue and hot topic amongst Islanders, and to getting this motion to a vote this afternoon.

Thank you so much, Madam Speaker.

**Speaker:** The hon. Leader of the Third Party to second the motion.

**K. Bernard:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

It’s a pleasure to rise and speak to this motion.

[3:30 p.m.]

Every once in a while, there’s an issue that strikes Islanders either really the right way or really the wrong way. We know it, as was mentioned, because our emails are full of emails from people. I can tell you that I have not received one single email from anyone

saying that having ATVs on the Confederation Trail is a good idea.

And so, I of course stand in support of this motion. It is, absolutely, a provincial treasure that we have here, and as I consider the fact that one of the things that we’ve talked about in here a lot – and one of the things that so many community organizations are fighting hard for – is preventative care.

I find as our population grows, I get more and more defensive of our green spaces and our trails, because I don’t think that we recognize the gem that we have in those. People need spaces to get out, and if we aren’t conscious about the spaces we keep for people to enjoy quiet peacefulness, then we’ve missed the mark.

And so, as we consider health care, we consider the ripple effects of keeping a trail where people can get out and move and enjoy the benefits of physical health, that just has ripple effects to everything.

How many jurisdictions can say they have an active transportation trail that connects one end of their province or jurisdiction to the other? I think that is really cool, and if you take a minute to sit and think about that, why would we ever want to mess with that? One of our goals in here is to grow active transportation lanes and to make sure they’re reconnected. Well, there’s one massive one right there that we can build off, which we are building off.

The unique tourism opportunity that this presents, and the fact that we see bed and breakfasts and restaurants reaping the benefits of the Island Walk, and people who are cycling and biking on this all of the time; to allow ATVs access would go against the whole original intention of this and it would also go against the trail strategy being developed by Tourism PEI.

Really and truly, it is not fair to say that ATVs can share the trail with active transportation users. One has a very clear advantage. One little mistake, and they can take lives. It doesn’t make sense that we would allow ATVs on a trail that is to be used for active transportation.

One of the issues that I'll mention – and I'm very conscious of the time and I want to make sure others get a chance to speak to this – is I heard a lot of issues with the survey, which I did present to the minister. A lot of people were upset that there wasn't an option to say how they would like to use the trail in the wintertime and why we aren't opening that conversation as well, which I think is a really important part there.

I guess I will close by saying I am no math expert, but I can tell you this. Walking and/or cycling plus ATVs does not equal safe, quiet peacefulness.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

**M. MacKay:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I will be quick. Thank you, hon. members, for bringing this motion forward.

Myself, I guess, as a former ATVer, has known this has been a topic of discussion for a while. I have no interest in seeing ATVs have access to the Confederation Trail, as an active ATVer.

But I do feel that the problem is not going to go away, and we need to work with the ATV Federation to make sure there is an active trail for them outside of the Confederation Trail. They've done a tremendous job on doing that, and I think government needs to continue working with the ATV Federation to make sure that does keep going and there's a place for the ATVs. The Confederation Trail is not the place for it.

Madam Speaker, I would like to make an amendment to the motion, if I could.

I move, seconded by the hon. Member from Souris-Elmira, the following amendments:

That the following WHEREAS clause be added after the 6<sup>th</sup> WHEREAS clause:

AND WHEREAS there is an ongoing consultation process currently happening with the public and stakeholders which concludes Friday, December 1, 2023;

AND that the final operative clause be amended by adding the word "full" after the

word "grant", and the deletion of the words "any part of" and "already", so that the clause reads:

AND THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Legislature urge government not to grant full access to the Confederation Trail for All Terrain Vehicles, other than at designated crossing points.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Speaker:** Do you have copies of your amendment, hon. member?

**M. MacKay:** I believe so, yes.

**Speaker:** Okay.

[3:35 p.m.]

Hon. members, I'll just give you a minute here to read the amendments, and then if there's anyone who'd like to speak to the amendments, I'll take a list of that.

**S. MacEwen:** Call the vote.

**Speaker:** There has been a motion to call the vote.

The hon. Member from New Haven-Rocky Point.

**P. Bevan-Baker:** I'd just like to speak to the amendment briefly, please, Madam Speaker.

**Speaker:** Sure, absolutely.

The hon. Member from New Haven-Rocky Point.

**P. Bevan-Baker:** Thank you.

I appreciate the comments of the member, and also what I consider to be a friendly amendment coming forward here. I also understand that it's important that we continue to have dialogue with the ATV Federation here on Prince Edward Island.

Currently, there are a number of crossing points on the trail, as there are – I mean, you can't go on the Confederation Trail without crossing a main road. It crosses the Trans-Canada Highway, for goodness sake. And of course, there are tractor crossings all over

the place, and there currently exists some ATV crossings. That's very different from ATVs driving along the trail bed.

I'm just going to read the operative clause at the end once more, just so it's very clear:

“AND THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Legislature urge government not to grant full access to the Confederation Trail for All Terrain Vehicles, other than at designated crossing points.”

I understand from that that we are leaving the door open to create perhaps some new – different, more – crossing points on the trail, and I think the users of the trail would find that probably acceptable in a way that they would find ATVs on the trail itself completely unacceptable. So, I appreciate the willingness of the member to bring forward this amendment, and I will support it.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

**Speaker:** Anyone else to speak to the amendments?

All those in favour of the amendment, signify by saying, 'aye'.

**Some Hon. Members:** Aye!

**Speaker:** Contrary, 'nay'.

The amendment has carried.

Back to the motion. We have the hon. Member from Charlottetown-West Royalty to speak to the motion.

**G. McNeilly:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

It's a pleasure to rise. In today's age, we have a lot of issues on PEI. I didn't expect to be up here talking about ATVs on the Confederation Trail. I don't really understand where this came from. I understand both sides of the argument but really, we have to protect the Confederation Trail and what it was set out to do.

I, too, want to say hello to our guests in the audience who have done an incredible job. I've talked about that extensively, that trail in Prince Edward Island. That, in the next 50 years, will still be there. We have a trail that goes from one tip to the other tip of our Island. That's incredible. People will know about that and they will come.

I've heard arguments, too, about tourism and for ATVs coming. They don't need to be on our trail. It just doesn't need to happen; it doesn't mix. When I think about people who use the trail in groups, people run out in groups and they do different sections. The UPEI athletes and the Holland College athletes go on the trails in September. What happens if they were to have an ATVer pull up beside them in a group of 20 people on the trail? It doesn't make any sense.

[3:40 p.m.]

So, I look at this and say it is a safety issue. Crossing is okay, but that has to be talked about with communities, and I think it will be. It's up to the communities, I guess.

I've heard the same thing. In my community, I've heard people looking and grabbing onto this trail as a point of pride for PEI. It's a national park that basically runs across our province, and we have to start to think about it that way.

I like that we're debating in here now, but it also shows that – I've been talking about this for four years – we need to get more people active. We need to get more people on the trail. That's what the motion should have said. I mean, it's here for a reason, but we have to promote this trail. We have to get people on it.

When I look through the Minister of Health's mandate letter, there's nothing in there about wellness. There's nothing in there about activity. We're fighting against wellness. The Minister of Health and Wellness should be able to look at that and say, "Hey, you know what? The Confederation Trail is like a playground for adults. We need to be using it. We need to get out there and see what different sections we can discover and explore peacefully, quietly, and safely at the same time."

Those are the types of motions – and we’ve talked about it with the minister of action over there. We’ve talked about: How do we get more active transportation trails, but also people using them? That’s up to government to promote that. When we don’t have a wellness plan, when we don’t have anything in the Minister of Health and Wellness’ mandate letter around activity, that’s a problem.

I will be encouraging you to do that and I’m encouraging all members to vote for this motion, as I will be too, because the people have spoken to me and I’m in support of wellness. I’m in support of safety. I’m in support of getting out there and getting moving. That really is what this is about. Whoever designed this trail deserves a big thank you, and whoever designed the trail around Prince Edward Island, same thing. Let’s get out and use it.

Thanks, Madam Speaker.

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

**Hon. R. Lantz:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Very happy to rise to speak to this motion. I spoke to the Member from New Haven-Rocky Point last week, and I said, “Are you going to get a chance to bring that motion back? Because I really want to speak to it.”

It’s interesting; when you’re in this line of work, you work on a lot of really important files that affect the lives of Prince Edward Islanders. I’m not trying to take anything away from this issue – it is very important – but it’s always surprising what strikes a chord with the public and when they decide to jump on an issue, how apparent it becomes how important it is.

I’ve received more emails about this than any single issue in my seven months now in this job. I’ve responded to every one of them – well, almost; I think I’ve received a couple today that I haven’t yet had the chance to respond to yet – and I’ve been consistent in my message. I’m going to try to be succinct here, and definitive:

I do not support allowing access to ATVs on the confederation trail, full stop.

That’s what I’ve told everyone.

The Member from New Haven-Rocky Point read from a letter that was sent to Trans Canada Trail, who are a very important collaborator on our Confederation trail, and an investor in fact. He read the first line of that – and I’ll read that first line – but there’s a second line that’s also important. He said, at the time:

“Please be assured this government has the full intention of honoring the greenway designation of the Confederation Trail which was originally agreed to with your organization. We recognize the importance of a non-motorized trail system as we continue to develop the Confederation Trail.”

Important, there at the end where it says “continue to develop” because – I’m a trail user myself. I’ve biked tip to tip. I’ve biked sections of it many times. It’s where I head to when I want to get out on my bike and put on some miles.

But “as we continue to develop”, that struck a chord with me because it still has so much more potential. As much as we’ve continued to develop it, it still has so much more. It’s a very unique resource to this province and we need to protect it and continue to realize the full potential of that resource.

[3:45 p.m.]

As I said, I’ve biked it tip to tip and in fact, when I did that in 2015, the Member from New Haven-Rocky Point actually joined me for a section of my tip-to-tip ride from Morell to St. Peters. I think he turned around halfway because he was the new leader of the party and had to get back to work.

At time, in fact, I was biking it as a fundraiser for the United Way and the Member from Charlottetown-West Royalty was also involved. We were both involved with the United Way at that time, and I’ve got promotional photos of us on the trail at that time as well. We’ve all got a connection. We’ve all got an appreciation for it. I want everyone who’s contacted me about this to know how I feel and have my feelings on the record.

Essentially, I don't know how this issue bubbled up to become as prominent as it has because in all my discussions with my colleagues on this side, I have not discovered any great willingness to change anything with respect to the trails.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

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

**Hon. E. Hudson:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

I will be brief. I know every time I say I will be brief, I always get frowns from ones on my side of the House: "Uh-oh, this is going to be trouble," but I will be brief. I certainly want to see it get to a motion and to a vote here today.

I want to thank, certainly, the mover and the seconder of this motion. Also, my colleague from Kensington-Malpeque for bringing forward the amendment to the motion.

Certainly, I'd like recognize ones that are here in the gallery. All of you, but certainly the ones that are here from Island Trails. Give a shout-out to my friend, Greg McKee. Greg and I go back a number of years, back up in O'Leary. Just for the record, thank Greg for your great work too, on the Forestview Trail.

I think one of the things that we've heard – and it's important to me – that was brought forward here in the amendment to the motion is the part whereas there is an ongoing consultation process. I think that's very important to recognize, that ongoing consultation process.

I do appreciate the conversation that the seconder of the motion had with me here a while back with regard to winter access and things along that line. I think that this consultation process – to me, it's never a bad thing to go out to hear feedback, to hear opinions from Islanders. But with that, that gave people the opportunity, and also in the survey – which over 3,500 have replied to it at this point in time – there was also the means of providing additional feedback through an email which I had shared with you.

I would encourage ones too, if they feel that there's additional things that they want to put forward, that they make utilization of that email.

I also see this as a way to increasing the potential – as my colleagues has mentioned – the potential for use of the trail and of active transportation networks right across this great province of ours.

With that, again, thank you, Madam Speaker. I will be supporting the amended motion.

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

**T. DesRoches:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I'm not going to take much time here. I just wanted to rise and thank the hon. members for bringing this forward.

Like I'm sure every other colleague, my email was flooded. I have a different minority in Summerside where there's a lot of people who are involved with ATV, but I keep going back and refreshing. I kept a running tally because my vote is for how my constituents want to vote. It was pretty close, but we did have a lot of people who came forward and wanted to keep the trails the way they were.

I do agree with the Member from Kensington-Malpeque with saying that, as government, we've got to work to connect the trails that are there, just not on the Confederation Trail.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Winsloe.

**Z. Bell:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I'll be very brief. I do want to thank the mover and the seconder for bringing this forward.

Just to reiterate what has already been said, that a lot of people have reached out. I do want to thank everybody that has reached out, and I do want to thank everybody that has taken the time. The minister mentioned there's 3,500 people that have responded. I

do want to thank everyone because that was my message, and I do want to say that I'll be supporting this as well.

I'm an urban MLA, so a lot of my constituents have asked about – I think they have the fear of the ATVs being on the trails in and around Charlottetown, which will never happen ever. I live on Trailview Drive, so I am 100 percent in favour of this trail.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

**Hon. J. Burridge:** Very brief, I just wanted to get up and speak to this.

[3:50 p.m.]

I want everyone who I've talked to and who I represent to know that I see it for the natural asset it is, and that it should be protected. I'm glad this aligns with a lot of the constituents I'm hearing from, and a lot of Islanders that I'm hearing from are telling me the same thing.

I just wanted to rise to add just a technical piece, that piece being I would encourage that any crossings that are looked at are done at a 90-degree angle or thereabouts to avoid jogs. I would just look to those responsible in the future to try to do that and avoid jogs when designing those future crossings.

Thank you.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member for O'Leary-Inverness.

**R. Henderson:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I wanted to get up and speak to this motion as I was a former minister responsible, actually, for the Confederation Trail. Actually, I was the minister who signed with the Galen Weston Foundation, an agreement to maintain the Confederation Trail as a greenway, for at least that section anyway.

The Confederation Trail is in my riding. It's very easy for a lot of these urban members to get up. Now, in my particular riding, I probably would have overwhelming support

from people who are ATVerers that would want to be on the trail.

But I've been very consistent in my message to those in every place I go. I try to say that the ATVs are a reality out there, they're on the trail, but I do not think they are conducive to a Confederation Trail. You can't have cyclists and walkers – and these ATVs have gotten quite a bit bigger, faster, and stronger, and all those things moving forward.

I know some members have said, "Where did this issue come from?" Well, I can tell you where it came from. It came from an election campaign recently. I remember all the candidates were eventually invited out to the ATV Club in the Member from Alberton-Bloomfield's riding. I went one night, and they had a lot of stuff there, a lot of ATVs. But when the Conservative candidate happened to go out there, he came with the Premier.

They rode in on their ATV, and although I can't say I know exactly what was said since I was not there, they certainly gave an indication they were going to review this Confederation Trail issue. I think is where it's all come from. I have to admit, they seemed to have a lot of that candidate's signs up after that particular meeting. I don't think I did very well in the ATV group in general terms.

But I do want to commend Greg McKee. I've known Greg a long time; the service centre in O'Leary. He was also, when I was minister, involved with the Confederation Trail. I want to also acknowledge Wayne MacPhee and Mark Lockhart, who maintain the Confederation Trail in my area.

But I do think it's really important that we do try to work with the ATV Federation to try to deal with their one big issue. In my district, they have lots of their trails all through the area. I think we need to convert a few more abandoned roads over to the ATV group, but it's the dealing with the issue at Portage.

I remember asking the Minister of Tourism and Fisheries about that particular issue. I think there is an issue at Portage, and it comes with Route 2. That road needs to be a



bit wider. I would like to see maybe a third lane go through there.

The Minister of Transportation, half of it's in his riding. I would think that if we did that and then added a little bit of a section for ATV use, the link from Bay Road to Percival Road, I think you would solve a lot of this problem and then I think –

**Hon. E. Hudson:** (Indistinct) Tory Road, right?

**R. Henderson:** Yeah, you don't want to go down that road. It's a bit of a dark hole. But anyway... [Laughter] There's no light at the end of that road, I can tell you.

**Hon. E. Hudson:** You wouldn't want to go down that road for sure.

**R. Henderson:** No, that's not in my district. I was happy to see that go over to the Member from Alberton-Bloomfield.

Anyway, that's ultimately what I think really has to happen, and I do encourage government to work with that. I just feel that it is a unique situation. I know politically, it's always difficult taking something or trying to share something with somebody else. I don't think that works. My advice as a legislator is for government to maintain the Confederation Trail as it is for non-motorized vehicles, for the exception of the time it leases out to the Snowmobile Association.

I think it is a gem. I was honoured to be the minister responsible for the trail and try to improve and add sections to the trail. I think the section out around your district, Madam Speaker, was during my time. I think it is an asset. I'll be certainly supporting this motion wholeheartedly.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Speaker:** Is there anyone else to speak to the motion?

I'll go to the hon. Member from New Haven-Rocky Point to close debate.

**P. Bevan-Baker:** Thank you so much, Madam Speaker, and thank you to everybody in the House. So many people spoke to this motion and that's always

lovely when you get a diversity of voices. I appreciate each and every one of your comments.

[3:55 p.m.]

When you used to come to Prince Edward Island, you'd get the ferry. That was a sort of enforced slow down for those of us who weren't born and bred here from the frantic world that we used to live into a place where things are a little calmer and quieter and slower.

That charming essence of our Island has not been lost, even though we have the link now, of course. We're still in some respects the Gentle Island, and in a world when I think more and more folks are questioning whether faster and bigger and newer are what we should be looking for to find contentment, PEI still stubbornly holds onto that time and place when things were simpler and quieter. I like that. Let's keep it that way.

Just to finish off the thing on the cycle ride that Ann and I did – we haven't finished that trip; that was two years ago – but we're going to do it and I hope that when we do, the only things that we get buzzed by are the odd mosquito or bumblebee.

Madam Speaker, I now call the question. I request a standing vote.

Thank you.

**Speaker:** Hon. members, the question has been called. The member has requested a standing division.

If the Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms could ring the bell.

[The bells were rung]

**P. Bevan-Baker:** Madam Speaker, the third party is ready for the vote.

**R. Henderson:** Madam Speaker, the opposition is ready for the vote.

**Z. Bell:** Madam Speaker, government is ready for the vote.

**Speaker:** Hon. members, all those voting against the motion, please stand.

[The Clerk calls the roll]

NAYS

Perry

**Speaker:** All those supporting the motion, please stand.

[The Clerk calls the roll]

YEAS

Arsenault  
Bell  
Bernard  
Bevan-Baker  
Burrige  
Croucher  
Deagle  
DesRoches  
Dillon  
Henderson  
Hudson  
King  
Lantz  
MacEwen  
MacKay  
MacLennan  
McLane  
McNeilly  
Myers  
Redmond  
Thompson  
Trivers

**Speaker:** Hon. members, the motion has passed.

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

Government Motions

Orders of the Day (Government)

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Justice, Public Safety and Attorney General.

**Hon. B. Thompson:** Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. Premier, that the 1<sup>st</sup> order of the day be now read.

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

**Committee Clerk:** Order No. 1, Consideration of the Capital Estimates, in Committee.

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Justice, Public Safety and Attorney General.

**Hon. B. Thompson:** Madam 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 grant of capital supply to His Majesty.

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

The hon. Member from Morell-Donagh to chair the Committee of the Whole House.

[4:00 p.m.]

[S. MacEwen in the chair]

**Chair:** The House is now in a Committee of the Whole House to further consider the grant of capital supply to His Majesty.

Minister, would you like to make a motion to bring a stranger to the floor?

**Hon. J. Burrige:** Yes, please.

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

Jordan, would you introduce yourself again for Hansard?

**Jordan McNally:** Jordan McNally, executive director of fiscal management.

**Chair:** Welcome back.

Minister, do you have anything to table?

**Hon. J. Burrige:** Yeah. We have an answer to a question on the emergency shelter at Park Street compared to the budget allocated for the emergency shelter in Summerside.

**Chair:** Alright. Hon. members, we're currently on page 27, debating the capital budget for Justice and Public Safety.

I have read Equipment and Other Capital Assets.

Shall the section carry? Carried.

Vehicles

“Appropriations provided for vehicle purchases.” Vehicles: 55,000.

Total Vehicles: 55,000

The hon. Member from Charlottetown-West  
Royalty.

**G. McNeilly:** (Indistinct) anything that you can on that line, \$55,000?

**Jordan McNally:** That’s for the Fire Marshals Office. They added a position last year. It typically takes roughly a year to train them while working under existing fire inspectors. So, the current year budget of \$55,000 is for that position that was added last year. They also got approval in current year budget for another fire inspector, basically to build their capacity. So, the vehicle next year is for when that new position requires a vehicle. So, two vehicles, total.

**G. McNeilly:** This is under vehicles, so that’s for a vehicle? Or a position?

**Jordan McNally:** A vehicle. It’s for new positions that were added over the last two years to that Fire Marshals Office. So, they are for vehicles.

**G. McNeilly:** Okay.

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

Total Capital Expenditure – Justice and Public Safety: 4,936,300

Shall it carry? Carried.

Social Development and Seniors

Capital Improvements – Buildings

“Appropriations provided for capital improvements and construction.”  
Construction and Renovations: 2,000,000.

Total Capital Improvements – Buildings:  
2,000,000

The hon. Member from Charlottetown-West  
Royalty.

**G. McNeilly:** We’re forecasting, I guess, \$3.4 million this coming year. Can you talk about what that’s for?

**Jordan McNally:** The plan for the department is to purchase six five-bedroom homes over the next five years. The current forecast in current year is to purchase three of them. I know they’re actively looking for existing properties. Obviously, there’s some criteria that they would have to check off for it to be suitable, but it would be to purchase existing five-bedroom homes. If there were renovations needed, it would be part of that as well.

**G. McNeilly:** Is that because we changed the legislation? Were they foreseeing that we needed more space for kids aging out of care?

[4:05 p.m.]

**Jordan McNally:** That wouldn’t be in these next two years. It’s a different project there, aging out of care. That project starts really in ’26-27, but that project is a result of the change in legislation, yeah.

**G. McNeilly:** Okay. Here, it says 30 beds: \$6.1 million. We’re kind of cutting half of that, looking for three houses this year. So, are we talking about room for 15 people? Is that our goal?

**Jordan McNally:** That would be the goal, yeah, exactly.

**G. McNeilly:** And that’s based on a need in the system currently, correct?

**Jordan McNally:** Yeah, they have pretty high occupancy rates in their existing homes. I know they just are about to open; I believe they’re just recruiting for a new home in New Annan that was purchased in ’22-23 or early ’23-24. It would be to address needs and to reduce the occupancy rate down from where it is.

**G. McNeilly:** Okay, perfect. That’s it for me for right there.

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

**K. Bernard:** Thank you, Chair.

The six new group homes over the next four years – I might have missed this at the very beginning of these questions, but I’m wondering, are there any projected to be ready for ’23-24?

**Jordan McNally:** They wouldn't be ready. Right now, their plan is to hopefully purchase three homes in the current year, of the six that are in the five-year plan. It would take some time to actually – depending on which home they purchase, there are some renovations potentially involved, and then they would need to recruit staff to those homes as well. So, there is a bit of time for implementation.

For example, the New Annan home that was purchased in late '22-23, and they're just finalizing operationalizing that home, I believe. They're recruiting staff now. So, there is a bit of a lapse between when they're actually purchased and when they're operational.

**K. Bernard:** The purpose-built facility for high risk needs youth. I know we have the information in front of us; do you have any information on that that we don't have?

**Jordan McNally:** No, I believe the information you have is what I have as well. I know in terms of timing of that, there's \$50,000 allocated this year, \$200,000 next year which would be for design of the actual building, and then the construction would be planned for '25-26 of that fiscal year.

**K. Bernard:** Do you know how many beds that will give us?

**Jordan McNally:** No, they don't have that level of detail determined at this point. I know they're still going out and doing assessments, which is noted there as well, for what other jurisdictions currently have for something like this. But no, I don't have a number of beds.

**K. Bernard:** The \$50,000 that you said was for this year, what would that be for?

**Jordan McNally:** I don't have the level of detail of that would be for. I know when they're talking about going out and doing jurisdictional scans, I'm not sure if that would involve a consultant. If it's something that's tied to the actual project itself, it might be something that could be capitalized, potentially. So, that might be what it's for.

**K. Bernard:** I guess it's fair to say at this point that all of these are kind of just in the planning stages.

**Jordan McNally:** Yes. I would say, yeah.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Charlottetown-West Royalty.

**G. McNeilly:** This is important because of the legislation that we were just talking about. We're timing people out at 25 now, so there's going to be a demand. The 10 transitional housing beds is in my district. The staff does an amazing job. I haven't heard any complaints ever.

Can't we speed this along by using the existing model and replicating that? The existing housing unit, it's a 10 bedroom. I'm just looking at the timelines. We don't have time to wait for '27-28 on that. Where are the initial plans for this?

**Hon. J. Burridge:** Where are the plans for this? Are you saying, can it be used again to save time? Is that what you're saying, use the same design over and over? Is that what you're saying, which could save time?

[4:10 p.m.]

**G. McNeilly:** Yeah, exactly. It's working. I do believe – I'm not sure, on the floor we're just talking – hopefully we're talking apples and apples, but it's a working model. Obviously, the plans are in the system. I'm just looking at how we save a year on this. I'd just like to see this project get advanced because we will need it, obviously, in this.

Can we look at speeding this up? Do we have the land, first of all, for this? Is that what the \$50,000 is for? We don't know what that's for.

**Jordan McNally:** The \$50,000 was for the purpose-built facility for high risk needs. The aging out of care transitional housing units, there is no money in the current year forecast for that. That's really to start in '26-27. That's really where the project (Indistinct)

**G. McNeilly:** I'm going to keep these for next year. Can we start that in '25-26, at least?

**Hon. J. Burridge:** I think we keep coming back to this and I think, in going through this budget process, there's a ton of projects that we would love to start next year or this

year. It's a matter of trying to balance things out. You do have to spread some projects out, but I've been noting what you've been putting a sense of urgency on.

But I would say if you ask government, can we speed this up and do this next year, I would say we would love to do that too. But operationally, you have to manage that. Fiscally, you have to manage that.

**G. McNeilly:** Well, I'll just put it on the record that I'm willing to go as an MLA to say that this is working in my community. My community wants to support. It's already there; the building is already there. It works. On the floor, when we were expanding our support, the director of Child Services said yes, this is going to be important.

I'm just saying. I'll work with the minister too, to see whatever we can do. If you want to look at Beach Grove, I will take that back to my community. They are very supportive of helping out and this is one way to help out. So, I'll just add that, to see if we can speed it up a year. That would be a win for everybody and especially the kids in care.

The other thing I want to ask; I have to ask this and then I'll stop asking on this section afterwards, if I can. I just got the form. It was \$1.2 million for Park Street. It came in at \$2.5 million; that's a \$1.3 million overage. I don't know if these questions are out of line because of the section that I'm asking on.

That's an enormous – that's double and then some about what the project was supposed to be in at. Is that appropriate, normally, for a Minister of Finance to have to approve such an overage?

**Chair:** Minister, do you want to answer that question?

**Hon. J. Burridge:** I can. I'll entertain it.

I think what I said yesterday or the day before, we develop a plan based on what we know at the time and the best data and the knowledge that we have. I think the minister has spoken about it in Question Period, how in further conversations they have identified a bit of a pivot that they might be making as far as looking for more – that the need might

be more in transitional housing and focusing on that, as opposed to the (Indistinct)

So, I think that is just what happens, but this plan was based off information. He's had further conversations and I think he's been clear in Question Period of why that is the way it is. I'll leave it at that.

**Chair:** I'm not surprised you have more questions, not in the least.

The hon. Member from Charlottetown-West  
Royalty.

**G. McNeilly:** What I just want to say is if there's a pivot to transitional housing, like I said to the minister today in Question Period, I expected to see that in the capital budget. It's not there.

**Hon. J. Burridge:** This was developed before, so there could be money reallocated to that, I guess is what I'm saying, but –

**G. McNeilly:** But before was August. The Department of Housing submits their – maybe in August, maybe whatever, and it's changed so much since then. I'm just trying to say: Where is the plan? How are we basing – you talked about fiscal prudence, prioritization; there were a few words that were used in there. I don't see this being fiscally prudent or having a plan that we're following.

**Hon. J. Burridge:** It is being fiscally prudent. This is a five-year plan, once again. It's allocating that money to tend to the items that are very important to you. You want to see money in this bucket, is what I'm hearing. There's money in that bucket. The minister and his team will identify where the needs are and spend the money where it's required.

[4:15 p.m.]

**G. McNeilly:** I'm glad there's money in the buckets; it's just not in the pages.

**Chair:** Shall the section carry? Carried.

Equipment and Other Capital Assets

“Appropriations provided for information technology system modernization.” Child Protection Services: nil.

Total Equipment and Other Capital Assets:  
nil.

The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

**K. Bernard:** Thank you, Chair.

I'm just wondering if you can tell us why the budget for Child Protection Services is cut.

**Jordan McNally:** It's not cut. The project's actually complete. This was to replace technology for Child Protection Services. The project is complete; I know they're in the testing phase of that. So, it's just a matter of the project being complete is all.

**K. Bernard:** So, I'm assuming if it's in the testing phase and it does need some more funding, that that will be...

**Jordan McNally:** Yeah. That would be included in the professional service contract in terms of what deficiencies mean, but yeah, it would be covered in that budget line.

**K. Bernard:** Okay.

Thank you, Chair. I'm good.

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

Total Capital Expenditure – Social  
Development and Seniors: 2,000,000

Shall it carry? Carried.

Transportation and Infrastructure

Land

“Appropriations provided for land purchases and shoreline protection.” Land Purchases: 365,000. Shoreline Protection: 2,000,000.

Total Land: 2,365,000

The hon. Member from O'Leary-Inverness.

**R. Henderson:** Just a quick one. That's not very much money for any shoreline protection. Is this money that's going to be matched by the federal government maybe? I just know from West Point; that was a million. So, if you're doing any amount of shoreline protection, you're going to have to

do a lot more than that in one year, I would think.

**Jordan McNally:** At this point, there's no federal dollars or matching associated with the \$2 million.

**R. Henderson:** Okay, thanks.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from New Haven-Rocky Point.

**P. Bevan-Baker:** Thank you, Chair.

I'm looking at the land purchases lines, between the estimate and forecast last year. There was an unplanned \$5 million spent. What was that money spent on?

**Jordan McNally:** The two components of that are – government exercised its option to purchase land. I'll call it Sisters of St. Martha land; near UPEI, that location. That was an unplanned purchase. The other one is Canada Nature Fund had an amendment to their agreement where they added some extra money, where we could go out and purchase land and it would be funded by the federal government.

**P. Bevan-Baker:** Okay. That's great. Those are both important pieces of land that now sit under government control, and I love that. Where are we in terms of the goal of protecting 7 percent of the Island landmass by 2030?

**Chair:** Minister, is that a capital budget expenditure?

**Hon. J. Burridge:** No.

**Chair:** So, the purchase of that land would be in the operating budget?

**Jordan McNally:** It would be a mix of both.

**Hon. J. Burridge:** For the protected lands? I thought the question was: Where are we on the percentage?

**P. Bevan-Baker:** Yeah.

**Hon. J. Burridge:** I'd have to confirm it, but –

**P. Bevan-Baker:** Oh, intervention from the Minister of Environment.

**Hon. J. Burridge:** – the last number I heard was 5.91 percent. Is that close?

**Hon. S. Myers:** Yeah.

**Hon. J. Burridge:** Yeah. I think it was 5.91 percent was the last number I heard, out of the 7 percent.

**P. Bevan-Baker:** Okay, alright. We're coming on.

Is this where we would find – if there were such a thing – a land bank for farmers, in this section?

**Jordan McNally:** It's not included in this department as it stands now. I'm not sure where it would be included, if it were to be.

**P. Bevan-Baker:** Okay.

For the shoreline protection, what's the overall objective of that shoreline protection program? I mean, the name suggests it...

**Hon. J. Burridge:** I think the objective in that money is to basically look at critical infrastructure and protection of it.

**Jordan McNally:** Yeah. They say it's really to protect provincial assets, roads, and provincially owned land along the shoreline.

**P. Bevan-Baker:** Okay. What projects were completed last year, and what projects are planned for this year?

[4:20 p.m.]

**Jordan McNally:** There was improvement to the water bank stabilization at Jacques Cartier and Panmure Island, as well as the West Point groyne project, establish offshore reefs to mitigate the coastal erosion on West Point area, and reestablish sand dunes in the vicinity of West Point Lighthouse and Cedar Dunes Provincial Park. That would be projects that were done this year.

**R. Henderson:** And they work well.

**P. Bevan-Baker:** I appreciate that, and yeah, the Member from O'Leary-Inverness speaks frequently about how well that offshore reef is working at the West Point Lighthouse. Do you have a dollar figure

attached to that particular project? I just, in my own head, would like to know how much it cost.

**Jordan McNally:** I don't, no. They just list the projects that were completed within that budget allocation, but I don't have the details by project.

**P. Bevan-Baker:** Okay. There's \$2 million a year, as I see, going forward. It surprises me that over five years we're not increasing that as the need to protect our shoreline gets more acute. Why are we not increasing that?

**Hon. J. Burridge:** Again, this is what was brought forward by the team at Environment, Energy and Climate Action. I know they work closely with the UPEI school in St. Peter's. I would expect that this is an informed decision, and this is the number they put forward.

**P. Bevan-Baker:** Okay. I'm good with this section.

Thank you, Chair.

**Chair:** Shall the section carry? Carried.

Capital Improvements – Buildings

“Appropriations provided for capital improvements and construction.” Capital Repairs: 6,792,800. Construction and Renovations: 4,500,000.

Total Capital Improvements – Buildings: 11,292,800

The hon. Member from Charlottetown-West Royalty.

**G. McNeilly:** Building ventilations and system upgrades. It seems like there's a lot in the different budgets, but here, '23 budget is \$1.2 million and then the forecast is just \$278,000 and then it goes up. I see in '24-25 that will be a building in O'Leary, but why the difference between the budget and forecast for '23-24?

**Jordan McNally:** That one is just a delay in the project, so really, \$900,000 of the \$1.2 million budget is delayed and moved into '24-25 on that particular project.

**G. McNeilly:** Is that because of labour or why was that?

**R. Henderson:** Because it's in my riding.

[Laughter]

**G. McNeilly:** Is that true? What are you doing?

**R. Henderson:** Hard to get much traction up there.

**Jordan McNally:** No, there's no specific reason in my notes in terms of why that project's been delayed.

**G. McNeilly:** The Access PEI Cornwall furniture fittings and equipment in '24-25 – is that building under construction now?

**Jordan McNally:** I know the tender for that location has been awarded. Let me see, in terms of timing. Most of the costs or all of the costs are slated for '24-25, so I'm thinking that they're probably in the design phase of what that retrofit looks like.

**G. McNeilly:** For everything that was delayed, I don't know how we could – it seems like this is a priority. The things that were delayed, I look at those as being a priority (Indistinct) housing. I don't understand. It's important; an Access PEI building is important but on the scale of people having a place to live and transitional housing that has been delayed and not in this budget, I just have a problem with that. That's all I have to say, I guess, on that one.

I will save my questions for the next section.

Thank you.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from New Haven-Rocky Point.

**P. Bevan-Baker:** Thank you, Chair.

There's a big increase in the capital repairs budget. I'm just wondering what that is for.

**Jordan McNally:** The big thing there is the greening and retrofit program is being included in there. That's \$4.9 million being added to next year's budget to start that program.

**P. Bevan-Baker:** Jordan, can you say what particular buildings – I'm really glad, by the way, that we're working on government-owned buildings to make them examples of green retrofit, but which ones are we doing that on?

[4:25 p.m.]

**Jordan McNally:** For '24-25, their priority was on some social housing existing buildings. The four they have identified are at 225 Linden Avenue in Summerside, 501 Queen Street in Charlottetown, 19854 Route 2 Hunter River – 14 units – and 324 Church Street in Tignish.

**P. Bevan-Baker:** Alright. Thank you.

Conversely, in the construction and renovations, there's a huge decrease in that. Why is that?

**Jordan McNally:** There are some larger completions happening in the current year, the biggest of which would be – there are kind of two larger ones. Kings County Highway Depot is coming to completion, so because it's being completed, there's no budget needed for (Indistinct) the next year. The other large one is the West Prince Community Health Centre is complete. Those are two large projects that no longer require funding.

**P. Bevan-Baker:** Okay. I'm good with this section.

Thank you, Chair.

**Chair:** Shall the section carry? Carried.

Capital Improvements – Highways

“Appropriations provided for highway and bridge construction.” Active Transportation: 1,000,000. Bridges: 19,350,000. National and Collector Highways: 20,900,000. Provincial Paving: 19,000,000.

Total Capital Improvements – Highways: 60,250,000

I'm not even going to look up. I'm sure there's no questions about this at all.

The hon. Member from Charlottetown-West Royalty.



**G. McNeilly:** It's just me. No, I don't know.

Active transportation, \$5 million over five years. I remember that number being higher in the past. Are we looking at the next five years to reduce the amount of funding we're putting into active transportation?

**Hon. J. Burridge:** I think in the past it was \$5 million per year. There was a push to do \$25 million; I think it was \$5 million per year. Jordan, do you remember?

**Jordan McNally:** I think it was \$1.5 million.

**Hon. J. Burridge:** Oh, was it \$1.5 million? Okay. It was \$1.5 million, then, maybe. There's been a big push on active transportation. We've been doing a lot of active transportation. I suspect a lot of big projects have been completed, and this is kind of likely a new normal. But again, I'd have to confirm that with the minister.

**G. McNeilly:** So, we were at \$25 million over five years.

**Hon. J. Burridge:** No, that might not be correct.

**G. McNeilly:** It sounds about right.

**Hon. J. Burridge:** I'd have to confirm that.

[Interjections]

**Hon. J. Burridge:** I know. I would have to confirm that. That was in my head.

**An Hon. Member:** It's in Hansard.

[Laughter]

**G. McNeilly:** That's how I started it off. I remember this number being way higher, but \$1 million doesn't build too much, doesn't have too much pavement. You can't do too much with it. So, \$5 million over five years. Are we on that cycle so next year will be \$1 million, or is there a carry over into next year being \$5 million? How much are we allocating for next year?

**Jordan McNally:** It is a straight million per year. They have done a lot of work with this over the past couple years. I know this would just be for collector highways, adding

active transportation to that. I know there are some different allocations even in the operating budget to allow municipalities to – because that would be operating grants.

Environment, I know they have some active transportation funds, and then Transportation and Infrastructure also have the ICIP program where, as an example, Abegweit Connects was a project in Scotchfort that was all done through the ICIP program. There are other allocations of active transportation that wouldn't fall under just collector highways, but that's what this bucket is for.

**G. McNeilly:** Okay. That's good. How much more of the Island do we have to do, then? I think it's all done. What are the projects for next year? Where is the \$1 million going for next year?

**Jordan McNally:** I don't have a list of the projects allocated for next year. Because it's tied for the collector and national highways, a lot of the projects have been submitted to the New Building Canada Fund and have been already established.

So, as they're doing those paving projects, I think they look for opportunities where active transportation could go in, and that's where this allocation kind of comes into play. Between the national and collector highways, that \$1 million is kind of added to that bucket in order to add active transportation.

**G. McNeilly:** National and collector highways, provincial paving, and bridges; that's where a chunk of that money, the \$256 million, we would find for active transportation, too?

**Jordan McNally:** No, no, sorry.

**G. McNeilly:** Would you find some of that in there?

[4:30 p.m.]

**Jordan McNally:** There is some that they do in provincial paving. Provincial paving is basically secondary roads. That would be if there's an opportunity to widen roads as they're going out to repave those secondary roads, but really, the \$1 million active transportation in that budget line is really for

national collector highways only. Provincial paving is based on whether there are opportunities to widen a road as they're doing the recap.

**G. McNeilly:** Okay.

I say "okay," but I don't really know what we're talking about here. I don't know if we're getting active transportation or widening highways.

**Chair:** Hon. member, I know from being involved in the groups that apply for it, it's an operating budget from the Department of Environment is – I think what you're getting at is the projects that are much more local; the ones that you've been lobbying for, the ones that I've been lobbying for. It's a fund through the operating budget, and from what I understand, this is –

**An Hon. Member:** It's \$5 million.

**Chair:** That \$5 million a year, I think, is where you're getting it from.

**G. McNeilly:** Okay, perfect. I've had that conversation with the minister and he's been open to talking about that. I know I have to get the municipality involved, so I'm just making it clear that I have to go that route. It's kind of complicated but, as MLAs, you have to lobby at certain times of the year or else you lose a year.

**Chair:** Can I add to that?

**G. McNeilly:** Yes, please.

**Chair:** Sometimes, rather than using up the entire active transportation fund, you lobby the Department of Transportation for what Jordan had mentioned about using some of the recap allocation budget to do a paved shoulder or something like that, too, so you don't waste it all out of that \$5 million, or you work with the municipality to get shared dollars. I completely understand what you're talking about. You've got to push every corner.

**G. McNeilly:** Yeah, and I thank the Chair for bringing that forward. It's great. This is good money. The only other thing that's not in here is just to get people using the trails, keep getting that push, but I know that's an operational. But thanks a lot, Chair, for the

invention because I didn't know what I was getting into there. I don't have much recap in my riding.

**Chair:** [Laughter] No, you don't.

**G. McNeilly:** Thank you.

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

**B. Trivers:** Thank you, Chair.

In the past, I brought up this idea of a road continuum. That's where you'd start with a cow path and eventually work your way up to a seasonal road, then maybe it's a heritage road, and then eventually you get a gravel road out of it. Eventually it gets paved. A lot of my requests have to do with maintenance on gravel roads and clay roads. I had a number of requests. I just wanted to read them into the record.

Browns Road up near Stanley Bridge; the end of the Dixon Road down by Route 225; Hazel Grove Road in various places; the Centre Road which, work was done this year; the Murphy Road in Freetown, where I have a lady who's had an operation it the spring who couldn't get in and out. After her surgery, her support couldn't get in and out. I put it on list and said that was the reason it had to be fixed. She has another operation this fall, and she still can't get in and out.

Then there's the Clyde Road, Fredericton Station Road, the Millvale Road, and great work was done on the Toronto Road extension.

I went back and I said, "Why can't we get that maintenance done on these roads?" Because mostly it's gravel that's required, as well as digging out ditches and things like that. It was budget, budget, budget. All the way through, they said, "We're out of budget. We can't fix your road this summer."

We're not talking about paving here. We're talking about gravel. I have talked to the minister and the minister says that, in fact, gravel is like paving when it comes to money. It all comes back down to that budget.

I wanted to find out, in the capital budget, how many loads of gravel are you bringing in? How many shipfuls of gravel are you bringing in so we can get those roads improved? Because they're getting worse and worse every year due to the climate change and the warming temperatures year-round. Are we improving and getting more gravel in this coming year than we've had in the past? Are we increasing that?

**Chair:** Minister, that's not a capital budget – that's an operating budget question, right?

**Jordan McNally:** I believe so, yes.

**Hon. J. Burridge:** Yes.

**Chair:** Sorry, member, but that's in the annual operating budget, the allotment for gravel on sideroads. Capital improvements is for the highways, the active bridges, national and collector highways, and then the provincial paving for capital projects, not for the operational budget.

**B. Trivers:** Okay, alright.

**Chair:** You did get those roads on the record, though.

**B. Trivers:** I got that on the record.

[4:35 p.m.]

There is a bridge that needs to be replaced. It has had to be replaced for two years now. It's off on a heritage road and it's required for farmers to get to their fields. They did put a temporary bridge in so that snowmobiles could get across, but it's the Princetown Road bridge. Would that be covered by this budget?

**Jordan McNally:** Yeah, a bridge replacement would be covered by the capital budget. I don't have detail on what projects are planned for the next year under that line item, but if it was a sizeable bridge to be replaced, then yeah, it would fall in this budget.

**B. Trivers:** Alright. I'll leave it there, Chair.

Thank you.

**Chair:** Thank you, member.

The hon. Leader of the Third Party

**K. Bernard:** Thank you, Chair.

In the active transportation, there was \$4 million in unplanned spending. I'm just wondering if you can explain what that went towards.

**Jordan McNally:** There were some projects as they were doing New Building Canada Fund projects, and some ICIP projects; there were opportunities to widen the collector and national highway along those routes. So, there was a number of projects. There was Route 13 in Mayfield, Route 20 in Hamilton, Route 16 in Red Point, and Route 16 in Chepstow.

**K. Bernard:** One of the things with bridges and with provincial paving is we just have a consistent overspend on that in the province. Last year, for provincial paving, \$8 million was spent above budget.

I'm wondering how confident you are that we're actually going to stay on budget with provincial paving this year.

**Hon. J. Burridge:** That was considered in the allocation for this year because there were overages, so we've upped that budget. I think it was \$15 million per year and you're right, there were special warrants and different pieces every year, it seemed. So, what we've done is we've looked at that and we've raised it to \$19 million now. We have raised it a little bit to feel like now we're maybe more on target, but still keeping that fiscal lens on it as well.

**K. Bernard:** So, are you hopeful or confident that this new bump will stop the process of just kind of adding and adding and adding?

**Hon. J. Burridge:** That was the consideration, and that's the new line that we've adjusted that we feel is more on target to alleviate the overspend.

**K. Bernard:** Okay, thank you.

**Chair:** Shall the section carry? Carried.

Equipment and Other Capital Assets

“Appropriations provided for information technology system modernization and equipment purchases.” Electric Vehicle Charging Stations: 150,000. Emergency Preparedness: 4,000,000. IT System Modernization: 644,000.

Total Equipment and Other Capital Assets:  
4,794,000

The hon. Member from New Haven-Rocky Point.

**P. Bevan-Baker:** Thanks.

Where are the new EV chargers being added here? Apologies if there is a list somewhere in the handout.

**Jordan McNally:** No, there isn't a list that I have in my notes. I know this is for government owned buildings, these EV chargers, so I think they take a look at where there are currently EV chargers and decide where the greatest need is.

**P. Bevan-Baker:** There was some discussion about school bus drivers being able to have chargers in their homes. Is any of the money being devoted to that?

**Jordan McNally:** No, that would be something considered with the Department of Education in terms of what their policy is around adding chargers at bus drivers' homes.

**P. Bevan-Baker:** So, I'm looking at the emergency preparedness line. That was a new item last year for this department, and obviously one that was well needed. I'm happy to see that we have \$4 million, but it doesn't look like that budgeting's going to be sustained past next year. Is that right?

[4:40 p.m.]

**Jordan McNally:** Next year there's \$4 million, and then \$1.5 million the year after. Really, the largest intent with that budget line was to look at government infrastructure and what's needed in terms of generator replacement or added as new. So, they put together a list, and once that list is exhausted, that's where that funding would end.

**P. Bevan-Baker:** Just going back to the chargers for a minute. Clearly, we're seeing more and more EVs on our roads. One would think that the budget line for putting in chargers to support the larger number of cars would be increasing consequently along with that, but that's not what we see here; it is actually going down. What's the rationale here?

**Jordan McNally:** There's a mix there. These electric vehicle charging stations are really for government-owned properties. The Department of Environment, they also have a budget line to add vehicle chargers, charging stations, at other locations across the province. We saw when we were there that over the next two years, they do have an increase in chargers going out. That's the discrepancy.

**Hon. J. Burridge:** I think there are 33 chargers being added.

**P. Bevan-Baker:** Okay. I'm sorry, Jordan. Sometimes, you have to say the same thing twice for it to absorb on this side of the House. You did say that, and I apologize for making you say it again. I think that's all I have for this section.

Thank you, Chair.

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

Vehicles

“Appropriations provided for vehicle purchases.” Heavy Equipment: 4,000,000. Light Fleet: 2,000,000.

Total Vehicles: 6,000,000

Shall it carry?

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

**Chair:** Total capital expenditure –

**Hon. J. Burridge:** I think Rob has one.

**Chair:** Oh, sorry.

The hon. Member for O'Leary-Inverness. My apologies.

**R. Henderson:** I wouldn't want to be missed. This is my big question for the whole bloody year.

[Interjections]

**R. Henderson:** Every time I run down Christmas morning and I look in my sock, since these guys came in, all I get is a lump of coal. [Laughter]

My one question: Is there a bush cutter for District 25 this time around?

**An Hon. Member:** Someone buy him a bush cutter.

**R. Henderson:** Because already, the thing is – it's in the junk heap now.

**P. Bevan-Baker:** That won't fit in your sock.

**R. Henderson:** Well, this bush cutter better be a big one. Minister, if you can tell me there's a bush cutter coming to O'Leary-Inverness for next time, boy, my issues are – it'll go pretty smooth from here. And if there's not, I might flip the table here.

[Laughter]

**Hon. J. Burridge:** Jordan's got something.

**Jordan McNally:** I did ask about some of this information.

**R. Henderson:** You're an astute person.

**Jordan McNally:** What I can say is they do it by county, in terms of where the bush cutters are added. All I know for sure is that two were added. There's four allocated to Prince County. One is a contractor, two were new in 2021, and one is still an older one.

**R. Henderson:** Yeah, I know about the older one. That's in my district.

[Laughter]

**Chair:** Does anybody know where the older one is? Anybody?

**R. Henderson:** That's my district. I knew that. You're not telling me anything I don't know, but you're saying that there's a

couple of them that are going to be replaced in Prince County. I have the oldest one, so that would be probably a good sign.

**Jordan McNally:** Well, there were two replaced in 2021 is all I can say. The department is still looking at the priorities for '24-25 and they don't have a listing of specifically what's going to be replaced, but it would be –

**R. Henderson:** Well, I do know – I was asking around – a bush cutter, you're probably talking about a \$300,000, \$350,000 expenditure. You've only got \$4 million here in total into heavy equipment. That's giving me some pause for concern here.

But I really emphasize, minister – I know the Minister of Transportation should provide a bit more information on this to you, but like I said, my riding, it's unbelievable. The trees are up to – I showed pictures of the powerlines there a couple of days ago and –

**R. Croucher:** You can't see the flamingos.

**R. Henderson:** No, a flamingo couldn't even nest in the powerlines in my district. The trees are up through it. I really emphasize – I keep complaining about it all the time, but it's costing you money as a government. It's costing you money in water removal. You have to get backhoes in when the snow melts quickly because the water can't get through.

You need a bush cutter. The one in my district at the moment is kaput. It's in the junk heap at the moment, I think as of maybe about a month ago. Out of the graciousness, I would say, of the minister, he has put the one in his district into my district to try to keep it going. But we're so far behind, and the operator says it, that it's just taking way more time and it's harder on the equipment. So, it's costing you money here.

You've got to start providing some equal services when it comes to one riding over the other. I keep taking it on the chin every time, and I'm sick of the lump of coal here for this Christmas, so try to get me a bush cutter, will you?

**Hon. J. Burridge:** I'll make it my mission to find you a bush cutter.

**Chair:** There we go.

**R. Henderson:** There we go. I much appreciate that, minister.

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

**R. Henderson:** No further questions from O'Leary-Inverness' perspective.

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

[4:45 p.m.]

**B. Trivers:** There seems to be a shortage of graders in the Central Queens area. It's like clockwork; every three weeks I get calls from people on the roads that are on the end of the cycle that the road needs to be graded. I've been told yeah, we used to have another grader and we had to cut back. One died and we didn't replace it. Is there any money in this budget to buy new graders?

**Jordan McNally:** It would be in the heavy equipment budget. Not specifically to buy that; I don't have that level of detail. I know the department is taking an inventory of what they currently have and what the priorities are for purchase next year within that \$4 million. It is a bump of \$500,000 from the previous year, but that's all the information I have on that budget line.

**B. Trivers:** Consider this my request for a new grader, then.

Thank you.

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

**R. Croucher:** I don't want O'Leary-Inverness to feel like he's all alone in his quest for –

**M. MacKay:** We'll get you a bush cutter, too.

[Laughter]

**R. Croucher:** What was that again, Kensington-Malpeque?

**M. MacKay:** We'll get you a bush cutter, too.

**R. Croucher:** That's all I wanted to hear.

[Laughter]

**Chair:** Shall the section carry? Carried.

Total Capital Expenditure – Transportation and Infrastructure: 84,701,800

Shall it carry? Carried.

Thank you, members. Thank you, minister, and thank you, Jordan.

**Hon. J. Burridge:** Mr. Chair, I move the Speaker take the chair and that the Chair make report to Madam Speaker.

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

[Hon. D. Compton in the chair]

**S. MacEwen:** Madam Speaker, as Chair of a Committee of the Whole House, I wish to report that the committee has gone into capital supply to be granted to His Majesty and has come to certain resolutions which I am directed to report to the House whenever it should be pleased to receive same.

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

The hon. Minister of Finance.

**Hon. J. Burridge:** Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Workforce, Advanced Learning and Population, that the report of the committee be now received.

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

The hon. Member from Morell-Donagh.

**S. MacEwen:** Madam Speaker, I move that the report of the committee be now adopted.

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

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

**Hon. B. Thompson:** Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. Minister of

Finance, that the 2<sup>nd</sup> order of the day be now read.

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

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

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Justice, Public Safety and Attorney General.

**Hon. B. Thompson:** Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Finance, that this House do now resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole House to take into consideration the grant of supplementary supply to His Majesty.

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

The hon. Member from Morell-Donagh to chair the Committee of the Whole House.

[4:50 p.m.]

[S. MacEwen in the chair]

**Chair:** The House is now in a Committee of the Whole House to consider the grant of supplementary supply to His Majesty.

Minister, would you like to make a motion to bring a stranger to the floor?

**Hon. J. Burridge:** Yes, please.

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

Welcome back, Jordan. Could you introduce yourself for Hansard again?

**Jordan McNally:** Jordan McNally, executive director of fiscal management.

**Chair:** Okay, members. We are going to start on page 7, Schedule “A”, and I’ll read the departments.

Economic Growth, Tourism and Culture

“To fund additional capital expenditures related to Tourism PEI assets owned by government.”

Total: 2,974,800

The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

**K. Bernard:** Thank you, Chair.

We’re not given much information at all on any of these supplemental special warrants. For example, we get: “To fund additional capital expenditures related to Tourism PEI assets owned by government.” Is there any way that we can get more detailed information on these?

**Hon. J. Burridge:** You can ask. Ask away. I’ll note that for another year, I suppose, but feel free to ask any questions.

**K. Bernard:** I guess the point being those are fairly big-ticket items, and we don’t have any additional information above and beyond that. I mean, we’re here debating a budget, but we have no idea – \$2,974,800, we have no idea what that is; not a clue. So, what are a few things that were in there?

**Hon. J. Burridge:** Yeah, ask the question and we’ll answer it.

**Jordan McNally:** In that particular line item, there are two large pieces. There were some upgrades at the Mark Arendz park that – there were cost overruns from ’22-23, so that would be \$2 million of that. Then there as some work done at Crowbush golf course as a result of Hurricane Fiona, to enhance that shoreline. Those are the two big pieces there.

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

**Hon. H. Perry:** Thank you, Chair.

I was wondering if you could just give me a better understanding of what the difference is between Schedule “A” and Schedule “B”.

**Jordan McNally:** Sure. Schedule “A” is special warrants for the fiscal year ’22-23, and Schedule “B” is for the current ’23-24 year.

**Hon. H. Perry:** Okay. Under Health and Wellness –

**Chair:** Sorry, hon. member. We’re on Economic Growth, Tourism and Culture.

**Hon. H. Perry:** Oh, we’re still on there. I’m sorry about that.

Okay, I’ll save my question for the next.

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

Health and Wellness

“To fund additional capital expenditures related to capital projects.”

Total: 1,760,700

The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

**Hon. H. Perry:** Could you please give us some information on what that money was spent on?

[4:55 p.m.]

**Jordan McNally:** Sure, yeah. There are two pieces to it. One is the mental health and additions campus; changes in timing and higher costs in that fiscal year. It was offset partially by a delay in phase two of the electronic medical record, which is what we’ve kind of seen in the capital budget for Health and Wellness. Those are the two pieces.

**Hon. H. Perry:** Those are the only two?

**Jordan McNally:** Yeah.

**Hon. H. Perry:** Okay.

The hon. Member from Charlottetown-West  
Royalty.

**G. McNeilly:** In that year, I saw the public accounts and Health PEI underspent on their capital by \$10 million, but we’re giving them more money; their operational funding as well, but we have a \$1.7 million special warrant.

**Jordan McNally:** This one’s for the Department of Health and Wellness, not Health PEI. That’s what that is.

**G. McNeilly:** It’s for the Department of Health and Wellness, but you mentioned the mental health hospital.

**Hon. J. Burridge:** Yeah. That falls under the Department of Health and Wellness.

**G. McNeilly:** The new mental health hospital?

**Jordan McNally:** Yes.

**Hon. J. Burridge:** Yeah.

**G. McNeilly:** Okay.

That’s good. Thanks, Chair.

**Chair:** Shall the section carry? Carried.

Transportation and Infrastructure

“To fund additional capital expenses related unbudgeted road and bridge work required.”

Total: 3,300,000

The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

**Hon. H. Perry:** Thank you very much.

Could you give us a description of where those dollars were spent, on what bridges and what roads?

**Jordan McNally:** I know it was bridge repairs due to Hurricane Fiona. Darnley bridge, French Village bridge, Souris West Bridge were the three components of that.

**Hon. H. Perry:** Was there any pavement involved other than the pavement, obviously, to go over those bridge and lead up to them?

**Jordan McNally:** No, not in this.

**Hon. J. Burridge:** I think you’ll see that in another section.

**Hon. H. Perry:** Okay, so for clarification, the \$3,300,000 was spent on three bridges only, correct?

**Jordan McNally:** Right. That’s what that allocation is for. In ’23-24 is maybe when you’ll see additional special warrants for paving.

**Hon. J. Burridge:** In Schedule “B”, yeah.

**Chair:** Shall this section carry? Carried.

Agriculture and Land

“To fund additional operating expenditures related to the Fiona Agriculture Support Program.”

Total: 8,281,000



Shall it carry? Carried.

Economic Growth, Tourism and Culture

“To fund additional operating expenditures related to the Labour Market Development Agreement and the Digital Skills for Youth Programs.”

Total: 1,260,000

The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

**K. Bernard:** Thank you, Chair.

I’m wondering what additional expenditures you saw associated with the Labour Market Development Agreement.

**Jordan McNally:** I think it was just a new agreement was signed, and therefore it bumped up what was allocated for that year. The Digital Skills for Youth program was offset by the \$340,000. Really, my notes just say that it was a provision for employment-related services under the Labour Market Development Agreement.

**K. Bernard:** Thank you, Chair.

**Chair:** Shall this section carry? Carried.

Tourism PEI

“To fund expenditures related to Tourism PEI operations.”

Total: 6,832,000

The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

**Hon. H. Perry:** Thank you very much, Chair.

All the \$7 million spent to fund expenditures related to Tourism PEI operators, can you please just elaborate on what those dollars went to and why?

**Jordan McNally:** Sure. Some larger components; again, Hurricane Fiona-related clean up expenses that wouldn’t have put it into the capital category, there’s about \$1.5 million there. That’s a large chunk of it. There was a program launched called the Tourism Seasonal Extension Program. It’s another large portion.

There was an airline recruitment program that was launched. Canadian Heritage agreement; that one is offset by revenue, as well. That was to fund the PEI Islander Appreciation Concert Series. And then, ACOA kicked in some money to assist with tourism marketing initiatives, as well. Those were the larger ones.

[5:00 p.m.]

**Hon. H. Perry:** I just find it difficult when you say COVID-related; it was only \$1.5 million, and that leaves still over \$5 million just for what you had mentioned. You had mentioned something about air service, also. Can you expand on that?

**Jordan McNally:** It was airline recruitment program funding the Charlottetown Airport to recruit additional flights and airlines to increase capacity.

**Hon. H. Perry:** How much money was spent on that?

**Jordan McNally:** That one’s \$1 million.

**Hon. H. Perry:** How did that go?

**Jordan McNally:** I can’t speak to that.

**Hon. H. Perry:** Okay, I guess we’ll save that question for later.

**Hon. J. Burrige:** (Indistinct) Porter would be the big draw there. I think those are welcome flights.

**Hon. H. Perry:** Can you confirm that it’s only Porter?

**Hon. J. Burrige:** I think that they work with all airlines, trying to increase their flights. I think Porter would be a success story out of that.

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

**Hon. H. Perry:** No, that’s fine, Chair.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Charlottetown-West Royalty.

**G. McNeilly:** How much was spent on concerts? Did you say concerts?

**Jordan McNally:** It was through Canadian Heritage agreement to fund the PEI Islander Appreciation Concert Series. It was 100 percent offset by revenue. It was around \$700,000 as part of that allocation.

**G. McNeilly:** I'm good, Chair, thanks.

**Chair:** Shall the section carry? Carried.

Education and Lifelong Learning

“To fund expenditures related to post-secondary and continuing education grants.”

Total: 6,125,000

The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

**K. Bernard:** Thank you, Chair.

What additional grants did we need an additional \$6 million for? I'm just wondering if we underestimated how many students would qualify.

**Jordan McNally:** No. The largest portion of that is grants to Holland College and UPEI for additional operating money to support ventilation and upgrades, and Fiona recovery costs as well for those facilities.

**K. Bernard:** Okay. Thank you.

**Chair:** Shall the section carry? Carried.

French Language School Board

“To fund expenditures related to the operation of the French Language School Board.”

Total: 2,225,000

Shall it carry? Carried.

Public Schools Branch

“To fund expenditures related to the operation of the Public Schools Branch.”

Total: 11,550,000

The hon. Member from Charlottetown-West Royalty.

**G. McNeilly:** What would that be for? That's a big number. That's not for salaries obviously, in this...

**Jordan McNally:** There were some post-COVID supports that were added to the Public Schools Branch, so that is a pressure for sure. They did experience diesel fuel and school bus maintenance pressures as well, as well as heating fuel and repair costs; just an increase in those costs.

**G. McNeilly:** Is there a breakdown between the new electric buses and the old ones that had to be repaired?

**Jordan McNally:** No, I don't have that level of detail.

**Chair:** Shall the section carry? Carried.

Environment, Energy and Climate Action

“To fund expenditures related to the provision of efficiencyPEI's solar and energy efficient equipment rebate program.”

Total: 2,799,800

Shall it carry? Carried.

Fisheries and Communities

“To fund expenditures related to the Real Property Tax Credit Program due to higher property value assessments and higher construction than expected.”

Total: 1,233,800

Shall it carry? Carried.

Health PEI

“To fund additional operating expenses primarily related to the COVID-19 response and salary pressures.”

Total: 12,464,800

The hon. Member from Charlottetown-West Royalty.

**G. McNeilly:** What's the breakdown between those? There are two different things in there for \$12 million. That was last year. How much was in salaries, and what positions did they go to?

**Jordan McNally:** I don't have the list of specific positions that they went to. I know some things that are included in that are nursing incentives, collective agreement increases from expired union contracts actually being finalized. The other portion is that COVID response funding as well. Those are the two largest portions.

**G. McNeilly:** Would that be the \$8 million nursing incentives in that?

**Jordan McNally:** Yeah, that would be a portion of that, for sure.

**G. McNeilly:** I guess you can't ask stuff in the future, but I still don't know why nobody else got any bonuses in the entire system. Would we find that in the future, if that's going to happen?

Would we find that in the Capital Budget in Schedule "A" as a special warrant?

[5:05 p.m.]

**Jordan McNally:** If it's something that's not necessarily budgeted for and it's an additional expenditure outside of their appropriation vote – and this would be through operating budget in either case – If it was a pressure above their existing vote or budget, then it would be a special warrant that would be (Indistinct)

**Hon. J. Burridge:** Yeah, absolutely.

**G. McNeilly:** So, that indicates it was approved by government. It came through Finance, and everybody there approved this \$8 million.

**Hon. H. Perry:** Executive Council approved this.

**G. McNeilly:** It's Executive Council approved, correct?

**Hon. J. Burridge:** A big part of this is collective agreement. The labour market adjustments within the collective agreements that were done in that year, which is a big piece of that.

**G. McNeilly:** But minister, we just talked about that being excluded outside of the labour market. That's part of that in here, but that \$8 million a special warrant by this

government. It did divide, definitely, the health care communities within PEI.

**Jordan McNally:** The \$8 million isn't necessarily specifically the amount in here. Included in \$8.4 million of this \$12 million is nursing incentives, collective agreement increases. There's three, so there's no specific amount for how much of that was for nursing incentives, just so I'm clear.

**G. McNeilly:** The last thing I'll ask is: Can we have a complete breakdown of that section before we approve \$12 million in a special warrant section that divided our health care system, pretty much? Can you bring that back to us or send it to us by email or something? We need to see what's – I mean, if this passes today, I'd like to see a breakdown of that section because it's very important.

**Hon. J. Burridge:** You want a breakdown of the whole \$12 million?

**G. McNeilly:** I want, yes, a breakdown of the \$12 million and how it was divided.

**Hon. J. Burridge:** Jordan might have some extra information that might help.

**Jordan McNally:** COVID response was \$9.7 of that \$12 million. Nursing incentives was \$4.5 million. Collective agreement increases: \$2.7 million. There's a couple of other line items, too. Pharmacy Plus Program: \$2.5 million. Medical surgical supplies: \$1.5 million. Other pressures for utilities, heat and fuel: \$2 million. Out-of-provinces health services fluctuate each year depending on the number that's actually served, so that list would be offset partially by out-of-province services and (Indistinct) there. That's really the breakdown.

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

**K. Bernard:** The question I was going to ask: Is there any money in that \$12 million that's been given to long-term care facilities? After all the stuff we heard from COVID, I'm wondering if there was anything put into that.

**Jordan McNally:** I'm not specifically sure what's under the COVID response, the \$9.7 million there. I know there is an allocation

there for grants to private nursing homes as well, included in that.

**K. Bernard:** Okay. Thank you.

**Chair:** Shall the section carry? Carried.

Justice and Public Safety

“To fund additional operating expenditures related to Hurricane Fiona response”

Total: 35,798,000

Shall it carry? Carried.

Social Development and Housing

“To fund additional operating expenses related to the delivery of the Seniors Independence Initiative.”

Total: 165,000

The hon. Member from Charlottetown-West  
Royalty.

**G. McNeilly:** Just quickly, what would the \$165,000 be for? Did we go over on that program?

**Jordan McNally:** It is just based on an increase in the average number of clients in '22-23.

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

Transportation and Infrastructure

“To fund additional operating expenditures related to Hurricane Fiona response”

Total: 11,430,000

Shall it carry? Carried.

Interest Charges on Debt

“To fund additional operating expenses related to the financing of the Province’s short-term and long-term debt.”

Total: 12,340,000

The hon. Member from Charlottetown-West  
Royalty.

**G. McNeilly:** I just want to say that if we’re going to practice and we’re going to talk about fiscal prudence and looking at it, and we’re presented with a \$120 million – I know some of this money is offset federally – that’s an awful lot of special warrants out. That’s an enormous amount of taxpayer’s dollars that’s going out.

[5:10 p.m.]

I would have liked some more time to scrutinize this, but we don’t have it. I just want to make that point. We will be looking at this number in the future.

Thank you, minister.

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

Total Special Warrants: 120,539,900

Shall it carry? Carried.

Alright members, we’re going into Schedule “B” on page 13.

Agriculture – Capital

Total: 50,000

Shall it carry? Carried.

Education and Early Years – Capital

Total: 60,310,000

The hon. Member from Charlottetown-West  
Royalty.

**G. McNeilly:** I just have to ask. All of these ones are specific to something that – I will maybe let it go to Jordan, just so I understand what we’re talking about here.

**Jordan McNally:** Those entire ones where they’re like: expenditure, and then there’s a sequestration offset right beside it; this is really just to capture that there was a reorganization of government. The existing capital budget that was approved last year had to be reallocated to these new departments, the new department names. That’s all it is.

**G. McNeilly:** So, it’s zeros.

**Jordan McNally:** Net zero, yeah. It's just a reallocation.

**G. McNeilly:** That's what I thought.

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

Fisheries, Tourism, Sport and Culture – Capital

Total: 1,675,000

Shall it carry? Carried.

Housing, Land and Communities – Capital

Total: 60,907,100

Shall it carry? Carried.

Social Development and Seniors – Capital

Total: 3,890,000

Shall it carry? Carried.

Transportation and Infrastructure – Capital

Total: 25,920,000

Shall it carry? Carried.

Total Special Warrants – oh, I'm so sorry.

The hon. Member from New Haven-Rocky Point.

**P. Bevan-Baker:** No problem, Chair. Thanks.

Most of these are net zero, as we just described it. This would be the exception to that.

**Hon. J. Burridge:** This is the exception.

**P. Bevan-Baker:** Can you give us a bit of explanation on that?

**Jordan McNally:** Yeah. There were pressures identified from Transportation and Infrastructure for a number of items that they knew about early, so they came and requested special warrant for that additional spending.

One of them we kind of already talked about was that larger purchase of land, the Sisters

of St. Martha's land. That's a significant portion, as well as that addition to the Canada Nature Fund agreement. There was some additional provincial paving, bridges, and collector highways as well included in that \$25 million.

**P. Bevan-Baker:** Okay. The net warrants for '23-24 are essentially that amount. Last year's special warrants were \$200 million or so. I guess the first question is: Are we expecting more special warrants for the last three months of the year to make up that difference? What are you expecting?

**Jordan McNally:** The expectation at this point wouldn't be that we'd have the level of special warrants that we did last year. One major factor was Hurricane Fiona in '22-23. A lot of costs got accrued, even if they were incurred in '23-24. Accounting would put them back into '22-23. That resulted in a lot of special warrants.

It's one thing, when you look at '22-23, and the pressures in there in Q2 or Q3 forecast, you kind of look to next year and see, should budget be allocated to those departments to offset some of those pressures? For instance, this capital special warrant, there was an addition to the Department of Transportation's capital for next year to hopefully reduce the need for special warrants in the future.

**P. Bevan-Baker:** I think my last question: There's a large offset of about \$126 million. Is that revenue largely federal?

**Jordan McNally:** That \$126 million is actually under the sequestration offset, and sequestration, that relates to just the reallocation of the department, the reorganization. It's not actually revenue, it's just a reallocation. No revenue.

**P. Bevan-Baker:** I'm good for this section. Thank you, Chair.

**Chair:** Shall the section carry? Carried.

Shall the Supplementary Estimates carry? Carried.

**Hon. J. Burridge:** Mr. Chair, I move the Speaker take the chair and that the Chair make report to Madam Speaker.

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

[5:15 p.m.]

[Hon. D. Compton in the chair]

**S. MacEwen:** Madam Speaker, as Chair of a Committee of the Whole House, I wish to report that the committee has gone into supplementary supply to be granted to His Majesty and has come to certain resolutions thereon, which said resolutions I am directed to report to the House whenever it should be pleased to receive same.

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

The hon. Minister of Finance.

**Hon. J. Burridge:** Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Workforce, Advanced Learning and Population, that the report of the committee be now received.

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

**S. MacEwen:** Madam Speaker, I move that the report of the committee be now adopted.

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

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

**Hon. B. Thompson:** Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. Minister of Finance, that the 11<sup>th</sup> order of the day be now read.

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

**Clerk:** Order No. 11, *Appropriation Act (Capital Expenditures) 2024*, Bill No. 43, ordered for second reading.

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Justice, Public Safety and Attorney General.

**Hon. B. Thompson:** Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. Minister of Finance, that the said bill be now read a second time.

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

**Clerk:** Bill No. 43, *Appropriation Act (Capital Expenditures) 2024*, read a second time.

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Justice, Public Safety and Attorney General.

**Hon. B. Thompson:** Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Finance, 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 Morell-Donagh to chair the Committee of the Whole House.

[S. MacEwen in the chair]

**Chair:** The House is now in a Committee of the Whole House to take into consideration a bill to be intituled *Appropriation Act (Capital Expenditures) 2024*.

Minister, would you like to make a motion to bring a stranger to the floor?

**Hon. J. Burridge:** Yes, please.

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

Shall the bill carry? Carried.

**Hon. J. Burridge:** I move the title.

**Chair:** *Appropriation Act (Capital Expenditures) 2024*.

Shall it carry? Carried.

[5:20 p.m.]

**Hon. J. Burridge:** I move the enacting clause.

**Chair:** 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.

**Hon. J. Burridge:** Mr. Chair, I move the Speaker take the chair and the Chair report the bill agreed to without amendment.

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

[Hon. D. Compton in the chair]

**S. MacEwen:** Madam Speaker, as Chair of a Committee of the Whole House having had under consideration a bill to be intituled *Appropriation Act (Capital Expenditures) 2024*, 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.

**Hon. H. Perry:** Recorded division, please.

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

Hon. Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms, you may ring the bell.

[The bells were rung]

**R. Henderson:** Opposition is ready for the vote, Madam Speaker.

**P. Bevan-Baker:** Third party is ready for the vote, Madam Speaker.

**Z. Bell:** Government is ready for the vote, Madam Speaker.

**Speaker:** Hon. members, all those voting against the report, please stand.

[The Clerk calls the roll]

NAYS

Bernard  
Bevan-Baker  
Henderson  
McNeilly  
Perry

**Speaker:** Members, all those voting in favour of the report, please stand.

[The Clerk calls the roll]

YEAS

Arsenault  
Bell  
Burridge  
Croucher  
Deagle  
DesRoches  
Dillon  
Hudson  
Jameson  
King  
Lantz  
MacEwen  
MacKay  
MacLennan  
McLane  
Myers  
Redmond  
Thompson  
Trivers

**Speaker:** Hon. member, the report has passed.

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

**Hon. B. Thompson:** Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. Premier, that the 12<sup>th</sup> order of the day be now read.

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

**Clerk:** Order No. 12, *Supplementary Appropriation Act (No. 2) 2023*, Bill No. 44, ordered for second reading.

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Justice, Public Safety and Attorney General.

**Hon. B. Thompson:** Madam 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. 44 *Supplementary Appropriation Act (No. 2) 2023*, read a second time.

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Justice, Public Safety and Attorney General.

**Hon. B. Thompson:** Madam 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 Morell-Donagh to chair the Committee of the Whole House.

[5:25 p.m.]

[S. MacEwen in the chair]

**Chair:** The House is now in a Committee of the Whole House to take into consideration a bill to be intituled the *Supplementary Appropriation Act (No. 2) 2023*.

Minister, do you want to make a motion to bring a stranger to the floor?

**Hon. J. Burridge:** Yes, please.

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

Could you introduce yourself?

**Jordan McNally:** Jordan McNally, executive director of fiscal management.

**Chair:** Thank you.

Shall the bill carry? Carried.

**Hon. J. Burridge:** I move the title.

**Chair:** *Supplementary Appropriation Act (No. 2) 2023*.

Shall it carry? Carried.

**Hon. J. Burridge:** I move the enacting clause.

**Chair:** May it please Your Honour:

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.

**Hon. J. Burridge:** Mr. Chair, I move the Speaker take the chair and the Chair report the bill agreed to without amendment.

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

[Hon. D. Compton in the chair]

**S. MacEwen:** Madam Speaker, as Chair of a Committee of the Whole House having had under consideration a bill to be intituled *Supplementary Appropriation Act (No. 2) 2023*, 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 Justice, Public Safety and Attorney General.

**Hon. B. Thompson:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I'm seeking unanimous consent to proceed to third reading on Bill No. 43, the *Appropriation Act (Capital Expenditures) 2024*, which was read a second time today.

**Speaker:** Does the member have unanimous consent? Yes.

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

**Hon. B. Thompson:** Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Finance, that the said bill be now read a third time.

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

**Clerk:** Bill No. 43, *Appropriation Act (Capital Expenditures) 2024*, read a third time.

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Justice, Public Safety and Attorney General.

**Hon. B. Thompson:** Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Finance, that the said bill do now pass.

**Speaker:** 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 minded, 'nay'.

The bill has carried.

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

**Hon. B. Thompson:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I'm seeking unanimous consent to proceed to third reading for Bill No. 44, *Supplementary Appropriation Act (No. 2) 2023*, which was read a second time today.

**Speaker:** Does the member have unanimous consent? Yes.

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

**Hon. B. Thompson:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Premier, that Bill No. 44 be now read a third time.

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

**Clerk:** Bill No. 44, *Supplementary Appropriation Act (No. 2) 2023*, read a third time.

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Justice, Public Safety and Attorney General.

**Hon. B. Thompson:** Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Premier, that the said bill do now pass.

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

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 minded, 'nay'.

**Some Hon. Members:** Nay!

**Speaker:** The bill has carried.

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

[5:30 p.m.]

**Hon. B. Thompson:** Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. Premier that the 4<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> orders of the day be now read.

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

[The following bills were ordered for third reading]

**Clerk:** Order No. 4, *An Act to Amend the Financial Administration Act (No. 2)*, Bill No. 26;

Order No. 6, *Loan Act 2023*, Bill No. 38;

Order No. 7, *An Act to Amend the Real Property Tax Act*, Bill No. 39;

Order No. 8, *An Act to Amend the Planning Act (No. 2)*, Bill No. 40.

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Justice, Public Safety and Attorney General.

**Hon. B. Thompson:** Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Premier, that the said bills be read a third time.

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

[The following bills were read a third time]

**Clerk:** Bill No. 26, *An Act to Amend the Financial Administration Act (No. 2)*;

Bill No. 38, *Loan Act 2023*;

Bill No. 39, *An Act to Amend the Real Property Tax Act*;

Bill No. 40, *An Act to Amend the Planning Act (No. 2)*.

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Justice, Public Safety and Attorney General.

**Hon. B. Thompson:** Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Premier that the said bills do now pass.

**Speaker:** These bills are 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 amendments as each case may be, read a third time and it is now moved that the bills do pass.

All those in favour, say 'aye'.

**Some Hon. Members:** Aye!

**Speaker:** Contrary, 'nay'.

The bills carried.

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

**Hon. B. Thompson:** Madam Speaker, I wish to advise that this concludes the business that government wishes to conduct during this fall sitting.

**Speaker:** Hon. members, I have been advised that the Honourable Lieutenant Governor will be arriving at the Honourable George Coles Building shortly. I will leave the chair and invite Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor to join us in the Chamber to receive the House and to grant Royal Assent to the various bills passed by this House.

[The Legislature recessed from 5:32 p.m. to 5:41 p.m.]

**Clerk:** Your Honour, the Legislative Assembly has passed certain bills during this, the 1st Session of the 67th General Assembly, and now begs Your Honour's consideration of the grant of Royal Assent for the following bills:

*An Act to Amend the Health Information Act, Bill No. 3;*

*An Act to Amend the Police Act, Bill No. 7;*

*An Act to Amend the International Commercial Arbitration Act, Bill No. 8;*

*Arbitration Act, Bill No. 9;*

*An Act to Amend the Roads Act, Bill No. 10;*

*An Act to Amend the Highway Signage Act, Bill No. 11;*

*An Act to Amend the Environmental Protection Act, Bill No. 12;*

*Adult Guardianship and Trusteeship Act, Bill No. 19;*

*Public Guardian and Trustee Act, Bill No. 20;*

*Powers of Attorney and Personal Directives Act, Bill No. 21;*

*An Act to Amend the Legal Professions Act (No. 2), Bill No. 22;*

*An Act to Amend the Opioid Damages and Health Care Costs Recovery Act, Bill No. 23;*

*Government Reorganization Act, Bill No. 24;*

*An Act to Amend the Agricultural Insurance Act, Bill No. 25;*

*An Act to Amend the Financial Administration Act (No. 2), Bill No. 26;*

*An Act to Amend the Archaeology Act, Bill No. 27;*

*Mental Health Act, Bill No. 28;*

*An Act to Amend the Amusement Devices Act, Bill No. 29;*

*An Act to Amend the Police Act (No. 2), Bill No. 30;*

*An Act to Amend the Liquor Control Act, Bill No. 31;*

*Child, Youth and Family Services Act, Bill No. 32;*

*An Act to Amend the Adoption Act, Bill No. 33;*

*An Act to Amend the Intercountry Adoption (Hague Convention) Act, Bill No. 34;*

*An Act to Amend the Workers Compensation Act, Bill No. 36;*

*An Act to Amend the Municipal Government Act, Bill No. 37;*

*Loan Act 2023, Bill No. 38;*

*An Act to Amend the Real Property Tax Act, Bill No. 39;*

*An Act to Amend the Planning Act (No. 2), Bill No. 40;*

*Supplementary Appropriation Act (No. 2) 2023, Bill No. 44;*

*An Act to Amend the Employment Standards Act, Bill No. 106;*

*An Act to Amend the Employment Standards Act (No. 3), Bill No. 109;*

*An Act to Amend An Act to Incorporate Amalgamated Dairies Limited, Bill No. 200.*

**Her Honour Lieutenant Governor**

**Antoinette Perry:** In His Majesty's name, I assent to these bills.

**Speaker:** May it please Your Honour:

We, His 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 His Majesty's person and government. We do humbly beg for Your Honour's acceptance of the following bill entitled *Appropriation Act (Capital Expenditures) 2024*, 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 His Majesty's loyal and dutiful subjects, accepts their benevolence and assents to this bill in His Majesty's name.

[5:45 p.m.]

**Her Honour Lieutenant Governor**

**Antoinette Perry:** I wish to commend all honourable members for the conscientious manner in which you have conducted your deliberations to this point of the 1<sup>st</sup> Session of the 67<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of Prince Edward Island.

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 nearly achieved.

*J'aimerais vous souhaiter aussi les meilleurs vœux de la saison de Noël, du temps des Fêtes. J'espère que ce sera un temps de renouvellement et de réjouissement avec vos êtres chers.*

I'd also like to wish you a wonderful Christmas and holiday season. I hope it's a time of renewal and rejoicing with loved ones.

I would like to extend to all hon. members my expression of season's greetings. I really do hope that this period of holidays will give you a renewed energy and that that will come from your connections with your family and friends. Enjoy them, taste the goodness of friendship and the love of family, as well as that stuffed turkey.

I'll see you in the new year, and be well; be well, especially.

Thank you.

**Speaker:** Hon. members, before putting the question, I just want to wish each and every one of you a very merry Christmas. Happy new year. Enjoy your family. Enjoy your time together. Forget this stuff, and think about your friends, and just relax. Let's get renewed, as Her Honour said, and be back here in 2024 with a renewed spirit to be here for Prince Edward Islanders.

Merry Christmas.

I'll call the question.

**M. MacKay:** I move, seconded by the hon. Premier, that this House adjourn and stand to the call of the Speaker.

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

[Applause]

[The Legislature adjourned until the call of the Speaker]