

2:00 p.m.

### RESOLUTIONS OF SYMPATHY

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

#### LATE HON. LLOYD MACPHAIL

**Premier:** Madam Speaker, since this House last sat, the former Lieutenant Governor, a member of the Legislative Assembly, Honourable Lloyd MacPhail passed away on July 3, 1995. With the passing of the Hon. Lloyd MacPhail, the people of Prince Edward Island lost one of their most respected and distinguished citizens. Mr. MacPhail had an outstanding career marked by selfless devotion to the people he served, both in public and private life, characterized by great honesty and integrity. For close to quarter of a century, he received the continued support and endorsement of the people he served. As Lieutenant Governor, Mr. MacPhail's quiet and caring manner as well as warm hospitality earned him the respect and affection of people from all walks of life. Prior to his death, he was made a member of the Order of Canada, one of the highest honours a nation can confer on one of its citizens.

I move, seconded by the Leader of the Opposition that this Assembly extend our deepest sympathies to the members of Mr. MacPhail's family.

Madam Speaker, since this House last sat, Eugene Cullen, a former member of the Legislative Assembly for 15 years . . . (Indistinct)  
Excuse me.

**Speaker:** Leader of the Opposition, sorry. Thank you.

**Leader of the Opposition:** Madam Speaker, members of the Assembly, it is with a feeling of personal sadness that I second this Resolution Of Sympathy to the family of the late Hon. Lloyd MacPhail. I considered Mr. MacPhail a friend and an advisor and an individual genuinely interested in the betterment of Prince Edward Island. The positions he held over a long career of public service are a reflection of his commitment to others and a reflection of the esteem in which he was held by Islanders. It was just a year ago, Madam Speaker, that I made reference to the fact that Mr. MacPhail had been honoured with the Order of Canada. That honour speaks volumes about his career in public service and his many contributions to our province. A successful businessperson, he could well have enjoyed that success and left public service to others; but he chose a life of public service and he established a long and distinguished record of being a good example to colleagues, contemporaries, and even competitors.

For a quarter of a century, Madam Speaker, he served the people of 2nd Queens as a member of this Assembly; and regardless of whether he sat on the government side or in the opposition, he

showed the same dedication and commitment to the betterment of the province. Over those 25 years, there were ups and downs in the electoral success of the political party he represented, but Mr. MacPhail was a steadfast presence in the Assembly. Eight times he placed his name on the ballot and eight times he was elected. He accepted each role with energy and commitment. He held four different cabinet portfolios and in each distinguished himself. I always marvelled at the understanding and the concern about the finances of the province and the interest with which he followed the political process. In many respects, he was a finance minister well ahead of his time achieving surplus budgets at a time when huge deficits were a norm in most governments. His commitment to financial management stemmed from his personal belief in stewardship. Madam Speaker, the fact that the actions of today lay a foundation for tomorrow and that each of us has an obligation to help build a solid foundation. His loss is one still felt. I used to very much appreciate his involvement in reviewing the budget of the province and in hearing his reasoned insights and suggestions. The legacy of Mr. MacPhail is a legacy of what political service is supposed to be.

To his wife, Helen, and to his children: Judith Ann, Lynn, Fern, and Robert, I extend my sympathies. They can take comfort in the fact the name of Lloyd MacPhail will continue to be spoken with respect and admiration in this chamber and among his colleagues and friends. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Speaker:** Thank you honourable Leader of the Opposition.

#### LATE EUGENE CULLEN

**Premier:** Madam Speaker, since this House last sat, Eugene Cullen, a former member of this Legislative Assembly for 15 years passed away on July 12, 1995. Mr. Cullen served Prince Edward Island with distinction as a Member of the Legislative Assembly during which time he had several cabinet portfolios, position as Speaker of the House. A highly respected and well-known businessman in the province, Mr. Cullen founded Purity Dairy Limited in the middle 1940s, a business which his family continues to operate today. He made a significant contribution to the dairy industry serving in a number of capacities and receiving various awards, including the Dairy Service Award in 1985. Mr. Cullen was a true gentleman, who will be fondly remembered and sadly missed. I move, seconded by the Leader of the Opposition that this Assembly extend our deepest sympathy to the members of Mr. Cullen's family.

**Speaker:** Thank you, honourable Premier. The honourable Leader of the Opposition.

**Leader of the Opposition:** Madam Speaker, members of the Assembly. As Mr. Cullen represented my electoral district of 3rd Queens and continued to enjoy the summers and the beautiful view

of his cottage in Keppoch, I would like to join in the expression of sympathy to the Cullen family. His contributions to public service and to the agricultural industry are many, and it is worth to note that the Purity Milk Company, which he founded, has celebrated 50 years of operation and remains a family business. He represented 3rd Queens for about 15 years in the Assembly and held several cabinet portfolios under two premiers as well as serving a session as Speaker of the House. Mr. Cullen served with a number of boards, especially in health care and education fields.

To his wife and family, I extend my sympathies. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

#### LATE HON. F. WALTER HYNDMAN

**Speaker:** Thank you honourable Leader of the Opposition. The honourable Premier.

**Premier:** Madam Speaker, since this house last sat, former Lieutenant Governor, the Hon. F. Walter Hyndman passed away on October 12, 1995.

Mr. Hyndman was born in Charlottetown in 1904, was educated in West Kent School and Prince of Wales College. Prior to his appointment as Lieutenant Governor in 1958, Mr. Hyndman enjoyed a successful career as President of Hyndman and Co. Ltd. and in 1923 was credited for building the province's first local broadcast station. He also served in the Canadian Military, including four years active service and was awarded the Efficiency Decoration. Walter Hyndman made a tremendous contribution to his community, his province, and his country; and for this he will be fondly remembered.

I move, seconded by the honourable Leader of the Opposition, that this Assembly extend our deepest sympathies to the members of Mr. Hyndman's family.

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

**Leader of the Opposition:** Madam Speaker, on behalf of the Official Opposition, I too want to extend my sympathies to the Hyndman family. I know that Mr. Hyndman served with distinction in his own business and in the community throughout the province for many years, and it was with regret that I learned of his passing this past year; so on behalf of the members of the Assembly, I too want to second the remarks of the Premier and extend my sympathy to their family.

**Speaker:** Thank you honourable Leader of the Opposition. All those in favour of the Resolution say Yea.

**Honourable Members:** Yea.

**Speaker:** Contrary say nay. Resolutions are carried unanimously.

Matters of privilege and recognition of guests. The honourable Premier.

#### MATTERS OF PRIVILEGE AND RECOGNITION OF GUESTS

**Premier:** Madam Speaker, it's my privilege to rise today to welcome our visitors to the gallery. We're always delighted to have people watching the proceedings of the House. Last Thursday we had the Speech from the Throne, so this is our first full sitting day - the day when we really get down to business. And today, Madam Speaker, we have some special guests - students from the Career Preparation Program at Holland College, Charlottetown Centre, accompanied by instructors Joanne MacDonald and Scott Blanchard. We're delighted to have you visiting the Legislature and certainly hope you'll come back again, and I also see up in the gallery a couple of people that we saw a lot in the last Session; and Madam Speaker, we hope they'll be here this Session every day and that's Mrs. Bradley and Joe O'Hanley. So welcome. Welcome to you all. (Applause)

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

**Leader of the Opposition:** Thank you, Madam Speaker, I too want to extend a special welcome to the 20 students from the Career Preparation Program at Holland College accompanied by their instructors, Joanne MacDonald and Scott Blanchard. I hope that you enjoy the proceedings. You're getting a head start because this is really the first sitting day of the Legislature, and I hope you find the proceedings interesting. I want to also welcome the mother of the Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries. She has been a faithful attender over the past Session and she's starting out on the right foot again. I also want to make special mention of two members of my staff who are here and probably will be here on a regular basis - Mrs. Susan MacMillan Turner, who became Mrs. Turner this past summer - and the Opposition celebrated that great event - and Mr. Garth Staples, who is now employed with Opposition office. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Speaker:** Thank you honourable Leader of the Opposition. (Applause) The honourable House Leader.

**Hon. Wayne Cheverie (L):** I wish to point to all honourable members that the Minister of Education is not in his seat for Question Period, although I expect him later, Madam Speaker. He has to attend a funeral in his district and, as well, the Minister of Economic Development and Tourism will also be in later but unlikely for Question Period and I had previously advised the Leader of the Opposition.

**Speaker:** Thank you honourable House Leader. Statements by Members - the honourable Councillor 4th Prince.

**STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS****INITIATION OF THE HANSARD**

**Libbe Hubley (L):** Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise in this House of Assembly in order to mark the beginning of a new era in this historic legislature. What I am referring to is the installation of an official Hansard for the purpose of recording the daily proceedings of this democratic Assembly. Madam Speaker, the idea for a record of parliamentary debates was the brainchild of 19th century British reformer William Cobbett. In 1810, he published the first such document. However, the Hansard name was derived from the Hansard family, who published Great Britain's parliamentary debates from 1812 until 1888. Madam Speaker, after last year's Special Committee on Legislative Reform recommended the adoption of this program, Prince Edward Island is now on par with other Canadian legislatures whose proceedings are readily available to the public. I thought it would be fitting, Madam Speaker, that the first statement of this sitting of the House acknowledge the addition of the Hansard recording to the Island's democratic process. After all, openness and access to information are two of the cornerstones of any democratic system and this transcription will ensure all Islanders have equal access to the business of this government. Once again, Madam Speaker, let us acknowledge and welcome the addition of the Hansard to our Legislative Assembly and strive to make our orations worthy of note. Thank you, Madam Speaker. (APPLAUSE)

**Speaker:** Thank you honourable member. Member of the Legislative Assembly representing 3rd Prince (French to English translation).

**JOEY ARSENAULT - 1996 EASTER SEALS  
AMBASSADOR**

2:15 p.m.

**Robert Maddix (L):** Madam Speaker of the House, it is therefore my pleasure to welcome everyone in the gallery (French to English translation).

Welcome to everyone in the gallery. While I am on my feet, I do take advantage to wish everyone a welcome and I hope they enjoy the deliberation here today.

Madam Speaker, it is with great pleasure and hometown pride that I stand in the House today to offer my congratulations and best wishes to Joey Arsenaault of Wellington, who will be serving as this year's Easter Seals Ambassador. Joey is the 13-year old son of Jerry and Sally Arsenaault. He copes day to day with a debilitating disease Cerebral Palsy, but has been given a great deal of freedom thanks to computer technology. Madam Speaker, Joey's voice synthesizer and laptop computer have opened up a whole new world for him, bettering his communication skills and greatly

improving on his abilities to carry out his school work at Evangeline. This vibrant, energetic, and intelligent young man likes to spend his days "surfing the net", following his favourite sports---not the least of which is professional wrestling---and generally just making the lives of people around him just a little bit brighter.

This thirteen year old boy is very interested in the development of his community and participates as much as possible through the use of technology that was given to him a few years ago. This young man succeeds well in school; he will be attending high school next year and is doing well academically. (French to English translation)

Island Rotarians, Madam Speaker, are hoping to raise \$120,000 in this year's Easter Seals drive. This money will be used to support projects like Camp Genchef, the Education Coalition, and the P.E.I. Rehabilitation Council. As well, funds will be allocated through the Rotary Club drive to purchase playground equipment for the physically challenged, specialized computer equipment, and aquatics programs specifically designed to meet the needs of other youngsters like Joey. The campaign will be launched Monday, March 11, with a pancake breakfast at Stonepark School. I urge all Islanders, Madam Speaker, to lend their support to this very worthwhile cause. With an ambassador like Joey, I feel this year's goals are well within reach and I wish him and Island Rotarians great success with their project. Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. (APPLAUSE)

**Speaker:** Thank you, member. The honourable Assemblyman, 3rd Kings.

**30TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE CANADIAN FLAG**

2:17 p.m.

**Peter Doucette (L):** Thank you Madam Speaker. I too ... (Indistinct). Madam Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to rise in this historic House of Assembly once again to acknowledge the recent celebration of an important occasion. I am speaking, of course, of the 30th anniversary of our beautiful Canadian flag. Madam Speaker, the national flag of Canada was proclaimed by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II on February 15, 1965. The flag is formally described as a red flag of the proportions two by length and one by width, containing in its centre a white square the width of the flag, bearing a single red maple leaf. Red and white, as many already know, are also the official colours of Canada, proclaimed by King George V in a ceremony in 1921. Since the adoption of the red maple leaf, Madam Speaker, this majestic banner has come to embody much more than just the official symbol of Canada. Over the span of the last 30 years, it has come to be associated with peace, tolerance, and equality wherever it has flown. Madam Speaker, in more recent times, our flag has become a tangible symbol of unity to a country struggling with questions, perhaps, of its own identity. Some would paint this banner to symbolize

disharmony, but for the vast majority of Canadians, Madam Speaker, this flag embodies the very essence of cooperation and harmony---two ingredients vital to the survival and prosperity of any nation. Madam Speaker, whether it is worn on the shoulder of one of our brave peacekeepers in a war-torn country or proudly flies outside one of our many embassies abroad, the national flag of Canada continues to earn the respect and admiration of the citizens of the world. And so, Madam Speaker, let us take a moment to reflect on what this flag symbolizes to ourselves and our country, and rest assured in the knowledge that the red maple leaf will continue to embody all that is noble and just in this great nation of Canada. Thank you, Madam Speaker. (APPLAUSE)

**Speaker:** Thank you honourable member. Questions by Members, the honourable Leader of the Opposition.

### QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS

#### BRINGING "ISLAND ISSUES" TO THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

2:21 p.m.

**Leader of the Opposition:** Madam Speaker, a question for the Premier. Madam Premier, since the election of the Federal Liberal Government, the people of Prince Edward Island have been hard-hit by a number of budget and policy decisions, such as changes to social programs, changes to the fishery, changes to Unemployment Insurance, changes to support for our ports, changes in agriculture support programs, etc. etc. What is the strategy, Madam Premier, of your government for ensuring that the interests of Islanders are effectively represented in Ottawa?

**Premier:** Madam Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition mentioned a number of issues there, and I can inform you, Madam Speaker, that we have been working very hard on these. For example, she mentions the UI. We made it very clear in the Speech from the Throne what our position was on the Unemployment Insurance reform. It affects the seasonal workers we feel in an unfair manner. As we said, we're against anything, Madam Speaker, that discourages people, Islanders, in this Province from working in seasonal industries. We only have 3 major industries---agriculture, tourism, and the fishery.

These reforms that have been announced, certainly, are unfair. They have a negative impact. They were presented way back in '94. In the fall of 1994 is when these social reforms were presented. We started at that time, Madam Speaker, and I can go through, if the Leader of the Opposition wishes, and itemize every step that we've taken and what we're doing right now. In fact, right now we're getting ready to make a presentation to the Standing Committee on the UI Reforms. We were the only province in Canada I might add that made a presentation to the Task Force on the seasonal worker. So, we've been very, very

aggressive in unemployment and in other areas as well, Madam Speaker.

#### MEETINGS WITH ISLAND MPs- RE: FEDERAL DECISIONS

**Leader of the Opposition:** Madam Speaker, another question for the Premier. Our Island MPs appear to be remarkably silent on many of these issues. Do you meet regularly with the four Island Members of Parliament to discuss strategy in dealing with the many negative impacts that the Federal decisions are having on Prince Edward Island?

**Premier:** Madam Speaker, I can't speak for the MPs themselves. But I can inform this House that, yes, I meet with the MPs, not on a regular basis, every Monday or every Tuesday or something like that. But I meet with them from time to time. I talk to them on the telephone, and I can assure you, Madam Speaker, that they are well aware of how we feel about the initiatives such as the one I just talked about---unemployment insurance.

2:25 p.m.

**Leader of the Opposition:** Supplementary, Madam Speaker. If the Premier, as she indicates, does meet on occasion with the Members of Parliament who represent Prince Edward Island, have they indicated at any point why they have absolutely no impact it would appear from Prince Edward Island's perspective on these decisions that are coming down from Ottawa?

**Premier:** Madam Speaker, that's not a question that the Leader of the Opposition should be putting to me. She should be putting that to the Members of Parliament in the House of Commons in Ottawa. As I said, I talk with them from time to time on these issues and, certainly, I'm concerned about a lot of the initiatives that the Federal Government are taking and I can tell you, we haven't been shy in saying so.

**Leader of the Opposition:** Madam Speaker, another question for the Premier. I understand that it is the role of the Members of Parliament to speak in Ottawa on our behalf, but from observing what has been taking place in the Province over the last couple of years, it appears that there are provincial premiers who are wielding a heavy hand and having their way in changing decisions that have been made by Ottawa. You don't have to think long to figure out who those Premiers are.

**Hon. Wayne Cheverie (L):** Who are they?

**Leader of the Opposition:** My questions are directed to the Premier because as premier of the province she speaks on behalf of our province to Ottawa. So, I think that the questions are directed to the right source. Madam Speaker, I would ask the Premier whether, as a former member of the Chretien caucus

yourself, do you have an established network of Liberal members across the country that you could lobby in the interests of our province?

**Premier:** Madam Speaker, I'd like the Leader of the Opposition to give the House a few examples of Premiers and what she's taking about? What changes they have been able to reverse that the Federal Government has set out to do? I'd like to hear that.

But, Madam Speaker, in answer to the last part of the question, yes, I know many Members of Parliament on the Hill and I've talked to a lot of former colleagues of mine about the effects some of these initiatives are going to have on Prince Edward Island. Madam Speaker, as I said at the beginning, this Government has been working hard on initiatives like Unemployment Insurance and we're going to continue to do so.

### VETO ON CONSTITUTION

**Leader of the Opposition:** Well, Madam Speaker, just as a quick response to the reference to what Premiers have done, the Premier of British Columbia managed to get a single veto for his province when the Federal Government had initially decided he was going to be part of a region. Our province gave up the only veto we had and consequently we now have no vote on constitutional matters.

But, Madam Speaker, another question for the Premier. As a former member of the Chretien caucus and a Liberal premier, are you consulted by the federal ministers and by the Prime Minister on national issues?

**Premier:** Madam Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition said that we gave up a veto. We did not give up a veto.

**Hon. Alan Buchanan (L):** We never had a veto to begin with!

**Premier:** I want to make that very clear, that the Constitution has not changed. There was legislation brought in, but we did not give up a veto. The Constitution is there. There are some things that have to be amended by unanimous consent, and in order to amend the Constitution every province has to agree to that. I can tell you, Madam Speaker, that we will never agree to anything that's going to have a negative impact on the people of Prince Edward Island.

**Some Honourable Members:** Hear, hear.

**Premier:** Now, what you're talking about is legislation and that's a completely different thing that we can get into today or later on or whenever you want to have a discussion on that. Now, sorry, I forgot your question.

**Leader of the Opposition:** Well, we will get side-tracked for a minute on the veto since you seem to suggest that we didn't lose

any power by signing into the regional deal. The veto provision that was passed by the Federal Liberals, I believe sincerely diminished the status of Prince Edward Island as one of ten provinces. Do you not consider it a slap in the face to this province and to our people that the Prime Minister of this country would make reference to the fact that we've got only 130,000 people and would suggest to you that you come back to this region and work out a deal with your fellow Maritime Premiers?

**Premier:** Madam Speaker, I want to...I don't know whether the Honourable Leader of the Opposition really understands what we're talking about here. I have a copy of the parts of the Constitution here. Now, there's section 41 that says every province has to agree if you are going to change certain things and, as I just said, we will never agree to a change in the amending formula unless it's beneficial to the people of Prince Edward Island.

There's another section there that says things can be changed if you have the agreement of 7 provinces, representing 50% of the population. So under that it means that they could make a change with only one Atlantic Province, if they had the other 6.

What you're talking about is not the Constitution because they didn't change the Constitution. What the Prime Minister brought in was a piece of legislation that said under the section of the Constitution that requires 7 provinces plus 50%, I'm not even going to introduce that into the House of Commons unless I have the agreement of British Columbia, 2 out of 3 of the western provinces, Ontario, Quebec and 2 provinces from the Atlantic area. So, in a sense now, in order to get anything on the floor to talk about changes in the Constitution there have to be 2 Atlantic provinces, at least. Before they could get away with only having one.

Now, it's going to make it more difficult to change the Constitution. Some people would argue that might be good for Prince Edward Island because you know how we feel about property rights. You know how we feel about the numbers of people we have in the Senate and the House of Commons. There's certain things that are pretty touchy with us and we wouldn't want changed. So, there are different ways of looking at this.

Now, as to the last part of your question, when you say about what they put in was 2 provinces with 50% of the population, yes, I object to that and I have told the Prime Minister so. However, I spoke to Minister Alan Rock at the time. I spoke to the Prime Minister. I expressed our displeasure with this and they went ahead with the legislation. So I've made an agreement with the Province of New Brunswick and the Province of Nova Scotia so that we are relevant as far as this whole procedure would be concerned to introduce that legislation. But I want to make it very clear that the Constitution did not change. We did not lose anything. Everything is still there in the Constitution. 2:32 p.m.

**Leader of the Opposition:** Madam Speaker, I'm quite aware that there are certain provisions in the Canadian Constitution that require the unanimous consent of 10 provinces. I am also aware that there is another section of the Constitution that requires 7 out of 10 with a population base of 50. So, those are the 2 sections that the Premier referred to earlier. What I am addressing is this most recent attempt by the Federal Liberal Government to bring the regions in as one voice instead of allowing Prince Edward Island to speak as a province, as we always have. Regardless of what the Premier says, the fact that it only requires 2 in this region means that Prince Edward Island, because of our population, will never be able to influence the position of the regional vote.

So, Madam Speaker, a question for the Premier. Since you claim--and I understand that to be true, that we're not really talking about amending the Constitution with this veto--could you, Madam Premier, tell us exactly what it is that we will be able to consider vetoing under this new regional deal?

**Premier:** Madam Speaker, as far as the vote goes under this, yes, we will be able to influence that Atlantic vote because of the political accord I worked out with the Premiers of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. But what we're talking about here is, as I said, if they want to change something, you still have to fit that criteria into the Constitution—7 provinces representing 50%. But in order to...the Prime Minister, in order to fulfil his commitment to Quebec during the Referendum, has put in other roadblocks there. There's another side deal that really says that you have to have B.C., 2 of the Prairies, Ontario, Quebec, and 2 of the Atlantic Provinces, representing 50% before we'll even put that legislation on the floor of the House of Commons to talk about it.

Now, I have worked out a side deal to this with the other 2 Maritime Provinces so that we will sit down and there's a process that we will go through with them to try to find a common approach to the legislation. But as I said a few minutes ago, I object to the 50% being in there and I made that very, very clear to the Prime Minister and to the Minister who was the minister of the day at that time, Mr. Alan Rock.

**Leader of the Opposition:** Madam Speaker, a supplementary to the Premier. If you object to the deal, why did you agree to come home and arrange with the other Premiers this political accord? If you objected, why didn't you say "it's a no-go, we are a province; we're going to serve..."

**Hon. Wayne Cheverie (L):** It's federal legislation.

**Leader of the Opposition:** ...we're going to reject the application of a regional voice because we will never, because of our population, be able to influence a regional decision?

2:35 p.m.

**Premier:** Madam Speaker, I wish it was that simple! You know, it's Federal legislation. I don't control what goes on. I didn't agree to that. No way! No! Why would I agree to that? I just said that I told the Prime Minister I didn't like it and I told Alan Rock exactly what I thought of it.

Now, why I came home. They went ahead with it. I came home and I raised a deal with the other 2 Maritime premiers. I think any reasonable premier would do that. I wanted to see that our interests were protected and I have a political arrangement with them. That's why, Madam Speaker.

**Leader of the Opposition:** Well, Madam Speaker, if the Premier is so adamant that she didn't agree, why did she come home and sign a political accord with the other premiers? When you came back from Ottawa, Madam Premier, the message was that the Federal Government had said to you "go and arrange something, work out something with your own fellow premiers". At which case you did that. If you objected to it, why didn't you say, I'm not going to sign any political accords, because this erases our power as a province? Why didn't you say "no"?

**Premier:** I'll try to make it very clear, Madam Speaker. We don't control the legislation or what goes in the legislation that the Federal Government puts on the floor of the House of Commons, just like they don't come down here and tell us what legislation to bring in as a provincial government. They went ahead. They put that legislation through the House of Commons. I did not like it. I told the Prime Minister so. I told the Minister. But they went ahead anyway. So, what was I to do? They went ahead. They put it through the House. So then I went and I made a side deal with the 2 other Maritime provinces. I didn't want them to put that legislation through the House. I told them so. I wanted the 50% taken out. However, they wouldn't take it out.

But, Madam Speaker, I want to make it clear that, you know, we still retain our legal powers under the Constitution. There was no change there. Also, as I say, we've worked out a deal so that...well, I agree with the Leader of the Opposition, that with that 50% we would have been irrelevant. But I've worked out a deal which makes P.E.I. relevant now. You know, as I say, I just wish it was as simple as the Leader of the Opposition thinks. But I want to make it very clear, I did not agree to that legislation that went through the House of Commons and I made it very, very clear.

**Leader of the Opposition:** Madam Speaker, a new question for the Premier. You didn't agree but you have signed a political accord with the other premiers. I assume that's the 3 or 2 premiers? Is Newfoundland included?

**Premier:** Madam Speaker, no, Newfoundland was not included because when this was going on, I sent it to Premier Wells, but he was going to be stepping down. Then Mr. Tobin came and there

was an election and so it's the 3 of us, really. But all we need is...

**Leader of the Opposition:** So, Madam Premier, this gets more confusing by the minute. Now we've got a regional veto but it doesn't include one of the 4 provinces in the region. Does that mean that Newfoundland now has their own veto as opposed to the 3 other Maritime provinces that have one? This is really looking very fuzzy! I would ask the Premier if she is willing to table the political accord that she signed with the other premiers so that we would find out what it is she did commit the province to doing? And although the Premier insists that this is not going to affect our effect on the Constitution, the Federal Government didn't do it for nothing. They didn't go through it trying to get this veto process in place not to use it! They are obviously going to use it, Madam Premier.

So, the question I was asking the Premier was, Madam Speaker, what is this veto going to be used for? I understand one of the things it could be used for is the devolution of powers to the provinces. The Province of Quebec because of their volatile political situation and for some other reasons are demanding certain changes. The Federal Government is trying to accommodate them. Is it possible that some of those changes which will definitely affect Prince Edward Island will come into being with Prince Edward Island sitting on the outside saying, "well, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia said it was OK, so we're going along too".

2:40 p.m.

**Premier:** Madam Speaker, yes, the Leader of the Opposition asks if I would table that document. I would be pleased to table it. Now, you ask what it's going to be used for. I don't know how I can make this any clearer. Like, the Constitution is over there. It's still in place. It wasn't touched. What this pertains to are the items that are listed in the Constitution that require 7 provinces, which make up 50% of the population. If 7 provinces with 50% of the population agree to this, then the Prime Minister has said, "I'm adding another deal to this; I'm adding another step, another hoop. I'm not going to present it on the floor of the House of Commons unless I have B.C., unless I have 2 of the Prairie Provinces, unless I have Ontario, unless I have Quebec...". In other words, Quebec gets a veto. Ontario gets a veto. B.C. gets a veto. The Prairie Provinces and the Atlantic region. That's what it's all about.

Now, they said, what I wanted was for them to say this 2 Atlantic Provinces, drop the 50%. They would not drop the 50%. And I made that very clear to them that I objected strenuously to that. However, they put the legislation through the House of Commons. So, there we sat with it as it was. Now, I'm sure if the Leader of the Opposition was sitting over here that she would have looked at her options. How do you make P.E.I. relevant in this situation and that was obviously to turn to the other 2 provinces, which I did. I made an arrangement with them and, Madam Speaker, I'll be glad

to table that.

**Leader of the Opposition:** Madam Speaker, I appreciate that she's going to table the accord and we will pursue that issue when I get to read what the accord actually committed ourselves to. But I'm still not convinced that we put in a veto provision to do nothing! If it applies to all of the items in the Constitution that require the 7/50 amending formula, we're talking virtually everything that affects P.E.I. in the Constitution. And I might add, Madam Speaker, that in the Throne Speech debate a couple of weeks ago by the Federal Government, they made reference to the fact that they were going to put into the Constitution the regional veto provision. So, is the Premier aware of that? Are we moving from this step up to really having no effect on constitutional changes as well? Is the Premier aware of that statement made by the Federal Government in the Throne Speech?

**Premier:** Certainly I'm aware of what's in the Throne Speech. But Madam Speaker, if the Leader of the Opposition had been following this discussion this afternoon, I indicated that in order to have it in the Constitution, to change the amending formula in the Constitution, every province has to agree. Now, Prince Edward Island is not going to agree to an amending formula that's going to have a negative impact on us.

**Leader of the Opposition:** That's only the amending formula.

**Premier:** To the amending formula.

**Leader of the Opposition:** That's all.

**Premier:** That's what we're talking about.

#### LOBSTER TRAP ESCAPE MECHANISM

2:44 p.m.

**Leader of the Opposition:** Madam Speaker, a new question for the Premier. Just this past weekend the Federal Minister of Fisheries announced a new escape mechanism for lobster traps. Can you indicate what discussions you had with the Minister prior to that decision being made?

**Premier:** Yes, Madam Speaker. This is an issue that I can tell you the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry has been working hard on and he may want to speak to this after I'm finished. But I personally met with some fishermen and fisherwomen. They indicated to me the problems and their feeling was that there should be a study done. This should be looked into in more detail before this became law. I personally talked to the Minister and suggested that this area have a fuller study, a more adequate study done. The Minister of Fisheries did the same. The Minister of Fisheries also worked...well, he's been working on this for I don't know how long, but he also helped to get the meeting

with the Federal Minister for the Association.

Now, as you know, they went to Ottawa last Thursday I believe it was. Felt they had a good meeting. So I was very surprised when on Friday---I guess it was late Friday night---I found out that the Federal Minister of Fisheries had moved and said this was going to become law. Now, the Fisheries Association, I understand, is having a meeting today as to what they think should be done. If they come out of that meeting with a strategy, certainly we would be pleased to sit down with them because fisheries is a major industry in the province and we want to support it in any way we can. Now, Madam Speaker, I don't know whether the Minister of Fisheries has anything to add to that.

**Leader of the Opposition:** Madam Speaker, a supplementary to the Premier. Madam Premier, you indicated you did speak to the Minister of Fisheries---the Federal Minister of Fisheries---prior to this decision being made. Could you indicate what he said at that time?

**Some Honourable Member:** And what she said!

**Leader of the Opposition:** I know what she said; I'd like to know what he said.

**Premier:** I talked to the Minister and I indicated to him that the fishermen that I had talked to told me they might lose as much as 30% of their catch, that this would have a devastating effect on the fishermen and on the processing plants because if they haven't got the fish, then that means fewer processing jobs. I suggested to him...or I said from the information I get, it appears that there wasn't an adequate study done, why don't we have a study done this year, a scientific study, and then see exactly...because he said to me, when I said 30%, he said, "no, my bureaucrats are saying 6%". I said, "well, that's certainly not the information I'm getting". I pressed hard for him to take the year to look at this and to study it.

2:46 p.m.

**Leader of the Opposition:** So, Madam Speaker, I understand the presentation the Premier made, but there isn't any point in us repeating and repeating and repeating to Ottawa the effect all of these things are going to have on Prince Edward Island, and Ottawa just keeps making their own decisions. The question is, on the other end of the line, what did the Minister say to the Premier in terms of accommodating her concerns? The reason the Premier speaks to a federal minister is to represent the voice of the province. Did the minister listen? Did the minister suggest any options? Did the minister have a deadline? Could you indicate the minister's end of that conversation, Madam Premier:?

**Premier:** Yes, as I just said, I said that the fishermen I talked to said 30%. He said, "my bureaucrats told me 6". I said, "well,

that's not the information I'm getting and I feel that the study wasn't scientific enough or wasn't really adequate". So, I said to him, "what I would like is for you to talk to the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry and he'll have all the facts lined up for you". I made an arrangement so that the federal minister would talk to the provincial minister the next morning on the phone and that took place.

**Leader of the Opposition:** A new question, Madam Speaker. If the minister indicated to you that he didn't agree with the data that you had on the loss to the fishermen, saying that somebody in his department suggested 6%, was there not an indication there that the people that were advising him are not the people from Prince Edward Island, which is going to be seriously impacted by this decision? Probably, from what I've heard, the people that attended the meeting were a large delegation from the other provinces, specifically New Brunswick. I think the parliamentary secretary for the Minister of Fisheries would be a very influential voice. Did you try to go through your Liberal counterparts in the other governments in the region to explain to them that you did not agree with this position and that you were going to fight to make sure that the Minister bring it in?

2:50 p.m.

**Premier:** Madam Speaker, as I said, the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry has been working extremely hard on this. I told the Leader of the Opposition that I contacted the federal minister, of the discussion that we had, and I made the arrangement for him to talk to the minister the next day, and I know that our minister has had several phone calls and meetings. So, I would like, Madam Speaker, with your permission, that the Minister would answer the question more fully.

**Hon. Walter Bradley (L):** Madam Speaker, I hope I remember the question that the Honourable Leader of the Opposition wants answered. There were a number there. I don't know whether they are questions or statements that she's making. But with regard to the last meeting that was held, which would be Thursday last---I believe that was the last question she was referring to---that the Honourable Lawrence MacAulay, Secretary of State, and I arranged with the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, the Honourable Fred Mifflin, to have our fishermen from P.E.I. given an opportunity to present their views, their observations, their findings, with regard to the possible implementation of the escape mechanism.

The meeting was arranged. Minister Mifflin then decided on his own---and I suppose with some advice from people within his department---that members of other fisheries organizations should also be present because he...and when I queried him on this, he informed me that he was not going to meet with particular member fisheries organizations from each and every province because he had other issues that he wanted to talk about and he was going to



meet with them all at once.

My response to him was, "why invite these other people when it was P.E.I. who requested the meeting in the first place?". He said, "because it's a regional matter. I want to have these people here to listen."

**Leader of the Opposition:** The decision was made!

**Hon. Walter Bradley (L):** You may be right on that, but I would appreciate if you wouldn't interrupt while I'm responding to your question! (LAUGHTER) I don't know where I was now! (LAUGHTER) I'm frustrated to a high degree... But really what it boiled down to...and then we found out, of course, that the minister---well, he's only a Secretary of State for Agrifood and Fisheries, Ferdinand Robichaud---was going to be in attendance. We questioned why that should be and he said, "well, he's my junior minister; he's to give me advice". My response of course was, "well, I understand that this man is very much in favour, not only of this, but also of having the carapace size increased in the past".

Then I, perhaps, laid a few things on him with regard to the fact that I felt that not only did the DFO people in Ottawa---which I refer to as the bureaucrats---and also the bureaucrats in DFO in Moncton seem to be driven by this concept that escape mechanisms and/or increased carapace size above even the 2 5/8 that we now have would be very, very appropriate and most suitable to them.

Now, granted, the meeting was held. We were able to inform Minister Miffen that our people, since they requested the meeting, should speak first because you know, when you speak first and you do a good job of it, you probably then will make points that will be remembered. I don't know, I think, as I said, that goes back and I would agree with the interruption that the Honourable Leader of the Opposition came up with, that maybe people's minds were made up. But there were a lot of conversations, a lot of dissertations, a lot of discussion on this issue over the past 2 months. I can't agree with putting a certain size in without a proper evaluation. Our position to the minister and to the deputy minister and to all those bureaucrats in DFO was that, look, evaluation and make sure that you put the proper and appropriate mechanism in place.

**Speaker:** Thank you, honourable Minister.

**Leader of the Opposition:** Madam Speaker, another question for the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry. Well, I can see some similarities between your response and the Premier's response to the veto question! The similarities are, we're all talking and nobody is listening! We cannot blame the DFO officials. We cannot blame bureaucrats. The people who make the decisions are the ministers in Ottawa just like the people who are supposed to make the decisions here are the ministers. So, we

have to take the blame where it is. Madam Speaker, could the minister please indicate whether or not this is...does he agree that this is just a backdoor approach to introducing one carapace size?

2:55 p.m.

**Hon. Walter Bradley (L):** Well, that's sort of a very broad type of question. I think I will answer it in this way. What you have is 3 different carapace sizes now and as I referred to---if you had of been listening earlier---that really what we're bringing, when we're bringing in the escape mechanism, people are saying that it brings it up to 2 3/4 inches really, which is above any size that we have now. I kind of feel that it may be a backdoor way of at least getting the carapace size moved upward. It can't work completely because whose to say that some poor cranky lobster when he gets into a trap may decide, even though he's only 2 5/8 or 2 9/16 that he may decide to stay there and you can still legally catch him?

**Leader of the Opposition:** Well, it would appear that the lobsters may have better decision-making powers than Ottawa at this stage! (LAUGHTER) But a supplementary to the same minister. There appears to be some confusion over the stand that you, Honourable Minister, took when you addressed this issue with the minister in Ottawa. There was a rumour going around that...

**Hon. Walter Bradley (L):** That's what it was!

**Leader of the Opposition:** This is your chance to clear it up! That, in fact, you as minister of the province, had indicated that if there was going to be a decision made on this mechanism, make sure you make it before the 28th of February, so our fishermen can be ready. So could you please confirm or deny that happened?

**Hon. Walter Bradley (L):** Well, Madam Speaker, I'm very pleased to be able to answer this question because one never likes to have rumours swirling around. I thank you for bringing this up.

**Leader of the Opposition:** There's a lot of them!

**Hon. Walter Bradley (L):** Well, some are concocted and others are...

**Leader of the Opposition:** Oh, this is real!

**Hon. Walter Bradley (L):** ...concocted by the Leader of the Opposition! (LAUGHTER) To get to this particular question, or comment, or rumour, or whatever, when I did talk to Minister Miffen on the Monday---or Tuesday, I'm not sure---after he was appointed, I talked to him again about putting in an evaluation procedure with regard to the appropriate type of escape mechanism because our fishermen are not opposed to escape mechanisms. Then we talked for about 40 to 45 minutes and the conversation bordered at times on, probably, the best way to say would be argumentative.

Basically, he says to me, "well, when can I make a decision? When is the latest that I can make a decision?". Notice, "when is the latest that I can make a decision", not "when can I make a decision with regard to the implementation of escape mechanisms". No, no. "When is the latest that I can make a decision."

**Leader of the Opposition:** What decision?

**Hon. Walter Bradley (L):** Well, whether he was going to put escape mechanisms in, whether he was not going to, or whether he would consider any other measure, or whether he would agree with me that it should only be an evaluation period. I said to him and I started backtracking in my mind, you know, that the season opens the first of May; most lobster fishermen like to get their traps down by the middle of April at the least; they have to move traps to finish, you know, the building of them and getting them repaired. So I backtracked in my mind and finally on January 29th or so I said, "well, a month, the end of February, you would have to have a decision made". And that's exactly the way the conversation went.

**Speaker:** Final question.

**Leader of the Opposition:** Madam Speaker, a final question to the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry. You have stated in a press release, I believe, that you put out: "I'm afraid the deck was stacked on this one". Would you indicate what you mean by saying "the deck was stacked" and who stacked it?

**Hon. Walter Bradley (L):** Simply put, I think it goes back to--- and this may take longer than we wish because this is a long standing issue. It really relates back to over a year ago whenever our people were meeting here on the Island and they were looking at conservation. They were looking at conservation measures. They said maybe something like this would be appropriate. Then went and talked with the other regional people and they jumped on us because they must have known because some of them used it before. They put it in for last year on sort of a trial basis with the fact that it would be put in the following year, assuming that, you know, if everything worked out, it would be put in the following year, that it wasn't going to devastate the fishery.

Then they said they made this a condition of the license. In talking to---and I can't quote names in here---but let us say in talking to one of the regional directors in the DFO office in Moncton on numerous occasions we got the impression that they were saying, "well, this has been put in; your people asked for it; it has to stay there." Then you go talk to the deputy minister in Ottawa, you get the same message.

There was then, of course, movement of fisheries ministers in Ottawa. There was a period of time where we had an acting minister. In those cases, which will sort of answer a previous question or statement by the Honourable Leader of the Opposition

when there wasn't really a minister that was in full-time service. There was an acting minister. Some bureaucrats seemed to be able to drive this issue then. The poor Minister of Fisheries that moved into this position, the Honourable Minister Mifflen, only had a month and I think he was pushed pretty hard to make this decision. Therefore, that's why I think to say "the deck was stacked" is rather appropriate. We had the problems of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia pushing against us also, bureaucrats.

**Speaker:** Thank you, honourable Minister.

**Hon. Walter Bradley (L):** I think we'll take a look at this over the years.

**Speaker:** End of Question Period. Statement by Ministers. The honourable Attorney General.

3:01 p.m.

### STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

#### MINIMUM WAGE

**Hon. Alan Buchanan (L):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I have a statement today, Madam Speaker, if I can find it, regarding the recent decision of Executive Council on the recommendation of the Employment Standards Board; thank you, Mr. Minister, regarding the minimum wage in the province.

Madam Speaker, I am pleased to announce that Executive Council has recently approved the Employment Standards Board's recommendation of a two-stage increase in the minimum wage of Prince Edward Island. Effective September 1, 1996, the minimum wage will increase from \$4.75 to \$5.15, with a further increase to \$5.40 on September 1, 1997. These increases, Madam Speaker, in keeping with changes to the minimum wages in other jurisdictions, and in recognition of the cost of living increases in our own province. The significance of these increases is to acknowledge the contributions made by individuals working in the lower income groups. The effective date of September 1, 1996, and again in September 1, 1997, Madam Speaker, is not to accommodate the election needs of our political party, as the Leader of the Opposition may suggest Madam Speaker, but to provide sufficient lead time to allow our business community, particularly those in the tourism industry, to adjust their rates and costs of services to these new initiatives, new increases.

Madam Speaker, let me conclude by saying I extend my thanks to Mr. Michael Hennessey, the Chairman of the Employment Standards Board, and the other members of the Employment Standards Board, for the work that they have done on behalf of working Islanders. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Speaker:** Presenting and receiving petitions. Tabling of documents. The honourable House Leader.

*TABLING OF DOCUMENTS***REPORT OF ALL BANK ACCOMMODATIONS  
BY WAY OF OVERDRAFTS**

**Hon. Wayne Cheverie (L):** Yes, Madam Speaker. By command of His Honour, the Lieutenant Governor, I beg leave to table the Report of All Bank Accommodations By Way of Overdrafts since my last report, Madam Speaker, in report of all loans and advances required pursuant to Section 30 of the Financial Administration Act; and I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Health and Social Services, that the said document be received and do lie on the table.

**Speaker:** Shall it carry?

**Honourable Members:** Carried.

**Speaker:** Carried. The honourable Attorney General.

**REASONS FOR EXEMPTION IN RESPECT  
TO THE ACQUISITION OF LAND**

**Hon. Alan Buchanan (L):** Madam Speaker, by command of His Honour, the Lieutenant Governor, I beg leave to table a document intituled, Reasons For Exemption In Respect To The Acquisition Of Land as required pursuant to Section 17.2 of the Lands Protection Act for the period ending February 27th, 22nd, Madam Speaker, 1996; and I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry that said document be received and do lie on the table.

**Speaker:** Shall it carry?

**Some Honourable Members:** Carried.

**Speaker:** Carried. Reports by Committees. Introduction of Government Bills. The Honourable Minister of the Environment.

*INTRODUCTION OF GOVERNMENT BILLS***BILL NO. 4- AN ACT TO AMEND THE FISH AND  
GAME PROTECTION ACT**

**Hon. Barry Hicken (L):** Environmental Resources. Madam Speaker, I beg leave to introduce a bill to be intituled, An Act To Amend The Fish And Game Protection Act; and I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Health and Social Services, that this bill be now received and read the first time.

**Speaker:** Shall it carry?

**Some Honourable Members:** Carried.

**Speaker:** Carried.

**Clerk:** Bill No. 4, An Act To Amend The Fish And Game Protection Act, read the first time.

**Hon. Barry Hicken (L):** Madam Speaker, this bill removes the ratite birds, such as emu, ostrich and rhea from the definition of exotic animals; and ratite birds are now farmed in the province and the amendment takes them out of the category of exotic animal, removes the permits and other requirements imposed by the regulations.

**Speaker:** Thank you. The Honourable Minister of the Environment and Resources.

**BILL NO. 17- AN ACT TO AMEND THE ARCHIVES  
ACT**

**Hon. Barry Hicken (L):** Madam Speaker, I beg leave to introduce a bill to be intituled, An Act To Amend The Archives Act; and I move, seconded by the Provincial Treasurer that the same be now received and read the first time.

**Speaker:** Shall it carry?

**Some Honourable Members:** Carried.

**Speaker:** Carried.

**Clerk:** Bill No. 17, An Act To Amend The Archives Act read the first time.

**Hon. Barry Hicken (L):** Madam Speaker, this appear to be just housekeeping changes to redefine the department, including the commissioners and other institutions referred to in the bill, just some small amendments. Thank you.

**Speaker:** The Honourable Provincial Treasurer.

**BILL NO. 15- AN ACT TO AMEND THE REVENUE  
ADMINISTRATION ACT**

**Hon. Wayne Cheverie (L):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Health and Social Ser-, I beg leave, Madam Speaker, to introduce a bill to be intituled, An Act To Amend The Revenue Administration Act; and I move, seconded by the Minister of Health and Social Services, that the same be now received and read a first time.

**Speaker:** Shall it carry?

**Honourable Members:** Carried.

**Speaker:** Carried.

**Clerk:** Bill No.15, An Act To Amend The Revenue Administration Act, read a first time.

**Hon. Wayne Cheverie (L):** Madam Speaker, this bill makes several housekeeping amendments. In the first section, it obliges a person filing a Notice of Objection to a tax assessment, to set out all the objections on which that person will rely. This amendment together with the amendment to subsection 10.4, will prevent new evidence unknown to the commissioner from being presented at the hearing before IRAC, and thus will expedite the appeal process; and one other section enables the minister, Madam Speaker, to declare an account uncollectible and thereupon interest will cease to accrue.

**Speaker:** Thank you. The honourable Minister.

#### **BILL NO. 13- AN ACT TO AMEND THE GASOLINE TAX ACT**

**Hon. Wayne Cheverie (L):** Madam Speaker, I beg leave to introduce a bill to be intituled, An Act To Amend The Gasoline Tax Act; and I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Health and Social Services, that the same be now received and read a first time.

**Speaker:** Shall it carry?

**Honourable Members:** Carried.

**Speaker:** Carried.

**Clerk:** Bill No. 13, An Act To Amend The Gasoline Tax Act read a first time.

**Hon. Wayne Cheverie (L):** Madam Speaker, this makes one slight change in relation to the massive commercial vehicles in keeping with the International Fuel Tax Agreement that the provinces entered into.

**Speaker:** Thank you. The Honourable Minister of Provincial Affairs, the Attorney General.

#### **BILL NO. 3- AN ACT TO AMEND THE LIQUOR CONTROL ACT**

**Hon. Alan Buchanan (L):** Madam Speaker, I beg leave to introduce a bill to intituled, An Act To Amend The Liquor Control Act; and I move, seconded by the honourable Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, that the same be now received and read a first time.

**Speaker:** Shall it carry?

**Honourable Members:** Carried.

**Speaker:** Carried.

**Hon. Alan Buchanan (L):** Madam Speaker, oh I'm sorry, jumped the gun here.

**Clerk:** Bill No.3, An Act To Amend The Liquor Control Act, read a first time.

**Speaker:** Thank you. The honourable Minister.

**Hon. Alan Buchanan (L):** Thank you, Madam Speaker, this is a minor housekeeping amendment to the licencing provisions of the Liquor Control Act, which makes provision for two new sets of licences, one which has been requested for some period of time from the tourism industry, will provide for a tourist home licence, which will allow spirits, wine and liqueurs and such, to be served in a bed and breakfast or tourist home, legally.

The other, Madam Speaker, makes provision for a distiller's licence. Now you will recall that last year we brought an amendment to the act making provision for a winery licence in the province. Lo and behold, as soon as we did that, a winery popped up in the southern part of my riding and we're hoping, Madam Speaker, that the inclusion of a distiller's licence will have the same kind of impact here this year, and of course, we know that our Minister of Economic Development and Tourism has been recruiting heavily, but, Madam Speaker, we feel that it's an appropriate licencing provision to have in the Act in case we are success in getting a distillery to locate in the province.

**Speaker:** Thank you, honourable Minister.

**An Honourable Member:** Do you have any more like that?

**Speaker:** The honourable Minister of Provincial Affairs and Attorney General.

#### **BILL NO. 5- AN ACT TO AMEND THE MUNICIPALITIES ACT**

**Hon. Alan Buchanan (L):** I have several others, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I beg leave to introduce a bill to be intituled An Act To Amend The Municipalities Act; and I move, seconded by the honourable Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, that same be now received and read a first time.

**Speaker:** Shall it carry?

**Honourable Members:** Carried.

**Speaker:** Carried.

**Clerk:** Bill No. 5, An Act To Amend The Municipalities Act, read a first time.

**Hon. Alan Buchanan (L):** Madam Speaker, this Act provides two amendments, one of more significance than another. The first one involves our volunteer fire departments in the province. Under the terms and conditions of the Municipalities Act, as it's currently written, municipalities had the right to provide fire services, but as we all know, Madam Speaker, our fire departments, our volunteer fire departments, have become increasingly more sophisticated over the years, and are providing services, emergency services, other than simple fire services, like for example, jaws of life at accidents, highway accidents, and that kind of thing.

Madam Speaker, just to ensure that they would not be subjected to a suit, we are providing an amendment to the Municipalities Act, which will that the municipalities are able to provide those kinds of emergency services.

The second amendment, Madam Speaker, comes about as a, at the request of the P.E.I Federation of Municipalities and it concerns the synchronization of elections. In 1996, the extension of elected, of people elected in that year, for an additional year, in other words, for a four year term as opposed to a three year term, Madam Speaker, so that then we will have elections occurring across the province in both our major municipalities and our smaller municipalities at the same time. The Federation of Municipalities believes, and the department agrees, that this would help with generating interest in municipal politics and encouraging greater participation at the polls.

**Speaker:** Thank you, honourable Minister.

**Hon. Alan Buchanan (L):** It's a one shot deal, for 1996 only.

**Speaker:** honourable Minister, you have others?

#### **BILL NO.12- AN ACT TO AMEND THE CHARLOTTETOWN AREA MUNICIPALITIES ACT**

**Hon. Alan Buchanan (L):** Yes, Madam Speaker, I beg leave to introduce a bill to be intituled, An Act To Amend The Charlottetown Area Municipalities Act; and I move, seconded by the honourable Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, that the same be now received and read a first time.

**Speaker:** Shall it carry?

**Honourable Members:** Carried.

**Speaker:** Carried.

**Clerk:** Bill No. 12, An Act To Amend The Charlottetown Area Municipalities Act, read a first time.

**Hon. Alan Buchanan (L):** Madam Speaker, this bill provides for the City of Charlottetown and the towns of Stratford and Cornwall to extend and expand responsibilities for emergency services other than fire services as well, similar to the amendment that was brought about in the Municipalities Act.

**Speaker:** Thank you.

**Hon. Alan Buchanan (L):** Madam Speaker, the Summerside Act may require some other minor changes as well, some other items that have come to light since we introduced the Act, they will also have amendments of this type, but it will also be accompanied by other amendments and I'm not prepared to introduce them at this point.

**Speaker:** The honourable Minister, the honourable Attorney General,

#### **BILL NO. 10- AN ACT TO AMEND THE OCCUPATION AND SAFETY ACT**

**Hon. Alan Buchanan (L):** Madam Speaker, one final one here. I beg leave to introduce, Madam Speaker, a bill to be intituled, An Act To Amend The Occupational Health And Safety Act; and I move, seconded by the honourable Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, that the same be now received and read a first time.

**Speaker:** Shall it carry?

**Honourable Members:** Carried.

**Speaker:** Carried.

**Clerk:** Bill No. 10, An Act To Amend The Occupational Health And Safety Act, read a first time.

**Hon. Alan Buchanan (L):** Madam Speaker, this bill makes a series of housekeeping changes to the Occupational Health and Safety Act. Primarily I guess, Madam Speaker, it makes provision for the transfer of the Occupational Health and Safety Division from the Department of Provincial Affairs and Attorney General to the Workers' Compensation Board.

This follows, Madam Speaker, the recommendation of the employers group of the Workers' Compensation Board to better accommodate the new Workers' Compensation Act, and the new philosophy which drives the Act; and our new movement well, Madam Speaker, to experience-based assessment, which will ensure that workers' compensation rates are based on the experience of the individual employer and their safety record.

And it's felt, Madam Speaker, that we can improve safety at the workplace by combining the worker compensation function and the occupational health and safety function more closely together.

**Speaker:** Thank you, honourable Minister. The honourable Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry.

**BILL NO. 7- AN ACT TO AMEND THE APIARY INSPECTION ACT**

**Hon. Walter Bradley (L):** Madam Speaker, I beg leave to introduce a bill to be intituled, An Act To Amend The Apiary Inspection Act; and I move, seconded by the honourable Minister of Provincial Affairs, that the same be now received and read a first time.

**Speaker:** Shall it carry?

**Honourable Members:** Carried.

**Speaker:** Carried.

**Clerk:** Bill No.7, An Act To Amend The Apiary Inspection Act, read a first time.

**Speaker:** Honourable Minister.

**Hon. Walter Bradley (L):** Madam Speaker, this bill is minor housekeeping in it removes the requirement for inspectors to be appointed by the Lieutenant Governor and Council. Under this amendment, the Minister may appoint them.

**Hon. Alan Buchanan(L):** Minor hive keeping, Madam Speaker, not housekeeping.

**Speaker:** The Honourable Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry.

**BILL NO. 8- AN ACT TO AMEND THE ARTIFICIAL INSEMINATION ACT**

**Hon. Walter Bradley (L):** Madam Speaker, I beg leave to introduce a bill, to be intituled, An Act To Amend The Artificial Insemination Act; and I move, seconded by the honourable Minister of Provincial Affairs, that the same be now received and read a first time.

**Speaker:** Shall it carry?

**Honourable Members:** Carried.

**Speaker:** Carried.

**Clerk:** Bill No. 8, An Act To Amend The Artificial Insemination

Act, read a first time.

**Speaker:** Honourable Minister.

**Hon. Walter Bradley (L):** Madam Speaker, this repeals one Section, Section 3, of the Act, which provided for an Artificial Insemination Advisory Board. There's no need of that any more, and the people in charge of the artificial insemination in the province recommended this, and we agree with it. It does make an inconsequential change to some other sections also.

**Speaker:** Thank you, honourable Minister. Honourable Minister, one more?

**BILL NO. 9- AN ACT TO AMEND THE NATURAL PRODUCTS MARKETING ACT**

**Hon. Walter Bradley (L):** Madam Speaker, I beg leave to introduce a bill, to be intituled, An Act To Amend The Natural Product Marketing Act; and I move, seconded by the honourable Minister of Provincial Affairs, that the same be now received and read a first time.

**Speaker:** Shall it carry?

**Honourable Members:** Carried.

**Speaker:** Carried.

**Clerk:** Bill No. 9, An Act To Amend The Natural Products Marketing Act, read the first time.

**Hon. Walter Bradley (L):** Madam Speaker, this is a housekeeping amendment to the Natural Products Marketing Act. The first, section one, enables the Marketing Council by Order to establish minimum wholesale and home delivery prices for class on, milk. Section two authorizes inter-provincial pooling of the proceeds of the sale of a regulated product, and section three enables the commodity board, with Cabinet approval, to make agreements with federal authorities, and in particular, for a National Milk Pooling Agreement; and section four requires that a producer requesting a refund of the levy from a commodity group, substantiate that claim by submitting a copy of the invoice. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Speaker:** Thank you, honourable Minister. The honourable Minister of Health and Social Services.

**BILL NO. 19- AN ACT TO AMEND THE COMMUNITY CARE FACILITIES AND NURSING HOMES ACT**

**Walter McEwen (L):** Madam Speaker, I beg leave to introduce a bill, to be intituled, An Act To Amend The Community Care Facilities And Nursing Homes Act, and I move, seconded by the

honourable Minister of Economic Development and Tourism, that the same be now received and read a first time.

**Speaker:** Thank you. Shall it carry?

**Honourable Members:** Carried.

**Speaker:** Carried.

**Clerk:** Bill No. 19, An Act To Amend The Community Care Facilities and Nursing Homes Act, read the first time.

**Hon. Walter McEwen (L):** Various amendments to the legislation, Madam Speaker, just to generally update it.

**Speaker:** Thank you. The honourable Minister of Economic Development and Tourism.

**BILL NO. 14- AN ACT TO WIND UP GEORGETOWN SHIPYARDS INCORPORATED**

**Hon. Robert Morrissey (L):** Madam Speaker, I'm sure the Leader of The Opposition will be interested in this bill. Madam Speaker, I beg leave to introduce a bill to be intituled, An Act To Wind Up Georgetown Shipyard Incorporated.

**An Honourable Member:** Hear! Hear! ( Several members speaking )

**Hon. Robert Morrissey (L):** And Madam Speaker, I insisted of my staff that regardless if there's a cost, make sure there's no dollar figure in my budget this year because I do not want another three hour lecture from the Leader of The Opposition. Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Minister of Health and Social Services, that the same be now received and read a first time.

**Speaker:** Shall it carry?

**Honourable Members:** Carried.

**Speaker:** Carried.

**Clerk:** Bill No. 14, An Act To Wind Up Georgetown Shipyard Incorporated, read a first time.

**Hon. Robert Morrissey (L):** No, Madam Speaker, the Provincial Treasurer said the bill is self-explanatory. (Laughter) Really, on a serious note, though, Madam Speaker, I'm pleased that while doing this act to wind up the corporation, that in its place is a very successful identity there, employing a lot of Islanders. I'm sure my colleague, the member from Fifth Kings, both of them, will appreciate there are legal transactions to transfer, one is an on-going court case, to the books of Enterprise P.E.I., but when we

discuss that..

**Leader of the Opposition:** ... ( Indistinct)

**Speaker:** Thank you, honourable Minister.

**Hon. Robert Morrissey (L):** we'll discuss that when we get on the floor of the House.

**Speaker:** The honourable Premier.

**Hon. Robert Morrissey (L):** We tell you there's a test. If you can find it, Madam Leader of The Opposition... ( Indistinct)

**BILL NO. 2- AN ACT TO AMEND THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY ACT**

**Premier:** Madam Speaker, I beg leave to introduce a bill to be intituled, An Act To Amend The Legislative Assembly Act; and I move, seconded by the honourable Provincial Treasurer, same be received and read a first time.

**Speaker:** Shall it carry?

**Honourable Members:** Carried.

**Speaker:** Carried.

**Clerk:** Bill No.2, An Act To Amend The Legislative Assembly Act, read a first time.

**Premier:** Madam Speaker, by way of explanation, these amendments to this Act are here, coming from recommendations from the Standing Committee that reviewed this Act in the last Session.

**An Honourable Member:** Madam Speaker, the late Minister of Education...

**Speaker:** The honourable Minister of Education.

**BILL NO. 6- AN ACT TO AMEND THE ISLAND REGULATORY AND APPEALS COMMISSION ACT**

**Hon. Gordon MacInnis ( L):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I beg leave to introduce a bill to be intituled, An Act To Amend The Island Regulatory and Appeals Commission Act; and I move, seconded by the honourable Minister of the Environment, that the said now be received and read a first time.

**Speaker:** Shall it carry?

**Honourable Members:** Carried.

**Speaker:** Carried.

**Clerk:** Bill No. 6, An Act To Amend The Island Regulatory and Appeals Commission Act, read a first time.

**Speaker:** Honourable Minister.

**Hon. Gordon MacInnis (L):** Madam Speaker, this is simply a matter of clarifying definitions in this Act, and what it does is remove, telephone utilities are no longer involved in the regulatory regime of things because of the change federally, and in essence, this will allow people that normally could not have shares in the telephone utility to be on the board of IRAC. Thank you, very much.

**Speaker:** Thank you, very much. Government Motions. Orders of The Day ( Government)

### **ORDERS OF THE DAY (GOVERNMENT)**

**Hon. Wayne Cheverie(L):** Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Premier, that the first Order of the Day be now read.

**Speaker:** Shall it carry?

**Honourable Members:** Carried.

**Speaker:** Carried. The honourable Councillor 1st Kings.

### **← ADDRESS IN REPLY TO THE SPEECH FROM THE THRONE**

**Ross Young(L):** Madam Speaker, I take great pride in standing before this historic House of Assembly today to move the Speech from the Throne in this the 4th Session of the 59th General Assembly of this Legislature; and as I've done in the past, may I remind this Assembly that as the youngest member of the Assembly, I'm always proud to address my more senior members.

Madam Speaker, I'm very pleased to see that once again you're occupying the esteemed position of Speaker of the House. I know I speak for all my honourable colleagues when I say that you shall conduct all deliberations in the House with fairness, openmindedness, and impartiality. I'm confident that your vast experience from previous Sessions will guide us in our ongoing efforts to better the lives of all Islanders. I'd also like to take this opportunity to welcome back our Sergeant-at- Arms, the Legislative staff, and also welcome our new pages. Their presence, once again, will greatly aid us in the efficient execution of our deliberations.

In moving the acceptance of this address, Madam Speaker, I'd like to congratulate the government on its foresight and commitment to fiscal responsibility. And this, I might remind my esteemed colleagues, is being done with a balanced budget for the first time

in over a decade while still moving the residents of this province forward to the next millennium. As is evidenced across this great country of ours and abroad, debt load can be more than just a costly burden to our citizens. ... the very fabric of our society and are detrimental to those most in need of our guidance and support. By getting our fiscal house in order, Islanders are reaping the benefits of an unemployment rate that has dropped a full 7 percentage point over the last three years, from 19.2 percent to 12.2 percent as of last November - the largest decrease of any Canadian province. According to Statistics Canada, there are more than 8,000 new jobs on Prince Edward Island than there were when this government took over office three years ago. Madam Speaker, a major contributor to this economic resurgence has been one of the pillars of our economy - the potato industry. Last year due to the hard work of Island farmers, there were over 1,000 acres of potatoes produced, an amount never before achieved by Island farmers. This, Madam Speaker, has been accomplished in conjunction with the realization of another dream to process as many of our own products as we possibly can, thus putting more Islanders to work in an industry that has earned our fair province international recognition.

In my own area, Madam Speaker, and as well my colleague, the Assemblyman from 1st Kings, I see vast opportunity to take advantage of this growth with the establishment of additional warehousing space that would not only provide longer stints of employment for farm labourers but would also ensure producers are not missing out on markets that don't often present themselves until well after their supplies have been diminished. This growth in food processing has span, spawned, sorry, the creation of 1,200 new jobs across the Island - 350 in Souris and eastern Kings County, up to 200 at Cavendish Farms in New Annan, and 100 at the new Slemon Park potato chip plant. Other examples of this government's commitment to job creation include the construction of the Little Christo's frozen pizza factory, the continued success of P. E. I. Preserve Company, and countless other enterprising efforts of Island entrepreneurs.

Madam Speaker, in the field of tourism we are quickly approaching the phenomenal amount of one million visitors a year; and if last year's record-breaking season is an indication of things to come, the Island's tourism operators can indeed look forward to another fun-filled, prosperous season. For the most part though, these are traditional resource-based industries; and credit to this government has to be granted, as well, for its ongoing commitment to expand the economic horizons of Islanders by attracting new businesses and technology. These initiatives have fostered a growing aerospace industry in Slemon Park, the latest edition for this being Testori Americas Corporation which added 111 new jobs to our economy. Another breakthrough in this yearning to attract technology-based industry to this Island is the recently announced introduction of a call centre being established as Canada's largest 1-800 service company, Watts Communication Limited, which will bring an anticipated 240 jobs to Prince Edward Island.



Madam Speaker, this is truly an impressive beginning for what I'm sure will be a lucrative, economic environment for our province and its people. As well, Madam Speaker, Islanders of all walks of life continue to reap the benefits of the fixed link project. Job creation here will top the 1500 mark by May; and upon completion, this megaproject will open a marketplace that includes 100,000,000 consumers within 1,000 kilometre radius. In the meantime though, this project continues to stand on the global stage as a shining example of infrastructure investments, a crucial component in the future economic prosperity.

Over the years, Madam Speaker, Islanders have enjoyed a health and social service system that is second to none in this country; and with last week's impressive Throne Speech, we have proven, once again, our commitment to delivering quality services that ensure the well-being of all Islanders. Not only, Madam Speaker, is the health and well-being of our citizens a priority, but this government is providing and proving it is also strongly committed to the education of our children as we ensure the strength of this great province and its people will remain intact for years to come. It gives me great pleasure, Madam Speaker, to stand in this House today and remind my fellow Islanders that over the past two years this government has installed 600 new computers in Island schools and 60 new computers in school libraries. In this age of rapidly advancing technology, it is imperative on all governments to ensure that their children are equipped with the necessary, necessary skills to compete in the global marketplace. That is being dictated by websites, information highways, and E-mail. As we can see, last week's Throne Speech has reaffirmed the Liberal Government's commitment in investing in our most precious resource - the education and growth of our children.

If I may, Madam Speaker, I'd like to also commend those in my own riding of 1st Kings on their continued efforts in establishing the new Souris Food Park; in particular, my federal and provincial counterparts who have lent their support and their dollars in this worthwhile endeavour. After the devastating loss of the Usen Fish Plant several years ago, the co-operative efforts of government and private industry have had positive results. This project, Madam Speaker, stands as an excellent example of economic diversification for the people of eastern Kings County. Madam Speaker, this 57 acre site will facilitate as many as five separate food processing operations and will hopefully employ some 300 people upon its completion this year. The Dim Sull Corporation and Babineau's Fisheries Industry are ready to go and are looking to employ many residents, not only of 1st Kings but of all of eastern Kings County. Their project represents an investment of 22 million dollars and stands an example of not only on the cutting edge of the food processing technology but also significant advancement in waste management. The latter require an investment of about one million dollars. This project embodies a crucial balance between economic development and respect for the environment, a formula essential to sustaining the health of our communities for generations to come. Another eastern Kings

initiative, Madam Speaker, is the Baltic Peat Bog Co. Ltd. which has been given the green light and will be underway this spring providing 12 - 14 full and part-time jobs for local residents. Also Madam Speaker, the tourism attractions at Basin Head will be expanded and re-developed this spring making it a much more attractive destination point for the visitors and all Islanders alike.

Tourism diversification and season expansions have been aided greatly by the further development of the Rails to Trails system in our own district and across Prince Edward Island. Madam Speaker, this long overdue progress in our tourism sector will almost surely provide great incentive for winter tourism; and in doing so, the owners of our local hospitality businesses including bed and breakfasts, restaurants and inns, stand to gain a great deal as their facilities become viable on a year-round basis.

In light of this potential, Madam Speaker, I'm glad to see that colleagues in this Assembly have aided in the lifting of the moratorium on fixed roof accommodations in the Eastern Kings area. If our entrepreneurs are expected to plan for the future, Madam Speaker, it is up to us to see that those plans can be brought to fruition. By listing this moratorium by ACOA, I feel the doors will open for many lucrative tourist attractions in my area; such as an 18 hole golf course, which could either be publicly funded or privately funded. Prince Edward Island is quickly becoming a destination for the avid golfers of the world. Madam Speaker, golfing and the quiet beauty of Eastern Kings will provide an excellent backdrop for such a facility.

Three positive highlights of the recent Throne Speech, Madam Speaker, were the Fisheries and Aquaculture Initiative, the Shellfish Aquaculture Financing Program, and the Wildlife Habitat Improvement Program. These three areas continue to show great promise for the economic development of Eastern Kings and the establishment of these programs will continue to build on the tangible promise already shown by the respective industry.

I'm also happy to see the continued assistance of Opportunities East will benefit residents of Kings County, especially Eastern Kings, in drawing potential businesses from other parts of the Island but also from out of province. I commend the CEO and the board members of the Opportunities East on taking these initiatives on and look forward to seeing the results in the near future for development in Kings County.

Indeed, all Islanders should be encouraged by this government's commitment in the Throne Speech to spend 18 million dollars on highway construction in this coming season. That's a lot of job opportunities there.

**Some Honourable Member:** (Indistinct)

*Rec of Goes + J*  
**Tim Carroll(L):** Actually, Madam Speaker, I rise on a matter of

privilege. I'd just like to welcome all members of the gallery, and particularly, the wife of the present speaker, Mary Lou, has come here to watch Ross move the Speech From the Throne, so do a good job. (Applause)

**Ross Young (L):** Thank you honourable member. No, I don't see her here. I'm not quite sure where she is.

**Some Honourable Members:** You might have to start over there. Start over. Start over.

*Debate continued*  
**Ross Young (L):** Eighteen million dollars on highway construction will be spent this coming season. This is encouraging, Madam Speaker, because without these vital improvements and upgrading to our infrastructure, none of the worthy projects I have been talking about would be at all feasible. All roads lead to the east. A roadway provides a crucial link to Islanders travelling to work, returning to their families, getting their jobs, get their goods to market. This is an investment in our future, not just our roads.

If I may, Madam Speaker, I would also like to take the opportunity to comment on some dramatic changes being introduced to Islanders to all walks of life by the federal government. Firstly, proposed amendments to the Unemployment Insurance Regulations will hit the Island economy at its heart; that being the income of seasonal workers, the backbone of our provincial workforce. More specifically, the gap clause, the intensity clause, and the 16 week minimum must be addressed by our colleagues in Ottawa to ensure the well-being of the people who are most in need of social nets they all depend on. Policy makers in Ottawa must realize that our economy is of a seasonal nature and without proper consideration and compassion, ill-conceived strategies could prove disastrous to our economy. If these and other issues like the abandonment of forts, increased licensing fees, and the controversial escape mechanism plan are not immediately addressed, the consequences could be detrimental for not only Island fishermen and women, but our society as a whole.

Madam Speaker, I could go on and on about the great things this government has accomplished in these last three years. I would like to expand more on the future developments that are upcoming for our province. Talks of election are in the air. A tremendous amount of enthusiasm is in the air. We welcome all types of economic development to Prince Edward Island, especially eastern Prince Edward Island, Madam Speaker; and I know I speak on behalf of my colleague and myself that I truly appreciate the effort that has put forward for our region in economic development by this government, the Premier and her Cabinet, in the initiatives that have been undertaken in Souris area, and as well, just west. Our neighbours in St. Peters and Morell are benefitting from those initiatives as well. Madam Speaker, I want to take the opportunity now as well to thank and commend my honourable colleague, the Assemblyman from 1st Kings for the help and his guidance and intelligence in helping to lead the people of 1st Kings in these

initiatives. Madam Speaker, there are many changes taking place on our Island and we are not exempt from them in 1st Kings. There have been many challenges presented to this government in the last three years. Many of them hurt fellow Islanders in the short-term, but in the long term changes have to be made, Madam Speaker, in the best interests of all Islanders; and I appreciate not only the support from my colleague, the Assemblyman from 1st Kings, but the support from the rest of the members in this House as we undertook many strong initiatives.

Madam Speaker, the future is bright. Our citizens enjoy a quality of life on Prince Edward Island that is the envy of all Canadians. Our sandy beaches, warm waters, lush farmlands, and the pristine environment have drawn not only countless tourists, but also with the continued effort of this government a broadening economic horizon that holds many possibilities for our residents. Madam Speaker, our only limitation are our own imaginations. Thank you. (Applause)

**Speaker:** Thank you honourable member. The honourable Councillor, 4th Prince. (Applause)

**Libbe Hubley (L):** Madam Speaker, it is indeed an honour and a privilege to rise in this Legislative Assembly in order to second the motion before us now - the acceptance of the Speech From the Throne in this, the 4th Session of the 59th General Assembly.

Before I get into the body of my speech, let me first extend a warm welcome to you, Madam Speaker, as you once again preside over the deliberations of this House. As Deputy Speaker, I understand the importance of this position in ensuring the smooth operation of this Assembly. The preservation of our democratic traditions is of great importance to all Islanders, and I know from years past that your experience and dedication to the position of Speaker will result in yet another justly administered Session.

**Some Honourable Members:** Here! Here!

**Libbe Hubley (L):** I would also like to welcome back our Sergeant-at-Arms, the Clerk, our Clerk Assistant, and the rest of the Legislative staff, all of whom contribute to the efficient functioning of this historic House.

A special welcome, Madam Speaker, to our new pages who are: Kelly Wheatley from Colonel Gray High School, Lindsay Victor from Morell High School, Jamin Barrett of Grace Christian School, Karen MacDonald of Souris High, Blake Andrew of Bluefield High School, Jill Gallant of Evangeline, and Westisle High's Jody Ramsey. Madam Speaker, I would like to make special mention of our page from Kensington High School, Bronwyn Crane. She is a grade 12 student and the daughter of Mel and Mary Crane of Malpeque.

**An Honourable Member:** Here! Here!

**Libbe Hubley (L):** Bronwyn is President of the Lot 18 4-H Association and has attended the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair in Toronto for the past four years showing beef cattle. Last year she was the Island representative at Agri-Vision in Regina, the largest cattle show in Canada. This show provides participants with an opportunity to judge beef cattle and then have their own judging evaluated. This impressive young lady has also begun her own herd of Simmental beef cattle and has already sold her first bull to Bar 5 Ranch in Alberta.

**An Honourable Member:** Alright.

**Libbe Hubley (L):** Madam Speaker, I sincerely hope all the pages enjoy their time with us and find the experience both educational and enlightening.

Madam Speaker, I also feel it appropriate to welcome our new Lieutenant Governor Gilbert Clements. His vast experience in the political arena, which dates back more than 25 years, will undoubtedly serve as a benefit to all Islanders as he begins the varied duties at his new Fanningbank residence. It is a position that requires both diplomacy and congeniality and we are more than confident that His Honour will be a shining example of both these qualities.

Now Madam Speaker, on the purpose of my address today, the seconding of last week's Throne Speech, it is a great honour to have our government call on me to carry out this task, especially considering the wide array of talent present in this Assembly. This year, Madam Speaker, as indicated in the Throne Speech, is once again shaping up to be a prosperous and productive year for Islanders in all walks of life. This continued prosperity is especially evident in the backbone of our provincial economy - the agriculture industry. With over 100,000 acres of potatoes setting a new record for Island farmers, this year holds a great deal of promise, especially for our young people who are working on the farms and in doing so building strong work ethics and character that is synonymous with the "Island way of life". An integral part of the success of this industry has been the continued growth and viability of our food processing plants. Advancements here have made an astonishing affect on the province's employment situation, and with this government's commitment to employment and economic growth, the same can be expected over the course of the next 12 months. The expansion at Cavendish Farms, McCain's fertilizer plant, and other worthy models of continued growth serve as tangible examples that our agricultural sector continues to be a valuable strand in the fabric of Island tradition.

While on the topic of the industrial sector, I would also like to commend, Madam Speaker, the ongoing efforts of the fixed link managers and employees who continue the construction of this vital bridge to our future. This project continues to provide valuable

economic spinoffs for the people of Borden-Carleton area and, indeed, all Prince Edward Islanders.

As well, my congratulations and thanks to the people at the Slemmon Park Development Corporation. These dedicated people and businesses have greatly aided the Summerside area in rebounding from what at first was thought to be a devastating blow to the community, that being the closure of their air base. However, the situation today is quite different from what the naysayers had originally speculated. Positive attitudes and forward thinking have enabled the former base to become a thriving industrial centre attracting a wide variety of business; the most recent addition being Testori Americas Corporation which will employ 111 Islanders.

These accomplishments truly show what a community can achieve if it has the drive and commitment to overcome unforeseen adversaries. It is my belief, Madam Speaker, that this attitude can be found across this great province of ours and in the hearts and minds of all our residents. In another mainstay of the provincial economy, Madam Speaker, Islanders saw an influx of almost 800,000 tourists drop by last summer spending in the vicinity of 178 million dollars while they were here.

As if this weren't exciting enough in itself, our Rails to Trails project which will see abandoned railway beds turned into hiking, cross-country skiing, and snowmobiling trails right across the province holds enormous promise for the future growth of our tourism sector.

**An Honourable Member:** Here! Here!

**Libbe Hubley (L):** In particular, I see this ongoing endeavour as a potential windfall for winter tourism as our scenic trails can carry visitors into the serene and tranquil environment that Islanders value and appreciate. Further to this, our inland communities, which often don't reap as great a benefit from tourism as our coastal locales, stand to gain a great deal from this project as their picturesque trails will lure visitors into the very hearts of our towns and villages. Once completed, this system of trails will prove to be a valuable asset on the road to developing a viable, year-round tourism industry on Prince Edward Island.

Madam Speaker, job creation has been and will remain the top priority for me and my honourable colleagues. Statistics Canada has reported that since the current Liberal Government began its mandate three years ago, about 8,000 Islanders have been welcomed back into the work force, all of whom are now enjoying the dignity and self-confidence they deserve as hard-working, dedicated employees.

**An Honourable Member:** Here! Here!

**Libbe Hubley (L):** The benefits of a growing work force are

obvious to most; but for a government, it is crucial to not only stimulate the business sector but also maintain the essential services Islanders have come to expect from their politicians. In today's economic reality, we have had to make some difficult decisions; decisions that we knew full well would impact on each and every Islander. In doing this, I'm proud to say, Madam Speaker, this government was able to put 600 new computers in Island schools last year, and another 60 in school libraries. We've also managed to sustain a quality health care system. There has been some rationalization in this effort, but unlike other provinces, no hospital doors have been closed; and Madam Speaker, my colleagues and I can guarantee there will be no hospitals closed in Prince Edward Island as long as this government is in office.

**Some Honourable Members:** Here! Here! (Applause) Great stuff!

**Libbe Hubley (L):** Focusing on my own riding, if I may Madam Speaker, I would like to comment on the recent rebuilding of the intersection in Kensington. This infrastructure development has served two purposes for the people of this and surrounding communities. Firstly and perhaps most importantly, our pedestrians and commuters will have a much safer intersection in the midst of their community. This has greatly reduced the chances of potential accidents and associated injuries. The other important spinoff of this construction project is the resulting increase in traffic which provides more customers for a variety of local businesses.

Another exciting development in 4th Prince is the ongoing Scales Pond Watershed Improvement Program. This worthwhile endeavour has seen the creation of a nature trail and beautification of Scales Pond itself and the renovations and enhancing of the existing site, which includes the addition of canoes and paddle boats for the future enjoyment of the pond's many visitors. This project, Madam Speaker, is an excellent example of how smaller projects can bring people together for the betterment of their community and environment. Co-operation today on this project and those of a similar nature ensures that our children will benefit from a sustainable environment, rich in beauty and character.

Another positive development in my back yard is the phenomenal success of the Waste Watch program. Over the course of the last year, this project has directly resulted in a 60, a 60 percent reduction in waste previously destined for landfill disposal.

**An Honourable Member:** Here! Here!

**Libbe Hubley (L):** Expressed in another way, residents in Prince County are directly responsible for diverting 7,000 tons of waste from our existing landfills, waste that is now being recycled or composted. After some initial startup problems, the Waste Watch program is now the envy of municipalities across North America; something all Islanders can take great pride in. And once again,

Madam Speaker, this success could not have been achieved without the concerted effort of all my constituents and their neighbours in Prince County. This is just one more glowing example of how community-based co-operation and commitment.

The past year has also been a time of geographical change in my riding. The amalgamation of Summerside and the Borden-Carleton area has been very well received and 4th Prince has undergone major constituency alterations in conjunction with the electoral boundaries revisions. These changes make good geographical and social sense, and I would like to take this opportunity to welcome new constituents to the new riding of Kensington-Malpeque and to offer my heartfelt thanks to the residents in the new riding of Kinkora-Borden-Carleton, who have shown their support to us in the past.

This new system of electoral boundaries will see the retirement of some well-known figures in this House of Assembly, Madam Speaker. I would like to take this time to thank one member in particular for his many years of dedicated service to the people of Prince Edward Island. I am speaking, of course, of the Councillor for 3rd Prince. His legacy of leadership and guidance will be greatly missed in our caucus, but that same legacy has left an indelible imprint on all those who have had the pleasure of calling him a friend.

Madam Speaker, I would like to offer my thanks and appreciation to another member of this House who will also be leaving the political arena. I am speaking of my friend and colleague, the Assemblyman for 1st Queens. (Applause) Her co-operative nature and tireless efforts on behalf of her constituents have earned her the respect of not only the members of this House but also the respect of the people of 1st Queens. Her reputation for excellence and contributions to the operation of this House will not soon be forgotten.

Madam Speaker, I also feel it essential to mention the incredible success of the recent East Coast Music Awards. This stunning display of talent and co-operation has shown the country and, indeed, the world that our province is an excellent venue for prestigious, high calibre events such as this. The ECMAs were also a great opportunity to showcase Island talent that is as varied as the provincial landscape. This is a virtually untapped source, one that I am sure will bring much acclaim and pride to all Islanders as names like Richard Wood, Lennie Gallant, Kim Albert, Maxine MacLeod, and our own Legislative Clerk, Alan Rankin, take their rightful place in ... (Applause)... take their rightful place on the international stage.

Madam Speaker, I would like to commend the Councillor from 1st Kings. He is a worthy representative of his district and he has had an interesting and informative response in moving the Throne Speech.

I would also like to thank the Assemblyman from 4th Prince. We worked well together representing our district while addressing the many and varied concerns of our constituents. Madam Speaker, as was evident in the Throne Speech, this government has reaffirmed its commitment to Islanders. We are committed to a quality health care system that our peoples can be confident in and proud of. We are committed to education building a foundation on which our young people can grow and prosper. We are committed to economic development, sustainable development that provides security and dignity for all our residents and we are committed to the environment. For without a healthy environment, all of the efforts we are making in other areas would be for nought.

Madam Speaker, I would also at this time like to thank the ministers of this government. This impressive group of individuals has met many challenges facing the Island's society and I am sure they will effectively deal with many more. As a member of the backbench, I realize the importance of having your concerns listened to and understood in caucus. Our ministers have made this an easy and rewarding job with the ultimate reward going to our many constituents. It gives me great pleasure, Madam Speaker, to stand in this House today and second the motion to accept the Speech From the Throne. Let us work together during this Session and have as our collective goal the betterment of the lives of all Islanders. Thank you Madam Speaker.

**Some Honourable Member:** Here! Here! (Applause )

**Speaker:** Thank you honourable member. The honourable Leader of The Opposition. (Applause)

**An Honourable Member:** Now, Madam Leader, this could be an historic speech.

**Leader Of The Opposition:** No doubt. Madam Speaker, Members of the Legislative Assembly, may I begin by welcoming members back to the Assembly. While I look forward to a very lively debate, I trust this session will not be marred by the type of incident that interrupted the last session and raised new concerns about public safety in the province. There are many more effective ways to bring about change and influence public policy than violence. This chamber should be the focus of non-violent processes rather than the target of violence. As an elected representative, it is our responsibility to ensure that the Assembly is looked upon as a forum where the issues that face Islanders can be debated and discussed and where change can be achieved.

Madam Speaker, I also want to acknowledge those who organize and take part in peaceful protests and demonstrations. They have a right to express their point of view and to have their voices heard. Peaceful protests have long been recognized as a means of publicly expressing concerns. It would be a mistake to assume that protestors take to the streets without serious thought about what they are doing or attempting to accomplish.

Madam Speaker, for many the decision to take part in a protest is viewed as one way in which they can be heard. Elected representatives have an obligation to listen to such concerns and to respect the right of people to express their point of view.

Madam Speaker, I want to recognize your role and thank you for the manner in which you preside over the activities of this chamber; and the manner in which you represent the Legislature. I realise, it can at times, be a very difficult position, but you demonstrate patience and understanding and I want you to know that I appreciate that. I would like as well to single out the pages for special recognition. This is a real learning opportunity for you, an opportunity to directly witness the operation and the proceedings of this Legislative Assembly. It is an experience that you will be, will be of value to you throughout your life, because the activities in the Assembly do directly impact on the lives of Islanders. You will gain insight into the manner in which legislation is presented, debated and passed. That legislation, you will find, covers many activities and does have a direct impact on people's lives.

You will note that while the members opposite set up committees to study red tape, they also spend a lot of time creating it. As potential future taxpayers, you will witness the manner in which the public finances of the province are debated and passed by the Assembly. You will also notice that there are many others involved in the legislative process, the staff who are associated with a variety of duties associated with the Assembly and the support services provided to the members. As Leader of The Opposition, I certainly appreciate that assistance. I am sure you will also witness the important role of the media in informing Islanders about the activities in the Legislative Assembly.

Madam Speaker, I hope you will recognize that what is reported in the media is only one aspect of the work that is carried out in this chamber. Fortunately, unfortunately I should say, full televised coverage of the Legislature has not been implemented so most Islanders must rely on the media to receive an accounting of the activities in the Legislature. This year a Hansard will be produced, providing a detailed accounting of the proceedings, and I understand that that will be available on the Internet before the end of this Session. Hopefully, we will soon join the other provinces of Canada in providing TV coverage.

I, too, want to recognize, Madam Speaker, the Lieutenant Governor and congratulate His Honour on his appointment. His Honour has demonstrated one of the important roles of the Lieutenant Governor that has evolved in modern times. That being, to serve as a strong voice on important issues that go beyond partisan politics. It is obvious, from a recent speech to the Rotary Club of Charlottetown, that His Honour intends to focus the attention of Islanders on the environment. I welcome his voice in that discussion for he speaks from considerable experience, a recognized commitment and a conviction that commands attention.

**An Honourable Member:** Hear. Hear.

**Leader Of The Opposition:** I note that several government members have indicated that they will not re-offer for election after the 59th General Assembly is completed. Since we are just over halfway through a normal mandate, it may be two or three more Sessions before the election occurs, but some members are obviously already contemplating retirement. I wish the Assemblyman for First Queens well, I expect she will remain active in the political field and I hope that there will still be the ringing of bells and the passing out of candy canes at Christmas time at my office. The Councillor for Third Prince has also indicated that after a lengthy term in this Assembly, and a variety of roles, he will be retiring. Madam Speaker, I want to acknowledge his role and specifically, from my point of view, I want to recognize his assistance in signing the Resolutions that I place before the Assembly.

I congratulate Mr. Elmer Mac Donald on his decision to chair a Round Table on Land Use and Stewardship. I know this is an issue that he feels very strongly about himself. If you happen to be flying to or from the Island during a heavy rainstorm, you notice the red colour of the water extending out a significant distance from the shore. That is an indication of the loss of tons of soil from our farms. While progress has been made in the area of erosion control, there are still many fields where large gullies have carried topsoil away. Larger fields and the loss of windbreaks and soil cover also raise problems. The stewardship of the land is a very important element of sustainability as an agricultural province; and there are growing signs that increased pressure on the land has negative long-term consequences. Demand for potato land has increased pressure on all farm land. This has resulted in increased competition among various sectors of the agricultural industry. In some areas there is conflict between residential development and agricultural expansion. There are also concerns about the manner in which we treat the land, the chemicals utilized in agricultural production and the loss of organic matter in the soil and crop rotation.

Madam Speaker, this is not a new issue. In fact, there has been debate in this Legislature on this issue. In 1987, Mr. Prowse Chappell put forward a Resolution calling for government to provide leadership on soil management, pointing out at that time, that soil erosion led to the loss of as much as ten tons of soil per acre per year. And as that Resolution stated, proper soil management is essential to the future of the agricultural industry. An understanding of the magnitude of the problem is there. What has been lacking is concrete action. It is important to remember that Mr. MacDonald will chair the Round Table and produce a public report. It will be up to the government and others to determine how well those recommendations are acted upon. I know Mr. MacDonald's skills because I have seen the work he has completed before; and it is vital that this be an issue where the report is not left on the shelf and ignored by government.

I also know, Madam Speaker, of his deep concern about this issue and I wish him every success in increasing the level of discussion about this issue and identifying a course of action to ensure the preservation of the Island's land base. With discussion and well-developed plan, I believe effective action can be taken. Many are left with a question about the government's commitment to take action, especially if such action may generate some controversy.

Madam Speaker, there are many points in the Throne Speech that demand examination and discussion, not the least of which is the government's commitment to fairly and accurately act on those commitments. In short, many question whether this government can be trusted.

Madam Speaker, I want to reflect for a few minutes on the governing process. Specifically, I want to talk about what I see as a central aspect of some of the discontent that we are witnessing across the province, and I might add, across the country. These are unprecedented protests and demonstrations. These actions revolve around trust, or more accurately, the loss of trust in the electoral process and the people who are elected. What we are seeing is a growing level of frustration. The electorate and the elected heading in different directions and a resulting erosion of trust on both sides. The electorate does not trust the politicians to do what they say and many politicians do not trust the electorate to accept what the politicians believe must be done. One political observer summarized it as a situation where the politicians don't want to tell the truth and the electorate don't want to hear the truth. I do not accept that idea, but I do see a very difficult road in rebuilding some of the barriers that have been erected. I do not see the thirty page Throne Speech with ringing political prose as playing a very constructive role in that process. I recognize that there is a political element involved in governing. Political parties not only seek office, but have a desire to remain in office; and therefore, an element of politics can be expected to enter into the decisions made by a government. But, being elected as a government also requires governing for the good of the general population, and placing that objective above all others. A great deal of cynicism that exists in our society toward politicians, exists because of the way in which the political interests of the parties have come to dominate the governing process. Government decisions are weighed more for political implications than for benefit to society. The promises and the rhetoric of parties in opposition often differs from their actions in government. The rhetoric of Throne Speeches often differs from reality. In this Throne Speech government heaps praise upon itself in the hope that others will believe that that praise is warranted. But the best praise comes from others, not yourself; and very few are praising this effort. Most Islanders have a very healthy dose of scepticism. We are not sure the promise of the Throne Speech will be fulfilled. People are tired of being told one thing prior to the election and told a different story after the election.

Madam Speaker, they are tired of political parties that enforce such strict discipline that an elected member dare not speak out on an

issue lest they be dropped from favour and punished by their own party for doing what they were elected to do—represent their constituents. It is absolutely ridiculous to expect that every elected member of a party must agree with every single decision of that party. Yet, that is the standard that many expect. When some members of the federal Liberal Party spoke against some of the policies of their government, they were punished, dropped as chairs of committees, stripped of responsibilities and shunned by their colleagues. The message is clear: speak out and you're out. Still the actions do not produce an uproar in the public. Many seem to accept the notion that if they did not toe the party line, they would be punished. Until we have the courage to change that notion, to make political parties, as the backbone of the democratic process, more democratic, there will continue to be a growing barrier between voters and those they elect. Frustration will continue to grow. The United States offers an example of how lack of trust can create a cycle whereby increased frustration leads to a drop in voter turnout, which in turn generates greater frustration. The result being that fewer and fewer people actually elect the government. This province enjoys a high degree of voter turnout, but we cannot assume that that will continue.

Madam Speaker, more and more you hear comments like "it doesn't matter what I do, they will do what they want anyway, so why bother voting." Madam Speaker, that is a dangerous attitude. How did this occur? I believe it relates to the political process itself, and to the assumption that politicians no longer mean what they say.

Madam Speaker, all members should take the time to review some of the previous debates of this Assembly. While there is a healthy amount of rhetoric, it is equally obvious that politicians spoke with conviction and with clarity. In their words, one can easily pick up a sense of what they believed and that they were not afraid to state it. Many of those early politicians were very successful in terms of their accomplishments and many were re-elected a number of times. But there was also a sense that getting re-elected was not their most important consideration. They wanted to express a point of view, represent a constituency and take part in the debate. Such does not appear to be the case today.

Many elected members seem to go out of their way to avoid any controversy that might require them to state a personal stand. The result being, that many are silent when changes occur, preferring to wait and see what the polls say rather than state a personal conviction. Election campaigns themselves often centre around a very limited number of issues that may have very little to do with the mandate a government chooses to act on. On the federal scene, we hear protests related to changes in programs that were not the subject of debate during the election campaign. At the same time, promises that were made have been ignored. I'm sure at least some members of this Assembly will recall the promise of the Deputy Prime Minister to resign if the GST was not eliminated. There are some rumblings about some possible harmonization, but

no talk of elimination.

Not every matter that at government has to deal with can be covered in election campaigns, but people do expect that, at the very least, the major issues will be discussed and the general approach of the government outlined. Such is the case with social programs like health care and education funding and unemployment insurance. These programs are considered the backbone of Canadian social policy and far more than what more than what we name a tax, changes to these programs should be publicly debated with ample opportunity for citizen input. The reason people are marching in the streets is not only due to the impact changes will have on their lives, but the fact they feel they were misled by the people they elected. They thought they were voting for jobs, and what they are getting is a loss of jobs. Even worse, the people punished for lack of jobs is not the politicians who promised to create them, but the people who are now unemployed. The changes planned for the UI system, regardless of what name one calls it, are of serious consequence to the seasonal workers of this province.

Madam Speaker, I have placed a Resolution dealing directly with the changes to unemployment insurance on the order paper so I do not plan to go into detail on the impact the program will have at this time; but I raise it as an example of the growing level of frustration felt by Islanders. When our fellow Islanders, our neighbours and friends, protest in the numbers and with the sense of frustration that we have witnessed in this province and other areas of the Canada, it is very obvious that serious problems exist. Ignoring the problem will not make it go away. It will only increase the level of frustration and that could have disastrous consequences. There is nothing more dangerous than a group of people who are so frustrated that they feel they have nothing left to lose. Those are the people you have to keep an eye on.

If the changes now being brought in by the federal Liberal government were being implemented by a government of a different political stripe, the attitude of this Assembly would be decidedly different. Members would be in the media and on every soap box denouncing the changes as being destructive to the province. They would be screaming for the Island MP's to take action, but because it is their federal bedfellows that there are in Ottawa now, they are virtually silent. That is exactly the type of politics that Islanders are tired of. That is the type of politics that has caused politicians to be held in such low regard. Whether members want to accept it or not, it creates the impression that they consider the Liberal Party to be more important than the people.

Madam Speaker, it is not only a federal issue. The cuts implemented by this government were not debated in the last election. For example, there was no talk of wage rollbacks on the campaign trail, yet a year later Islanders noted the Provincial Treasurer was announcing a seven and a half percent across the board cut in programs and salaries. Had the situation changed

dramatically in the twelve months between the election and the rollbacks? Not really. Many of those directly affected by the cuts, which includes all Islanders, find it hard to believe that the situation leading to the rollbacks arose overnight and came as a surprise to government. The fact that, for some it came within months of signing a new agreement, also creates the very understandable impression that government was planning in secret while offering a different picture publicly.

What such actions does is degrade the entire governing process by raising suspicions and doubts about politicians. It is also insulting to many voters who feel they are viewed as being incapable of making judgments and decisions about issues. If the government had confidence in its plan, if it had a plan, why did it not have confidence in its ability to explain the plan and to win the support of the people for the plan? Then within a year of making this vital decision to reduce the deficit, the Liberal government, through Orders In Council, spent 23 million dollars over and above what had been budgeted for. Government had reduced salaries by 23 million but the overspending was double that. Programs have been cut by 29 million, yet the government spent 43 million more than it budgeted for. How many programs have been cut to make up for that overspending? Government expects others to exercise restraint and follow the budget process, but the Cabinet then feels it is free to spend additional revenues in any way it chooses. Some of those who sacrificed to achieve those savings would have appreciated some say in how they were allocated.

Probably the most glaring example of this old style politics is the O'Leary Hospital in the span of three years. A new hospital constructed and closed in three years. The issue was raised and debated in this Assembly prior to the last general election and the government went out of its way to make it appear like they were committed to the construction of a new hospital and by inference, to the continued operation of an acute care hospital in the O'Leary Hospital, in the O'Leary area. I am sure when the members were canvassing for votes they were not raising questions about whether the hospital would continue to meet acute care after it was built. There was no talk of closure when the then Minister of Economic Development and Tourism and the then Minister of Agriculture were posing for pictures and sod turnings, and laying the cornerstone.

But there were times that there was trouble, the controversy over the reduction of the number of beds in the new hospital hinted of some discussions about the future of the facility. It was an issue of honesty in government that led the former Liberal MLA to resign from the Liberal caucus. He made reference to being jerked around on the issue and he made reference to being told by the then Premier that the two Cabinet Ministers from his area were not backing him. Those statements are interesting backdrop to what has now taken place with regard to the O'Leary Hospital. When the ministers were having their names engraved on the cornerstone, were they already aware that the future of the facility was in

jeopardy? To the people serving by the O'Leary Hospital it has all the look and feel of a government that took one course of action to get through an election knowing they would be taking a very different course of action after the election.

To those in other areas of the province, it creates the impression of a government prepared to spend millions of dollars to get elected, at the same time that it is prepared to lecture Islanders on proper financial administration and balancing the budget. It raises the question of trust. Can government be trusted? The answer I hear from O'Leary is loud and clear and it is no. They feel they were misled by government and that feeling was strengthened by the actions taken after the board resigned. Government moved ahead with the decision to end acute care in O'Leary. Regardless of how you feel about the operation of the O'Leary Hospital, there are only two options to explain what has happened. Neither options are flattering to this government. Either government is incompetent when it comes to long range planning or they chose to ignore their own plans in favour of short-term political interest. Either they plan on such a short time frame that they could not see beyond a few months into the future, or they could see well beyond, but chose to pretend they did not see. There is another matter related to the O'Leary Hospital issue and it goes to the very top of government, to the Cabinet table and to the desk of the Premier. Once again, it is centred around trust. In this Assembly, the Minister of Health and Social Services made many references to the structure of health care reform and to the commitment of government to have decisions made at the community level. I will take a few moments and share a couple of quotes from Question Period to illustrate this claimed commitment.

"That's the whole trust of health reform, to move the decision-making level from Charlottetown and the minister's office out into the regions to the people." Another quote, "One has to realize that when we created the regional health authorities, we gave them certain autonomy and responsibilities with respect to the delivery of programs and services." Another quote: "If it's a matter of determining whether there should be four employees delivering a program, instead of five or six, or whether it should operate out of this facility as opposed to another, those are operational decisions. Those may be taken by regional health authorities, but on the other hand, we created autonomous health authorities with the understanding that we are moving the decision making authority away from Charlottetown and the bureaucrats in Charlottetown, and the politicians out there in the regions, and I've explained this before."

Madam Speaker, I suppose I could go on for another hour quoting similar statements because it was consistent refrain which the minister and his colleagues presented, and the basic message was always the same. The regions, the regions are making the decisions, not the government. The politicians were not involved, it was up to the boards. That is the consistent message that was presented in the House last year.



Now, Madam Speaker, we know that that did not happen in West Prince, and we know that one of the reasons there is no longer a board serving in West Prince is because that did not happen. The former chair of the board signed a legal affidavit testifying to the political interference of the Minister of Economic Development and Tourism. The government system has some basic principles. Cabinet Ministers are appointed by the Premier and they are assigned responsibilities by the Premier. In terms of this Assembly, it has been expected that the Opposition direct its questions to the minister responsible. That is what I was doing last year when the Minister of Health and Social Services was giving me all those assurances that the decisions were being made at the local level, free from political involvement from the Liberal government. Ironically, we now know that at the very time the minister was making that commitment to the people of Prince Edward Island in this Assembly, a senior member of Cabinet was meeting with the West Prince Health Board and telling them to shut up, keep things quiet until after the House closed.

Madam Speaker, you cannot have it both ways. You cannot claim to be free of political interference and at the same time, have a Cabinet Minister attending a board meeting and attempting to have a direct influence over the actions of the board. Was the Minister of Economic Development and Tourism acting for the Premier? Did she not have faith in the Minister of Health and Social Services? Did she ask the Minister of Economic Development and Tourism to get involved at the board level? She must have because the Premier herself took no action to discipline the minister when the information became public. Even when I called for the Premier to take action, she remained silent - not a word. Islanders can only assume that she therefore agreed that a cabinet minister can attend board meetings of a so-called autonomous board, that a minister can have policy discussions with a senior staff person of that board, and that the minister can tell the board when to make the information public and when to keep it secret. Madam Speaker, what role does the Minister of Economic Development and Tourism have in the operation of a regional health authority? This is not the Minister of Health and Social Services we are talking about. This is not the Minister assigned responsibility under the Executive Council Act, yet this minister of the Crown is directly involved; not observing a board meeting but directly involved. To defend such actions by suggesting he did not want people to be confused is not only insulting but laughable. The minutes of April 10 of '95 state: "It was reported that the chair met with Robert Morrissey to discuss equity. A paper was prepared and will be sent to Mr. Morrissey with the approval of the board. Mr. Morrissey asked that public announcements of any changes be kept, wait until after the House closed. Discussion also took place around patronage and people working in our system to receive 2 to 12 weeks of work". It should be noted that the minutes were the official record of the board and have not been disputed and so stand as a fact.

**An Honourable Member:** How did you get your hands on

something like that?

**Leader of the Opposition:** Wasn't difficult. Wasn't difficult.

**An Honourable Member:** Where'd you get that? ... (Indistinct)

**Leader of the Opposition:** Madam Speaker, those . . . No, I haven't finished part one yet. Madam Speaker, those few lines highlight a number of major problems and highlight the actions of a government that has lost respect for the people.

First, the issue of a minister of the Crown asking what his government insists is an independent board to wait until after the House is closed to make a public announcement. Madam Speaker, that is simply wrong. That is political interference and the Premier, as Premier, should have at least chastised the minister for going outside his portfolio responsibilities. Madam Speaker, such an action clearly reflected in the minutes of the meeting of the board - it's an insult to the integrity of the Assembly, and it's an insult to the people, especially the people of West Prince. It's an effort to manipulate the actions of the Health Board to suit the political interests of the government. Nothing else would be gained by a delay in releasing the information. It would not be a benefit to the residents of the area to delay releasing the information. It would not be a benefit to the board to delay releasing the information. It would only be a benefit to the minister. Since the comment was made at a board meeting, it is logical to assume the minister was attending the board meeting to represent the political interests of the Liberal Party. A government holding all but one seat in this Assembly asks that information be withheld from the public while the House is open. Is the government that afraid of some questions that might be asked? Does that suggest an interest in openness? It speaks very directly to why freedom of information legislation has never been introduced. I'm pleased to say it's finally on its way. Madam Speaker, even as information began to circulate about the involvement of the Minister of Economic Development and Tourism at the board meetings, the Minister of Health and Social Services was making public statements that there was no political interference whatsoever, to quote the minister. Now maybe the minister has a twisted sense of what political interference is or maybe he has some legal interpretation that permits him to make such a statement.

**An Honourable Member:** Oh, he's a lawyer. (Indistinct)

**Leader of the Opposition:** But Madam Speaker, any clear-thinking individual who reads those board minutes can understand what is taking place. There is a very obvious attempt to control actions of the board to meet the political agenda of the government. Sadly, Madam Speaker, one of the people most harmed by this situation is the Premier. The failure of the Premier herself to act, to demonstrate that such actions would not be tolerated is a mark against the integrity of her office. It offers insight into what the

present government considers to be acceptable behaviour. It also offers insight into why people have taken to the streets to express their dissatisfaction.

Madam Speaker, the minutes also indicate the chief executive officer of the board met with an area cabinet minister to discuss a matter that should be addressed to the Minister of Health. Why is the Minister of Economic Development and Tourism meeting with the CEO to discuss equity? Would it not be more appropriate, if there was to be any discussion, that it occur between the Minister of Health and the board? Such meetings suggest a high degree of ongoing contact between the regional agency and the politicians. That stands in sharp contrast to the statements of the minister that decisions would be taken out of the hands of the politicians.

Madam Speaker, there is yet another aspect of those few lines that is worthy of discussion. "Discussion also took place around patronage and people working in our system to receive 2 to 12 weeks of work. What does this refer to? Why is such a discussion taking place with an area MLA? Is the minister involved in making decisions about people employed in the health system? That is the logical explanation for that discussion. Was the minister seeking to influence who was hired by the board, how long they worked? Is that not more evidence of direct interference?"

Madam Speaker, on December 5, 1994, the same minister figured very prominently in the minutes with several comments and a rather lengthy statement offering opinions on a variety of health issues. The minister tells the board: "The status quo is not acceptable and a plan should be forthcoming by the new year". That has the sound of a very specific direction. The minister also asked the board "to bring him a model that deals with the issues". Why would such a model be presented to him? He is not the Minister of Health and Social Services. He is not the one supposed to be making the decisions on health care in the region. That has the sound of a government minister suggesting to the board that he has to approve any plans that they develop. On July 10, '95, the same minister attends a board meeting and the minutes read: "Mr. Morrissey asked that a proposal be presented to him regarding this pilot as well as the figures for the hiring of a consultant". Once again, what is the Minister of Economic Development and Tourism doing making such a statement to an independent health board?

Madam Speaker, the actions of the minister place a cloud of suspicion over the government. For most Islanders, it was confirmation of what they had suspected all along. The government was far more involved in the administration of health care than was being admitted publicly.

Another regrettable thing occurred. The Premier failed to take any action to discipline the minister. I have no hesitation in stating that in any other province in this country, one or both ministers involved would have been fired from cabinet. Someone misled the people. Either a minister was acting behind the back of his

colleague and outside his role as a member of the Executive Council or the Minister of Health was aware of the actions and chose to mislead the public. The Premier's response was silence. The Premier has an obligation to the people to act in their best interests, not in the best interests of the Liberal Party. It would have been a difficult decision to step in and take action, especially with two cabinet ministers involved; but it would have been the right thing to do, right for the province. Government has blurred the lines in terms of the distinction between the leader of the Liberal Party and the leader of the government. The correct course of action for the Premier may not always be the correct course of action for the Liberal Party, but the position demands that the difference not only be recognized but that the interests of the public are placed first. It is disturbing for the public to watch the manner in which the Liberal Party seeks to destroy those who have demonstrated the courage to speak out. Government had to be forced to permit the former chair of the western board to remain on the board. The minister was more than prepared to see her cast out of health care field altogether. Almost as an act of punishment, the government wanted to prevent the former chair from continuing in any capacity.

There are some interesting contradictions in the actions of the Minister of Health and Social Services. When the board first indicated its intention to resign, the minister met with the board in an effort to have them reconsider. In doing so, he indicated that he had faith and confidence in the board and that would obviously include the chair of the board. In fact, the board was appointed by government; so we know that the members and the chair had the confidence of the government. But Madam Speaker, when the chair of the board was prepared to sign an affidavit about a recollection of discussions between herself and the CEO, the Minister of Health was quick to state he doesn't believe the statement. In fact, the minister calls it "another tactic by some individuals in the O'Leary area who are unhappy with the decision." In other words, he rejects the sworn statement of the chair of the board that he thought enough to ask to reconsider the decision to resign. He called the affidavit second-hand information and hearsay. Did he make any effort to determine if the information was accurate? Did he find his statement of "no political involvement" at odds with the actions of the Minister of Economic Development and Tourism? Apparently not. Since the Minister of Economic Development and Tourism admits to the call taking place but disputes what was said, we can assume the Minister of Health must accept his colleague's explanation; but in so doing, the Minister of Health recognizes that political interference has taken place and he accepts it. Now he justifies that in terms of his statements in the House and to the media remain a mystery. In an act of what's bordering on vindictiveness, the government forced the provincial board to move ahead with the decision to close O'Leary and to leave the western area without a board. The specific details of why such action was necessary were never clearly presented and the public were not consulted. The minister, in fact, refused numerous requests to attend a meeting in the region

and to explain his actions. One would assume that if the decision was a solid decision, it would stand the test of a challenge that might be offered. This is yet another example of how this government has fostered the impression that government acts without the involvement of people. Now the matters related to the closure of O'Leary Hospital are the subject of a court case; further evidence of the manner in which the issue was mishandled.

Madam Speaker, the actions in western Prince Edward Island are only one example of the problems faced in the health care industry. Members of other boards have expressed concern, a feeling that they are being used as puppets and that as representatives of the people they have very little influence over direction of health care. As they see it, the person controlling the money can control the decisions and that is what is happening.

From the service point of view, the level of frustration in the system is unprecedented. Morale is terrible. Decisions are being made in isolation and there appears to be more emphasis placed on administering the system rather than delivering services. The level of administration continues to grow while services are cut and there is increased pressure on the front line workers. Many people believe that they are pawns in the overall plan that is not being shared with Islanders. If there is a plan, what is it? Let's see it. Why hasn't it been laid out in clear and understandable terms? If there is no plan, how can major changes to health care be implemented with no idea of how the entire system fits together to give us a picture of health care in the next 10 years.

Rumours abound about the future of only two hospitals in the provincial system. Government has not made a concerted effort to set the record straight and so the rumours continue. Madam Speaker, the Throne Speech is yet another example of how political rhetoric is used to create a false impression. The speech is an obvious attempt to suggest that all is well and everything is being looked after; but again, it leaves a false impression. At first, reading the commitment that no hospitals will be closed sounds emphatic but what does it really mean? It is not a commitment that services will not be reduced. It is not a commitment that the number of beds will remain at the present levels. It is not even a commitment that acute care services will continue to be provided at hospitals. It is simply a statement that the doors will not be locked and the heat turned off. The O'Leary Hospital has been closed as an acute care facility, yet the government made a statement in 1994 Budget Speech that no hospitals would be closed. That statement was made in '94. No hospitals would be closed. Is there anybody who has common sense and operates on a logical level that would say that O'Leary Hospital was not closed? If you can say it in '94, you can say it in '96 and now there's evidence that people are really not going to believe you.

Last year the Minister of Health and Social Services stated, "We have given direction to the regional health authorities that they are not to close hospitals in any community in this province because

we feel that hospitals are an integral and important part in every community." That's a quote.

That was before the O'Leary decision; a decision that was promoted by the minister. What the government hopes to achieve is the impression that it will maintain the existing services. The Premier wants Islanders to believe that the commitment is a commitment to retain what already exists. The reality is the government is free to claim it is living by its commitment while at the same time it consolidates services, eliminate services, and may even be close to what we consider closing hospitals and turning them into extended care facilities. This is a perfect example of government doublespeak. To most people, the term "closing a hospital" means eliminating services such as acute care. The government members know that, but to them the term "not closing a hospital" simply means making some other use of the facility.

The questions and the concerns that existed before the Throne Speech still exist today. In fact, when Islanders look at the obvious contradictions; rather than calm their concerns, it probably serves to make them more worried. It relates again to the issue of trust. Madam Speaker, I don't understand why whoever wrote the Throne Speech put that line in there. I think it has created a credibility problem for the government. If you had said nothing about hospitals and proceeded on your plan, whatever it is, people might have been able to figure out what was going on; but to say that hospitals will not close as long as I'm Premier, whatever the quote was - people are not believing that. They're simply not believing that because that statement was said before and the O'Leary Hospital closed. There's no consolation for Souris or Montague or Tyne Valley that those hospitals will not close in, by following that statement. There is simply no assurance that that's going to happen, and it would be better not to try to fool the people. That's the old style politics. Fool the people with semantics. Put the words in so that it sounds like something else. It sounds like no hospitals will close. Your ordinary citizen who is worried about health care figures, okay, our hospital is still gonna be here. What you people are saying really is that you're going to make hospitals into other things. You're not going to close the building. You're going to put offices in it. You're going to put long-term care. You're gonna put manors, whatever; but that statement is so conspicuously arrogant that I can't believe that you put it in there because it assumes that people are stupid enough to believe it, and the electorate is not that stupid. They aren't. Why not tell them the plan? The actual approach that the Throne Speech should have taken is: This is our plan for health care. This is what we want to see in five years. These are the services that each region will have and the people could decide whether they liked it or not. If they don't like what you're offering, they may like what we're offering but at least they'd have a choice.

**An Honourable Members:** Give us that ... offer? ... (Indistinct)

**Leader of the Opposition:** Well, I guess it will be up to you people to decide when I put, we put our offers forward. We have to wait until you make that decision. Don't worry. We will give them a choice.

**Some Honourable Members:** (Indistinct)

**Leader of the Opposition:** There a lot of things that the present government could have addressed in the Throne Speech relating to health care and they chose to ignore all of them and put one sentence in there that really confused everybody. Like I think it was an insult. When I heard it, I thought why would a Liberal caucus sit in the room and agree that that line should go in the Throne Speech because it's not true. It's really not true. So why didn't somebody say, well, you know, someone's gonna read through this sooner or later, but there must be somebody that has some idea of what the plan should be and it should have been in your Throne Speech. You should . . . Your Throne Speech would have been your perfect opportunity to tell people what it is. Where is home care going to be in five years time? That's a genuine concern of every Islander. When people are dying at home, they want to know: Is there going to be a service to the hospital? Is there going to be emergency care? Are there going to be RNs available? Is there going to be any addition to home care? None of that is out there. The only line that makes any . . . that is in there relating that makes any reference to health is, "No hospitals will close." So you've destroyed the credibility right away by saying that because nobody believes it. I don't think you people believe it. I think it's semantics. You have put that line in there and now people say, "Well, why would you use that line?" Like why didn't you say something else? Anything else? Like we're changing the functions. Are you afraid to tell people you're changing the functions? Are you afraid to tell them what home care will look like in five years? If it's a good idea and you don't even have to . . . You don't have to convince the public about health reform. You don't have to convince the public about health reform. You don't have to convince the public about health reform. There is no problem with people buying into health reform, but they're not going to buy in it the way you people are selling it because it's deceptive. It's very deceptive. The whole West Prince thing was deception right from the beginning to the end, along with some more serious offences.

**An Honourable Member:** Sounding more like Herb all the time. (L aughter)

**An Honourable Member:** Now don't do that to the poor woman.

**Leader of the Opposition:** Now Madam Speaker, a further example of the reasons why people get cynical about governments is the recent action on the Buffer Zone Regulations. I guess the minister responsible may not be in the House at this time but he may hear us anyway.

This zone around the newly amalgamated communities has been objected to by many residents. Those residents were not opposed to the concept of controls on development, but they are opposed to what they view as excessive restrictions. Government was proceeding full speed ahead with permanent regulations. I know because I attended a public meeting in Alexandra to discuss the proposed regulations, and it was clear at that meeting that government was committed to implementing permanent regulations. That had been made clear by the minister, so the people at that meeting that I attended wanted it explained to them. They said, "Okay, if we live outside of Stratford, how is it going to affect us, this zoning?" And what they heard they didn't like. Basically, if a couple lived on a large farm and they had three children, the legislation would allow them to give some land to one; not to two, not to three. Only one child could get land. Now they objected, first of all, to not being consulted and they objected to the fact that that meeting didn't have MLAs at it except for myself; and they objected to the fact that the people who went to the meeting weren't prepared to explain it. They were going to just let people walk around and ask questions. Anyway, after the thing got very heated, the department people said, "Okay, we'll make a presentation and explain this to you." When they explained it, they got upset because they said, "This is the first we've heard of it and we don't like it." So what happened?

A few weeks ago late one afternoon, there was a news release from the minister who said that the permanent regulations would be on hold. There was no commitment to make a change to the regulations; not necessarily going to change them but they'd be on hold. Just need further time for consultation. Maybe, maybe 18 months. Sounds like a nice round number. Eighteen months put on hold. Now why would this process happen to take 18 months? The answer is pretty clear. A period of up to about 18 months takes the issue off the table, takes it out of the public agenda prior to the next election.

**Some Honourable Members:** Oh! ... (Indistinct)

**Leader of the Opposition:** And it's interesting to note that the news release came . . . The news release was issued just a few hours before 25 communities that were going to be affected were planning to meet to discuss strategy. So obviously, the word got out the communities were all upset. They were going to have a meeting. The minister said, "Let's get this off the table. Put it on hold 18 months. That will keep us from getting in any furor."

Now we know the regulations are prepared. We know the regulations are prepared. We know the people in the department already have them ready to go. How long will it take to pull them out of the drawer. It will take until after the next election probably, but any discussion that would result in the government having to look at them and to make them acceptable will not take place until after the election at which time governments feel they can do what they want and that gets back to the same old story. These issues .

... The issue of zoning around municipalities is new to Prince Edward Island. It's not new to anywhere else. It's not new to anywhere else in the country. They dealt with these things.

**Hon. Alan Buchanan(L):** Madam Speaker, would the Leader of the Opposition, Opposition entertain a question or entertain a comment?

**An Honourable Member:** I'm sure she would.

**Leader of the Opposition:** Is it... (Indistinct)

**Speaker:** Only with the consent member and you don't... It's up to yourself to make that decision.

**An Honourable Member:** Sure she will entertain a question.

**Some Honourable Members:** Yes.

**Leader of the Opposition:** I expect that might have a chance to ask me the question in Question Period.

**Hon. Alan Buchanan:** Generally, in Question Period the questions come from the other side of the House.

**Leader of the Opposition:** Okay. Go for it.

**Hon. Alan Buchanan:** Madam Speaker, I'm wondering on what side of the issue the honourable Leader of the Opposition is. She suggested that there was absolutely no consultation. In fact, Madam Speaker, the buffer zone was developed in absolute consultation with the community. Each of the communities in the affected area was asked to send a representative to a committee. Each of the communities did. In the instance of non-incorporated communities, there was a representative appointed from a representative group, Women's Institute or something similar, within the communities; so the document that came forward and was discussed on the evening that she, that the Leader of the Opposition was there, Madam Speaker, was one that came forward from the community. Of course, there wasn't 100 percent survey of people there but there certainly was representation from the community. And Madam Speaker, I have here a letter from the community of Stratford - and I assumed that the Leader of the Opposition will be running in the community of Stratford next time around - praising and commending the government for the work that it has done in developing the temporary buffer zone and hoping that they would continue to move ahead with it. It says, "On behalf of the Stratford Town Council, I would like to commend the provincial government and the staff of your department" - the same staff, Madam Speaker I might add, that the Leader of the Opposition was attacking on the night of the meeting - "for the initiative and effort to carry out the government's commitment to us to ... controls for all development in the area immediately beyond our newly amalgamated town. We appreciate the

opportunity to provide our input to this important document."

**An Honourable Member:** Who signed that?

**Hon Alan Buchanan(L):** This is signed, Madam Speaker, by Michael A. Farmer, mayor of the town of...

**Speaker:** ... question for the... (Indistinct)

**Hon. Alan Buchanan (L):** Well, Madam Speaker, I began with a question on what side of the issue is the Leader of the Opposition? Does she want the buffer zone? Does she not want the buffer zone?

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

**Leader of the Opposition:** Yes, I want the buffer zone but I want the people that are going to be impacted by the buffer zones not to hear it from some official that says, "Now, we've got news for you. You own a farm of 500 acres. Guess what? You've got four kids and you're only giving land to one of them and that person can only build a house." I do not think that's the way any government should operate and the meeting I attended, that letter you quoted, Stratford has no problem with it. Stratford is not in the buffer zone. The people outside of Stratford are the ones that are paying the price for this, and they are the ones that are concerned that their taxes are going to go up; and if the towns could have it their way, the taxes would go up and go further out. Speak for the people that are going to be impacted. Those representatives from the community you talked about that were at that meeting - I know who you're talking about. They stood at the door. They had to be dragged into the meeting, some of them, because they had not communicated with anybody in the room. They had not communicated with anybody in the room, and I stood there, not in government, and tried to explain what I thought your government was trying to do.

And I can tell you that my position is that these people in the extremities, whether it's Summerside, whether it's Stratford, wherever it is, these people deserve to have some genuine input. Don't pick some representative and say, "We've consulted the community." Why didn't those people go back to the community with the bad news? They didn't go back with the bad news. So Madam Speaker, I stand on the case that the government set this aside. They got it off the political agenda because we have members sitting right here who are going to be campaigning in those very districts, and they don't want to have to face the people with that issue on their plate, and they won't have to because it will be 18 months and the election will be over.

Thank you Madam Speaker.

**Leader of the Opposition:** Oh, oh. Madam Speaker, I move the debate to the Throne Speech...

**Speaker:** No, you just adjourn, just adjourn.

**Leader of the Opposition:** I adjourn the debate.

**Speaker:** Thank you. The honourable House Leader.

#### ADJOURNMENT

**Hon. Wayne Cheverie (L):** This evening we'll contemplate, Madam Speaker, business other than government business and because, according to the rules, there aren't any matters to be dealt with this evening. I would move, Madam Speaker, when this House adjourns shall stand adjourned until 2:00 p.m. tomorrow afternoon, Wednesday, March 6. ↗

**Speaker:** Shall it carry?

**Honourable Members:** Carried.

**Speaker:** Carried.

**Hon. Wayne Cheverie (L):** Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Premier, that this House do now adjourn.

**Speaker:** Shall it carry?

**Honourable Members:** Carried.