



**Legislative Assembly of Prince Edward Island**  
**Standing Committee on Social Development**

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**Date of Hearing:** Thursday 12 January 2006

**Meeting Status:** Public

**Location:** Pope Room, Coles Building

**Subject:** To plan the Committee's work on the following topics: (a) cyber-bullying and violence prevention initiatives among youth (Motion 14); (b) support of entrepreneurial skills and positive development in Island youth (Motion 16), and; (c) appointments to the Prince Edward Island Human Rights Commission

**Committee:**

Wayne Collins (Chair), MLA Winsloe-West Royalty  
Jim Bagnall, MLA Montague-Kilmuir, replaces Kevin MacAdam, Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Aquaculture  
Richard Brown, MLA Charlottetown-Kings Square, replaces Carolyn Bertram, MLA Crapaud-Hazel Grove  
Robert Ghiz, MLA Charlottetown-Rochford Square, Leader of the Opposition  
Wilbur MacDonald, MLA Belfast-Pownal Bay  
Elmer MacFadyen, Minister of Community and Cultural Affairs  
David McKenna, MLA Glen Stewart-Bellevue Cove

**Committee Member absent:**

Beth MacKenzie, MLA Park Corner-Oyster Bed

**Staff:**

Marian Johnston, Clerk Assistant and Clerk of Committees

Edited by Hansard

The Committee met at 10:00 a.m.

**Chair (Collins):** Okay. The Standing Committee on Social Development is now in session.

I want to welcome all committee members back for the winter season of hearings on various issues that we've been mandated by the Legislature to examine. We have in front of you the agenda for today's meeting. Do we have a motion for approval of the agenda?

**Dr. McKenna:** Moved.

**Chair:** So moved by Dr. McKenna. Those in favour, say 'aye.'

**Some Hon. Members:** Aye!

**Chair:** Contrary, 'nay.'

All right, that's passed, the agenda.

This is a planning meeting principally. We're charged with three things in our agenda today. To come up and formulate some kind of a plan for dealing with Motion 14 - cyber-bullying and violence prevention initiatives among youth - and secondly, support of entrepreneurial skills and positive development in Island youth, Motion 16, and finally, appointments to the Prince Edward Island Human Rights Commission. You'll note on your agendas there is a complement of commissioners attached, the current complement.

I want to also note for the record that Jim Bagnall is here substituting for Minister MacAdam.

So, members, welcome. This is an open planning meeting, and the first issue on cyber-bullying - I would like to ask our Clerk of Committees, Ms. Johnston, if she would talk a little bit about the suggested approach. Because this is based upon previous experience I think an entreaty, if

you will, to junior and high school principals might be in order.

**Clerk of Committees:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

This is the same committee that looked at bullying, which would be just part of the broader problem, in 2003. The way the Committee did it then was to send a letter to the school boards and to each school on Prince Edward Island and ask them to come forward and talk about their programs in school and what they were doing for bullying prevention. As a result they've produced this report which was tabled in the Assembly in May 2003. There were also public hearings and there was certainly a great interest in the community on this topic.

**Chair:** Now this issue, though, is cyber-bullying and also I really feel this committee needs to get an understanding of: Is there a problem out there and to what extent is there a problem in the Island among Island youth? So that's why I think it's important to touch base through the principals, with school officials at junior and high school level, and based on their response we can certainly fine-tune where we want to go further on this issue. But I feel it's really imperative to get an understanding from those who are most likely to know what problems may exist.

I've also passed on to all Committee members a copy of what I found the other day at cyberbullying.ca, a Canadian website.

**Mr. MacDonald:** Jim doesn't have one.

**Chair:** Jim doesn't have one? All right. It also contains a biography at the end of the very accomplished teacher out west, Bill Belsey, who put this website together, and certainly seems to have quite a handle on what's going on among some Canadian youth these days. So I'll leave that with you for your later perusal.

Also a copy of an article from this week's edition of *Maclean's* magazine entitled "You have hate mail." "Cyberbullying is on the rise." Can anything be done to stop it?

So those things we can read over before the next meeting at which time, hopefully, we will have some kind of responses from the school.

Also, Madam Clerk, would we also put in an ad in the paper as well to elicit response -

**Clerk of Committees:** That's what the Committee did last time.

**Chair:** - as well as the letters to the - very well.

**Clerk of Committees:** They also identified particular stakeholders they thought might be interested in briefing the committee and they received personal invitations.

**Chair:** I see. Is there any comment on this? Does anyone want to extend those letters of invitation or anything? Mr. Bagnall.

**Mr. Bagnall:** I just (Indistinct) that we proceed the same way as we did the last time, with an ad, with notifying the schools, and that should open up enough for the committee to start. Then, at that time, if we feel we need to bring anybody else in, then we can do it at that time.

**Chair:** All right.

**Mr. Bagnall:** Maybe we should have somebody from young offenders or where this stuff could come from. I don't know.

**Mr. MacFadyen:** I wonder, Mr. Chair -

**Chair:** Yes, Minister MacFadyen.

**Mr. Bagnall:** That's just a suggestion. I don't know.

**Mr. MacFadyen:** I wonder in regards to

Tammy Martell, I believe it was, that took the initiative last time in regards to violence.

**Clerk of Committees:** What the committee may hear is the recommendations are still outstanding from the last report.

**Mr. R. Brown:** I move that we have the provincial coordinator for bullying come to the Committee and update us. No, I'm serious. No, no. There was a committee report done before the last election, went around the province, you listened to all the people in the Province of Prince Edward Island. You had all the schools in. The main recommendation of the report at that time was a provincial coordinator. Now I'm hoping that the Province of Prince Edward Island did what the Committee recommended. So I move that we have the provincial coordinator in to tell us what problems there are in bullying and what recommendations they have. (Indistinct).

**Leader of the Opposition:** I agree with that.

**Chair:** Who would that be, Mr. Brown?

**Mr. R. Brown:** Whoever the government appointed to do this task out of the last committee report.

**Mr. MacFadyen:** So did the Committee say that they did appoint or recommend the appointment?

**Mr. R. Brown:** It was the top recommendation of the committee that you guys went into the election with.

**Leader of the Opposition:** So didn't they do it? Is there a provincial coordinator, Mr. Chair? I don't know. I just presume there is, reading from the report.

**Chair:** Not to my knowledge, Mr. Ghiz. Not to my knowledge. Not to my personal knowledge.

**Leader of the Opposition:** So they didn't listen to the report? Was that a report to the Legislature?

**Mr. R. Brown:** Passed by the Legislature.

**Leader of the Opposition:** Passed by the Legislature (Indistinct) recommended?

**Chair:** Is that a formal motion, Mr. Brown?

**Mr. R. Brown:** Yes, it is.

**Chair:** All those in favour, say 'aye.'

**Some Hon. Members:** Aye!

**Chair:** Contrary, 'nay.'

**Mr. R. Brown:** We'll ask the government to (Indistinct) -

**Some Hon. Embers:** (Indistinct).

**Mr. Bagnall:** Because there isn't one.

**Mr. R. Brown:** No, no. We'll write the government and ask -

**Leader of the Opposition:** So there isn't one. Government could be in contempt, then, of the Legislature.

**Mr. Bagnall:** These were only recommendations.

**Chair:** Just recommendations.

**Mr. Bagnall:** You know that. Hopefully you've been around long enough (Indistinct).

**Chair:** Quite seriously, beyond that is there anything further that Committee members would like to include in terms of invitations of expressions of interest? We've decided at this point that we're going to contact all junior and senior high schools through their principals on Prince Edward Island and that

we'll also be putting an ad in the paper. Is that it for the moment?

**Mr. MacFadyen:** As long as we can gauge what interest there is out there in regards to whether there is a need for us to meet further based on the resolution.

**Chair:** Yes. All right.

**Dr. McKenna:** We need something on the - I'm just thinking - like, cyber-bullying's a whole different concept. If we need something - I don't know - RCMP, you know, some type of people that are familiar with that type of stuff out there in the community. I mean, it's a pretty new topic.

**Chair:** The RCMP certainly, I do know, has experts related to Internet crime and harassment and things of that nature. We can certainly maybe include the RCMP in that.

**Dr. McKenna:** (Indistinct) just to see what can be done, what they are doing and what's going on in that area. Maybe some (Indistinct) helpful for the committee.

**Chair:** If we're agreeable to that, then we won't even vote on that. But that's a consensus of the committee. We'll do that. Very good.

That leads us now to our second item of business and that is Motion No. 16. The operative clause here is: that this Committee should consult with interested parties to explore opportunities to further support entrepreneurial skills and positive development in Island youth.

This particular mandate flows forth from the motion that celebrated the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Junior Achievement in Canada. As I recall from discussion in the House, the hon. Minister Currie and the seconder, Wes MacAleer, did a very fine job, I thought, in extolling what wonderful things Junior Achievement has been able to accomplish

here on Prince Edward Island to this date. But I felt the will of the Legislature was that we should explore further how we can build upon that kind of success.

So anyone with any ideas on how this Committee should further explore this issue, most welcome.

**Mr. MacDonald:** I think it's a very -

**Chair:** Yes, Mr. MacDonald, go ahead.

**Mr. MacDonald:** I think it's a very interesting one. I was at a meeting once with a gentleman - I can't remember his name and I think he was with the Chamber of Commerce or was associated with the Chamber - who conducts courses or something on how to start businesses, how to operate business and so on. I'm wondering if there are some people within the business community that we could bring in to give us some ideas too. We can't bring in youth alone without bringing in somebody who understands the business world and how it works and how it operates. Maybe we could get some ideas too, besides the junior achievers or whatever.

**Chair:** To that end, could we maybe take the same approach we're doing with the previous motion and that is to send out letters to various groups? I think of the chambers of commerce in Summerside and Charlottetown, maybe the Department of Business at UPEI, and also at Holland College, to let them know that the Committee is interested in exploring this issue and if they have ideas they'd like to express to us about how we can further this interest of Island youth in a positive way and with entrepreneurial skills, to please make it known, to come forward to the Committee with their ideas.

**Mr. MacDonald:** Okay, that's a good idea.

**Chair:** Anyone want to add - Mr. Bagnall.

**Mr. Bagnall:** (Indistinct) you covered all of the training schools that might be teaching business and any of that, like the Academy of Learning, Holland College, or any of those? Because some of those have business courses that we could maybe have someone from there, or maybe even students from those, come in. I think that people that are going into or furthering their education, some of them may want to speak to the entrepreneurial part of it.

**Chair:** Yeah. So to extend that list, we're talking about Holland College, UPEI, the major chambers of commerce in our two cities, and also other institutions.

**Mr. Bagnall:** I'd say some of the private training schools.

**Chair:** Some of the private sector educational institutions.

**Mr. Bagnall:** Yeah, I think that they should be included.

**Chair:** Yeah. Any further comment on that in terms of extending our net, if you will, and plus an ad in the paper?

**Dr. McKenna:** What about should we know what both levels of government are doing in this area as well? Like the federal government has some stuff probably in this area and the provincial governments. You know, just what are they actually doing to (Indistinct).

**Mr. Bagnall:** What programs do ACOA have, maybe, on all of this?

**Dr. McKenna:** ACOA or just development or whatever, just to see what they do.

**Leader of the Opposition:** The new prime minister (Indistinct).

**Dr. McKenna:** It's just a suggestion I make to you. (Indistinct).

**Chair:** Yes. Is that agreeable to the Committee that we would extend that invitation or certainly that expression of interest to both levels of government - provincial and federal - to come in and comment on what programs and services they may be offering to Island youth to help further their business experience?

**Mr. Bagnall:** Yes.

**Chair:** Very good. Consensus on that, Madam Clerk. Thank you.

Any further discussion on Motion 16 and its planning work? Very well.

**Clerk of Committees:** Is that also going to the high schools, the letter, or not, on this (Indistinct)?

**Mr. MacDonald:** Well, it should.

**Chair:** I think it should be included to the high schools. Would you think so?

**Dr. McKenna:** Well, that's the group you want to really reach, I think, so I think that should.

**Mr. MacFadyen:** A lot of the students (Indistinct) involved in Junior Achievement. I think the schools would be the connecting (Indistinct).

**Chair:** Yes. Right. So high schools as well. Thank you very much members. Appreciate it.

**Mr. MacDonald:** Did we include the business at UPEI?

**Chair:** We did, the school of business at UPEI, the department of business.

**Mr. Bagnall:** I think an invitation should go out to - isn't there somebody that's the head mentor of Junior Achievement or (Indistinct) people trying to getting into business, like for young entrepreneurs?

**Chair:** There is a mentoring program that is done, I think, through the chambers.

**Mr. Bagnall:** Yes. Maybe we should have the head of that program come in and talk to the Committee. Just a thought, I don't know.

**Chair:** I don't know how active that mentoring program is right now. Dr. McKenna, are you aware of that?

**An Hon. Member:** No, it's active.

**Chair:** It is very active?

**Dr. McKenna:** Wes would know that quite well but Wes is not on the Committee.

**Mr. Bagnall:** I think it would be a good - maybe as a starting point even.

**Chair:** All right. Very well. Thank you members. That concludes our work on Motion 16.

Now we want to talk about the current situation with the Prince Edward Island Human Rights Commission. Some of this really has to -

**Clerk of Committees:** (Indistinct).

**Chair:** Beg your pardon? Yes, some of this really has to deal with - I guess we could call it human resources issues. I know we don't have any representatives of the media here this morning, but at the same time I feel it is important that we should maybe go in camera and discuss that. Is that agreeable?

**Some Hon. Members:** Agreed.

**Chair:** All right. So we'll now go in camera on this issue. We'll just wait for the doors to be closed.

**Mr. Bagnall:** Does that mean there's no notes taken?

**Chair:** Oh, no. The transcripts are always taken even in camera.

[At 10:20 the Committee went in camera to deal with the Human Rights issue, with public debate resuming at 10:25]

**Chair:** Go ahead, Mr. Ghiz, you have the floor.

**Leader of the Opposition:** Thank you very much.

I know that there are two motions that we discussed today for hearings of this Committee, but as we've seen that for the first one there was a report done, I guess less than three years ago, that had recommendations that still aren't followed. The second one is something where I believe it's the Chair's idea and I think it is a good idea.

But I believe that there's an issue that's probably more pressing right now that I think this committee should be exploring, and that has to do with ambulance services in Prince Edward Island. As everyone knows, there's going to be an RFP or there is an RFP out currently right now for ambulance services in Prince Edward Island to come under one umbrella, which I agree with. I think it is the right way to go. The only problem with it is we're still not sure if we should be moving towards a public or a private system.

I'm sure everyone's heard the unions with their advertisements on the radio pushing for a public system. I believe it would be prudent for this Committee if they could make a recommendation to the Legislative Assembly and to the Government of Prince Edward Island on perhaps which system is the best.

The other issue that we're dealing with, as everyone knows, is closures of emergency rooms across Prince Edward Island. With closures of emergency rooms across Prince

Edward Island, ambulance services become that much more important. We've seen in New Brunswick recently where they've eliminated fees for ambulance services for emergency situations, and I think Prince Edward Island should move in that direction.

So I'd like to move the following motion:

WHEREAS ambulance services on Prince Edward Island are a focal point of our health care system consisting of 9,703 calls in 2004-2005;

AND WHEREAS the government's demonstrated intention to close down emergency rooms in rural hospitals impacts access to emergency medical care for rural Islanders;

AND WHEREAS the New Brunswick Government recently eliminated the fees for emergency ambulance services;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Standing Committee on Social Development undertake a review of the benefits of a public versus private ambulance services in terms of its impact on the Island's health care system;

AND THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Standing Committee on Social Development recommend the elimination of ambulance fees and emergency services as called for by the Liberal caucus.

I guess we only need one mover and that'll be myself.

**Chair:** Discussion on the motion.

**Mr. MacFadyen:** I guess my understanding is that the mandate of this Committee is to deal with issues that are referred to it by the Legislative Assembly.

**Mr. R. Brown:** Not as a rule.

**Mr. MacFadyen:** The motion that's been put forward by the Leader of the Opposition has some merit, in my opinion. I guess the meeting that took place last night in Souris indicated from the residents in the community that they were concerned about the cost of ambulances and they wanted the member there to lobby the government. I don't believe that the role of this Committee is to lobby government to, in turn, deal with an item that is not coming from the Legislative Assembly.

I mean, each of us as members could, in fact, have issues that we would like government to do, and I don't think that the Legislative Assembly gives the authority for this Committee to take on issues from members (Indistinct) here.

**Chair:** It is my understanding, hon. minister, that the Committee can examine any areas it's mandated to do if it is the will of the Committee to do so, and the Standing Committee on Social Development is charged with matters concerning education, health and social development broadly. So it's really up to the Committee whether it wants to examine this or not.

**Leader of the Opposition:** You should know that after being around for 10 years.

**Some Hon. Members:** (Indistinct).

**Chair:** Further discussion, or do we want to table this motion, or -

**Mr. Bagnall:** Mr. Chair, I move that we delay this motion until our next meeting and discuss it at that time.

**Leader of the Opposition:** We don't know when the next meeting is going to be. This is a pressing issue for Islanders right now.

**Mr. Bagnall:** So I'll make that motion.

**Leader of the Opposition:** We've got to start planning.

**Chair:** Well, we have the first motion to deal with. We have a motion out there. Can you table the motion by motion?

**Clerk of Committees:** It can be deferred.

**Chair:** It can be deferred.

**Leader of the Opposition:** You learned that deferred one, now. You're deferring everything.

**Chair:** So we have a motion to defer.

All those in favour, say 'aye.'

**Some Hon. Members:** Aye!

**Chair:** Contrary, 'nay.'

**Leader of the Opposition:** Nay!

**Chair:** Motion carries.

**Wilbur MacDonald (PC):** I would like to have the - what do you call that thing that they put out?

**Leader of the Opposition:** The RFP.

**Mr. MacDonald:** The RFP at the next meeting so we can read it and understand it.

**Mr. R. Brown:** Yes, it's interesting, because none of the proponents are allowed to talk to politicians (Indistinct) RFP.

**Chair:** Is that desirable by Committee members to have the RFP here in our hands?

**Mr. R. Brown:** You can go on the website and get it.

**Leader of the Opposition:** I think you can get it off the website.

**Chair:** Yes. Okay.

**An Hon. Member:** We get it off the website.



**An Hon. Member:** We, the Liberal caucus,  
(Indistinct).

**Chair:** That said, we'll entertain a motion of  
adjournment.

**Mr. Bagnall:** So moved.

**Chair:** So moved by Mr. Bagnall.

Those in favour, say 'aye.'

**Some Hon. Members:** Aye!

**Chair:** Contrary, 'nay.'

The Committee adjourned.