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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
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RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS AND ORAL QUESTION PERIOD
(PRELIMINARY PROCEEDINGS)

FOR

FRIDAY, 13 NOVEMBER 2009

Responses to Questions Taken As Notice

Questions by Members

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Prosperity plan

Leader of the Opposition: Madam Speaker, with an hour into it, I almost thought that was another tactic to delay Question Period, but we'll go after them anyway.

Islanders are concerned about the state of the economy. We just had the Best of PEI store shut down in October. Thirty-five people no longer employed. We had Cabinetmaster, a company that at one time employed up to 100 people, no longer working, doors shut. Now we see Cavendish Farms on rolling layoffs, Cavendish Farms, our largest private sector employer in the province.

My question is to the Premier. Premier, you're in the third year of your mandate. How is the prosperity plan working for these people?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier Ghiz: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

As the hon. Leader of the Opposition knows, the economy of Prince Edward Island, as well as the economy of the world, has been facing many challenges as of recently. Luckily in Prince Edward Island we've been able to avoid a lot of the catastrophe that

we've seen in many areas of the globe. In particular, our neighbours and largest trading partner in the United States. But our government has been very active in making sure that we're also able to help combat that.

I just want to quote here from the Conference Board of Canada, and it says:

The global economic downturn has battered businesses, workers and consumers across Canada. Prince Edward Island is no exception. But unlike most provinces, economic growth has merely decelerated rather than stopping altogether. Real GDP will increase 0.9% in 2009, a disappointing number compared with recent years, but good enough for PEI to outpace all other provinces.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Premier Ghiz: Growth will accelerate slightly to 1.8% in 2010 as global demand strengthens and trade stocks dissipate.

Madam Speaker, the reasoning they give for this is: government stimulus is one of the principal reasons why the economy has not fallen into recession.

Our government was one of the first governments in North America to introduce a \$510 million capital budget, the largest in the province's history. Even the Conference Board of Canada recognizes that it's been good for the PEI economy.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the

Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

We all do thank Gail Shea and her federal transfer payments, and her stimulus package.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Leader of the Opposition: My question, Madam Speaker.

Many other industries are losing faith in this government. Hog farmers, beef farmers -

Mr. Bagnall: Slowly and quickly.

Leader of the Opposition: - almost extinct. Oyster fishers. We heard about the exciting fishery a little while ago. Well, oyster fishers didn't have a good year. Room night accommodations, air traffic, all down.

Premier, how do these industries fit in your prosperity plan?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier Ghiz: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

They fit in directly with the overall PEI economy. We are a very fortunate province. Here we are, the smallest province in Canada with a population of 140,000 people, the size of some towns or cities in Ontario, Quebec, or Alberta. But we get to be a province in the greatest country of the world.

I think it's a testament to the economy of

Prince Edward Island that our three largest sectors in Prince Edward Island still remain, agriculture, fisheries and tourism. Industries which our government has continued to support since we've been in power, unlike the previous government when they were in power for 10 years.

But we've also decided that we're going to make investments in education through the George Coles Bursary. In our primary system with kindergarten moving into the school system. Make investments in education so that we can help transition to the new economy of the world of biotechnology where we see over 800 Islanders working in that field. Aerospace, where we've seen growth over 10% last year in the aerospace industry alone. Renewable energy and IT shared services. Our government will continue to support all industries on Prince Edward Island.

As the Conference Board of Canada said, Prince Edward Island is leading Canada, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

That speech is as good as the 10-point plan for wind energy that no one saw the result of.

But anyway, my question to the Premier. I know you had the Hedley report that gave you guidance to shut down agriculture.

How's the prosperity plan working for those industries and the primary sectors?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier Ghiz: Very well, Madam Speaker.

In fact, I had the opportunity to attend numerous announcements with regards to our biotechnology industry here in the province and the direct correlation it has back to our primary industries. In fact, our main recipient this year of the Premier's Award was a Mr. Russell Kerr who was a researcher out at the University of Prince Edward Island, who is now setting up his own company. He actually moved here from Florida.

What he said was: In Florida they used a lot of the ocean to extract from that to find new products to help out with biotechnology. He said he moved to Prince Edward Island because it's really an untapped resource. That is one of the reasons why we believe biotechnology has a direct correlation back to our primary industry.

In fact, yesterday the hon. Minister of Innovation and Advanced Learning - and I think someone perhaps the Leader of the Opposition knows quite well, Gail Shea - had the opportunity to make a very important investment with ADL into biotechnology which is going to help our dairy farmers here in the Province of Prince Edward Island.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the

Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

People on PEI are getting really tired of the announcements, the glossy brochures, etc., and no true delivery. I guess when we think about industries bioscience is absolutely a wonderful sector, but what about the primary sectors that you've closed? What about all those employees that no longer have work? Where do they fit in your prosperity plan? Just simply tell them: When's the prosperity going to hit?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier Ghiz: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

We're very fortunate that our government has been able to make a lot of important investments. In tourism alone, we've got the integrated IT solutions that's taking place there. Investments with our cruise ships. We've seen those numbers rise dramatically.

In terms of agriculture, our government provided \$22 million in help for our hog farmers. We just announced a recent million dollars for help for our hog farmers while they're waiting for federal programs to kick in so that they're able to access them. We're actually stepping up to the plate, unlike some of the hon. Leader of the Opposition's friends.

You have to look at the fisheries. For too long - 10 years that government was in power. The fishermen in this province asked for a low interest loan program: No, we

can't do it. Our government came to power and right off the bat we were able to introduce a low interest loan program for the fishers in this province. That government was about inaction, our government is about action.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Speaker, and thank you to the Member from Montague-Kilmuir that had to give this government the 5-point plan for fisheries.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Leader of the Opposition: But, Madam Speaker, I've heard some stories from parents, parents who find themselves -

Speaker: Order, please!

Leader of the Opposition: - who've had to make choices, choices this fall. One parent told me it was a real tough decision whether or not she should pay her \$60 school athletic fee for her child to play a sport because it was going to be half of her electricity bill. People are struggling in this province.

Ordinary Islanders know the cost of a kilowatt of electricity, ordinary Islanders know the cost of a litre of heating fuel. My question, Madam Speaker: Premier, how do ordinary Islanders fit in to your prosperity plan?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier Ghiz: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

Again, when our government came to power we realized that Islanders needed a break for a change. For too long, previous governments, and especially that government, had been gouging Islanders year after year. We just have to look at the last time that government was in power and property tax rates in this province increased by over 7%. We came to power and we were able to freeze property tax rates here in the Province of Prince Edward Island for a three year period. Time after time, the previous government increased the cost of gasoline which was taking money out of the pockets of Islanders trying to get back and forth from work or back and forth from school. When our government came to power we were able to reduce down the gas tax in this province by 4.4 cents a litre.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Premier Ghiz: Madam Speaker, just so the Leader of the Opposition knows, since we've come to power our government has been able to decrease taxes in this province by \$50 million.

That is tangible evidence that our government is looking to save Islanders money.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Madam Speaker, the previous government left this government with a \$23.9 million surplus, transfer payments from the federal government, equalization payments the highest ever.

We better not forget the hon. Gail Shea and how much money she's brought into the province with stimulus. On top of that, this government had an opportunity, however, they blew that, too, in terms of mismanagement of the PNP.

My question to the Premier is: How do all Islanders, not just government's friends, benefit from the prosperity plan?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier Ghiz: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

All Islanders benefit because when we were able to come to power, we were able to introduce new programs to help out all Islanders. We were able to expand the Best Start Program so that young children in our society could get the best possible start. We were able to move kindergarten into the school system starting next year so that all Islanders could get the best possible start in life.

With regards to seniors, we were able to reintroduce a program that the previous government cut -

An Hon. Member: Shame, shame!

Premier Ghiz: - called the Seniors'

Emergency Home Repair Program. We're able to help out families who have relatives dying at home by introducing the home palliative care drug program.

All these programs help out vulnerable Islanders, whether or not they're at their youth or they're at their final days. Of course, we helped reduce taxes in this province by over \$50 million.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

People have told us all summer they're really tired of people who seek power and want to give glorified speeches and words. What they want is good government. My question: This government's on a continuous spending spree. Fact is, the government has been warned, warned back in September of this year by a bond credit rating service, DBRS, that PEI has no plan to cover or deal with this deficit.

Premier, what is Prince Edward Island's plan to get out of the deficit?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier Ghiz: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

Again, we're in a very fortunate situation here if you look, compared to the rest of the country, on our debt to GDP ratio. Prince

Edward Island has a budget of approximately \$1.4 billion, maybe a little bit higher. Last year we were able to introduce a budget with a deficit around \$85 million. About 35 to \$45 million had to do with the pension liability. Therefore, our government is operating with around a 35 to \$40 million structural deficit here in the Province of Prince Edward Island. We believe that because, as the Conference Board of Canada says, and because of the incredible stimulus package that our government was able to introduce, the \$510 million capital budget, that Prince Edward Island over the next couple of years should be able to go back to a balanced budget situation.

In fact, we're in a much better situation here in Prince Edward Island than many other provinces across the country, and a lot of it has to do, according to the Conference Board of Canada, because this government here has been making sound decisions to help stimulate the economy of Prince Edward Island.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

A year ago, and I quote you: We're on a path right now towards a balanced budget. Words. People want action. My question. Everyone knows when a young couple, inexperienced, have a mortgage, a car payment, electric bills, and they get sick of living week to week, paycheque to paycheque. Often they take credit cards and

they decide to spend a little - little credit here, a little credit there, some vacations, some expensive trips, etc., and all of the sudden the bank or the credit card company starts knocking and putting pressure on that door.

Right now, government, the pressure is on your door. The credit bond raters are telling you you have to have a plan. My question to you: They've been warning you, what is the plan to get the deficit back under control?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier Ghiz: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

We know that if the Conservative party had have been in power -

[A phone rang]

An Hon. Member: Can that telephone.

Premier Ghiz: Not in a car, at least.

An Hon. Member: I'm not driving.

Premier Ghiz: Madam Speaker, I'm going to allow the Leader of the Opposition to re-ask her question.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Absolutely. We were talking about young inexperienced people that get under pressure when they spend too much.

Your government has been spending quite a deal. We're in a deficit. DBRS has given you a warning. I'm asking you the question. I remind the people of the House, the last time the bond market gave your previous government a warning we had 7.5% rollback. Everybody remembers that.

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier Ghiz: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

We know that the bond raters of Canada have looked at our numbers, including Moody's have confirmed that we have a great bond rating.

What we're going to do in this province is we're going to continue to grow our economy, like we've been doing. We've seen now the Conference Board of Canada has indicated that our economy is expected to grow next year by approximately 1.8%.

But what our government's going to do is we're not going pick on the vulnerable in society like the previous government did. When they got into difficult financial positions, what did they try to do? They tried to cut the Best Start Program. A program to help out young families in this province that the Leader of the Opposition was just talking about. They went after seniors in this province by cutting the Seniors' Emergency Home Repair Program. They put up gas taxes year after year, trying to gouge families that they're driving to and from work, taking their kids to hockey rinks and to the schools of this province.

Our government came to power. We were

able to help out young families in this province by helping out the Best Start Program, we were able to help out the seniors in this province, and we were able to help out each and every Islander by cutting taxes in this province by more than \$50 million.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

It's quite clear that this government doesn't understand what situation they're putting the province in by ignoring the bond raters who are saying time to have a plan, but we'll move a little further ahead. We have the whole session for many questions.

Cost of moving departments

My question to the Premier is in the spring of this year, the last day of the House, when you guys were so anxious to leave here, we laid forty questions on the floor of the House to be answered. We only received eight answers back, none of which answered any of our financial questions.

My question to you: What are the true costs of your move of the department of education or the department of fisheries to Summerside or Montague? What are the actual costs? There's no debate here about the move, it's the cost. People want the answers.

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier Ghiz: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

The cost is priceless because what we're trying to do in this province is to promote -

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Premier Ghiz: - one Island community, one Island future. Unlike the previous government that wanted to consolidate everything in the Charlottetown area, what we want to do is make sure that all Islanders can benefit from government services.

That's why our government is moving the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development to the Summerside area, the department of fisheries down to the Montague area. We just have to look - I was at the 25th anniversary of DVA the other day, and I think perhaps a lot of your colleagues were there at that time. Look at the impact that DVA had on moving to Prince Edward Island.

Is the Leader of the Opposition going to stand up and go complain to the federal government: Moving that department cost too much money, it should not have been done, it's not worth the cost?

No, she's not, because she knows the cost benefits were tremendous for Prince Edward Island and for the city of Charlottetown. The same as moving those two government departments to the town of Montague and to the city of Summerside will do.

Perhaps the Member from Montague-Kilmuir thinks it's too expensive and he doesn't want the department moving there. I highly doubt it. Perhaps the Leader of the Opposition should check with him before she asks questions like that.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

There's no debate about the move. The question is: What does it cost? When you have a bond rater that's knocking on the door saying: Your spending's out of control, what are the costs? Ordinary Islanders need to know. Is it 5 million, is it 10 million, is it 2 million? What are the costs? You've had 3 years. It's been 3 years since your original throne speech that talked about the move. You still don't have it figured out? What are your costs?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier Ghiz: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

The costs are benefitting Islanders. We have a department that's now being built in the Montague area on Main Street. I'm sure the Member from Montague-Kilmuir knows the lack of development that's taken place there the last number of years. There were a lot of empty buildings, a lot of empty office space. I'm sure I heard the hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir mentioning today the

new town council. Perhaps the hon. Leader of the Opposition should go meet with the town council of Montague and ask them how they feel about the government department moving there. Or perhaps she should go meet with Basil Stewart and ask him how he feels about the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development moving to that area.

These are great investments to help support our one Island community concept. I'm not going to apologize for making great investments for Islanders.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Georgetown-St. Peters.

An Hon. Member: Here we go now.

Stratford liquor store

Mr. M. Currie: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

My first question today is for the minister of innovation. I saw in the newspaper a couple of weeks ago where Brooke MacMillan and you have decided that you're going to move the liquor store in Stratford. Can you tell me if that was an open tender to make that move?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Innovation and Advanced Learning.

Mr. Campbell: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

The proposed move to Stratford is a reflection of this government's recognition of the needs of consumers, whether it be our tourists or whether it be Islanders in general.

Here we have one of the largest and fastest growing sectors of PEI in Stratford. We've made the decision to accommodate the needs of the Stratford area and the tourism sectors in this province. We're moving to Stratford, expanding our space, expanding our product line, and contributing more to the bottom line of Prince Edward Island.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Georgetown-St. Peters.

Mr. M. Currie: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I see that from that answer it wasn't an open tender. So, my next question is: Did you ask the existing lease holder if he would expand his existing building to accommodate the need for expansion?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Innovation and Advanced Learning.

Mr. Campbell: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

When we looked at the proposed move in Stratford, if we look at what's happening in other jurisdictions across the country, we have liquor outlets that generally now are being built next to large box stores or next to

large grocery chain stores. It's proved to be a great success. I think it's great to be part of a government that finally had the foresight to look at what other jurisdictions are doing, look at what works, and make it happen here on PEI.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Georgetown-St. Peters.

Mr. M. Currie: So I take, it Madam Speaker, that he didn't speak to the existing landlord to ask him to do an expansion.

I'm just wondering: Could you please tell us how much this is going to cost, this move that you and Brooke MacMillan are planning?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Innovation and Advanced Learning.

Mr. Campbell: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

There seems to be a theme coming across the floor here this morning about costs. The Leader of the Opposition is asking about the cost of the relocation of the Department of Fisheries, Aquaculture and Rural Development and the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.

The Premier has clearly indicated that the benefits to this province will greatly outweigh the costs. I would suggest, and I'm

confident in saying, that the relocation of the PEI Liquor Control Commission outlet in Stratford out to the Sobeys location will greatly benefit Islanders as well.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Georgetown-St. Peters.

Mr. M. Currie: Madam Speaker, it's my understanding that there are at least seven years left on this contract, so is that going to be the normal procedure for your government now, that you're going to break existing contracts to accommodate international companies?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Innovation and Advanced Learning.

Mr. Campbell: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

Certainly we've been in discussions with respect to the current lease arrangement. Is it going to be a practice to break contracts? This government has clearly demonstrated that the practice is doing what's right and what's best for each and every person in this province.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Georgetown-St. Peters.

Mr. M. Currie: Minister, can you please tell us today why you'd take a prominent community leader, a strong entrepreneur in this province, who writes a payroll cheque every Friday for 288 people, you would overlook him and take a company like Sobeys from Nova Scotia and run roughshod over the top of him?

You indicated in your election that you were going to look after Islanders first. Did you break your promise today?

Mr. Bagnall: He did, he did. He broke his promise.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Innovation and Advanced Learning.

Mr. Campbell: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

In the discussions with respect to the current arrangement we have in Stratford -

An Hon. Member: There's no discussions, he was told.

Mr. Bagnall: (Indistinct) heavy-handed. (Indistinct).

Mr. Campbell: With respect to those discussions, certainly the interests of the gentleman who owns the property that we're currently leasing are at the forefront of those discussions as well.

I am confident in saying that that person will be happy with the arrangement. Again, that we'll have a new establishment in PEI that looks out for each and every Islanders

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Georgetown-St. Peters.

Mr. M. Currie: A move that's going to cost \$700,000 and break a lease, or contract.

Minister, I'm wondering. You said there's a lot of benefits here for Islanders. I'm wondering how the people that are buying groceries every day at Sobeys are going to be able to dodge 60,000 more vehicles going by the front door of Sobeys to get to the liquor store. Do you have a traffic flow program that you presented to Stratford town council to show how you're going to arrange this?

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct).

Speaker: Order, please!

The hon. Minister of Innovation and Advanced Learning.

Mr. Campbell: Madam Speaker, I'm certainly appreciative of the fact that the Member from Georgetown-St. Peters can obviously demonstrate the increased business that's going to happen in Stratford with respect to the relocation.

Maybe he's starting to get the gist of what we're trying to accomplish here.

Mr. Sheridan: Right on.

Mr. Campbell: Of course, the hon. Minister of Transportation and Public Works will

certainly work with him to look at that intersection out there, the traffic flow. I'm confident in saying that the people of the great community of Stratford will be very happy to see 60,000 more vehicles in a parking lot.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

H1N1 update

Ms. Biggar: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I do not have a supplementary question, but my question is for the minister of health. Minister, over the past while we've had a lot of different discussion around the H1N1 virus and its vaccine. Some of the delays that occurred in getting our vaccine to the province. I'm wondering if you could give us an update on how that's rolling out recently.

Also, I've had some calls from the teachers who are front-line workers and are concerned that because of the contact that they have on a daily basis that it's important also for them to get their vaccine.

Thank you.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health, Social Services and Seniors.

Mr. D. Currie: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

Certainly the success of our provincial vaccine program, the largest vaccine program that was rolled out in the history of the province, is a direct result of the dedicated professionals that work in our system every day across Prince Edward Island. To date we've been very fortunate. We have over 32,000 Islanders - one in five Islanders have been vaccinated here in the Province of Prince Edward Island. Today, Friday, elementary schools across Prince Edward Island we're finishing the grades 4, 5 and 6 as we move into week four of our provincial vaccination plan.

The challenge for our province is very similar to our other challenges, it's with the limited volume of vaccines that have been given to the province. We've been working diligently and our priority has been working closely with the Public Health Agency of Canada in following their protocol and guidelines as we reach Islanders across Prince Edward Island. Our priority has been individuals across Prince Edward Island with underlying health conditions.

Teachers in this province, it was hoped that we would vaccinate them at the same time we rolled out the vaccines in the elementary schools, but unfortunately, with the limited volumes of vaccines that we'd received from the Public Health Agency of Canada, we unfortunately had to wait. Teachers will wait till mass vaccines are rolled out in the public in the weeks to come.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from West

Royalty-Springvale.

Update on BioCommons Research Park

Mr. Dumville: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

My question is to the - too much hockey I guess - my question is to the Minister of Innovation and Advanced Learning. As the Premier has indicated, the bio industry is prospering on Prince Edward Island. Last June government announced the construction of a BioCommons Research Park which was a major piece of strategic infrastructure in the Island Prosperity Strategy.

Now I'm very pleased to see the big sign up on the Upton Road there and I noticed that some surveying seems to be going on. Would the minister give us an update on when we could expect the construction to begin on the BioCommons Research Park on the Upton Road?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Innovation and Advanced Learning.

Mr. Campbell: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

It's certainly my pleasure to update this House with respect to the BioCommons. The BioCommons is an exciting advance by this government with respect to the biosector in Prince Edward Island that currently has 24 companies and 10 research facilities operating in this province and employs over 800 people.

It's one of the keys of our economic prosperity strategy, the Island Prosperity

Strategy. Site-servicing will begin at the BioCommons site in the spring of 2010 with the building to be completed in 2011.

It's a great initiative to allow for the commercialization, to take products being developed right here on Prince Edward Island from the development stage and help them through that difficult process into commercialization. It's a great addition to the biosector in the province and it will be great for the economy of Prince Edward Island as well.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Georgetown-St. Peters.

Licence distribution

Mr. M. Currie: Thank you.

I guess we can see how this government looks after prominent Islanders that are doing their best to employ people in PEI.

Minister, I see that you're moving the license distribution part from Riverside Drive out to West Royalty. Can you tell me if that was tendered, please?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Innovation and Advanced Learning.

Mr. Campbell: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

I want to go back to the hon. member's question about prominent Islanders. I want to remind the hon. Member from

Georgetown-St. Peters that this government has been very pleased to work with Mr. Murphy.

We look at the Basilica Recreation Centre over here. Some of his health care initiatives around this province. We respect the great work that this man does in Prince Edward Island.

They talk about a heavy-handed approach and not respecting Islanders. I believe it was that member and that government who used that very approach back in 1997 when they broke contracts, fired 800 people, and cost Prince Edward Islanders millions of dollars.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Georgetown-St. Peters.

Mr. M. Currie: Madam Speaker, I'll repeat the question.

Could the minister of innovation please indicate to Islanders today if the move to West Royalty was an open tender process?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Innovation and Advanced Learning.

Mr. Campbell: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

I think it's easy to see here today that the hon. Member from Georgetown-St. Peters is

probably starting to realize the results of his inactivity when being minister responsible for the liquor control commission. We had outdated product lists, we had outdated infrastructure. It's great, again, to be part of a government that's forward thinking and doing good things for each and every Islander.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Georgetown-St. Peters.

Mr. M. Currie: Madam Speaker, it's clear today that we're not going to get any answers on all this backroom stuff that's being done in the Premier's office by Brooke MacMillan and the minister.

But anyway, could you please tell us how much that work is going to cost for this move out to West Royalty that's untendered?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Innovation and Advanced Learning.

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct) contracts.

Mr. Campbell: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

Again, it's the same pattern here, and again we go back to Montague, we go back to Summerside, we go back to the move out in Stratford. We are responding to the needs of the consumers in this province and the needs of our tourist sector. We're doing great

things at the PEI Liquor Control Commission. We're increasing our product lines, our wine listings are going up phenomenally in response, and the PEI Liquor Control Commission is positioned this year to return more revenues to this province than we've ever seen in its history.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Georgetown-St. Peters.

Mr. M. Currie: Madam Speaker, I can't understand why the minister and Brooke MacMillan would say that they're responding to the needs of the bars and restaurants where now they have to drive out to West Royalty to get their license and then drive back to Riverside Drive to pick up their order, where before they all picked it up at the one stop.

But anyway, I'll ask again: Minister, could you tell me who got this untendered work and how much this is going to cost your department to move this license distribution part from Riverside Drive out to West Royalty?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Innovation and Advanced Learning.

Mr. Campbell: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

The hon. member talks about people being inconvenienced to go out to West Royalty to the licensing distribution centre. In actual

fact, what's happening here is we've outgrown our space because of increased listings and responding to the needs of consumers in this province. That member, when he was responsible for the liquor control commission, did absolutely nothing.

An Hon. Member: There was no growth.

Mr. Campbell: I expect we're going to probably be talking about the renovations at head office as well, so I may as well speak to that one ahead of time, Madam Speaker.

Like all of the infrastructure in this province under that government, it was neglected, absolutely neglected. We look at our schools, we look at our long-term care facilities, the infrastructure that we inherited in this province was shameful, absolutely shameful. We are modernizing the infrastructure in this province to make Prince Edward Island a better place for each and every Islander.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

An Hon. Member: Islanders first. Islanders first.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Georgetown-St. Peters.

Mr. M. Currie: Madam Speaker, I'm going to try the minister again to see if he'd please tell us who is going to get this work that's untendered and how much it's going to cost.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Innovation

and Advanced Learning.

Mr. Campbell: It's kind of ironic, Madam Speaker, to hear the hon. Member from Georgetown-St. Peters asking this morning who's getting the work.

Again, I'll go back to 1997. He wasn't worried about who was getting work then when he fired 800 people in this province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Georgetown-St. Peters.

Mr. M. Currie: Madam Speaker, seeing that he won't tell us who's getting all this work that's untendered, I'll ask the minister now can you tell us how much you're going to spend to do the gala renovations for Brooke MacMillan's office over at the liquor commission?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Innovation and Advanced Learning.

Mr. Campbell: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Nothing.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Georgetown-St. Peters.

Mr. M. Currie: Madam Speaker, I thought I read in the newspaper where you were spending a quarter of a million dollars-plus to do renovations for Brooke MacMillan.

Is that not true?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Innovation and Advanced Learning.

Mr. Campbell: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

As I indicated probably a couple of minutes ago, we are renovating head office. Again, like most of the infrastructure in this province that we inherited, it was sorely neglected. We are renovating head office, and I can assure the hon. Member from Georgetown-St. Peters that the CEO's office is not a part of that renovation.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Georgetown-St. Peters.

Mr. M. Currie: Madam Speaker, could the minister please inform Islanders how much he's spending to do the renovations for Brooke MacMillan's office?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Innovation and Advanced Learning.

Mr. M. Currie: Two hundred and fifty -

Mr. Campbell: Madam Speaker, and with respect to head office, I already informed the Member from Georgetown-St. Peters and everyone in this House we're not spending anything to renovate the office of the CEO of the PEI Liquor Control Commission.

We're updating that facility to improve the working conditions of the people who are

working in that facility -

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct).

Mr. Campbell: Sorry, Madam Speaker, there's some kind of gibberish coming from the other side of the floor there.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: Carry on, hon. member.

Mr. Campbell: We're updating that facility to improve the working conditions of the public servants of this province.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Georgetown-St. Peters.

Mr. M. Currie: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

My question is back to the minister of innovation. Can you tell me if there has been a settlement with Mr. Ray Murphy on an existing contract that you're breaking? Has the contract been bought out?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Innovation and Advanced Learning.

Mr. Bagnall: Breaking contracts (Indistinct).

Mr. Campbell: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

I think I indicated the value that this government places on people like Ray

Murphy in this province, the great work that he's done over the years, and certainly -

Mr. Bagnall: (Indistinct) broke his contract.

Mr. Campbell: - our conversations and our discussions with Ray Murphy are continuing, and when those are concluded I'll be happy, and I think Ray Murphy will be happy. Perhaps even the Member from Georgetown-St. Peters might be happy.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Georgetown-St. Peters.

Stratford traffic flow

Mr. M. Currie: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Can you then indicate to me that there is a safe traffic flow survey that's been completed and presented to the town of Stratford for this move that you're making?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Innovation and Advanced Learning.

Mr. Campbell: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

I'll be working closely with my esteemed colleague the hon. Minister of Transportation and Public Works who clearly has demonstrated that safety is a priority for his department.

Not only safety, and I talked about outdated infrastructure in this province. Thankfully

we have a minister of this stature who is improving the travelling infrastructure in this province. More roads paved than this province has ever seen in its history.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Campbell: Improving that infrastructure. Great minister.

Speaker: Thank you.

The hon. Member from Georgetown-St. Peters.

Mr. M. Currie: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

So, minister, you're indicating to me that you do have in your possession a traffic flow survey that was done for this move that you and Brooke MacMillan have thought up to accommodate the Sobeys who are from Nova Scotia? You have a traffic survey that you can table and show the media and Islanders?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Innovation and Advanced Learning.

Mr. M. Currie: I'm sure you do if you'd made a move like this.

Mr. Campbell: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

As I indicated, I'll work with the Department of Transportation and Public Works. I'm confident in saying, and the Member from Stratford-Kinnock would no doubt concur, that the people in Stratford are

very excited about this move. Of course, safety is always a priority, and we will work to make sure that everything is in place to allow a safe flow of traffic while we increase business and revenue in Stratford, PEI.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Georgetown-St. Peters.

Final question.

Mr. M. Currie: Question for the hon. Minister of Transportation and Public Works.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. M. Currie: The minister of innovation has indicated that he is working very closely with you. Do you have in your possession a traffic survey done for this move from the liquor store over to Sobeys to guarantee safety for those people that are coming in and out of that grocery store?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Transportation and Public Works.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Transportation and Public Works.

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct).

Mr. MacKinley: No, I'm not. I'll answer this one.

The lights out there were put in by the former, I believe, Gail Shea, and they were up to standards at that particular time and

they are up to standards now. Every time, if you're going to live in this area in Prince Edward Island, there's a lot of newcomers up there, there's going to be more homes, more people are going to be living here now that we have a government that brought some sanity back into the Province of Prince Edward Island rather than filling your friends' pockets in some corner place in the Province of Prince Edward Island.

So I can tell you, the lights went out there. I know you're against lights. You were against them in North River, but you know what? That industrial park, being Minister of Transportation and Public Works, people tell me I have developed more businesses in that industrial park as minister of transportation in that industrial park where you guys lost millions of dollars of taxpayers' money -

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct).

Mr. MacKinley: - millions of dollars of taxpayers' money, as minister of transportation. By putting in \$180,000 worth of lights we've increased production in that industrial park by over three times the number of people that were working there before, and there are more announcements coming.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

[End of Question Period]