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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF
PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS AND ORAL QUESTION PERIOD
(PRELIMINARY PROCEEDINGS)

FOR

FRIDAY, 27 NOVEMBER 2009

Responses to Questions Taken As Notice

Georgetown-St. Peters.

Questions by Members

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

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

IT evaluation

A question for the minister of finance: Can you tell me the name of the company that did this study and where they're from?

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

Speaker: The hon. Provincial Treasurer.

A question for the minister of finance. It's my understanding that your department did an evaluation on your IT services across government. Can you tell me if that has been completed?

Mr. Sheridan: Certainly can, Madam Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Provincial Treasurer.

The name of the company is Acreon. They're from Fredericton, New Brunswick, and they did a very commendable job. All of those that are involved deeply in the IT section, which are the directors under my direction, are very pleased with the results that came forward. Some great recommendations, and we're right now implementing those.

Mr. Sheridan: Madam Speaker, yes, it has been completed and we are into a full implementation of what the recommendations were.

Thank you.

For a number of years, since the formation of ITSS - which is shared services, where we have one group taking care of all needs across government, formatted in one department which is my own - we had made quite a change there and had cut it quite close to the quick when it was formatted. The best idea was possible to make a shared service, but it was cut deeply. So we had to get a study done to see how we could improve the services that we provide to clients right across government and we're well into that process.

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

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

Minister, can you tell me if this work was tendered so that Island firms could have a chance at this work?

Speaker: The hon. Member from

Speaker: The hon. Provincial Treasurer.

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

No, the process for the actual review of the

IT sector was less than the amount of money needed to go out to public tender.

What I wanted to do was to have a brand new firm come forward and look at it without any prejudgement. I wanted them to have a very clear understanding of what takes place in other jurisdictions and to try to bring new ideas forward. I didn't want the same set of eyes that have looked at our IT sector many times before. I wanted a new perspective.

So it was underneath the tender amount and we had Acreon come in from New Brunswick to do that. They've done an awful lot of work for New Brunswick shared services and we wanted to take a look at what they could bring to the table.

Thank you.

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

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

A question for the minister of finance: Minister, will you table that report and will you please inform Islanders how much that cost?

Speaker: The hon. Provincial Treasurer.

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

I'd be very pleased to bring that forward. I'll have a copy for each of the opposition members when we come back to the House on Tuesday. Very proud of what the

recommendations say inside of it. The ballpark cost of that study I think is somewhere in the vicinity of \$47,000, Madam Speaker, right off the top of my head.

Thank you.

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

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

Minister of finance, could you please tell us who was heading up that study for Acreon?

Speaker: The hon. Provincial Treasurer.

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

The group from Acreon, there are about five specialists right across all different dimensions of IT. There are very many touches that take place inside a directive like IT services right across government. We needed to look at infrastructure, we needed to look at actual services provided to each of the departments, we had to look at actual software. All of those kinds of things need many experts in their different areas and that's what we were able to ascertain with Acreon's staff.

I would expect probably eight or nine different members of their staff came over and went through our IT sector thoroughly, examined it, tore it apart, and looked at a whole new regime, how we could go forward with the IT sector. That's what they did inside the report.

I don't know the names of those that took part but I could also table that with the document on Tuesday.

Thank you.

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

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

A question to the same minister: Minister, could you tell me today who is heading up your IT services presently and if he's on a contract?

Speaker: The hon. Provincial Treasurer.

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

Inside the recommendation that came forward from Acreon they broke down a table as to what our format should look like. What they presented to us was that our deputy minister of Provincial Treasury, Doug Clow, would be the lead on this file, of course, overseeing anything that happens inside our department.

What we had before, we had three directors. Those three directors were in charge of different parts as I spoke about earlier: software, infrastructure, and actual client services. What they proposed was that we spread that group out more thinly, make sure that we're crossing all lines in departments right across government.

They recommended that we go to five quasi-directors - they left that open to us as to

what we wanted to call them - and have one COO brought forward to oversee the full collection of services.

What I fully, truly believed, and as did my then-deputy Mr. Paul Jelley, thought that was one of the changes that when we brought IT shared services together - what might have been a minor mistake. We put three directors in charge of each of their categories and what happens then is that you create silos out through the ITSS services.

There wasn't enough communication throughout so we needed to have one body that would oversee all of that, and they thought that a COO would be the best person to oversee all of that. So we started in an exhaustive search, at that time, to try to find someone that would have the abilities to look across all of this.

What the hon. member is getting to is that we were able to find Mr. Al MacDonald from New Brunswick that was a former president of Acreon that has retired from the firm and has stepped down from his duties with Acreon to come on and do this for us in an interim position to get us through the first eight months of this recommendation change.

Huge position. I'm thrilled that we were able to get Mr. MacDonald to come through this and do this under contract for a short time period, as interim. We're now out there starting to search the bushes for a full-time COO. This is a very key position inside our government and we're thrilled that Mr. MacDonald was able to break his ties with Acreon to come on and do this exact job for us, Madam Speaker.

Thank you.

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

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

That's what I was getting at. It took you a little while to get his name out, but anyway, so you hired him to do the study then you hired him after he finished his study and you say this is a huge position. How much are you paying him a day?

Speaker: The hon. Provincial Treasurer.

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

We didn't hire Mr. MacDonald to do the study. We hired Acreon because they had the expertise that they could come and do the recommendations for us.

Hugely thrilled right across government, and I may say right across all IT on Prince Edward Island. They know of his abilities and they have great respect for what he brings to the table. He's worked very openly with all of the IT sector here in and around Prince Edward Island and continues to do that as we roll out these recommendations.

So it's a very important role in that. We're very lucky to get someone of his talent to come forward and do just that for us. There may be three people in the Maritime region that could have pulled this off for us.

As for the actual amount that Mr. MacDonald makes per day, I'd just be

guessing as to it, but I can table that on Tuesday along with the report, if that's all right with the hon. member.

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

Mr. M. Currie: Madam Speaker, I stand to be corrected, but I believe the minister would sign that contract and I am told that it's \$900 a day.

Is that true?

Mr. Bagnall: That's a pretty nice wage.

Speaker: The hon. Provincial Treasurer.

Mr. Sheridan: Madam Speaker, I signed that contract, no question about that, and I'm not here to argue or even to try to put off the House as to how much it is. Whenever you bring someone in like this on contract that has the skill set that Mr. MacDonald has, you're going to pay dearly for it.

When we're looking at an interim director that is going to work day and night to try to implement the changes we need inside the government to keep the IT sector moving forward in this government - it runs everything now -

Mr. Bagnall: How do I get a job like that, (Indistinct) a day?

Mr. Sheridan: There's not much worry that we'll have to worry about the hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir in that position, Madam Speaker.

But what's important here is when you have

to go forward and have someone maintain and bring in a program like this - the change that has to be effected inside this sector - you're going to pay dearly for it. We're thrilled to have Mr. MacDonald working for us and bringing this forward at this time.

Thank you very much.

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

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

Question for the minister of finance. Is there anything in your study that you are going to implement? Are you going to privatize any of the IT services within government?

Speaker: The hon. Provincial Treasurer.

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

That's a very fair question. Indeed, it is one of the things that we looked at inside the study. We asked them to look at, when they were going through out IT shared service: Was that a more appropriate way to do business on Prince Edward Island for the government? What came back in the recommendations was no, outsourcing was not a savings for Prince Edward Island government to do IT formatting in that way.

So it was a very clear message that was sent forward inside the recommendations that we continue to pump up IT services inside Prince Edward Island. We have allocated more dollars toward that budget to make sure that we provide a better service to each

one of our clients. Because at this time I, for one, fully understand that we are not providing the services that we should be to our clients.

Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Branding of city raceways (further)

Mr. M. Currie: Question for the minister of finance.

About a week ago I asked you questions on the focus group study for the name change for the Charlottetown Driving Park and the Summerside Raceway. I think you indicated that you'd look into and see if you'd bring back that report. Do you have that information to table today, minister?

Speaker: The hon. Provincial Treasurer.

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

I spoke to ALC directly after that House sitting. What ALC said to us at that time is there's very important information inside those focus groups that would give our competition very much a leg up on us. At this point there would be no good that would come out of this to put forward what the focus groups asked. As you know there is a competitor coming up in Moncton, New Brunswick, and we don't think that we would be wise in releasing that, Madam Speaker, to the public.

Thank you very much.

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

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

I guess we're never going to see that tremendous work that was done on that focus group.

Phytterra EIA

Question for the minister of environment. I think in August your government announced that there was a new company coming to Summerville called Phytterra and I see on your web site that you are doing an environmental impact assessment. Can you give me the details of that assessment?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Environment, Energy and Forestry.

Mr. M. Currie: (Indistinct) environmental assessment.

Mr. Brown: Yeah, that's the one in Kensington?

Mr. M. Currie: You're the minister of environment.

Mr. Brown: Is that the one in Kensington?

Ms. Bertram: Summerville.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Environment, Energy and Forestry.

Mr. Brown: Madam Speaker, yeah, there's

an environmental assessment being done on that and I'll bring back the information when the member wants it.

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

Mr. M. Currie: Question for the minister of environment. Minister, when you're doing an environmental assessment in a community or an area, is it required to do a public meeting for the details of that assessment?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Environment, Energy and Forestry.

Mr. Brown: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

There is an option to have a public meeting on any environmental assessment. If the department staff and the environmental committee and the department feels that this project is big enough to have public input, they will require a public input. They'll ask me to have an announcement on a public input, Madam Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

PNP units re: expansion

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

According to the presentation by the former PNP minister at Public Accounts, government's role in the program of the PNP Program is to: one, nominate potential immigrants; and two, to determine eligibility of Island companies seeking investment

funds according to established criteria.

My first question is to the present minister of the PNP. One rule for retail and restaurants was that the second unit had to be used for expansion. Since the MLA for West Royalty-Springvale confirmed he used his units for operational funds, was it Brooke MacMillan or Neil Stewart who actually approved these units and broke that rule?

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

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

Here we go again, I guess it's Friday. It's Friday, November 27th, I guess, Madam Speaker -

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct).

Mr, Campbell: - 2009, and here we go again with the recurring Friday pattern of the Leader of the Opposition attacking the character of people here in this Legislature.

The Auditor General has reviewed these files and has indicated that there was no wrongdoing. The MLAs went to the Conflict of Interest Commissioner and followed all the guidelines as per the *Conflict of Interest Act*. I would implore maybe the Leader of the Opposition not to be attacking the character of individual Islanders in this Legislature.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Let's be clear, we're talking about the administration and management responsibilities that you have as minister under the Conflict of Interest Guidelines from Treasury Board, and actually from the document you so happily passed to us when you tabled on Tuesday.

My question for you is: When this MLA received his units and there was rules broken, when you went back - you're the boss - what did you do?

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

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

Again we have the Leader of the Opposition providing false information here in the Legislature. I'm pleased to be part of a government that brought accountability to this program. Of course, as the Leader of the Opposition is well aware, the file mentioned would have been subject to a use of proceeds agreement. A great piece of accountability brought to this program.

The Auditor General has reviewed these files. He said there's been no wrongdoing here, the Conflict of Interest Commissioner as well. Perhaps the Leader of the Opposition should review those reports again.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I just happen to have the presentation with me that the former PNP minister did at Public Accounts, under oath. It says: The eligibility requirement - and I'll quote: Retail increased two investors per business and restaurants added as eligible, recognizing retail and restaurants as major economic contributors. Retail restaurants are now subject to asset wage tests and second unit must be used for expansion.

That's the rule. It was broke. The MLA admitted he put it in operational funds. My question for you: Who broke that rule? Was it Neil or Brooke?

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

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

I think it's been clearly shown that no rules were broken. Here we have the Leader of the Opposition again, on November 27th, 2009, attacking the character of these two individuals. I think it's absolutely shameful.

The Auditor General did speak about deputies under the current and under the former government. Our Premier has taken the leadership and ensured that the deputy

minister under the current administration was reversing the transaction and returning that money.

I'd ask the Leader of the Opposition: Has she talked to her federal counterparts about Pat Dorsey, the current vice-president of ACOA? Has she asked for the revocation of the party membership of Mr. Peter McQuaid? Here we go with her double standard again, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: Hon. members, and members of the gallery, I know that you're excited about what's going on down here, and you're welcome to come in and view us in the public gallery, but I would ask you to refrain from clapping or banging on the rail. You're welcome to be here but your participation is in viewing the viewing.

Thank you so much.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

To the same minister. We're actually speaking about your management skills, minister. My question to you is: Did you go back and double-check under your duties, under your code of conduct that you put in the tabling of the Legislature this week, to ensure: Were there other businesses with

restaurants who wanted to apply to receive units, were their dates of their application before or at the same time of the MLA, and were they turned down in comparison to this MLA?

Because it appears that there was preferential treatment here. The only way you can prove that is if you actually checked the files. Did you do that work?

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

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

Again, the Auditor General in his report has clearly indicated that business applications were reviewed and approved or denied as per the guidelines clearly established and clearly published on the IIDI web site.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

What continues to surprise me - it's your government that's blocking the Auditor General from bringing back some of the information - but this is actually about your responsibility to go and ensure to the public that there's no preferential treatment here.

I want to know: Was the same treatment given when the same member got second units for the second Burger King operation

in Summerside? Were the rules broke again?

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

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

I guess the simple answer is no. These files were clearly reviewed by the Auditor General. Here again we have the Leader of the Opposition questioning the integrity of the Auditor General, one of the most highly educated and trained professionals in this province. I think it's an absolute shame that she continues to attack his character as well.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Let's be clear. The Auditor General's job is to go and determine if there's a problem. He did that. Everybody agrees. It's your management responsibility to check the depth of the problem and to show accountability with people who are accountable to you. Did you go in and check the files? It's 11 months since you've been the minister. The issue keeps coming up. You could get the issue right out front -

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct).

Leader of the Opposition: - by checking the dates on the application and ensure to the general public there was no preferential treatment here. Did you do that work?

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

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

Perhaps the Hansard editor will have an easier job to do this week, he could just actually photocopy the Hansard from last Friday, because we have the same questions, and the answers are the same as well.

The Auditor General has reviewed these files. He has put forward 20 recommendations: 17 of those recommendations have been implemented and the other three recommendations' implementation is underway.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

To the same minister: If you notice lately in the media, there's two not-for-profit companies that had to charge individuals. Somebody else went out and pointed out there was a problem, but those not-for-profit groups knew what to do. They checked to the depth of what the problem was.

I'm coming back to you. You're the minister responsible. My question for you, again, was: Who broke the rules? Who signed off on these files? And is that not preferential treatment?

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

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

The Leader of the Opposition repeatedly comes to this Assembly and talks about her experience in bureaucracy. Certainly she should be aware that there are processes, and of course the role of the Auditor General is a very important role in those processes. The role of the Auditor General is to review programs right across government, such as PNP, to make sure that if there are issues that need to be addressed, if there are concerns, that those concerns are brought forward. He has done that, he's done a wonderful job, and as I indicated, 20 recommendations, 17 implemented, three underway. I think he's done a great job, and this government is doing a great job in implementing those recommendations.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

It continues to surprise me. Mr. Minister, the Auditor General told you you have a problem. In terms of the recommendations, that's for the future, to ensure no one else gets the chance to break the same rules. But the responsibility's on your shoulders and the Premier's shoulders to show leadership here and to discipline the two individuals that broke the rules, which the Auditor General has confirmed. It's your job to go back and see the depth of how many rules they broke. Did you discipline these two individuals? If so, what discipline did you

do for Neil Stewart?

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

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

Again, the Leader of the Opposition attacking the character of one of the finest - and I'm sure the Member from Georgetown-St. Peters would probably concur - one of the most highly skilled professional bureaucrats in this province. But here we go again, the Leader of the Opposition continuing to attack his character. I think it's shameful. I urge the Leader of the Opposition really to stop this attack on people's character in Prince Edward Island.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Sheridan: Excellent (Indistinct).

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Leader of the Opposition: Madam Speaker, I can't believe that the treasurer is saying this is excellent, a man that was in the private sector himself.

The former minister, at Public Accounts, under oath, said: Another rule. Retail guidelines enhanced. This was to allow the member from Alberton-Springvale to receive units, obviously. Retail guidelines enhanced. Inventory must be at least \$80,000 on display with a minimum

showroom of 450 square feet put in place, but also only bona fide retail could apply, and you couldn't use your inventory in the business. How did that rule happen to get broken, and in terms of, is that not preferential treatment?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier Ghiz: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

Just to clarify here, for the Leader of the Opposition who happens to be misled. The fact of the matter is that the Auditor General has reviewed each and every MLA file. The Conflict of Interest Commissioner has looked into it as well. I implore the Leader of the Opposition to perhaps read page 17 of the recent Conflict of Interest Commissioner report back to the Legislative Assembly that you requested.

It says here, and I quote:

The Auditor General did not make any finding or inference that any MLA whose business received PNP investment either influenced or interfered in any way with the processing of that application.

That is a clear indication that our MLAs followed the guidelines of the PNP. No rules were broken. The Auditor General looked into it.

It's quite unfortunate that the Leader of the Opposition in this province continues to question the integrity of the Auditor General, the integrity of the Conflict of Interest Commissioner, the integrity of members of this Legislative Assembly, and I

really find it quite shameful, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Sunnyside Road re: speed zone

Ms. Biggar: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Last year I tabled a petition from the residents on the Sunnyside Road in Richmond who were very concerned about the speed zone there, and my question is for the hon. Minister of Transportation and Public Works. Mr. Minister, since that petition was tabled, could you update me on what's been done around that issue?

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

Mr. MacKinley: We sent our highway people up to review the situation, and we're not going to change the speed limit. It's going to stay at 80.

Mr. M. Currie: Doesn't sound good.

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

Ms. Biggar: To the same minister. Mr. Minister, we do encourage people to build on secondary roads, which does, as you know, increase the amount of residences that live there. Would you commit at least to doing a second traffic count and perhaps use that data to look at again for consideration?

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

Mr. MacKinley: I'll do better than that. I'll go up someday and we'll take a drive down that road and have a look at it myself personally. Because basically what's going on here, if we lower the speed limit from 80 to 70 on that particular road, then I would have to lower it all across the province of PEI where that situation is. There's not as many houses there as somewhere there is where the speed limit is 80. But you and I'll take a drive down there, and anybody else we want, some day when the House is open.

Speaker: Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Belfast-Murray River.

Uptake of peddlers' licenses

Mr. McGeoghegan: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

My question today is for the Minister of Fisheries, Aquaculture and Rural Development. This year being extremely difficult in the lobster industry, with prices at the lowest level in two and a half decades, your department looked at, and enacted, a number of measures to try and help the bottom line of Island fishers. The changes to the peddlers' license regulation to allow fishermen to direct sell their catch was one of the measures to help. What was the uptake of the peddler's licenses this past spring for Island fishermen trying to diversify?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Fisheries, Aquaculture and Rural Development.

Mr. LeClair: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The hon. member is quite right. As a department, as a government, we've done more, I think, in the last two years for the fishery and in the fishery than any government in the past ever did.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. M. Currie: What's the price of lobster today?

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct).

Mr. Bagnall: Do you know what the price is? Five-fifty to (Indistinct).

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct).

Mr. LeClair: To the credit of our members over there who are associated with the fishery, your input is very valuable and you're well aware of what's going on around the province.

One of the initiatives was the peddler's license, and it was very well received. We had about 50 fishermen apply for and receive a license to peddle. Well received in the public. The fishers did a great job of it. They looked after the product and worked well with my department to make sure that the safety was of utmost importance as well.

Thank you.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Belfast-Murray River.

Mr. McGeoghegan: Supplementary question to the same minister.

I've had a number of fishermen call me, asking me what they need to do to direct sell their catch in Nova Scotia either by truck or by boat because of the \$1.50 a pound more they received this spring. Mr. Minister, could you look into the details of this so that fishermen could be prepared for next spring?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Fisheries, Aquaculture and Rural Development.

Mr. LeClair: Yes, Madam Speaker, I will look into that and get my staff to find out what would be involved in that aspect of an operation.

As a fishery and a province, we would certainly like our fishermen to continue to sell on PEI, but we will certainly look into that for you.

Thank you.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

PNP units re: expansion (further)

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Back to the innovation and advanced learning minister. It appears that the Premier and you are very comfortable with the fact that MLAs received preferential treatment here. My question to you is: Did you ask Dr. Michael Mayne to go in and review the files, take the files out that Brooke or Neil

authorized this particular MLA to receive units for restaurants, four units into operational funds? Were other restaurants allowed that?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier Ghiz: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

Again, the Leader of the Opposition is trying to paint a picture here that MLAs received preferential treatment. The Auditor General reviewed this file. That was not indicated, therefore it did not happen. The Conflict of Interest Commissioner looked into it.

Just so everyone knows, what the Leader of the Opposition is trying to do, the person sitting right next to her, the Member from West Royalty-Springvale, she's trying to say that that individual there broke rules and regulations, and that the Auditor General and the Conflict of Interest Commissioner are wrong in this province.

I find it quite shameful that the Leader of the Opposition would be attacking colleagues in this House. We all know that the Leader of the Opposition, when she was a bureaucrat, accessed the lending authorities so she could get a loan for her blueberry farm. We're not questioning that. We all know that the Leader of the Opposition, when she became an MLA, got contracts through MRSB -

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Premier Ghiz: - through Holland College, through the Department of Agriculture.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Premier Ghiz: We're not questioning that. What we're asking for is the Leader of the Opposition to please respect the processes in the province. Stop insulting, one, the Auditor General of this province, two, the Conflict of Interest Commissioner, and three, her colleagues in this House, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Under Treasury Board guidelines it's very clear that ministers, MLAs and deputies are accountable too, Mr. Premier. I'll quote from section 9: Employees must not accord preferential treatment in relation to any official matter to family members, friends, other persons or organizations in which the employee, family members or friends have a financial or other interest.

The only way you can prove to the general public - when I ask the questions, picture the general public behind me who want to know the answers. Was there preferential treatment here? Did you personally go in and check those files? Mr. Premier?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier Ghiz: Thank you very much again, Madam Speaker.

Again we have the Leader of the Opposition

in this province questioning the Auditor General. There are checks and balances in place. The Auditor General's there to go review those files. I find it quite ironic that here we are - the two former deputies under her government that received PNP units, Peter McQuaid and Pat Dorsey, she's gone out and done absolutely nothing about them, and they were probably the two individuals that helped her line up her contracts through MRSB, Holland College, and the Department of Agriculture.

So if anybody wants to talk about the irony of this whole situation, it's that - perhaps the Leader of the Opposition should take a second and have a look in the mirror.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The general public every day tell me they can really understand why my 27 years worth of experience gets me work.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Leader of the Opposition: My question to the same - to the Premier of the province -

Speaker: Order, please!

An Hon. Member: That is unbelievable.

Leader of the Opposition: - to the Premier of the Province. We're talking about your job as the Premier and the minister

responsible for this program.

Role of IIDI lawyer

Last week we spoke about Mr. Billy Dow, Mr. Billy Dow being the IIDI lawyer and also providing advice to you and to people on this program. In the media, in the winter of 2009, a former staff person, a person that was on secondment from the federal government who is covered by whistleblower legislation, came out and told the media, and I quote: It was known within government that Mr. Dow was in charge of the PNP program, and he made decisions about what happened with the management and direction of the PNP program.

Mr. Dow is a close friend of Mr. Premier. Can you tell us what Mr. Dow did in regards to the PNP?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier Ghiz: Absolutely, Madam Speaker.

We're very fortunate in this province that we have a lot of great individuals in this province that want to contribute to public service. Here we have an individual that is a well-respected lawyer, well respected by the Law Society of Prince Edward Island, involved in charities across this province. For the Leader of the Opposition to stand up and start slandering people is really quite unfortunate, but we know that that is the Leader of the Opposition's style.

She doesn't care about Islanders. She doesn't care about processes. She doesn't care about the Auditor General. She doesn't care

about the conflict commissioner. Everyone else is wrong and she's right. She probably got that message because she joined that party over there, a party that came to power and said: We do not respect human rights. We're going to go out and fire 800 individuals in this province.

Really, it's an indication of the Leader of the Opposition's character that she still continues to slander respectable individuals in this province, and I find it quite deplorable.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you. Question to the same Premier.

Mr. Billy Dow. My question to you: On these files, did Mr. Dow have any decisions between Brooke and the MLA that we're speaking to that received units for Burger King?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier Ghiz: Again, Madam Speaker, the hon. member wants to attack the hon. Member from West Royalty-Springvale, and I find it quite unfortunate.

An Hon. Member: Shame, shame!

Premier Ghiz: The conflict commissioner has looked into the file and says the Auditor General did not make any findings or (Indistinct) with any MLA whose business received PNP investment, either influenced

or interfered in any way with the processing of that application.

The Auditor General would have pointed out if anything else was done inappropriately. Here we have the Leader of the Opposition attacking respectable individuals with no proof whatsoever. It's a careless approach, it's unparliamentary, and I find it quite deplorable that the Leader of the Opposition continues to disrespect in this province the Auditor General and the Conflict of Interest Commissioner.

I want to point out: both those individuals are appointed by this Legislative Assembly. Bottom line, Madam Speaker, this Leader of the Opposition has no respect whatsoever for the processes of this Legislative Assembly.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Madam Speaker, to the Premier once again, this is about your management skills.

My question to you: Mr. Dow is providing legal advice. He's the lawyer for IIDDI in the PNP. Would you see a conflict if Mr. Dow was also the lawyer for the MLA involved, and also the agent?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier Ghiz: Again, Madam Speaker, we're very fortunate that we have good people that want to work for government.

At the end of the day the Auditor General looked into every single one of the MLAs' files. If he found anything wrong he would have pointed it out, but again, the Leader of the Opposition continues to stand up in this House and slander individuals.

I want to go through this again. The Leader of the Opposition got a loan through the lending authority when she was a bureaucrat. Do I have any problem with that? No, I don't. Do other individuals question her? Absolutely. They come to me with questions about it all the time. You want to know what I say to them? Do not slander individuals if you do not have any proof. I'm sure the Leader of the Opposition followed all the guidelines properly.

She became an MLA. She got contracts through Holland College, through MRSB, through the Department of Agriculture, she cleared it with the Conflict of Interest Commissioner. At the end of the day I respect the conflict commissioner in what they did for the Leader of the Opposition. Why does the Leader of the Opposition not respect the conflict commissioner when it pertains to somebody else? Why the double standard?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Madam Speaker, going back to the Premier, what we're referring to is the role Mr. Dow had as lawyer for the MLA, agent for the MLA, working as the principal lawyer, and also making decisions around provincial

nominee.

My question to you: Do you see that there's a conflict here?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier Ghiz: Obviously not, Madam Speaker.

Who isn't in conflict, according to the Leader of the Opposition? Everyone's in conflict: the media's in conflict, every member's in conflict, the department's in conflict. But she can go out and get loans through the lending authority when she's a bureaucrat, she can go out and get contracts right after she got elected as an MLA, but: I'm not in conflict, everyone else's in conflict. It's really quite unfortunate.

I want to use more proof here that our members went above and beyond. The conflict commissioner points out, and so does the Auditor General, that out of all the MLAs that received them, the three MLAs that are sitting in this House today, that are Liberal MLAs, all went to the Conflict of Interest Commissioner beforehand. There were MLAs that were elected before, that were colleagues of the Leader of the Opposition, that did not go through that process.

Why does the Leader of the Opposition continue still to go out and criticize the Auditor General, criticize the conflict commissioner, criticize her colleagues in the House, but yet she still will not hold those accountable in her own party, Madam Speaker?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I think what we're talking about today is, Mr. Premier, your leadership skills, which are very weak and shallow in regards to the management of the PNP.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Leader of the Opposition: My question to you, Mr. Premier, is this. According to the legal documentation which I'm going to table in the House today, Mr. Dow, who worked for you, who works for IIDI, signed the Dumville Restaurant Limited application as a lawyer, and also as an agent. Is that not a conflict? And I'm tabling this today.

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier Ghiz: You table it. Madam Speaker, she can table it all she wants.

If she's got an issue, obviously this is a legal issue. Perhaps now she's failed with the Auditor General, she's failed with the conflict commissioner, she's failed in pointing out that any MLA has done anything wrong. Now perhaps she should go to the Law Society of Prince Edward Island and file another conflict of interest allegation, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the

Opposition, final question.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you.

Same question to the Premier: Mr. Premier, are you telling us that you're comfortable with the fact Brooke MacMillan broke rules, Billy Dow now is in an appearance of a conflict, your MLAs are getting preferential treatment, and Neil Stewart broke all the rules?

Are you comfortable with those decisions that you're making to support these individuals?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier Ghiz: I'm very confident, Madam Speaker, because what our government has done is we've gone out and we've made sure that we followed the guidelines when we brought in the Auditor General of this province.

We made sure that our MLAs followed the guidelines when it came to the Conflict of Interest Commissioner. Now she's in here slandering individuals, respectable individuals in this province. Perhaps the chief fundraiser of the Conservative Party, or one of their main fundraisers, Mr. Norman Clarey before her, who worked on PNP, he could be in conflict.

According to the Leader of the Opposition in this province, everyone in the province is in conflict except for the Leader of the Opposition. The Leader of the Opposition has gone out and gotten loans when she's a bureaucrat, she's gone out after she's become an MLA and has gotten contracts

QUESTION PERIOD-PRELIMINARY PROCEEDINGS

27 November 2009

through government funded institutions, but everyone else in the province is wrong and the Leader of the Opposition is right.

I think it's time that the Leader of the Opposition perhaps take a look at the facts and respect the work of the Auditor General and the Conflict of Interest Commissioner in this province. Because on this side of the House we respect this Legislative Assembly, unlike the Leader of the Opposition.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

[End of Question Period]