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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
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PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS AND ORAL QUESTION PERIOD
(PRELIMINARY PROCEEDINGS)

FOR

TUESDAY, 1 DECEMBER 2009

Responses to Questions Taken As Notice

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

Phytterra EIA (further)

Mr. Brown: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The member from Georgetown had a question on Friday about an environmental assessment that was done by the department. The company name was Functional Technologies Corporation Phytterra Yeast Inc. I'll table their document at Tabling of Documents.

I just want to remind people that any environmental assessment is put on the web. We do advertise it, we do ask for submissions. If we don't get any submissions there are not public meetings, then. Because it's no good having public meetings without anybody wanting to go to them.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

NGO funding

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

I would like to present questions that were presented to me by the Leader of the Opposition in respect to the work that was done in respect to the Auditor General's

Report, the value for money audit of grants to non-governmental organizations and the success that we've had with a high volume of the recommendations as we tie them in to the strategic plan and mission and vision for the Department of Social Services and Seniors.

So I'd like to bring those questions forward.

Questions by Members

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Marketing strategy re: Olympics (further)

Mr. Bagnall: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

My first question is for the Minister of Tourism. Madam Minister, last week in the Legislature you were asked about the \$500,000 that you were spending for the Olympics in Vancouver. You led Islanders to believe that it was only 500,000 that was being spent. Do you still stand by that statement?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Tourism.

Ms. Docherty: Madam Speaker, the hon. member, on November 17th, specifically stated that we had announced earlier, or your government announced, about a \$500,000 contribution to the Olympics. We were telling the member the honest truth. At that time it was referenced to the press statement that went out February 17th, 2009, in which we admitted to contributing that amount of money.

The unfortunate thing was, on the 17th of November, I was bound by an agreement between myself, the other three ministers from New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland, and the federal minister Keith Ashfield, that we could not discuss any kind of financial contribution to the Atlantic Canada House. So I did not mislead the House that day. I was bound by confidential information and I can now speak to it.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: I'm glad the minister used the word mislead because that's exactly what she did in this House. She misled the House last week when she made those statements. She talked about that that was only 500,000 and the Minister of Communities, Cultural Affairs and Labour couldn't wait to get up on her feet to try to protect her on this.

So why did you tell the House that we were only spending 500,000? Because I asked if that was all and you said yes. Why did you tell the House that we were only spending 500,000 when in actual fact you are spending \$1 million?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Tourism.

Ms. Docherty: Madam Speaker, I just finished stating the reason I could not speak to the contribution that my department is making - which is not \$1 million, it's \$500,000 towards Atlantic Canada House.

There was a confidential situation in which

the four ministers from the Atlantic region plus the federal minister, Keith Ashfield, that there was to be nothing stated whatsoever until Friday, November 20th, at which time there was a press announcement went out.

My question back to the hon. member: What took you so long to ask me about it?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: Minister, I guess the answer to that question, Madam Speaker - and I'm not answering questions, but I will tell her - is when you try to hide things and sneak things through, then that's when people have a little harder time trying to find it.

You knew this government was spending \$1 millions and you deliberately misinformed the House here last week on that issue. Because you deliberately told us this was not the case, that we were only spending 500,000. Do you want to still stand by your statement? Are you only spending 500,000?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Tourism.

Ms. Docherty: Madam Speaker, one of the things when I decided to become involved in politics was to be truthful and honest, and also to make sure that when I was asked to keep something confidential, that I maintained that confidence.

The federal minister, Keith Ashfield, asked all of us tourism ministers in the Atlantic region to keep this confidential until he was

ready to make the announcement on Friday, November 20th. At that time he made the announcement, a joint announcement, and the information has been public ever since.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Olympic Torch Relay (further)

Mr. Bagnall: My next question is to the Minister of Communities, Cultural Affairs and Labour.

Minister, you stood in the House last week and you told me that every single province was a sponsorship in this and that we could not get the torch unless we were a sponsorship. New Brunswick's not a sponsorship, they got the torch. So why did you misinform me last week?

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct) you had a rough week.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Communities, Cultural Affairs and Labour.

Ms. Bertram: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Our government is very proud to be part of the Vancouver Olympics. Last week I confirmed in this Legislature that the Province of Prince Edward Island is a contributing partner to the agreement. We are contributing \$500,000, which was announced, hon. member. It did take you a little bit of time to ask questions on it because it was actually put out to the public back in February. So we actually had a

session in this Legislature that took the hon. member to ask the questions.

But we are very proud and the torch came through this province. Because we are a contributing partner to the torch we were able to select people, we were able to have certain celebrations within our province, and there were certainly advantages to PEI being a contributing partner. Furthermore, the cultural Olympiad is part of that and we are having lots of our artists be part of the onsite celebrations of Vancouver Olympics.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Marketing strategy re: Olympics (further)

Mr. Bagnall: Minister, one question. How much is your government putting in to the Vancouver Olympics?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Communities, Cultural Affairs and Labour.

Ms. Bertram: Madam Speaker, as the Minister of Tourism has stated, there is 500,000 from our department, there is a \$500,000 spend from tourism.

I will table the press releases during Tabling of Documents because it concurs with what the tourism minister has stated. I will table the press release that the Premier and I and Norma (Indistinct), the director of corporate strategy for the Vancouver Olympics who was here in Prince Edward Island. I will table that from February, I will table the

Atlantic Canada House announcement which followed your line of questioning, hon. member, that we weren't allowed to talk about.

Furthermore, hon. member, let me elaborate. As minister of culture I'm very excited about the Minister of Tourism supporting this. We have the Young Company from Confederation Centre, we have Tim Chaisson, Lennie Gallant, Vishtèn, Grass Mountain Hobos, Meaghan Blanchard, Chuck and Albert, John Connolly, Two Hours Traffic, Catherine MacLellan, Rose Cousins, Richard Wood, Paper Lions, and the list goes on. That money that the minister's Department of Tourism is supporting is supporting our artists on Prince Edward Island to go to an international event, to sell and to promote our (Indistinct).

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: Order, please!

The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: Madam Speaker, it's great that this minister can get up, invite all her friends to Vancouver for this million - not \$500,000 party, but \$1 million party, now that (Indistinct). When we actually get the facts out - she tried to sneak and hide behind her answers last week. She knew the answers, she deliberately wouldn't come clean to the House, she figured that she could get off the floor -

Speaker: Question?

Mr. Bagnall: Yes, I'm getting to it - get off

the floor and she wouldn't have to disclose that it's actually \$1 million.

Minister, why did you deliberately not inform the House when asked last week what the expenditures were for the province? Why did you try to hide it?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Communities, Cultural Affairs and Labour.

Ms. Bertram: Madam Speaker, I announced last week that we were a \$500,000 contributing partner.

Check, that was correct. This week, yes, it is confirmed that the Minister of Tourism can say that we are contributing to the Atlantic Canada House. Every jurisdiction in the Atlantic region is contributing to the Atlantic Canada House, as I've stated. All our musicians are being supported. The federal government is on board with \$2.5 million, hon. member. So our government is proud to be part of this through the collaboration of the Minister of Tourism, the Department of Communities, Cultural Affairs and Labour. PEI is going to be on stage, Prince Edward Island is going to be on an international event stage, and we should all be excited. Hon. member, you should get excited about Prince Edward Island being (Indistinct).

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: Madam Speaker, what I get excited about is that this government over here can't help Alzheimer's, they can't help

cancer drugs, but they can waste \$1 million to go to Vancouver for a party.

That's what I get excited about.

To the minister. Why are you - you still haven't answered why you've not informed this House the actual facts last week when you had them. You were more than too anxious to jump up and answer the minister's questions when I asked her. Why did you not confront, why did you not come clean and tell us the actual - why did you try to hide it?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Communities, Cultural Affairs and Labour.

Ms. Bertram: Madam Speaker, I think I have a history in this Legislature of tabling the facts.

Hon. member, I will table the facts as the dates present themselves. In this Legislature last week I stated the facts, and that was \$500,000, and that, hon. member, actually alluded to supporting our athletes and a contributing partnership agreement, and I was correct in answering those questions. It wasn't the Minister of Tourism's department that those line of questions were toward.

It's disappointing to see that the Member from Montague-Kilmuir does not see the value in supporting PEI artists and culture. You know, we have 40-plus cultural artists and groups going to Vancouver, and he keeps going on about a party. Well, I guess that's a party, but if we can put our musicians on an international stage, it's very disappointing that you don't see the value, hon. member, in supporting artists on Prince

Edward Island.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: Madam Speaker, I support supporting our Islanders.

I support supporting the sick. I support opening up the emergency room in Montague because we can't get people to work. The dollars aren't there. The minister is continuously - she has clearly not been forthcoming with her information here in this House. She has deliberately - deliberately - tried to take the questions away from the minister last week because she wanted to be the one to stand up and brag about her \$500,000.

The fact is, she didn't tell us the truth. The truth was that you're spending \$1 million. You tried to inform everybody that it was only 500,000. Minister, when are you going to own and apologize to the public in PEI for not being forthright?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Communities, Cultural Affairs and Labour.

Ms. Bertram: Madam Speaker, I will certainly, again, table the documents which I've stated which shows the credibility to the responses that were given last week.

The hon. member sitting behind the Member from Montague-Kilmuir went on about the torch relay last week as well. So where do they stand as a caucus in terms of the Vancouver Olympics? I don't know. They

are actually speaking on both sides of their mouth. So I don't know where they want to be. They're on both sides of the issue.

Prince Edward Island is supporting Vancouver Olympics. There's a survey that was done across Canada. It's here amongst my many sheets. Canadians are supporting - there was a corporate research poll done across the country, and Atlantic Canadians are onboard with the Vancouver Olympics. Men and women, children, are all supporting - very high numbers, I believe it's about 80% of those surveyed were supporting the Vancouver Olympics.

So hon. member, I would say to you, show some support. This is a national, international event for Canada. We are stage - PEI is going to be on stage. It's a great event.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Island support for Olympics

Mr. Bagnall: My question to the same minister.

Minister, last week, you told us that every single province, and territories, supported this. They were all paying into it, and if PEI didn't do it, we were the only jurisdiction in Canada that wasn't. Do you still stand by that statement?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Communities, Cultural Affairs and Labour.

Ms. Bertram: Madam Speaker, I recall the words that were stated last week, and it was an if statement.

It was: if Prince Edward Island, would we want to be the only one? That was a statement that, as a minister, I made. Would we want to be the only province. Yes, there is one province in Canada not contributing to this. Would we want to be there? No.

An Hon. Member: No.

Ms. Bertram: But, Madam Speaker, I'm not going to talk on that jurisdiction.

Mr. Bagnall: I wouldn't either.

Ms. Bertram: We are part of Confederation. This is the birthplace of Confederation. We are going to be at the Vancouver Olympics. We were the host to the 2009 Canada Games here in Prince Edward Island. How would it look if we weren't there and putting our artists - PEI - on stage and supporting our athletes?

Heather Moyses - look, we have wonderful athletes going to the Olympics, hon. member. I really question your line of questioning.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: Madam Speaker, it's called accountability.

The minister here has deliberately stickhandled her way through, trying to

answer the question. What I can't get over is that the Premier even jumped up last week in questioning and he went on about: We would be the only province and the only jurisdiction in this country that didn't - of course we were going to be there. Well, he was wrong too. So I just want (Indistinct) people to know that he made a false statement.

Minister, will you apologize to the people of Prince Edward Island for putting a misleading statement in the House here last week in your answers? Because you informed everybody that every jurisdiction in every province in Canada was involved, and that we'd be on the only one if we didn't participate.

I'll ask the minister: Will you actually get up and apologize to the public of Prince Edward Island and to the viewers that were listening here that you misinformed last week?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Communities, Cultural Affairs and Labour.

Ms. Bertram: Madam Speaker, again, I will table the documents which I stated that show the dates, and hon. member, Prince Edward Island is part of this, we are a part of the contributing partnership agreement, which we're very proud of.

Yes, the hon. Minister of Tourism has confirmed to you today that there was an announcement and a press release that went out after your line of questioning, hon. member. So I want to thank Islanders. I want to thank them for coming out and supporting the torch relay on Prince Edward

Island last weekend.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Bertram: It was a success, Madam Speaker.

We had thousands of Islanders come out to a successful event to celebrate such an international event here on the shores and on the land of Prince Edward Island. From tip to tip the province celebrated, they came to the celebrations, and I would just like to say thank you to them. This is part of PEI being part of the Vancouver Olympics, and we will continue to celebrate till February and in the two weeks that this great event will take place in our country.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: I just want to inform the member that she also just made a false statement again. It wasn't tip to tip. King's County wasn't included in the relay, so if you're going to make statements in the House you should make sure that they're correct.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

New Brunswick and Atlantic House

Mr. Bagnall: Now, is New Brunswick going to be included in the partnership, and in Atlantic House?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Communities, Cultural Affairs and Labour.

Mr. Bagnall: Oh, tag teaming again.

Speaker: Hon. member, who was your question to?

Mr. Bagnall: It was to the Minister of Communities, Cultural Affairs and Labour.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Communities, Cultural Affairs and Labour.

Ms. Bertram: Yes.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

It's nice to know that she finally has got one right answer to a question asked today, and it's good to hear that.

So my final question to the minister is - and I'm going to ask you again: Are you going to apologize to the people for not being forthcoming on the money? You deliberately tried to hide the \$500,000 expenditure last week. It's funny, everybody knew about it. Why you would try to do that, Madam Minister, is beyond me. Will you apologize to Islanders here today?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Communities, Cultural Affairs and Labour.

Ms. Bertram: Again, Madam Speaker, Prince Edward Island is a contributing partner to the Vancouver Olympics.

Yes, that is true, and we are very excited about that as a government, and as a province. Yes, we are part of the Atlantic Canada House, as the Minister of Tourism has stated today. Yes, our artists and our cultural artists will be part of that wonderful event on Granville Island in Vancouver.

This is going to be a wonderful event for our athletes here on Prince Edward Island. It's wonderful to show our Canada Games athletes. It's the next stage in their athletic careers. We have a Heather Moyse, we have a Brad Richards who could be part of Team Canada hockey team. We don't know, but we have great aspirations for our athletes here on Prince Edward Island, and I think it was a testament to the amount of support that was shown and witnessed here on Prince Edward Island a week ago during the torch relay. It was just fantastic to see so many people come out and support it.

Hon. member, we are supporting this as a province, whatever way you want to do your number, but hon. member, I will table those documents that I stated during Tabling of Documents, and the dates jive with everything that was said in this Legislature.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. MacKinley: I thought that was your last question.

Travel to Olympics (further)

Mr. Bagnall: Just one question for the minister.

Can you tell us how many plane tickets have been booked for Vancouver? Because we know they have to be booked or you wouldn't be getting anybody flying out there during the Olympics. So how many plane tickets have you booked, and at what cost?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Communities, Cultural Affairs and Labour.

Ms. Bertram: Madam Speaker, I know I'm not going to be attending, but I don't know who you're actually looking for.

I know there are going to be 40 to 50 musicians going to be part of Atlantic Canada House. So, there would probably be earmarked tickets for our artists. I'm unsure of the numbers. That could be brought back, hon. member. But if you're looking for myself, I will not be attending.

An Hon. Member: Great job.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: Would the minister mind tabling the number of tickets? Because the names are on all those tickets, so you'll actually know who's going, because there would have to be names on them. So, as the minister said here, she didn't know who was going. The tickets have been booked. Their names are on the tickets. Will you table a list of the tickets that are going to Vancouver?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Communities, Cultural Affairs and Labour.

Ms. Bertram: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Seeing that the Vancouver Olympics are going to be in February, we will probably have to wait to get confirmation on everything and table it in the spring sitting at the Legislature. Hon. member, the musicians still have to sign their contracts. They're going to be paid. Their flights are going to be provided for them. So, hon. member, that information, some of that is not available at this time, but we will get that to you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

West Prince health concerns

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Last night I was in West Prince with the Member from O'Leary-Inverness and there were well over 200 people at a public meeting who were very concerned about health care in West Prince. My first question to the minister: Mr. Minister, the people there want to know why you didn't attend last night.

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

Mr. Bagnall: (Indistinct) ducking and hiding.

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

In respect to the meeting last night, yes, I

did not attend.

Mr. Bagnall: Ducking and hiding.

Mr. D. Currie: I met with the concerned citizens group over a month ago and responded extensively, which I will table this letter to their concerns and their requests. Shortly after that I did meet with the O'Leary Foundation board -

Mr. Bagnall: They're not happy.

Mr. D. Currie: - and met with them and addressed some of their concerns.

I was disappointed that I was not able to attend, and I was certainly disappointed that our MLA from O'Leary-Inverness wasn't formally invited. He had to create his own invitation as well as the other MLAs in the western part of the region.

So I know there was a high volume of calling to invite people out to the meeting, but with that being said, I will table this document later in respect to the discussion we had.

I'm very pleased that we've made some inroads in health care delivery services. When we came in to government in O'Leary we had two physicians. Today we have six. We have substantial investments of -

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. D. Currie: - substantial investments in mental health and addictions infrastructure of over \$3.5 million, long-term care beds, Madam Speaker -

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. D. Currie: I know that there are some concerns on transition and we're working collaboratively with the physicians and the site administrators in both facilities to make sure that we continue to provide the best quality health care that we can provide.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

To the minister of fisheries and rural development. The people at the meeting last night were wondering why you were absent. Why were you not at this meeting?

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

Mr. LeClair: Madam Speaker, I had another rural development meeting last night, and I wasn't invited to the one in O'Leary.

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct) rural PEI.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Madam Speaker, it was quite clear last night it was an open, public meeting and they did want anybody that had an interest in West Prince to be there.

DNR policy

To the minister of health: Minister, the residents last night were really happy that you did take away the do not resuscitate order. However, what they found to be insulting is when they found out other hospitals didn't have that policy in place.

So would you clarify for the House, was O'Leary the only hospital that had to have patients sign do not resuscitate if they were going to be admitted?

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

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

As the minister of health, I do try to leave the health care decisions in our facilities across Prince Edward Island with the clinicians who provide health care, in collaboration with our front-line nurses and LPNs and RCWs in the workforce. The discussion did come to me and I did ask my department to engage with the front-line staff and the physicians during this transition, and as a result the DNR is now not part of the admission policy.

I do want to clarify for the Leader of the Opposition: as of today in the Community Hospital in O'Leary, our services are based on palliative care, convalescent care, restorative care, and acute care. Very pleased that we continue to make investments in primary health care. We have some real challenges in the Province of Prince Edward Island with chronic disease, and the investments that we're making - not

only in mental health and addictions, but the investments that we're making in diabetes - the Community Hospital will be the diabetes centre based out of the western part of the province.

We look forward to building on health care in West Prince. We've got a catchment area of approximately 14,000 people. When I look at health care I don't look at O'Leary, I don't look at Alberton, I don't look at Tyne Valley. I look at quality enhanced services for all of the residents of West Prince, and we're moving progressively in that direction.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Madam Speaker, to the same minister.

The community people want to know if the do not resuscitate order was in policy to all the other hospitals, especially the ones that you mentioned: Western, Montague, Souris, etc. They just want to know: Are they being treated fairly here?

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

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

Once again, I take great pride in being the minister of health for the province of Prince Edward Island. I do have the opportunity to

engage with health care workers. I have tremendous respect to the commitment by physicians in our province. We're very fortunate that we have - Dr. Grimes now is the in-house physician at the Community Hospital in O'Leary. Dr. Grimes has the responsibility to provide best practice clinical advice to patients that do need care in the facility.

We'll leave the decision making with health care in the hands of our very dependable, reliable physicians in the Community Hospital of O'Leary.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Government House Leader.

Pesticide ban

Mr. Vessey: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

My question is for the minister of environment. Mr. Minister, in the throne speech you had mentioned that you may be bringing in legislation to reduce lawn pesticides or maybe even banning them province-wide, and that's a good thing. But we all know that pesticides are essential in the agricultural industry. Can you reassure the agricultural community that if this ban is brought in it will not effect them in any way?

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

Mr. Brown: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

We will be tabling legislation today. The

restriction of lawn care products is the title of the act. I can assure the member that no restrictions - this act does not apply to our agricultural community.

Our agricultural community has shown over the number of years its commitment to the environment, especially in terms of the buffer zone legislation and with the legislation that has been put in for spraying of fields.

Our agriculture community is abiding by all the laws that are in place right now. You can tell by the number of incidences that have not been reported in our rural areas that our agriculture community is doing a fantastic environmental job, Madam Speaker.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Tracadie-Hillsborough Park.

Highway construction

Mr. Watts: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

My question today goes to the Minister of Transportation and Public Works. In the last few weeks there's been major construction. Major highway expansion has been happening at the intersection of the St. Peters highway leading up to the Charlottetown bypass.

My question to the Minister of Transportation and Public Works: Mr. Minister, is this highway construction going to alleviate the pressures that the residents

of Hillsborough Park have been facing when exiting Northridge Parkway on to the St. Peters highway? Is this going to help their situation?

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

Mr. MacKinley: Basically what's going to happen is we put an extra lane so the traffic coming in from Marshfield will be two lanes coming in rather than one. So if they turn down towards the PEI hospital there. So it's going to help somewhat, but we won't really know until the overpass is re-hooked up. It won't be hooked up till next summer. Because some people might be inclined to use that overpass rather than going into the circle that's there now, the two-lane circle.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Tracadie-Hillsborough Park.

Mr. Watts: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Supplementary question to the same minister. Mr. Minister, has your department ever considered, or are you considering, installing a roundabout in that area?

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

Mr. MacKinley: We have looked at that. We're looking at putting roundabouts over by the Hillsborough Bridge there coming in. That particular area, I'm not sure if we have enough room because we have a Kentucky Fried Chicken and places there. It takes a fair bit of room to make a roundabout so what we want to do is monitor the situation, hope this improves somewhat so that the

residents can get out on the highway.

Because there is another option for them. They can go down and catch the lights in the middle of the highway there. I think Mr. MacFadyen put those lights in. But I think that we'll find out after the overpass is hooked up and we'll just see how the traffic flows.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Community Hospital house doctor

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

To the health minister. Now that you've confirmed that O'Leary was actually the only hospital with the do not resuscitate order, let's talk about - is O'Leary the only hospital that has a house doctor?

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

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

I did clarify for the Leader of the Opposition - I know some of these issues are clinical decisions as I alluded to, but the DNR is not part of the admission criteria at the Community Hospital in O'Leary.

We certainly know that governments face intense challenges with health care in all jurisdictions across this country. I know that the meeting last night, I'm sure it was an

emotional issue, because health care touches the lives of all Islanders and their families.

I do want to remind that during the past 10 years, under that administration, they were faced with some difficult challenges in closing emergency rooms in Souris and in Tyne Valley. I know that they had the difficult decision of disassembling the ambulance service that was run by small companies across the Province of Prince Edward Island, and I'm sure those were difficult decisions.

But these are decisions that are made in the best interest of the future of health care and the sustainability of health care on Prince Edward Island. The investments that we're making - whether it's a new medical clinic in Tyne Valley, whether it's new manors in Alberton, whether it's a full complement of physicians looking at primary health care, looking at access for Islanders within 30 minutes for primary health care into the future - are tremendous investments.

We know that we have strong belief in rural Prince Edward Island. We want to make sure that there are people living in rural Prince Edward Island and have good access to primary health care and the appropriate services.

Over the past 10 months we've had no interruptions in emergency room services in West Prince, we've had stability in physician service. The transitions is difficult at times but we're in the right direction.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Madam Speaker, to the health minister.

Are there any other hospitals that have house doctors?

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

Mr. Bagnall: Very easy question. No.

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

I will take that question under advisement and bring the information back. As I say, I've got great confidence in my department. We've got eight health care facilities across the province, and we've an out-of-province health care budget of approximately \$40 million. It's a very complex system and a very robust system, and I try to leave the decision making in the hands of the administrators and the clinicians that provide the care, and the great care, in all of our facilities across Prince Edward Island.

I want to remind, and I've said this in the House before, that my priority as minister is making sure that services that we provide, from Tignish to Souris, are efficient services and stable services built on patient safety.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Apparently house doctors are at other manors, and one of the issues last night at the community meeting, was people wanted to know if it's the government's intention to have Community Hospital become 100% manor. Is that the reason for the house doctor?

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

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct).

Premier Ghiz: (Indistinct) that's why we put in 3.2 million -

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

I think our track record over the last two years speaks for itself. I mean, our challenge coming into government two years ago, we inherited a health care system that was very fragmented from a delivery model, and instability, with recruitment. With our investments in recruitment and retention we've been very fortunate to stabilize, and if you look at the investments we've made in medical seats in Memorial University, if you look at the investments in medical residency programs -

Some Hon. Members: Oh, yes.

Mr. D. Currie: - which will have five additional medical students available for services -

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. D. Currie: - across Prince Edward Island in community hospitals next year, and if you look at the investments in mental health and addictions, as I alluded to earlier, this government is on the right track. We're putting the investment into Islanders in West Prince to make sure we have stable services to sustain the health care system in West Prince.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Service provided by physicians

To the minister: Today is December 1st.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct).

Leader of the Opposition: The people last night, what they wanted to know was in terms of - in Souris, for example, the physicians that cover Souris Hospital only have to work in Souris. In O'Leary, although you have a full complement of six physicians, it's our understanding they have to work in three facilities. So it really is not fair to those physicians.

Will you be changing that so that the six physicians will work in O'Leary only, and give them similar service to right across the province? Will you be doing that, minister?

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

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

Our priority as we move forward with building an integrated, sustainable health care system is looking at a strong level of collaboration between facilities across Prince Edward Island. If you look at the success over the past year, we've made some strong inroads in respect to creative clinical dialogue with the physicians.

If you look at the number of physicians that we have right now, with the three facilities in West Prince, we have a complement right now, today, of 12 physicians, the largest volume of physicians in the history of West Prince, Madam Speaker -

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. D. Currie: - but we certainly know that stability today could be instability tomorrow.

Our investments in health human resources, we're embarking on a new master agreement negotiations with the physicians. We want to make sure that we build the infrastructure in to make sure that we can continue to attract quality physicians into the province to provide tremendous health care.

We look forward to bringing more updates to the Legislative Assembly and all Islanders about our investments in community based primary health care as we shift away from the traditional institutional care that has lasted so long in the Province

of Prince Edward Island.

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. All the 200-plus people wanted last night was to have discussions, and your administration from the hospital weren't allowed to come. So they have lots of questions, and since you're communicating today to the people, and they're all watching at home, perhaps you will go and have a meeting with the 200-plus people to explain to them directly how you're moving the health system. Will you do that, Mr. Minister?

Mr. Bagnall: He's ducking and hiding.

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

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

As I did allude to earlier in our debate, I do have a response from the concerned citizens, and I do have tremendous respect for Islanders who continue to advocate for services across this province.

I laid out in this letter, I responded. I think there are 10 points in respect to the DNR issue, the acuity levels, the consultation issues, the rumour about disbanding

community pharmacy. We also talked about improvements in primary health care, which we're excited about. We talked about the commitment that I made in filling additional physician over complement to make sure that we provide support for the transition from Beechwood clinic into the hospital.

So I look forward to tabling this, and I look forward to continued - more discussions with any health care group that want to. I've got an open door policy, and also enjoyed the discussion I had with the Community Hospital board. They've got some great plans for fundraising and we look at working closely with them in the future.

Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I hope that means that you will go meet with them -

Mr. Bagnall: No, it's just the opposite.

Leader of the Opposition: They actually presented a resolution last night and they were very clear in terms of their expectations, and I'll be tabling that resolution later.

Needle exchange program

To the same minister, to the health minister. Today is International AIDs Awareness

Day. How is the government's needle exchange program working here now that you removed it from AIDS PEI?

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

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

I commend the work of AIDS PEI for their advocacy. I had a great chat with Mark Hanlon this morning and his leadership over the last year in bringing the awareness of the role and function of AIDS PEI here in the province.

The department has basically taken over the needle exchange program, and I look forward to an announcement in the House over the next few days in respect to a new location that we will be announcing in the downtown core. It was an issue that AIDS PEI had brought to my department with the challenges, with clients going out to the Sherwood area.

So I look forward to bringing that information, and I know that AIDS PEI will be delighted. We're waiting for final renovations on the facility that that program will be functioning out of.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition, final question.

Oh, the hon. Member from Georgetown-St. Peters.

Study concerning new provincial museum

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

A question for the Minister of Communities, Cultural Affairs and Labour. You commissioned a study for a new museum that your government promised. Would you table that study now that you've cancelled the project?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Communities, Cultural Affairs and Labour.

Ms. Bertram: I'm a bit unsure how the member formulated his question, but if he's looking for the consultant's report after the heritage study was completed, I will be happy to table that following Question Period during Tabling of Documents. We only have at this point part one of a three part process that the consultants, through Bergmark Guimond, that did the consultants' report, and it was a tendered process, and we are doing - that's a step two on the process that was part of the heritage study. We are staying truly committed as a government to the provincial museum.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct).

[End of Question Period]