



Session: 3/63

Date: 20 April 2010

No: 22

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
OF  
PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS AND ORAL QUESTION PERIOD  
(PRELIMINARY PROCEEDINGS)

FOR

TUESDAY, 20 APRIL 2010



Responses to Questions Taken As Notice

Questions by Members

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

**Evaluation of immigrant partnership category in PNP**

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

The Auditor General told the government a year ago to conduct an evaluation of the immigrant partnership category of PNP. My first question to the innovation minister. Minister, your response on the 2010 Auditor General report shows that you have refuted this recommendation. Why?

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

**Mr. Campbell:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

With respect to that particular recommendation, staff at IIDI are awaiting a framework for evaluation to be put forward by Citizenship and Immigration Canada. We are yet to receive that. When we do, we will certainly complete that recommendation.

Thank you.

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

**Leader of the Opposition:** Madam Speaker, a question to the minister.

The Auditor General asked you a year ago to do this. An evaluation to the program, not the 30,000-foot framework, which is entirely different, that the feds are talking about. But the Auditor General asked your department to do a thorough evaluation, why did you refuse to do it?

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

**Mr. Campbell:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I believe I indicated we didn't refuse to do it. I don't remember in the Auditor General's recommendations anything about a 30,000-foot level evaluation. We are expecting the regulatory framework to be forwarded to us by Citizenship and Immigration Canada, and when we do receive that we'll be pleased to carry out that recommendation.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

**Leader of the Opposition:** Madam Speaker, let's remind the minister, in April 2009 you told this House you'd be discussing the evaluation with your staff.

In fact, you said you couldn't overstate the importance of the program. You said: I'll take that under further advisement and have the discussions actually today.

Tell us about the evaluation that you were working on a year ago.

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

**Mr. Campbell:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Again, we're waiting for the framework for evaluation of our partner category. We have a commitment from the federal government through Citizenship and Immigration Canada that we will receive that framework, and upon receipt of that framework we will conduct the evaluation.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

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

On page 57 of the Auditor General's report of 2009 the Auditor General says: IIDI should conduct an evaluation of the immigrant partnership category of the PNP program.

Why do you refuse to do that?

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

**Mr. Campbell:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I don't believe I have refused to do that. As I indicated, we're waiting for the regulatory framework to be forwarded to us by Citizenship and Immigration Canada. When we do receive that we'll be pleased to complete the evaluation.

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

**Leader of the Opposition:** Madam Speaker, this is the same minister that a year ago told us he was in direct discussions with a federal minister on a new program. He told us how many times there was a settlement strategy. The Auditor General asked for an evaluation. When are you completing an evaluation on this program Mr. Minister?

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

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

I believe in the same Auditor General's report that the Leader of the Opposition refers to, with respect to that particular recommendation, the response from IIDI was that Citizenship and Immigration Canada are completing a framework for a national evaluation of Provincial Nominee Programs, and PEI will be participating in that evaluation.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

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

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

Maybe to the same minister, let's talk about what should be in that evaluation. If you're going to be either completing the evaluation that the Auditor General asked or if you're

waiting for the federal government to design a framework for you, my question to you is: What will we expect in the evaluation framework, Mr. Minister?

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

**Mr. Campbell:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

As I believe I indicated, that evaluation framework is being drawn up by Citizenship and Immigration Canada so it's hard to comment on what we might expect in it. Perhaps if the Leader of the Opposition is talking to some of her friends in Ottawa they may enlighten her as to what might be in it. We're still awaiting that framework, and when we do receive it, we'll be completing the evaluation.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

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

To the same minister. Mr. Minister, you're the minister of this department, you're the minister on this file. We all know how mismanaged it's been. The Auditor General asked you to do an evaluation. Surely to heavens you'd understand or have a few ideas in terms of the methodology that should be used in an evaluation. Please inform the House what you expect to cover in such a framework.

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Innovation

and Advanced Learning.

**Mr. Campbell:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Leader of the Opposition constantly refers to the mismanagement of this program. I want to remind the Leader of the Opposition that this has probably been one of the most beneficial programs that this province has ever seen in its history.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Campbell:** Whether those benefits be tied to the investment in the business community in this province, whether those benefits are with respect to the cultural diversity that we've built - and I see probably some of our new Islanders joining us in the gallery here today. It's an absolutely fantastic program, and if that's what she refers to as mismanagement, I'll take it any day.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

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

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

Going back to the same minister, I believe you were going to answer in terms of what you expect to be an evaluation framework. What would the methodology be? Perhaps you might want to comment: Will you be doing an evaluation from the beginning of the program? What's the sample size, etc.?

What are the expectations? After all, you're the second minister on this file, and it's been thoroughly mismanaged.

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

**Ms. Dunsford:** The third minister on this file.

**Mr. Campbell:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Just perhaps as a note of correction, I'm not the second minister on this file. I believe the Member from Georgetown-St. Peters was also a minister on this file.

As I stated already, it's premature to talk about what might be included in that framework. That framework is being devised by the federal government through Citizenship and Immigration Canada. When we receive that framework, as I indicated, we'd be very happy to complete the recommendation of the Auditor General.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

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

To the same minister. This is the minister that told us he was in discussions last year with the federal minister on a new program. Actually, I think I read in the *Guardian* here a couple of weeks ago he was going to have a new program. Surely to heavens you'd have the evaluation completed.

My question to you is - after all, it was your department that actually called in the police on immigrants in the past - what's in the evaluation framework, Mr. Minister?

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

**Mr. Campbell:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

It's hard to comment on what might be in the evaluation framework, as we haven't received it. It's the same question, it's the same answer. We're awaiting that evaluation framework from the federal government, and when we receive it we'll complete the recommendation of the Auditor General to a T.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

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

Mr. Minister, you're always in this House saying that you're following through with every recommendation of the Auditor General. The Auditor General asked you to do an evaluation, not waiting in the future, but to have it done for this year.

My question. In his report the Auditor General found many problems of mismanagement. He only reviewed less than 4% of the files. My question to you, Mr. Minister: Will your evaluation include 25%, 50%, 70% of all files? Tell us what's going to be in it.

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

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

Perhaps, following Question Period, I could get some contact information for the federal minister of Citizenship and Immigration Canada, since it's he that's devising the framework for evaluation. Perhaps the Leader of the Opposition could check with him to see what might be in it.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

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

**Leader of the Opposition:** Madam Speaker, this is the minister that's responsible.

It's a co-managed agreement. Right clear in the original agreement it talks about the province designs the provincial part. My question to you, Mr. Minister, is: What do you have as expectations in the evaluation framework? You're the minister, it's three years late, are we going to have another minister? Someone else that can actually do the work on the file?

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

**Mr. Campbell:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

With respect to any expectations that I might

have with respect to evaluation of this great program, I expect that the hon. minister of Citizenship and Immigration Canada will put forward a very good document with respect to a regulatory framework for evaluation.

I also expect that IIDI and this government will take that framework and provide an evaluation as per the recommendation of the Auditor General.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

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

This minister talked about this framework a year ago. Who in your department is the lead? Is it Dr. Michael Mayne?

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

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

There is certainly a number of very professional and dedicated senior bureaucrats in my department who work on this file. As I indicated in the past, I'm very pleased with the hard work done by senior officials at IIDI. A great group of professional and dedicated public servants in this province doing a great job for all Islanders.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

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

Mr. Minister, are you telling us you do not know who in your department is the lead on this extremely important file?

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

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

As minister responsible for the department and also for IIDI, I'm the lead on the file.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

**Leader of the Opposition:** Madam Speaker, this is the same minister who's told us many stories in the past.

Now we're getting some answers. So it's your responsibility and you've chosen to do nothing on this file. Is that the case, Mr. Minister?

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

**Mr. Campbell:** No.

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

**Leader of the Opposition:** Madam

Speaker, to the same minister.

Since you are the sole person responsible, when you are working on the framework with the federal people in CIC, who's designing the framework? Is it your IIDI staff or is it the senior deputies' committee that the Premier often talks about that's helping you out with the Population Secretariat and their work? Who is it?

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

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

I don't know, maybe the Leader of the Opposition didn't hear what I stated earlier, but that framework is being derived by the department of Citizenship and Immigration Canada at the federal level. As per who might be designing that in Ottawa, again, if she'd like to contact the federal minister, perhaps he could provide those answers for her.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

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

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

For the last several years, the last three in particular, we often hear about the federal-provincial team that's working on this file. Provincial is part of that. We're asking you today about who's on your provincial team.

Who's responsible? Is it Dr. Michael Mayne? Who is?

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

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

I believe, as I indicated earlier, as minister responsible for the department and overseeing IIDI, I am ultimately responsible for the file.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

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

Could the minister tell us one thing, one action you're actually doing on this file? On the evaluation?

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

**Mr. Campbell:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Yes, with respect to the evaluation of the file, it's like any other government program. It's evaluated on an ongoing basis like any other program might be. But this particular file, we're awaiting an evaluation framework from the federal government, and when we have that framework we'll complete the Auditor General's recommendation as per the Auditor General's report.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

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

To the same minister. Mr. Minister, you told everybody last year that you were working on a settlement strategy, and we found out just lately you had to hire an outside consultant to do that. My question to the minister, a standard practice with the program that, according to the previous minister, brought in over 400 million to the province in 2008. Are you using an outside agency to do any part of this evaluation?

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

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

Again, we have a lot of very senior public servants here in the province working on this file. Again, we're working closely with the federal government awaiting that regulatory framework. We've got some great dedicated staff. I'm very proud of the work they do. Again, as we receive the framework that's necessary we'll be pleased to conclude the evaluation.

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. Is it Dr. Michael Mayne that's working on the framework here, or is it because he's so busy trying to deliver on the famous prosperity plan that no work's getting done?

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

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

Dr. Michael Mayne's probably one of the most dedicated professionals I've ever encountered in my life. The Leader of the Opposition claims that there's no work being done on the Island prosperity strategy. I believe I quoted some figures here just last week with respect to the results of the Island prosperity strategy to date.

The aerospace industry in PEI has grown by over 24% over the last two years. It now accounts for 25% of our international exports from this province and employs upwards of 900 people in the province. The bioscience sector, one of the fastest growing sectors here in the province, IT companies are expanding in the province, great companies like CGI Group Inc., like Advantage Communications, like Virtual-Agent Services, who's expanded, who's set up in Bedeque. We have bioscience companies like Nature's Crops International in Kensington. As I indicated last week and as I indicate again, the Island prosperity strategy is a great plan, and the plan is working.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

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

Last week we learned in the Legislature that the Population Secretariat certainly were travelling a lot to Europe. I guess their work, according to the IIDI report - I actually went back to check my figures - they actually attracted less than eight workers to the province.

#### **Methodology of evaluation**

To the same minister. In the evaluation, from the provincial perspective, can you explain the due diligence that you're working into the methodology, especially in the area of staff training, staff bonuses, and staff that actually participated on this file? Explain the due diligence, please.

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

**Mr. Campbell:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I'd just like to speak also about the great work done by the Population Secretariat here in the province of PEI. Under the CEO of the Population Secretariat there's been a lot of great work done with respect to recruiting, and I want to thank Mr. Jim Ferguson for the hard work that he does at the Population Secretariat in leading the group over there.

The Leader of the Opposition talks about, I don't know, it was eight or nine people who moved to PEI that resulted from recruiting trips. I don't know how she would measure that. We don't go over, pick a country - we don't go to foreign countries with an empty plane and just ask people to get in and then take them back to PEI. There could be people who have come to the province over the last year or two years as a direct result of the recruiting missions of the Population Secretariat. I don't know how she measures that.

But I do want to thank the Population Secretariat for its great work in getting out and promoting PEI and helping us to deal with the skilled labour shortage here in the province.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

**Leader of the Opposition:** Madam Speaker, I'm starting to see the picture really clear.

It's actually in your report -

**An Hon. Member:** (Indistinct).

**Leader of the Opposition:** - it's in your own report, minister, the methodology that you used to use the figure of eight skilled workers. So perhaps you should go back and have a good conversation with your own department on the methodology they used to do the 2007-2008 report and the 2008-2009 report. Because obviously it's not that clear to you. Would you like to go back to your

own department, Mr. Minister?

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

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

I'd be very pleased to go back to my own department. It's just a great group of individuals doing a lot of hard work and I want to thank them. I want to thank them on behalf of this provincial Legislature and this government for the hard work they do for the great people of Prince Edward Island day in and day out in this province.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

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

When you're back in the department, maybe you can talk to your lead, or whoever is working on this file, and ask what the due diligence is going to be and the methodology, especially because your staff participated directly in this program. So my question to you is: How are you going to write the due diligence and the methodology on the evaluation to make sure we all get a clear understanding of the depth of the issues in this program, Mr. Minister?

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

**Mr. Campbell:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I would expect when we receive a regulatory framework from a federal government department, Citizenship and Immigration Canada, that that will no doubt outline the due diligence and the methodology. Again, we're awaiting that regulatory framework. When we do receive it we'll be pleased to exercise it.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

### **Expected retention rates**

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

To the same minister. This is the minister that last year in January, or actually in April, told us he was in full discussions with the federal minister, and we found out very clear there wasn't one discussion.

So my question to you is - you're co-signed on that agreement. You're responsible for the provincial part. Obviously if you're talking about a new program you're going to try to be clear to the feds that you've actually done some work on the old program.

My question to you, Mr. Minister, is this: In your original goals, what were your expected retention rates for 2007, 2008 and 2009, and how were they included in the methodology for the evaluation, Mr. Minister?

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

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

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

The Leader of the Opposition refers to communications and new programs. I can assure you that I and staff at IIDI have been in contact with the federal government with respect to the release of new programs. As a matter of fact, I sent a letter off to the hon. Jason Kenney, Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism, informing him of our intentions here in PEI as per the regulations of the federal-provincial agreement on immigration. I'm awaiting a reply from Minister Kenney as to his thoughts on new programs.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

**Leader of the Opposition:** Madam Speaker, this is extremely disappointing to the public, who want answers on this program, and to the business community, who are expecting a new program.

You've obviously done no work in your own department. But my question to you was on the retention goals. Can you tell us what your original retention goals - especially when you ram, what, 1,800-plus applications through - what are your expected retention rates for that cohort?

**An Hon. Member:** One hundred per cent. We always aim for (Indistinct)

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Innovation

and Advanced Learning.

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

The cultural diversity side of what the Provincial Nominee Program has brought to this province has been absolutely fantastic. We see it day in and day out on the streets and in our schools.

Obviously, as new Islanders arrive here in PEI, our goal is very simple - we'd like to retain each and every new Islander who arrive in PEI. Now, we know that's unrealistic, it's not going to happen, and that's the great part about the great country that we live in, Canada. If someone arrives in PEI, it's their choice. They're free to move about the country. That's what makes Canada such a great country.

But our goal remains the same: to retain each and every new Islander who arrives in this province. We'll strive each and every day - it's a priority of this department - to see those retention numbers grow here at home.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

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

**Leader of the Opposition:** (Indistinct), Madam Speaker.

Mr. Minister, I'm glad to hear that you are wanting to retain all our newcomers, many of which came here because of their interest

in the Canadian dream.

So, in the evaluation, how many interviews will you be doing with each applicant to find out and determine if they stayed here, if they didn't stay here? Why or why not? Because that would be included in any evaluation, Mr. Minister.

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

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

The hon. Leader of the Opposition keeps replying to the evaluation. Again and again I'll tell the Leader of the Opposition that we are waiting the framework as per the notification we received from the department of Citizenship and Immigration Canada.

I have the hon. minister's email address here. I can provide it to the Leader of the Opposition following Question Period if she wants to share her views on what might be included in that framework. I'm sure he'd be more than happy to hear from her.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

**Evaluation and businesses**

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

To the same minister. Mr. Minister, you're the man that's responsible for this program.

You're the man that has had this file - the second minister, we'll have to admit. There's nothing done. Are we batting for number three to be next after the session closes?

My question to you, Mr. Minister, since you're not doing individual follow ups, let's talk about the evaluation, especially from the business perspective. Many evaluations often include when people are not eligible or refused participation and especially with the huge number of businesses that were refused participation in this program. Will you be reviewing 25% of the businesses that were rejected, 50% of the businesses? How many per year? What's the provincial expectation on this?

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

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

Again, the provincial expectation is that the regulatory framework for evaluation as put forward by Citizenship and Immigration Canada will be followed to the T, as per the recommendations of the Auditor General. The Auditor General has done a fine job in reviewing this program. He made a series of recommendations and we are acting to implement each and every recommendation.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

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

### **Examination of impact of immigrant partner program**

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

This is the minister that has no discussion with the feds but tells everybody he's working on a new program. Tells everybody not once, not twice, probably about five times, that he's working on a settlement strategy. Now he has to hire somebody else.

Now, in terms of the evaluation, which the Auditor General's asked for, he's done nothing.

But my question to the minister. You, in your response to the Auditor General, indicated that you're completing, with an outside party, an examination of the economic impact of the immigrant partner program. Minister, who is doing this work?

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

**Mr. Campbell:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

With respect to the economic impact of this great program, it's easy just to see the economic impact of this great program. Leading the region in housing starts, leading the region in new auto sales.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Campbell:** Fantastic program, Madam Speaker, that has brought a lot of investment, but more importantly, has grown the cultural diversity and has grown

the population, leading the region in population growth as well, Madam Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Campbell:** It's a program we're very proud of, Madam Speaker.

I am in consultation with the federal government. I'm releasing new programs so we can continue the great work that's being done here in Prince Edward Island.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Alberton-Roseville.

### Replacement of Maplewood Manor

**Mr. Murphy:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

My question is for the hon. Minister of Health and Wellness. After many years of lobbying by the people of West Prince of the former administration, the people of West Prince are very pleased to hear that this government is going to replace Maplewood Manor. What I'm wondering is: Could the hon. minister please tell the House what is time frame for the replacement of Maplewood Manor?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

**Ms. Bertram:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Certainly want to thank the hon. member for his question. It's a very exciting time in his

community and in long-term care in this province, and in terms of our commitment to aging strategy here in the Province of Prince Edward Island.

To the hon. Member from Alberton-Roseville, your community and the Maplewood Manor that's being replaced under a 55-million-plus capital infrastructure that's being invested into long-term care facilities across this province - I am pleased to tell this House today, and to tell the member for his community, that the tenders are going out, that work will start in May, and full construction will begin in later summer, Madam Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Alberton-Roseville.

**Mr. Murphy:** That's great to hear, Madam Speaker.

Of course, there's going to be many other questions surrounding the replacement of this manor. I'm just wondering: Is there a public presentation plan to lay out what the plans are to the public of West Prince?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

**Ms. Bertram:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

There is going to be one tomorrow for the - we have another manor replacement taking place in the hon. Minister of Innovation and Advanced Learning's -

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Ms. Bertram:** There is a public meeting there tomorrow, but for the hon. Member from Alberton-Roseville concerning the Maplewood replacement, on Thursday afternoon there will be a time for family, the residents and staff, to come together with all the staff from our shop, and then there will be a public time in the evening that everyone from the community can come between 7:00 to 8:00, approximately, to see the plan and have an informal conversation and question (Indistinct)..

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

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

#### **Use of mussel mud for fertilizer**

**Mr. Watts:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

My question today is for the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal. With your indulgence, Madam Speaker, I'd just like a little extra time.

Last fall the minister's department undertook a dredging operation out at Corran Ban for the removal of a sill of mud, that had gathered under the bridge which was restricting the flow of water going upstream. That project was completed, and I want to thank the minister for doing that, and finally a department listened and the job was completed.

But I had some blueberry growers come to me and ask about the possibility of using that mud that was pumped out of there as the fertilizer on their blueberry growing operations. Personally, I think that's a great

idea.

But my question to the minister is: Mr. Minister, does your department have any plans to do more dredging in the future and if so, would your department, consider ways of using this mud, this mussel mud, as a fertilizer on agricultural land?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal.

**Mr. MacKinley:** The first place of all, the watershed group and yourself did a lot of lobbying to get that done. We will be reviewing these on a situation basis and how much money's being involved.

Using mussel mud for fertilizer, I don't believe it's a fertilizer. I believe it's more like a lime. If you're a blueberry grower, I would think you'd want your pH very low, and if you mussel mud on your blueberry land it might drive your pH up.

Now the Leader of the Opposition could probably inform me better here, but I would say that - if you could just take indulgence here, too - but if I rented a farm and there was mussel mud on that particular farm, along the shores, we found that the pH was always higher because the lime - shells kept breaking down over a period of time and that increases lime.

So I would say that what I will do, I will refer it to the minister of agriculture and have his department have a look at it.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from

Georgetown-St. Peters.

**Number of people hired to look after closed schools**

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

My question today is also for the minister of transportation and public works. Last week, it was uncovered that the minister has hired a number of individuals to look after the schools you closed. Can you tell me how many individuals you hired?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal.

**Mr. MacKinley:** Could you repeat that question?

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

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

Last week it was uncovered -

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

**Mr. M. Currie:** - that the minister of transportation and public works hired a number of individuals to look after the schools your government closed last year. Can you tell me how many you hired?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal.

**Mr. MacKinley:** I'll have to probably take that information back to you. I know that we

are disposing of the schools to the communities or any non-profit organization that wants them.

I know that we're putting so much money towards operating that school for probably a year or so. I also know that St. Peter's, I believe, is looking for more down there. I've talked to them. Whether who was hired to look after them, I'll have to get back, or how many, I really don't know.

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

**Mr. M. Currie:** Madam Speaker, the minister of education pointed his finger to the minister of transportation and indicated that you do know about it and you did hire them. I'm just wondering: How many people did you hire? (Indistinct) uncovered.

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal.

**Mr. MacKinley:** Maybe if the minister of education knows how many we hired because the schools are his, but I really - I'll have to find out how many people we hired. Because we hire so many people. There's something like 1,800 people working for us across this province. We're creating jobs all the time. Good, long-term meaningful jobs and we're moving the department of transportation into the future in this province.

How many people are actually here or there? I'll have people that'll find that out for you.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. M. Currie:** Madam Speaker, a question for the minister of transportation.

Did you advertise these positions for these people to look after these abandoned schools or did you go through your local MLAs?

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

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal.

**Mr. MacKinley:** You're the MLA in the area. I don't know if our department went through you or not, I'll have to check out and find out.

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

**Mr. M. Currie:** Madam Speaker, it's my understanding that the minister of transportation also, in his negotiations with one community, has promised that one of these individuals could be the general manager if the community took this abandoned school.

Is that true? In St. Peter's.

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal.

**Mr. MacKinley:** St. Peter's. I talked to Mr. MacAulay, Jim MacAulay from St. Peter's, the teacher, former retired teacher.

The only conversation we had was I believe we offered him 90 - I forget what it was, I

shouldn't say the figure - \$94,000 and they wanted 130 or something because they wanted us to pay the insurance and some other things. We never got into who was going to be managing it. I just assumed it was going to be run by a group of volunteers. I'm not sure.

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

**Mr. M. Currie:** Is part of your negotiations with the community of St. Peter's that you include in your funding salary for a general manager? Is that part of your negotiations?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal.

**Mr. MacKinley:** All I can tell you is we have so much money going to these schools, and I believe it's 94,000 or something. I don't have the figures here for that particular school. But whatever they want to do with it, that's up to them what they do with it. They can do whatever they want with that 94,000. I hope they keep it for updating the school and that and they want more, but I don't think I'm going to have any more money for them.

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

### **Community interest in taking over closed schools**

**Mr. M. Currie:** Minister, can you tell me how many communities have indicated that they are interested in taking over these empty buildings?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal.

**Mr. MacKinley:** I would say there are probably - there are proposals for Grand Tracadie, Dundas, St. Peter's, Eastern Kings, that have been received from the communities. The proposals are under review by our government now.

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

**Mr. M. Currie:** Would the minister please indicate what kind of a budget you have in total for these empty buildings now, if you're in discussions?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal.

**Mr. MacKinley:** Well, what you'll have to do is wait until Friday afternoon, I'll tell you, when the budget comes down.

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

**Mr. M. Currie:** Madam Speaker, the minister has been in negotiations since last May with these communities.

Certainly he must have some sort of a budget in place to indicate how much you're going to spend on downloading these empty buildings to our communities.

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

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal.

**Mr. MacKinley:** I am the minister of transportation. We have a figure there. The communities have a figure they're looking for. But I got to wait until the budget comes down to see exactly what's in the budget. I don't think Friday afternoon is too long for you to wait.

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

### Road tax

**Mr. M. Currie:** Madam Speaker, that's disappointing, that he's been dealing with this file now for almost a year and he doesn't have a budget figure in place.

I'll go to another subject. Minister, a year or more ago I think it was promoted quite aggressively by your government to implement HST into this province. I believe that the road builders were lobbying your department and it's my understanding that you were in support of bringing HST to the province in support of the road builders. Now that you've broken that promise with them, are you going to lobby on behalf of the road builders to take the road tax off those non-registered vehicles for the construction industry?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal.

**Mr. MacKinley:** Madam Speaker, for a former minister of disaster, or whatever it was - highways, at that particular time - he should know that the road builders, whether there is HST in it or not, the road builders go by the government rate (Indistinct).

That's what they go by. These rates are there. If the HST was there, they got it back, their rates would be lower for their equipment. The only thing I ever promised these road builders when I met with them, I would give them lots of work. Put as much as I possibly could out for tender and try to make it fair to everybody, but the other government never did.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. M. Currie:** Madam Speaker, question to the minister.

Are you going to follow through, minister, with your promise, in lieu of HST that you're going to remove the road tax off those non-registered vehicles for the construction industry? Are you going to follow through with that promise?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal.

**Mr. MacKinley:** I don't (Indistinct) what happened here over the weekend down there, but there must have been something in it. Because the poor member - I don't have anything to do with the taxes, the taxes belong to the minister of finance. Check with the minister of finance. I'm not the minister of finance. I'm the minister of highways that paves all those nice roads for you getting back and forth, and all the bridges.

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

### **Bypass road test results**

**Mr. M. Currie:** Speaking of all those nice roads, I'm wondering, minister, on the bypass road from St. Peter's Road to Brackley, I believe it is, there was a new section paved in there last fall. Have all the test results come back on that road. Are they in compliance?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal.

**Mr. MacKinley:** When they pave the roads here in the Province of Prince Edward Island they've got to guarantee them for a year. So we do continuous testing. If they don't come in to compliance, we put a penalty against the companies that did them.

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

**Mr. M. Currie:** I'll try the minister again.

Minister, on that section of road that was paved last year it's my understanding that the tests have been taken. Are they all in compliance on that section of road?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal.

**Mr. MacKinley:** All I know is we're paving lots of roads, we have a year, our department will make up the decision on those particular roads. Our department will make up the decision whether they're done right or not. If they're not done right we have a year for warranty. More than you had. Because on your roads they were bumpy bump. If you want to go out to Long

Creek, you fixed that corner over there six times, and it was bumpy bump bump, every time. We went out and we did it right. Out there across the West River Causeway. We did the Dunedin Bridge. You had an old wooden bridge there that wasn't even safe to travel over.

So, if I'm out checking the roads and checking - down at the lab checking this and that. I have people that have arrived there, have full confidence in them and the amount of roads we're doing, you should be thankful that you're even in opposition.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

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

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

I believe my question was very specific in regards to a road that was paved last fall between St. Peter's Road and the Brackley Point Road. It's my understanding that a lot of the test results have failed. I want to know: Are you going to tear that road back up now and redo it?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal.

**Mr. MacKinley:** That road there, you're talking about the perimeter bypass. That road has got to have move paving done this year because we didn't get the seal on last year.

That road was done very efficiently, it was done great. Even if you're coming in from

Morell way - even the Leader of the Opposition is coming in now - it's not lined way back to Jamie Ballem's. Now see, there are two lanes that are turning this way. So I mean - or if you're turning from that way to go to Cornwall or anywhere like that, that's a new modern road that's working very well.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Georgetown-St. Peters, final question.

**Mr. M. Currie:** Madam Speaker, it's very clear here today that the minister is avoiding the question, and it's my understanding that the samples that were taken have failed and it's important

It's important, before he allows the contractor to put a seal coat on, that he makes a decision. So are you going to overrule the workers in your department or your deputy minister on this file?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal.

**Mr. MacKinley:** We'll have a look at the thing. What we're doing, we're building roads. Chapman's are one of the best companies we have here in the province, the same as Island Coastal (Indistinct).

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. MacKinley:** That's what we're doing. Eastern Kings. Their paving all over Atlantic Canada. So the poor member, when he was there, he was so busy ripping up intersections that he didn't build right. Wasn't anything to do with the paving. He spent all his time under the cloud at night

**QUESTION PERIOD-PRELIMINARY PROCEEDINGS**

**20 April 2010**

doing that work.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

[End of Question Period]