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

FOR

WEDNESDAY, 28 APRIL 2010



Responses to Questions Taken As Notice

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

**Impaired driving (further)**

**Mr. MacKinley:** Yesterday in Question Period I was referring to a question on the impaired driving limits and I put in - I said, in my Question Period it says here: I think it's 24 hours.

Actually, it's seven days. I knew the 24 hours was for our younger people with no tolerance for alcohol. This was seven days. I believe BC, which I think in that list is at seventh place, and we're at third. They've come out and they suspend a person's license out there for three days if they blow between .05 and .08. So we're still well above them.

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

Questions by Members

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

**Stanley Bridge resort (further)**

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

Question for the Minister of Health and Wellness. Yesterday you indicated you were going to bring information back. Did you bring any of that information back?

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

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

I returned to the office and I'm not privileged to release that information.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

**Mr. M. Currie:** Madam Speaker, I believe yesterday the minister did indicate that she was going to share with Islanders information.

I'm sure that there is information - faxes or whatever - and you did pretend yesterday you did not know anything about it, then you did indicate to the media 24 hours later that you did know something about it.

So, Madam Speaker, I'm asking the minister if she'd table that information.

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

**Ms. Bertram:** Madam Speaker, I think it's important to clarify, because I think the hon. Member from Georgetown-St. Peters is trying to make some statement that I don't feel is true in terms of yesterday's Hansard.

I was very clear that he stated a situation in regards to Canada Games last summer. This is a topic that is between the host society and between the private operator. I was very consistent with that in yesterday's Question Period. I did not deny that I didn't know of some type of situation, but I wasn't at privilege to disclose that information. The hon. Member from Georgetown-St. Peters

should realize that. As I urged yesterday to speak with the host society president, Mr. Joe Spriet.

Again, I want to share with this House that we were so proud of the success of the Canada Games in 2009. We had a great success that brought a tremendous amount of value to this province. Not only \$14 million worth of direct tax revenues, but it was a wonderful two weeks to showcase our beautiful province, Prince Edward Island, to our national stage. We should be so thankful that the host society did a great job doing that.

Thank you.

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

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

Usually in a business transaction if there is a disagreement and its resolved it's usually paid out or whatever, but in this case there was a letter of confidentially agreement signed. That raises the question of why was that signed if this is a normal business transaction.

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

**Ms. Bertram:** But hon. member and, Madam Speaker, this is between the host society and the private operator.

It is not the provincial government. Yes, we were a funder, just like the federal government, just like other municipal levels

of government, orders of government.

I would urge the hon. Member from Georgetown-St. Peters to perhaps go back to his paperwork back when he was in government in 2006 when original accommodation facts were given out. He probably should have that information. Maybe he was part of that and he should go back to his facts.

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

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

**Mr. M. Currie:** Madam Speaker, there is an issue here.

The minister does not want to reveal what happened. Mainly that's because she interfered in the process and/or she had her deputy interfere and instructed this to happen.

**Premier Ghiz:** (Indistinct).

**Mr. M. Currie:** Madam Speaker, will you stand up - easy now, Premier, don't get touchy now.

Will you stand up now and say that you or your deputy did not interfere with this process?

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

**Ms. Bertram:** Madam Speaker, I am very proud to be the minister of sport, responsible for sport, in this province and I am very proud that we were able to host the best

Canada Games ever in the Province of Prince Edward Island, and the best in Canada.

I have nothing to hide, nothing to hide to Islanders. I was so pleased that the host society saw fit to see the North Shore as a location for the rowing, the kayaking. Those activities took place on the North Shore of Prince Edward Island. It's a shame that the Member from Georgetown-St. Peters is taking this approach. I am not -

**Mr. Bagnall:** Overstepping your (Indistinct).

**Speaker:** Order, please!

**Ms. Bertram:** No, there are no excuses in this, Madam Speaker, absolutely no excuses.

I am so proud of our Island. I'm so proud of the host society, I'm proud of the volunteers. This member should be very much happy with the results that we had last summer in this (Indistinct).

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

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

Order, please!

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

Minister, will you please stand up today and indicate to Islanders - you pretended yesterday you didn't know anything about it. You told the media then a few hours later you do and you were talking to them. So

will you tell us whether you or your deputy interfered with this process and instructed that invoice to be paid?

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

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

Again, I have nothing to hide. There was no interference. The hon. Member from Georgetown-St. Peters should realize that he should be putting these questions to the host society or the private operator. I am not at privilege to disclose that information. This is between the host society. So questions should be asked, if he has some, to the president of the host society.

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

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

**Mr. M. Currie:** Madam Speaker, I guess if the minister has nothing to hide, then probably what we'll have to do is go to a standing committee and call all those affected in before a standing committee.

**Cost-benefit analysis re: TIR sections in Tignish**

My question now is to the minister of transportation. A little over a month ago you announced that you were going to move part of two sections of your department to the community of Tignish. I'm just wondering, minister, could you please table in the House today the cost-benefit analysis that you did on that move for this move to Tignish? Can you please table that

information.

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

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

**Mr. MacKinley:** For a minister over there who ran the department like a runaway train, as they tell me - we are moving the paint shop to Tignish. Because what you got to remember, too, is up west from Summerside west all the work is pretty well being done by the private sector. This way we're going to have our own crews working out of Tignish doing the work. We can do it cheaper. I looked into it, we can do it cheaper than the private sector.

I know he's against Tignish. I know he tried to do some things in his own area by bringing in some business for his friends and they didn't even work.

**Speaker:** Thank you, minister.

The hon. Member from Georgetown-St. Peters.

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

Question for the same minister. So, minister, are you telling Islanders today that you just woke up some morning and decided you were going to make this move without a cost-benefit analysis or some sort of an impact study? You just decided you were going to do that some morning.

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

**Mr. M. Currie:** The Speaker will only give me so long here to explain this to you because it takes a long time to get through to you.

**Mr. Bagnall:** Questioning the Speaker?

**Premier Ghiz:** No, he's just saying there's a limited time.

**Mr. MacKinley:** But the thing is, when we came in, for instance the school buses, weren't safe to be on the road. That goes back to not proper maintenance and proper rust checking, etc. I don't blame the staff because they were overcrowded here and they were overcrowded somewhere else. We had to look at making things into the future. We want this construction stuff to last longer.

I know it's 250,000 for a loader. Well, if you do a real overhaul maintenance after 10 years you can make that last another 15 years or so. You wouldn't understand that because they were all wore out from lack of maintenance.

So what we have done up in Tignish, we are putting a paint shop together, we're going to have a welding shop there. Then we're going to sandblast it. Then there's going to be the body shop and then the paint shop after that, and it's going to be done in an environmental friendly way and it's going to be done safe for the people working there.

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

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

**Mr. M. Currie:** Minister, could you please tell us who in your department has been assigned or directed to do this cost-benefit analysis? Can you please tell us who's championing this move?

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

**Mr. MacKinley:** This is a government that was in before that never costed out anything. But they looked at who they could help on their own side, who was their own supporters and who they could help. They put millions of dollars on the back of taxpayers - on back of their own taxpayers' money in their own friends' pockets.

What we're doing is looking at a long-term strategy for the department of highways and transportation. Within the year 2014 this government garage I guess has got to be moved because the expansion is going so well under our government that we got to need that for more exhibition grounds, etc., more racetracks, whatever.

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

**Mr. MacKinley:** I'm just telling you. So we're looking ahead, we're looking down the road. Not like you guys. You were out sailing like you lost your rudder or something.

**Speaker:** Thank you, minister.

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

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

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

Minister, could you please tell the House and Islanders when you sat down with the unions and the public service to advise them of this move and how it was going to affect the government workers financially and socially? You give me the dates.

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister -

**Mr. MacKinley:** I would say about four hours -

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

**Mr. MacKinley:** I would say four to five hours before the announcement was made up west.

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

**Mr. M. Currie:** Madam Speaker, so you sat down with them four or five hours before you made this decision.

I thought you were away on vacation. So who did actually sit down the unions?

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

**Mr. MacKinley:** If you would have been an active minister, you would have known that the minister doesn't sit down. It's my deputy and my comptroller who would sit down with them and explain this. Yes, I was away in Florida with my wife on vacation at the particular time, but that doesn't mean I

wasn't in touch with the Island. Because today they have phones and that.

But my deputy did the best he could and informed them, and his comptroller. That's what we did. There were so many phone calls coming in from Tignish and that that we're finally going to do something up there.

**Premier Ghiz:** Finally!

**Mr. MacKinley:** If you go up there, I can count millions of dollars in wasted money all the way up. Go to that building you have up there with the glass on it and nobody in it. Remember (Indistinct) Bloomfield. Land Bloomfield. Oh, I just - I couldn't even - you don't even want to hear about it today.

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

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

I'm sure the minister does not want to hear about it because a lot of people are asking questions. I'm just wondering, minister: Did you think up this on your own or did you get a call from the Premier's office?

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

**Mr. MacKinley:** The Premier's office? No, I didn't get a call from the Premier's office. Because what our Premier does is want one Island, one community. He appoints people to Cabinet to follow the Cabinet's wishes. The Cabinet's wishes at the time was to make sure we spread some of this stuff out

across the province to help out more than Cornwall and Charlottetown and Stratford or Summerside.

You weren't even too good for your own areas. It's lucky you even got elected down there because you didn't bring anything down there. I think two of them went broke that you did bring down there.

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

**Mr. M. Currie:** Madam Speaker, I think everybody knows that the minister did not make the decision, that it was probably Geoff Townsend or Chris LeClair that made this decision.

**An Hon. Member:** Neil LeClair made it.

**Mr. M. Currie:** Madam Speaker, I'm just wondering if the minister could now tell us, out of the finance section that you're removing from Charlottetown to Tignish, have all those people decided that they're going to transfer to Tignish?

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

**Mr. MacKinley:** That is going through our HR people. Secondly, we're analyzing the situation because in finance it's one area that we're speeding up. We did have some problems with bills not being paid quickly enough. I believe we were trying to get a tractor from Kensington agricultural equipment centre through the snowmobile club and we were told that highway credit was no good with Ford credit or something, because we weren't paying our bills on a

regular basis. That's because you guys were there.

As soon as I found that out - we're going to streamline that. We're going to make it work and make it work better, because we want to keep our credit up. We pay people within twelve days if we have to. What we've got to do is we're going to improve the system that was there.

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

**Mr. M. Currie:** Madam Speaker, I'm not quite sure I followed what tractors had to do with the question that I asked.

I'll ask the minister again. Can you tell me specifically how many people from the finance section have decided that they are going to transfer to Tignish?

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

**Mr. MacKinley:** Finance is mine. The director (Indistinct) finance my department.

Nobody has really told me. I deal with the HR people. Not so much like when you guys were there. You fired 800 people. Eight million dollars you paid, then you hired most of them back because you had to. If that's saving money to the taxpayers, I'm not going to take your economics and run this department.

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

**Mr. M. Currie:** Madam Speaker, I'm sure, as most people in the gallery are also confused with the answers coming back from the minister.

But it's my understanding, minister, that most of those people or all of them are not going to transfer to Tignish. That decision has already been made. So in that case, will you call for competitions within the civil service first, or will they be open competitions?

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

**Mr. MacKinley:** Just goes to prove you, Madam Speaker, that the member must know more of what's going on -

**Mr. M. Currie:** Than you do.

**Mr. MacKinley:** Yeah. In that department, I guess you must have hired them or something for some reason. They must be of your faith or something. But you know what, Madam Speaker?

My HR people have not informed me of anything. The former minister could be hallucinating or something here in the House, I'm not sure.

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

**Mr. M. Currie:** Madam Speaker, there's another section in his department, under the maintenance section, which is spray-painting and sandblasting.

Can you tell me, minister, how many of

those people are transferring to Tignish?

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

**Mr. MacKinley:** The building is not going to be built until sometime in the fall, in October. The HR people haven't informed me. There's a collective union agreement. We'll be working with the union, the collective agreement. We'll be looking to work as good as we can with these particular people.

If you would just listen, there's a lot of the private work that we did up west that's going to be done by civil service now, which means we need more workers. We also got to have equipment down here. Because when you're government was there you were letting everything fall apart. We've got to do a better job of this maintenance work, because there's painting, rust proofing, etc. That's what we're bringing in - preventative medicine is what it is.

Preventative medicine, preventative maintenance, whatever you want to call it. That's what makes the machinery last longer. I guess you delivered the oil, so you were wanting used oil, but when I was farming I had to make my equipment last as long as it could, and that was good maintenance.

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

**Mr. M. Currie:** Minister, you also have, under the collective agreement, rules and regulations to follow regarding the transferring of government employees. Can

you please tell Islanders today, since you have somebody that did this cost analysis, how much all the mileage is going to cost for that one year for all these employees?

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

**Mr. MacKinley:** If I go by your finance and your figures and your information from finance, it won't cost us anything. You said nobody's going to move up.

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

**Mr. M. Currie:** Minister, you indicated that most of these in the spray paint section are going to move. So how much is that going to cost to taxpayers?

**Speaker:** The hon. minister -

**Mr. M. Currie:** Travel time.

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

**Mr. MacKinley:** (Indistinct) I haven't found out exactly how many people are going to move or not. All I know is we need more workers because we're doing more work and it's going to take more employees. I hope we hire a lot of people from Alberton, O'Leary, Tignish. I think it's time they got an opportunity to work for the government the same as anybody else.

We also, if you want to really go back to it, we also, in my negotiations, have purchased a former paint shop here in the province, in an industrial park. A shop that your

department - or not you, it was I guess the former minister - the Taj Mahal - you spent millions fixing in up. I remember questioning it. Anyway, I purchased that building, put a deal together for \$92,000. We can use it for what we're using for, plus there's two bays back there that we're going to have a look at that we might be able to use to do small fender-benders, etc., here. That's what you call management of the department.

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

**Mr. M. Currie:** A question to the minister. Minister, you indicated that you were going to put this new sandblasting and paint shop in Tignish. Is it going to be inside the boundaries of the town of Tignish?

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

**Mr. MacKinley:** That's probably the best question. The question to that - the answer - if we went with the place we're looking at now that we want the answer would be no. But we're only a few feet from the boundaries of Tignish, so that'd be up to the residents of Tignish if they want to expand their boundaries and the people there.

Our direction from our department was to make sure it's away from houses and schools and that. We want it to be out by itself. We don't want the noise. If you look at Cornwall - Crapaud had a 5% noise level up there and they put a young Stewart fellow that was painting there and sandblasting, moved him right out of Crapaud and he had to go way back in the

country and put a place up there. He's doing a great job. I've been in it. It's a real nice shop. My deputy and I have both been there.

So, the question is, we want it kept away as far as we can from houses or anywhere that it's going to cause a noise inconvenience or anything, so we don't have to rebuild it and rebuild it.

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

**Mr. M. Currie:** So, minister, that's the very point I was asking. You're indicating it's going to benefit Tignish, but by the sound of you, with this new location you're going to pick, it's going to be outside the boundaries of Tignish. So is that going to benefit the town?

**An Hon. Member:** Absolutely.

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

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

**Mr. M. Currie:** Where's it going? Bloomfield? (Indistinct).

**Mr. MacKinley:** You know, it's no wonder when you were minister of development everything went bad here. I told you, it's about 500 feet, maybe 1,000 feet, outside the boundaries of Tignish. In that particular area there's no restaurants, there's no shops or anything, but if you go a kilometre down the road there's all kinds of restaurants and that in Tignish where they can eat and that, and different things they can go to.

See, what people do, they can move a kilometre or two, and it's right close to the boundary. Now, I'm not going to prejudge, maybe the minister of fisheries there would be more inclined to talk to the people in Tignish and the community of Tignish, whether they want to extend their boundaries. But I know one thing, talking to our Minister of Finance and Municipal Affairs, he has no problem approving if Tignish wants to extend their boundaries out 500 or 1,000 feet, providing it's not affecting anybody when we do it. But we can't prejudge what Tignish wants. But if I can go by the mayor, he wasn't too happy with the line of questioning, why everybody was against Tignish -

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

**Mr. MacKinley:** - and now I'm assuming he won't be going to any more of your political meetings up there.

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

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

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

A question to the same minister. Minister, could you indicate to us how much you have budgeted for this new building and the land coss?

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

**Mr. MacKinley:** I would, just quick off my head, probably 800,000, probably about

\$800,000 for land to build it. Roughly 600, 800. Whatever we're projecting, it would be about 20% cheaper than you guys could have done it.

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

**Mr. M. Currie:** Madam Speaker, you also indicated, I think, in the media that you are going to lease some property or a space from Tignish Initiatives.

Can you tell me how much that lease is going to cost?

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

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

**Mr. MacKinley:** I'll have to let the minister of fisheries try that one. What are we leasing up there?

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

**Mr. Bagnall:** (Indistinct) passing the buck.

**Mr. MacKinley:** I don't know. Look, I'll look into it and get back. But we are expanding so much in rural PEI I can't possibly - the deputy'll be here on the floor today, but I'm not familiar with leasing that particular piece.

**An Hon. Member:** (Indistinct) office space?

**Mr. MacKinley:** Oh, that's, oh, the office space.

**An Hon. Member:** The accounting department.

**Mr. MacKinley:** That's for the accounting department. Why didn't you say that? That's up where Gail Shea's office is, is it not?

**Some Hon. Members:** Yes.

**Mr. MacKinley:** Yes, that's up where Gail Shea and them used to have their slush fund and everything. We're moving in the accounting department there to put jobs right downtown Tignish.

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

### **Stimulus plan for rural PEI**

**Mr. M. Currie:** Madam Speaker, now you know why people get confused when they ask the minister any questions.

Minister, will you please step up today and admit that your government has failed in their economic policy for rural PEI and this is just another attempt to try to cover up for a failed economic stimulus package for rural PEI?

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

**Mr. MacKinley:** Madam Speaker, questions like that, when you look at it, his economic thing was give loans to I believe it was the Irvings, and that mill is closed now.

Give loans to somebody building furniture down there. I believe that place is not working. I could go on and on. What we are

doing, we're putting businesses that are sure, we're trying to make as good as we can. We're paving roads all across the Island. Things are booming across the Island. If you go out, people are building. I (Indistinct) off-shore builders or permits are up something like 41% or something last year. Those are people that have had confidence in the province here under our leader, our Premier. Because let's face it, Stephen Harper? Our stimulus fund started here and they copied us. Exactly what they did. I give them credit for listening.

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

### **Blooming Point Beach parking lot**

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

My question today is for the Minister of Environment, Energy and Forestry. Nightmare in Blooming Point, that's the situation that has faced emergency response vehicles for the last number of years if they're called to an emergency at Blooming Point Beach. Now, this is - cars are parked on both sides of the road, and the road is so narrow no vehicle can get through. Now, a parking lot would fix this up. But the reason a parking lot hasn't been built, is because it is an environmentally sensitive area.

My question to you, Mr. Minister, is: Has your department made a decision as to a location and construction of a parking lot at Blooming Point Beach?

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

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

The hon. member is correct. There was a major problem at Blooming Point Beach with the parking. The emergency people, the emergency response teams out in that area, have indicated a number of times that they had a difficult time getting to the beach to rescue people that need rescuing.

I've got to commend the member for the area. He's been working on this file since he got elected, and trying to improve the area. A location has been selected for a parking lot. We've worked through the member there with TARRP, the Tracadie Area Residents for Resource Protection association, and the Island Nature Trust.

There's a lot of sensitive land around there, and we're committed to not building on sensitive land. I think the communities and the Island Nature Trust have come together, have selected a site for a parking lot. That will have to go through an EA, an environmental assessment, and hopefully that'll be done right away.

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

**Mr. Watts:** Yes, a supplementary question.

You indicated, Mr. Minister, that it will be done right away, or as soon as possible. How many vehicles will this parking lot accommodate?

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

**Mr. Brown:** Madam Speaker, I think the

proposal is for about 120 cars to be located further up from the beach.

Right now they park right on the beach, or right on the sand dunes. We're not going to allow them in that sensitive area -

**Premier Ghiz:** Protecting the environment.

**Mr. Brown:** - Madam Speaker, it's protected under the natural protection act, and we're not going to touch that sensitive area.

We're working with the community. An environmental assessment has to be done first to ensure that nothing's being disturbed and it's constructed in an environmentally sensitive way, and that no harm has come to the habitat area that's in that area. So we're hoping it's to be done very quickly. But when you have all groups on side, you have the residents area community on side, and you have the Island Nature Trust on side, I expect quick evaluation of this project (Indistinct).

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Sherwood.

### School adaptation

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

My question today is to the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development and Attorney General.

Mr. Minister, during recent discussions with a parent group from the Sherwood Elementary School area there were some

questions regarding about 70 new kindergarten students coming into the school, and adaptations that have to be done to the school to accommodate these new students. Can you explain what will have to happen at the school in order to accommodate these new kids?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development and Attorney General.

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

Yes, the department is working closely with school boards all across Prince Edward Island. We are preparing to bring in approximately 1,400 five-year-olds into the public school system. We are on schedule and on target. We've recently purchased 51 new school buses to accommodate that transition. We've also, we're working closely now with the PEITF. We have ratified the 112 kindergarten teachers that will be brought into the system.

But in respect to the hon. Member from Charlottetown-Sherwood's question in respect to the needs at Sherwood Elementary School. Right now we have approximately 75 to 80 five-year-olds that will be coming into a school which is fairly congested. I know the school is working with the district to look at reconfiguring classroom space inside the building to accommodate the five-year-olds.

What will have to happen, there will be two second-hand mobiles that are presently used at Glen Stewart Elementary School that will be relocated next to Sherwood school to

provide programming in the area of art and music and resource to accommodate the five-year-olds in the school. We're doing everything we can to make sure that Sherwood school, like every other school in rural and areas of Prince Edward Island, is ready to embrace their five-year-olds, and we're looking forward to a positive transition. We're completing the early year evaluations this week, and the feedback has been very positive by parents and school teachers across the province, so we'll look forward to that work continuing.

Thank you.

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

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Sherwood.

**Mr. Mitchell:** Yes. Question to the same minister.

Mr. Minister, do you know if the parents will be notified of the upcoming change through the school system in the near future?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development and Attorney General.

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

Certainly one of the expectations I have in the department is to make sure that there's constant communication going out to the boards and the schools. The request for the additions to schools in the boards has come directly from the Eastern School District.

We are on target. We're moving forward.

There has been some discussions, I believe, with parents in schools about what is exactly going to happen. I can't speak specifically about those discussions, but certainly we'll follow up to make sure that parents are very clear that we'll be using mobiles that were used at Glen Stewart to accommodate the art and music programs next year for the 2010-2011 academic school year.

Thank you.

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

#### **Transplant policy (further)**

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

In the *Guardian* yesterday, Joanne Ings, the executive director from the PEI Lung Association, said she hand delivered a letter to the former minister of health on October 29<sup>th</sup>, 2009 asking for the province's financial support policy for lung transplant patients.

As you know, in this House I've asked the former minister and the present minister on a number of occasions what the government's policy is on this. Could the minister of health please update the House when this policy's going to be known to people?

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

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

I appreciate the Leader of the Opposition's question, and I did take note of Ms. Ings' letter to the editor yesterday. We have made contact with the association and we appreciate all the work that they do. I stand by the word that I've given this House that we are putting forward a policy and I would update the House that that will be probably coming within the next couple of weeks.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

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

Madam Minister, yesterday I had another conversation with Melissa MacPhail. She's the young woman that's in Toronto and she's waiting every day to understand what the government's policy is.

She tells me that she heard from one of the minister's staff about a month ago telling her that financial help was on the way. Would the minister please tell us what was meant by those comments?

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

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

Like I've said to the House before, in matters of health issues I am not disclosing any information on privacy. Again, I reiterate to the Leader of the Opposition that we are committed to a policy and that it will be brought forth in the next couple of weeks.

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

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

To the same minister, I hope this minister's not waiting for two more weeks when polling starts to announce the policy. Would the minister please tell the House what the policy's going to consist of?

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

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

There is a process. We have a budget and that is why we have to wait. We have a budget approval process. The Leader of the Opposition should know that. We hope to be through our budget and, again, we are hoping to be forthcoming with that information over the next couple of weeks.

Our government is very committed to new policies within our health care system and supporting individuals across PEI and accessing services within our province. If they have to do out-of-province travel, we are following through with policies.

Again, I give my commitment to this House and to the Leader of the Opposition.

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

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

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

To the health minister. Would you please call Melissa MacPhail directly and tell her that you are working on this policy? I spoke with her yesterday. She's getting sicker and sicker. I have her phone number. Would you commit to make a call to her and explain the process?

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

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

Again, I'm not going to speak on individual cases in the health care system. Again, we feel for any individual in our health care system going through any kind of health care issue, whether being cared for within our province or within the Atlantic region or outside the Atlantic region.

But let me reiterate, though, that we are committed to policies. Not only that. Within this Budget and our proposed budget, we are committing an additional \$2.2 million for out-of-province hospital care. That is a great commitment. We think that is demonstrating that policy is forthcoming and very positive for health care in this province.

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

**Leader of the Opposition:** Madam Speaker, last year this government had no problem getting wine experts and beer experts hired, no problem renovating liquor stores.

This has been going on since October of 2009. What is taking so long on this policy when it affects about three people over a 10-

year period? What's the problem?

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

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

I'm very proud, as Minister of Health and Wellness, in the accomplishments of our government. My previous - the minister and for myself, in terms of our government in Health and Wellness.

Under the direction of our government and our Premier, we are making significant investments in health care. We've issued (Indistinct) \$24 million more to the health care budget, directly going to impact Islanders, whether it be ambulance and paramedicine.

We have increased drug expenditures in this province by 45% since this previous administration.

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

**Ms. Bertram:** As well, Madam Speaker, we have increased funding to home care by 60%.

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

**Ms. Bertram:** We have instituted blood glucose strips for Islanders. That is very important and critical to their care, Madam Speaker.

Our primary care networks and the accessibility to our Islanders, we are including another half million dollars towards that this year. The list goes on.

Again, I give my word to the Leader of the Opposition. We are working on this policy and it will be forthcoming within the next couple of weeks.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

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

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

The question is: How could liquor stores get renovated, offices get renovated, our wine and beer expert get renovated? This is going on since October 29<sup>th</sup>. What is taking so long on a policy for three people over a 10-year period? To the health minister.

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

**Ms. Bertram:** Madam Speaker, I think it's very important to reiterate that we are putting dollars and cents into the front line and to Islanders and their health care needs.

We are going to announce later today during this House an important announcement that's going to be taking place later on today that is demonstrating our government's policy and direction in terms of health care and accessibility here on Prince Edward Island.

We see the investment to our cancer treatment centre at the QEH. This year alone we are investing almost 900 additional thousand dollars for nine new positions at

the cancer treatment centre.

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

**Ms. Bertram:** A direct impact to Islanders, Madam Speaker, whether it be teleradiology - we're putting more money into that - whether it's in the West Prince, in terms of mental health an addictions and diabetes program, medical training, new specialists, physicians or even just look at the QEH and the redevelopment that's going on or our new manors that are going to be built in this province.

We are investing in our health care system here on Prince Edward Island. We are investing in Islanders and their health care needs across our province.

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 health minister, then. With this investment to Islanders, Melissa MacPhail is a single mom, she's sicker by the day, she's in Toronto. There's tremendous stress. Would you at least call her and explain to her where your priorities are in terms of how long this policy's taking place and when is she going to actually here the answer?

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

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

I cannot discuss, in terms of privacy issues within our health care system, and I hope all members of the House realize that, and I cannot discuss individual cases.

Again, I reiterate that our government is committed to health care in this province with an additional \$24 million in this Budget, over \$510 million going to health care in this province. Very significant. Again, Madam Speaker, we will bringing forth policy in the next couple of weeks.

Thank you.

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

**Leader of the Opposition:** Madam Speaker, it's obvious to see where this government's priorities are in terms of polling, glossy documents, a lot of talk but no real action or delivery when individuals are concerned.

### **Adults in custody**

But we'll move to the Office of the Attorney General. Statistics Canada report that the average daily count of adults in custody on Prince Edward Island in 2008-2009 was 71 people in both facilities. Your report that you released indicated that the average daily counts was 94.69. Could you tell us which it is?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development and Attorney General.

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

I can't speak specifically on numbers but will be very prepared to bring those numbers back to the House.

I've had the opportunity to tour facilities as Attorney General and it's been very clear that our provincial facility here at Sleepy Hollow was built approximately 30 years ago and it was built to accommodate approximately 75 inmates. It's very clear today we've outgrown the facility and we're excited to be adding the new addition, the 48-bed unit at Sleepy Hollow, which will be opening in June.

Right now, the facility is under a tremendous amount of pressure. On weekends, we see in excess of over 120 to 105 inmates that are in that facility. So we're anxiously awaiting the opening of the facility. With the opening of the new facility, we'll be able to look at improving and enhancing and look at programming and transition opportunities for inmates to rehabilitate them and transition them back into the public life.

We are committed to modernization of the correctional facilities in the province. We are in discussions with the Atlantic Police Academy. We are working in discussions with other provinces in Atlantic Canada, working with the federal government, to look at ways that we can continue to modernize our facilities. We'll embrace those opportunities as they come forward.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

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

#### **Tabling of study**

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

To the same minister. You mentioned the words corrections modernization program. Mr. Minister, your department had done a study. I understand that's the reason how you rationalized the expansion at Sleepy Hollow and the work for Prince County. My question is when are you going to table that study to the House and when are you going to make that public?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development and Attorney General.

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

Being in government over three years and I've had, as the Attorney General that three months, I've been in all our facilities and had some really frank discussions with the leadership in our facilities. I've been very impressed with the staff and the people who work in corrections in this province do a tremendous job under some very challenging circumstances.

Very impressed with the work that's being done in community and correctional services here in the province as we look at opportunities for youth at risk as they're working with the school systems on their

(Indistinct) teams, as we look at opportunities to intervene early before youth get well entrenched in the correctional facilities.

We are committed to modernizing the facilities here on Prince Edward Island. I know I've had a tour in the facility in Summerside. The facilities are extremely outdated and have been ignored for a long time. Our province and our government are committed to a modernization, but I'll be more than welcome to bring information back and table that for the Leader of the Opposition.

Thank you.

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

[End of Question Period]