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

FOR

TUESDAY, 18 MAY 2010



Responses to Questions Taken As Notice

Questions by Members

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

**Macphail Homestead**

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

My question was going to be to the minister of agriculture, but I'll direct it to the Premier.

Premier, Macphail's Homestead, a great historical site in Orwell, is short on funds and we've just heard of the danger of its closing if they don't receive some funding that they need. Volunteers have been using their own money to ensure the homestead stays open. Premier, will you commit to funding the Macphail Homestead so it can remain open?

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier Ghiz:** Absolutely, Madam Speaker.

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

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

**Mr. Bagnall:** That's a very good answer. Thank you, Mr. Premier.

Mr. Premier, a motion was in the House here on May 4<sup>th</sup> which called on government to increase some funding and I'm just glad to hear that. So, minister, when will the

homestead volunteer group be told that they're going to get the funds?

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

We're currently in the process of working with the volunteer committee. We realize that the Macphail Homestead is a national historic site of very important significance. It's unfortunate that they got into the situation that they're in. We realize that there needs to be a long-range plan put in place for the Macphail Homestead and government will be working with them to ensure that it can continue into the future.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

**Mr. Bagnall:** Thank you, Mr. Premier. Another question for you.

Can you tell us, will they have the funding available so that they will be able to operate this season? Will there be funding in place for them to help them out for this season?

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier Ghiz:** That's what our plan is, Madam Speaker, and we're currently in talks to ensure that can happen.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

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

I want to thank the Premier, because as you

know that's a really great cause down there at the homestead, the Macphail Homestead. So I want to thank you very much, Premier, because I know the volunteer groups have worked so hard and they will really appreciate the support coming from the government.

### **Timetable on access to new drugs in formulary**

My next question will be to the minister of health.

Minister, I received some calls on the formulary for drugs which you've added some new drugs to the formulary this season. There are some concerned citizens out there that are going to be able to access these drugs that they've been never been able to access before. I'm wondering: Will you give me a timetable as to when they'll be able to go to their pharmacy and access these drugs on the formulary?

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

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

We were very pleased to announce a couple of weeks ago the addition of 10 new drugs to the provincial formulary. An additional reduction of 25% in the senior's co-pay program.

To the hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir, of those 10 drugs that were put on the formulary of this budget year, they will be effective July 1<sup>st</sup>.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from

Montague-Kilmuir.

**Mr. Bagnall:** Thank you.

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

### **Registered nurse positions**

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

My first question today is to the health minister. Minister, I've been receiving some alarming emails and telephone calls from nurses who are working at the QEH in the surgical unit, unit 3. They're telling me that between 10 and 13 registered nurse positions are being eliminated as you're rolling out the model of care. Can you confirm these layoffs?

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

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

I'm very pleased to stand today as Minister of Health and Wellness to discuss and to talk about the new model of care in this province where we are valuing every health professional on PEI to be practising to their full scope of practice, whether that be a registered nurse, a licensed practical nurse, a registered care worker, and the list goes on.

The model of care is supporting all of those health professionals in our system. It is not about the elimination of those jobs. This is about job protection.

We obviously have issues within our

system. We have critical shortages of health professionals. We do have a model, a showcase unit at the QEH. We have one at Wedgewood, we have one at the Prince County Hospital and Kings County Memorial. Those are showcase units that are being examples to our health system demonstrating how we are truly utilizing each health professional to their full scope of practice.

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

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

To the health minister. Can you confirm that on Friday 10 to 13 nurses in the surgical unit at the QEH were told that they were going to be laid off?

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

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

Again, I reiterate the issue that this is not about elimination of positions. Yes, there was a meeting on Friday, and this is again going back to unit 3 at the QEH. So again, this is a unit that is using - showcase unit. Yes, there are going to be RNs that will not be at unit 3 in the future. They might be at unit 1, they might be somewhere else in the system. I guess it's important to realize that we have at the QEH, presently, we have 27 permanent FTE vacancies and 51 temporary FTE vacancies. So there are vacancies.

Again, we're using our health professionals,

registered nurses, LPNs, to their full scope of practice. Some of those individuals will continue to be at unit 3, some of those individuals will be in other units at the hospital or other places within our health care system. They will have a job, Madam Speaker.

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

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

To the health minister. According to the nurses' union, they have not been able to have discussions on this model of care rollout. The nurses in question at the QEH, the RNs that are working in the surgical unit 3, are really shocked and disappointed that they're going to be laid off. Will you be meeting with them?

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

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

This is not just something that evolved overnight. Last spring, this is when it was - the announcement came out about the new model of care. It's been ongoing. Last week we had the opening of the Wedgewood facility for the model of care.

But I guess the most important message is that health professionals have been involved in this process all along, whether that be registered nurses. I can certainly speak to the design members of the model of care. We had QEH medical staff as part of the design members. This goes back to a year

where Noreen Lannigan, Roseanne Hancock, we had PCH surgical unit staff, RN Lynne Palmer, Nancy Gilbert, Dianne Windsor, we had Wedgewood, (Indistinct), we had Kim MacPhee, Maureen Forrest, Leah Kinch from home care, and the list goes on for RNs. And the list continues of all health professionals that have been involved in this process.

So, I guess, hon. leader, I think the department and Health PEI has done due diligence in consultation. Yes, there is change, but again, we value every health professional and everyone will have a job, Madam Speaker.

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

**Leader of the Opposition:** Madam Speaker, I am encouraged.

I hope the minister will show just what commitment there is to the RNs to actually meet with them and the nurses' union, especially since 13 surgical nurses are being laid off at the QEH.

### **Re-opening of PNP**

But my next question is - the Provincial Nominee Program was an opportunity for businesses to expand across Prince Edward Island. Under this government's management the business community continues to see the unfairness in the management.

To the minister of innovation. The Provincial Nominee Program was closed in July of 2008. The program was opened back

up on August 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>. Can you remind the House why it was opened back up?

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

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

Yes, I'd be pleased to remind the House. I believe that there were a number of companies who had prepared business plans in response to the program, and with respect to that and the work that they had done and the time that they invested, it was decided to reopen the program to allow for processing of those plans.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

**Leader of the Opposition:** Madam Speaker, according to the previous minister's comments when he appeared before Public Accounts, from July 21<sup>st</sup> to the 31<sup>st</sup>: We were receiving almost 60 new applications for eligibility for companies on a daily basis, and he continues to say: On July 31<sup>st</sup> the program was closed because so many applications were coming in.

So, minister, my question to you is: On the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> of August, why did you open it that day and were there companies that were actually applying and approved on that day?

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

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

Madam Speaker.

I believe under the work of the Auditor General, he reviewed business applications with respect to PNP. I think his findings were that business applications were generally reviewed and approved or denied in accordance with the guidelines of the program.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

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

Mr. Minister, I was asking you about your review, your responsibility as a minister under this important program. On August the 5<sup>th</sup> and the 6<sup>th</sup>, were there businesses that actually applied and received approval in the one day? To refresh your mind, you certainly know about Brooke MacMillan.

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

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

I'd be very pleased to talk about my role and responsibility with respect to this program. There has been a review ongoing on the program. I guess the benefits of this program have been well documented. I would go further as to say that now my responsibilities include launching a new program to build on the strengths and the benefits of what PNP has brought to this province. We're working very hard on that

in consultation with the federal government and we hope to have something to announce in here in the very near future.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

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

Actually, Mr. Minister, we're talking and looking at the program and your legacy that will be going down in history and the mismanagement of this program.

#### **DTR Environmental Services and PNP**

But my question, Mr. Minister, is this. The Auditor General reported that in a typical processing time a PNP business application from start to finish was 12 months. We were talking a number of weeks ago in this House of a startup company known as DTR Environmental Services, that it received PNP units in 2008.

Minister, this company was incorporated on August 13<sup>th</sup>. Can you please explain to the House, the public, and especially the business community, how did a startup company that didn't exist receive units and start as a company on the 13<sup>th</sup> when you had shut down the program the end of July and again on the 5<sup>th</sup> and the 6<sup>th</sup> of August? Please explain.

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

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

Madam Speaker.

No, I don't believe that on the floor of this Legislature I made reference to any particular company. That's private information. With respect to this program it involves private investment as well, between a private investor and a private company.

I find it quite surprising and almost shameful that the Leader of the Opposition would single out companies here in the province on the floor of this Legislature.

Thank you.

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

**Leader of the Opposition:** Madam Speaker, today we're going to start taking a look at the real mismanagement in this program.

I remind the minister, a couple of weeks ago on the floor of this House, it's your government that put in the Use of Proceeds Agreement, a contract between the provincial government and the business community. You can't wiggle your way out of this one. This is about your government.

My question to you for the business community on PEI is: How could you approve a company that didn't even exist, a startup company on August 13<sup>th</sup>, when to everybody else the program was shut down the end of July and then reopened for a select few on August 5<sup>th</sup> and the 6<sup>th</sup>? Now this company hadn't even existed and it was able to get units. Explain, Mr. Minister.

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

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

Because of the size and the scope of this program, I guess we have to appreciate that staff were very busy processing applications. With respect to dates and applications, it's not surprising that a company, or companies, might be processed - she talks about a 12-month period. The program was large enough that there would be a lot of different situations with respect to dates and applications.

The Leader of the Opposition refers to this being my legacy. I'm sure that I'd be very comfortable in the future, that if my legacy were tied to this great program and what it's brought to this province I'd be very pleased about that.

Thank you.

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

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

I'm going back to the previous minister's comment that he told in front of public accounts: From July 21<sup>st</sup> to the 31<sup>st</sup> we were receiving almost 60 new business applications a day.

You shut the program down then. You turned around and reopened it on the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>, then on August 13<sup>th</sup> a company, a new start-up, out of the blue. Explain, when

everybody else was treated to at least a 12-month process, how did this company get started, how did it receive the units?

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

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

I think the Leader of the Opposition herself alluded to the fact that the average processing time may have been somewhere in the neighbourhood of 12 months, but that wouldn't be the case. That's only an average. Again, with opening the program on August 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>, there were a number of businesses who invested a lot of time and effort and money with respect to the program, and out of respect for their efforts the program was reopened and we were pleased to bring some more investment to this province.

Thank you.

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

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

Back to the same minister. There's an awful lot of good businesses across PEI that applied in good faith, paid accountants their fees, lawyers their fees, put in applications. They were refused. They were not allowed to participate in the program. But you had another program going on the side.

My question to you, minister. How can you explain that a company that didn't even exist

was able to apply and receive units and how many companies were like this under your management of the PNP program?

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

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

The Leader of the Opposition keeps referring to companies who spent a lot of time and effort in applying, and we do realize that, and that's why we reopened the program to deal with that. She talks about companies who invested a lot, who did a lot of hard work and were denied. Again, the Auditor General reviewed this program and said that the processing of business applications was generally done in compliance with the policy of the program.

Thank you.

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

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

To the same minister. The Auditor General asked you to do a complete evaluation. You did two but you won't share it. He asked you, or told you - demanded - for you to do a settlement strategy. We've heard four times that it's in process. We still haven't seen it. You talk about a new program with the federal government, yet last year you didn't even have one conversation with the federal minister.

My question to you, from the business

community in PEI who received the famous letter saying they weren't eligible, explain to them, please, how this company on August 13<sup>th</sup> was able to apply and receive units when the program was totally shut down.

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

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

It's very simple. I guess the company was obviously evaluated, its business plan was evaluated, and it was found to be in compliance with the policy guidelines of the program.

I just want to correct the Leader of the Opposition. She talks about (Indistinct) to the fact that there's been no discussions with the federal government with respect to the new program as well.

I sent some correspondence off to the federal minister I believe on April 6<sup>th</sup> of this year outlining what we were proposing for our new program, and I received just recently, on May 12<sup>th</sup>, a response from the federal minister saying that he would be replying in writing in the near future with respect to our new programs, and that we'd appreciate that if any public announcements were to be made in PEI we would wait until we had the cooperation and the participation of the federal government.

I have that letter from Minister Jason Kenney of Citizenship and Immigration Canada and I'd like to table it here today.

Thank you.

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

**Correspondence to federal government re: new PNP**

**Leader of the Opposition:** Thank you. I look forward to seeing that. While you're at it, Mr. Minister, since it was January - it was actually in this House in April 2009 that you told the House and the public that you were in serious discussion with Minister Jason Kenney on a new program then. You didn't have one conversation.

If you can produce this letter that you happened to send just before the House started, please produce to the House, the public and the business community of PEI your correspondence directly, and your work from 2009 which you told everybody you were doing.

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

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

I think I indicated I went to Ottawa to meet with Minister Kenney to discuss the benefits and merits of immigration here to this province and what it meant to such a small province to be able to grow our cultural diversity and add to our population. It's significant, the numbers and the percentage of growth in population, leading the region in population growth. That's so significant.

All you need to do - it's a beautiful day today - all you need to do is walk around the streets of Charlottetown and see what this

great program has brought to Prince Edward Island. I shared those thoughts with Minister Kenney directly in his office in Ottawa. Senior officials from IIDI have worked very diligently on both the existing program and the new program, and we're very pleased that, now, Minister Kenney has acknowledged that something is forthcoming here so that we can bring this new program forward.

Thank you.

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

**DTR Environmental Services and PNP (further)**

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

Back to the minister of innovation. It's obvious he did no work in 2009 on this program, but let's talk about his management and the fact that DTR Environmental Services - 600 businesses were shut down, weren't able to participate in the program. Under your watch this particular company receives a government contract to the tune of about \$3 million, received PNP units. They weren't even registered as a company. It was a startup company. How did that happen?

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

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

The Leader of the Opposition makes

reference to IIDI shutting down 600 companies. I can assure her and this House and all PEI that certainly IIDI is in no way responsible or involved with shutting down companies in Prince Edward Island.

With respect to the application, again, we're talking about the information of private companies, we're talking about private investment with private investors and private companies. I'm certainly going to respect that here on the floor of the Legislature, and I would ask that maybe the Leader of the Opposition would consider doing the same.

Thank you.

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

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

To the same minister. Minister, is it not your department that has a Use of Proceeds Agreement between your department, the government of PEI and the individual business? Is that not the case?

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

**Mr. Campbell:** That's correct, Madam Speaker.

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

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

It's clear that you cannot have it both ways. This is definitely a government that has administered a program, the Provincial Nominee Program, under your watch. What we're talking about is a program that could have benefitted Island companies, the people of PEI, newcomers, but instead you mismanaged and you've given preference to a select few.

But I want to remind the minister, again, on July 31<sup>st</sup> the program was closed because so many applications from businesses were coming in. So if you had all these applications, you shut it down. Then you reopened it on the 5<sup>th</sup> and the 6<sup>th</sup>. This company isn't even a company. On August 13<sup>th</sup> you let them have units. Explain that.

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

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

Again, I'd just like to reiterate to the Leader of the Opposition, perhaps she's comfortable in bringing forward the names of private companies here on the floor of the Legislature. I'm certainly respectful of the business community and what they do for Prince Edward Island, for its economy, and I'll not be discussing individual businesses here on the floor of the Legislature, and I'd encourage her to do the same.

Thank you.

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

**Leader of the Opposition:** Thank you,

Madam Speaker.

That's no problem if that's your choice, but I bet you'll be discussing it on the floor and doorsteps of Islanders in 2011.

### **CERNER contracts**

My next question's to the Minister of Health and Wellness. Minister, when the House first started this spring the Auditor General brought down his report, which talked about a number of contracts your department had given out with regards to CERNER. You refused to release the details. Why?

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

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

To the Leader of the Opposition, those contracts were tabled in the Legislature.

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

**Leader of the Opposition:** Madam Speaker, and yes, the health minister is correct, but for a few days you held on to them.

Maybe you want to tell us why you were holding on the information before you actually decided to release them.

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

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

Again, I know we're talking a lot about business today. These were businesses that did business with government, whether it be the former administration or this administration. We were going through the proper channels to see if that access to information could be given, and it was. So, Leader of the Opposition, it was tabled and made public.

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

**Leader of the Opposition:** Thank you. To the health minister. So you agreed that when opposition asked for the information, you agreed that you were able to bring that information back to the House and release it?

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

**Ms. Bertram:** Madam Speaker, I believe, if you go back the Hansard, it was the hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir who asked for the information.

I believe it was the next day that the information was brought to the House. So, you know, once it was asked for -

**Mr. MacKinley:** Check on the third floor.

**Ms. Bertram:** - it was tabled. So there was no questioning in regards to that.

**Mr. MacKinley:** Go up on the third floor.

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

**Leader of the Opposition:** Thank you, Madam Speaker, and thank you to the health minister.

### **PNP applications from MLAs**

Let's see now, how the minister of innovation treats the same request in the same way.

To the minister of innovation, opposition has made a number of requests from the Standing Committee on Public Accounts for information that you have. Just like the health questions and contracts, we asked for the information, and the health minister was kind enough, within a day, bringing it back.

**Mr. Bagnall:** Yes.

**Ms. Dunsford:** Apples to oranges.

**Leader of the Opposition:** She made the same comments.

My question to you, minister. The Auditor General has stated that there have been 15 PNP applications from MLAs and ministers. Please tell the Islanders which MLAs and ministers participated in this program.

**Premier Ghiz:** We already know.

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

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

Yes, the Auditor General made reference to MLAs in his report. This is no new information. I believe the Leader of the

Opposition has criticized investment to her colleagues - the hon. Member from Charlottetown-Sherwood, I believe, in the past - with respect to PNP investment. I believe, with respect to MLAs, everything has been looked at, everything has been investigated. There's been seen to be no conflict, and I don't know why the Leader of the Opposition needs to continue with this personal attack on people.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

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

A few minutes ago the minister of health was kind enough to explain why she had held some information for a day, but when she checked on the rules she brought the information back to the House at the request of opposition.

**Mr. Bagnall:** Good minister.

**Leader of the Opposition:** We applaud her. She's providing the information to the public.

My question to you: the Use of Proceeds Agreement - each person, each MLA or minister that used a business application, using a contract known as the use of proceeds - will you bring that information back and table it in the House? Which is no different than the health.

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

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

With respect to the Use of Proceeds Agreement, we do have an agreement, and we're very pleased to have that agreement. When we came into government the PNP program had been existence for six to seven years with absolutely no accountability attached to it.

I want to commend this government, the former minister and the staff at IIDI for bringing forward the Use of Proceeds Agreement, to attach accountability to this great program in Prince Edward Island.

Thank you.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from West Royalty-Springvale.

### **Tolerance level on roads**

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

My question today is to the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal. The province had little frost this year, and weight restrictions were lifted some time ago. Why wasn't the tolerance level lifted at the same time?

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

**Mr. MacKinley:** First of all, Prince Edward Island is the only province that has a tolerance. The former government took away the tolerance, and I got it back for the truckers.

The reason it's not lifted yet is we go by the moisture contents under the road. The moisture contents aren't high enough - dry enough - in order to lift the tolerance.

The tolerance normally is lifted in June, but it's going to be a little earlier. It could be lifted in a week or so, or a few days. But that's why. It's to protect our highways so we don't have to pave and pave and pave.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from West Royalty-Springvale.

### **Gross vs. axle weight**

**Mr. Dumville:** Supplementary, Madam Speaker.

Does your department have any plans to utilize gross weight, instead of axle weight, to determine the allowable weight on provincial highways?

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

**Mr. MacKinley:** (Indistinct). The thing is with gross weight - that's why we have an axle weight. Every vehicle, if you've got a 10-wheeler, there's so much weight per axle, to spread it over the roads. If we went and did what you want us to do, we'd be putting all the load on two axles instead of using extra axles up front. You'd smash the roads. It'd be (Indistinct).

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

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from O'Leary-Inverness.

### **Older workers in changing workplace**

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

My question today is for the Minister of Innovation and Advanced Learning. As a former employment counsellor in western PEI I've been aware of the new department of SkillsPEI. It has invested in programs to encourage younger persons to develop their skills. But in the riding of O'Leary-Inverness there are numerous older workers who are having difficulty participating in a changing workforce. What opportunities can be provided for these workers?

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

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

I'm very pleased to say - and it's a great question from the Member from O'Leary-Inverness - I'm very pleased to say that my department has partnered with the federal government to bring forward the Passport to Employment, which is a training program for workers between the ages of 55 and 64. We have about 7,000 older workers in the province that are not currently in the labour force.

What this program allows us to do is to enable them to enhance their skills, whether it be computer skills or resume writing or job searching, or what have you, to allow them to transition back into the workforce. It's a program that's been very successful here in the province. We're pleased to see it continue.

Thank you.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from O’Leary-Inverness.

**Mr. Henderson:** Supplementary, Madam Speaker, to the same minister.

A preparatory program like this is a good first step, but we need to do more for mature workers in rural regions. Will your department consider looking at other opportunities specifically to help these workers integrate themselves into the workforce?

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

**Mr. Campbell:** Absolutely, Madam Speaker.

We continue to look at that all the time. I mean, right across the country we’re starting to see the effects of a skilled labour shortage, and that’s why the federal government created the targeted initiative for older workers, in recognition of that. We’re very pleased that they do provide us funding for our Passport to Employment program through that.

It’s a great start. I’m not saying that we’re doing all that needs to be done. We certainly aren’t. I would be very pleased to look at any different program that can help transition our older workers back into the workforce.

Thank you.

### **PNP applications from MLAs (further)**

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

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

Back to the innovation minister. Mr. Minister, we were referring to the 15 business applications of ministers, MLAs etc., that you have the information on. Will you be tabling that information in the House?

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

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

I think, as per the recommendation of the Auditor General, we have committed to do a review of the Use of Proceeds Agreement. When that review is completed the findings of that review will be included in the annual report for IIDI.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

### **PNP applications from MLAs (further)**

**Leader of the Opposition:** Madam Speaker, this is a new version today.

We’ll go back to the minister of innovation. You and the government have put in place a Use of Proceeds Agreement, a contract with businesses. They signed the agreement with

you - in fact, some of the proceed contracts even state the company must use immigrant money to pay back their government loans. This means that it's government businesses and that taxpayers have a right know. And don't forget, in this House, the use of proceeds - you have different wording for different people.

My question to you: In the interest of people across the province being treated fairly - especially the business community - will you be bringing this information back and making it public?

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

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

As I indicated here in the past, this government was very pleased to bring a Use of Proceeds Agreement. I believe the Use of Proceeds Agreement came was on the website in summer of 2008. The Use of Proceeds Agreement did evolve and change, and the reason why that happens is to strengthen agreements of this nature.

We're very pleased to have brought accountability to this great program. Again, the Auditor General reviewed the files in question by the Leader of the Opposition. If she has issues with his work I suggest she raise it with the Auditor General.

Thank you.

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

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

The issue is actually with your work, Mr. Minister. My question to you is: When a company like DTR Environmental Services Inc., a start-up company that didn't exist - to everybody else the program shut down, not once but twice - it starts as a start-up company on August 13<sup>th</sup> and your department issues units.

My question for the public, the business community of Prince Edward Island. There's a black cloud hanging over every MLA in this House. We constantly get the questions as: Who did participate, who did not? My question is: If there's nothing to hide and no wrongdoing, please bring the information back and table it.

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

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

Again, the Auditor General viewed the files in question. Over and over again we see the Leader of the Opposition target her colleagues on the floor of this Legislature. I certainly don't understand why she needs to continue to do that. She's received the information. Everything's been reviewed by the Auditor General, and I want to commend him for his fine work in reviewing the program.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

**Leader of the Opposition:** To the minister of innovation, then. Are you telling us today that you support doing exactly what the Auditor General is saying?

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

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

I believe I shared with the Leader of the Opposition numerous times that the Auditor General has made 30-some recommendations with respect to the program and we're working very diligently to implement each and every one of those recommendations.

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

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

The Auditor General had told us in public accounts that if the people, the MLAs, wanted the information he'd be happy to supply it. My question to you is: Will you be supplying the information to the business community of PEI and the public? Who are these 15 business applications? Bring them and table them so people can see that the wording of the use of proceeds is consistent with everybody else. So that they can see, for example, that the dates on them is not August 13<sup>th</sup> or the 14<sup>th</sup>.

**Premier Ghiz:** The Auditor General reviewed that.

**Leader of the Opposition:** No, I'm sorry.

The Auditor General reviewed only 4% of the files and not all these files. Will you bring the information?

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier Ghiz:** Madam Speaker, I don't know how many times the Leader of the Opposition needs to hear this.

The Auditor General of the province reviewed every single file of any MLA that applied, and that goes to back to the previous government as well. He's indicated that. The Leader of the Opposition is trying to mislead the public again with false information.

It's also very important to know that the Auditor General reviewed every single file that was put in place on the August 5<sup>th</sup> and August 6<sup>th</sup> date. Come back with no problems whatsoever.

Why the Leader of the Opposition continues to try to mislead the general public is beyond me, Madam Speaker.

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

**Leader of the Opposition:** Thank you.

To the Premier, then. This is the Premier that had a lovely taped conversation with a Mr. Rob MacEachern. In October of 2008 he told *Compass* CBC that he had no family connections whatsoever to the PNP when in last year, in 2009, you allowed your minister to actually engage ABCE to do an audit when everybody knows that you have strong family connections to this company.

My question - and let's not forget, the Institute of Chartered Accountants, they took their responsibility very seriously and they have gone in and they're in the process of doing a review to make sure that everything's okay because there's a potential conflict of interest.

With all that you've heard, Premier, my question to you is: Are you going to finally - here is a company, as one example, that applied, received units. They didn't even exist. They were start-up. We know that there's MLAs involved. We know that there's no released evaluation. There's no settlement strategy.

My question to the Premier: Will you finally take the responsibility and order a public inquiry? Will you, Premier?

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

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

As the Leader of the Opposition knows - one, first of all, she talks about the MLAs. MLAs from the previous government received PNP as well. They all went through the Conflict of Interest Commissioner and the Auditor General reviewed every single file. So if the Leader of the Opposition has any issues with those files whatsoever, I guess she has no respect for two arms of the provincial Legislature: that's, one, the Conflict of Interest Commissioner, and two, the Auditor General of this province.

She talks about dates. She clearly indicated that some files take up to a year to process. Naturally, there's going to be some that are

going to be processed after the August 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> dates. Those are just when no more applications are going to be accepted.

Three, I find it quite shameful that she wants to try and attack my family on the floor of the Legislature. That's her prerogative. She attacks me when I go on family vacations with my daughter and my wife. Myself, when she goes off and misses a week in the House, I congratulate her to do it. I think it's a good thing that she goes off and takes a week off the Legislature to go to her daughter's graduation. If she didn't do it I would probably criticize her for it. So it's really quite unfortunate that she chooses to go down these personal, slanderous attacks.

Finally, it's very important to point out here that she talks about ABCE in the province. It's very important to note that ABCE did all the audits when the previous government was in power as well, and the only thing we didn't do was fire them when we got in, like the previous government did with every single company that worked under a Liberal administration, Madam Speaker, when they got into power.

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

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

**DTR Environmental Services and PNP (further)**

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

We'll respect the chartered accountants' institute that's doing a thorough review in

terms of the potential conflict with ABCE.

But my question to the Premier, then, is DTR Environmental Services - they didn't exist as a company. They only started as a company on August 13<sup>th</sup>. Please explain that one.

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier Ghiz:** Again, Madam Speaker, I'm not going to go into personal files but I presume, like many files, there was a lot of different companies in Prince Edward Island that applied for the PNP.

It took up to 12 months to process them. A lot of companies in Prince Edward Island - because we're a small jurisdiction - they did not incorporate it. They realized that they needed to incorporate to be able to receive the business deal with a private investor for the PNP units. A lot of them, going right back to 2001, their first time ever, companies that have been in existence in PEI for 10, 20, 30, 40 years had to register for the first time.

The Leader of the Opposition has been chasing rumours, innuendo, trying to slander politicians in the Legislature. She's been disrespectful of the Conflict of Interest Commissioner. She's been disrespectful of the Auditor General. Unfortunately, the Leader of the Opposition, again, has no facts whatsoever.

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

**Leader of the Opposition:** Thank you.

To the Premier. Today I'll be tabling the actual documentation for DTR Environmental Services where they started this start-up company on August 13<sup>th</sup>.

My question to you - and I go back to what I've shared this afternoon already, the approximately 600 Island companies that received a letter in July, that were told that they weren't allowed to participate in the program because there was too many people.

August 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>, the program shut down. Now you have a company, at least one - we don't know how many more - that received preferential treatment.

Premier, please explain that to the business community of PEI.

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

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

Very easy to explain it out because the bottom line is this: we did not issue preferential treatment. We know that's what the previous government did between 2001 - or 1996 when they got elected.

When we got in we opened it up to everyone. We didn't care what political stripe they came from, like the previous government did. We wanted to make sure that we were there to help out Island businesses, and that's exactly what we did.

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

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

Opposition.

**PNP preferential treatment**

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

To the same Premier. While we're talking about preferential treatment, please explain to us that the Auditor General had stated that certain companies received more than four PNP units when the rule was you're only allowed four maximum. Explain that one, and who are the companies that actually receive that preferential benefit?

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

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

I have no idea which companies received that benefit or whether or not it's true. The Auditor General reviewed it all. We were there to help out any company. If it was the Leader of the Opposition's company that would have applied, the same as the Leader of the Opposition's company applied to receive funding from the lending authority, we're there to support all companies of Prince Edward Island.

Perhaps the Leader of the Opposition was so used to how business was done in this province, where there was preferential treatment done all the time, that she thinks it's being done now. But I can assure her full well that all Islanders have full access to this. I'm sure she was at her thousand dollar dinner the other night and probably a lot of them in that room received PNP units because we don't care if they're Liberal,

Conservative, NDP, Green or anything like that. We're going to be there to support Island companies.

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

**DTR Environmental Services and PNP (further)**

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

Back to the Premier. Mr. Premier, could you please explain to the business community of PEI how this company was able to start a start-up company on August 13<sup>th</sup>, 2008 and receive PNP units when no other company that we know of - but your minister of innovation won't bring back all the information even though he's sitting on it. So while will he not share that information if there's nothing wrong?

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier Ghiz:** Obviously, Madam Speaker, we're not going to provide private information.

The Leader of the Opposition tries to paint this as government money. There's no government money involved here whatsoever. This is two private companies doing business together. The Auditor General reviewed all files that were done at the end of PNP on August 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>, came back and said that they were all done under the criteria of the program. So why the Leader of the Opposition chooses to try and slander Island businesses in this province is beyond me, and I find it quite shameful.

If you look at the Province of Prince Edward Island, what we've seen over the last years, we've led Canada in housing starts, we've led in Canada in automobile sales, we've led the Atlantic region in terms of population growth. All this because of a great program, Madam Speaker, called the Provincial Nominee Program.

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

[End of Question Period]