



Session:	5/64
Date:	26 November 2014
No:	8

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
OF  
PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS AND ORAL QUESTION PERIOD  
(PRELIMINARY PROCEEDINGS)

FOR

WEDNESDAY, 26 NOVEMBER 2014



Responses to Questions Taken As Notice

Questions by Members

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

**Atlantic Lottery Corporation**

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

Question to the Premier. Atlantic Lotto is a big partner in our economy and millions of dollars annually in revenue are injected in this province through them. Hundreds of direct and indirect jobs are created and they are a vital support to the harness industry here on Prince Edward Island.

Question to the Premier: Would you agree that our partnership with the Atlantic Lottery Corporation is important?

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier Ghiz:** Absolutely, and when you look at the Atlantic Lottery Corporation and the work that it does with the four provinces in the Atlantic region, we're very fortunate to have it.

As you know, there are a number of lottery commissions across the country and we're very happy that we're able to cooperate with the three other Atlantic Provinces for the Atlantic Lottery Corporation.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

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

Last year Atlantic Lotto presented to the Public Accounts Committee and they said, and I quote: "We do know that most Atlantic Canadians are strongly of the view that it would be better for this province if those games were played through Atlantic Lottery. Our research and national research bears this out."

Question to the Premier: Do you agree with this statement?

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

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

If Atlantic Lottery is able to provide more programs that are already available online or to the general public where they're able to actually bring those dollars in so that we're able to spend the profits on health care and education, I think that is always a good thing.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

**FEMA minister and online gaming project**

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

The Premier believes that Atlantic Lotto is important to the economy of Prince Edward Island and Atlantic Lotto believes that they have the job for gaming for Atlantic Canada.

Question to the treasurer: Why did you spend three to five years, and perhaps millions of taxpayers' dollars, to develop a secret online gaming project on the side?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Finance, Energy and Municipal Affairs.

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

I'm pleased to tell the House today that I was able to get the information that the opposition leader has been talking about, the accounts at McInnes Cooper that we spoke about here over the last number of days. Clearly state what has taken place, and as the opposition member knows, it's not millions of dollars of taxpayers' money. This was a project that was the Mi'kmaq Confederacy and the province going hand-in-hand, along with a number of consultants, to try to find a solution that would complement what Atlantic Lottery provides here on Prince Edward Island.

Thank you very much.

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

### **Gaming file and Atlantic Lottery Corporation**

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

It's funny the minister says he has the information when just moments ago, when he was given the opportunity to stand up and talk about it, he didn't.

When confronted about your secret online gaming project you have said many times that the file has now been turned over to the ALC. Question to the treasurer: When did you turn this file over to ALC?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Finance, Energy and Municipal Affairs.

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

Secretive is certainly not the proper word for this. It's confidential, and confidential because we're trying to create a space in this online sphere that was being chased by a number of provinces as well as a number of United States jurisdictions. Florida, California, New Jersey were all looking to get into this and we needed to be first mover into this space. That's why the confidentiality was needed. Very important information that we're trying to establish here in Prince Edward Island.

Unlike some other governments we don't sit on our hands here. We try to find better ways to make Prince Edward Island a better place to live.

Thank you very much.

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

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

So after, what, three or four days of questioning the word is now confidential. It's confidential. I'm wondering if the gala event of the conference that he was at was confidential. It appears it was confidential, yeah.

### **Gaming file and Criminal Code of Canada**

You turned the file over to the ALC after three to five years of secret development with taxpayers' money.

Question to the treasurer. Did you turn the file over before or after you realized that your grand scheme wasn't legal under the Criminal Code of Canada.

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Finance, Energy and Municipal Affairs.

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

The reason why the confidentiality here over the past number of days is that I hadn't been able to retrieve the information. I hadn't been able to tell each of the proponents of the committee that we were talking about it. Today I've been able to do that with each of the members, I have the information that is there, and I have to tell the House, although I thought this was the case, we talked about a 2012 trip to London, England. I did not go in 2012, I went in January of 2011.

Thank you very much.

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

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

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

### **Gaming file and government loan**

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

The finance minister's secret gaming scheme was financed through a loan from government.

Question to the innovation minister: When was that loan given to this third party?

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

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

As the Leader of the Opposition knows, details on loans issued through Finance PEI

are confidential for all of our clients, and we need to respect client privileges, so I won't be going into any details on any loans in that portfolio.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

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

I think Islanders deserve to know. I think Islanders deserve to know where this government's wasting their money and blowing their money. If this minister doesn't think it's important, let's go back to the Premier.

Premier, when was this loan given to this third party?

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

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

Off the top of my head, I'm going to say sometime after 2007. I'm not exactly sure what the date would be.

But as we know, the First Nations in our country have specific rights that are different than some of the provinces. Obviously, as the hon. Leader of the Opposition has already indicated, that under the Criminal Code the province would have difficulty with online gaming, and the Mi'kmaq was looking for other streams of revenue, and that's why there was a collaboration between the province and the Mi'kmaq to see if there was an avenue where we could go down so that this could be advantageous for our First Nations and also for our province.

I'm guessing the loan, I'm going to say sometime after 2007.

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

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

This finance minister said that the loan was kept a secret because any loan under \$1

million doesn't have to get Cabinet approval, so this means that the innovation minister approved it.

Question to the innovation minister: Did you approve a loan of hundreds of thousands of dollars to develop this secret online gaming scheme?

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

**Mr. Roach:** Again, Madam Speaker, as the Leader of the Opposition knows, details of loans issued through Finance PEI are confidential and we need to respect the client privilege in that, so I won't be going into any details on that loan portfolio.

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

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

I don't think that there'd be any secrets given up if you answered the question that I asked which was: Did you approve the loan? So, did you approve the loan?

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

**Mr. Roach:** Again, Madam Speaker, as the opposition knows, the details of the loans issued through Finance PEI are confidential and, as such, I won't be releasing any information that would have anything to do with that client privilege.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

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

I'm wondering if the transportation minister could turn the page over and see if he's got other answers on the next page there because all I'm asking him is: Did he approve the loan? I didn't ask him to give up any information about anybody who was in a meeting, anybody who talked about a loan, anybody who applied for a loan.

I'm asking him: Did he actually approve the loan? He doesn't want to talk about it. He doesn't think Islanders deserve to know where their money's being spent. I feel bad for Islanders today.

**Legal opinion on government loan re: gaming file**

Question again to the same minister: Did you get legal opinion on the legality of your government's gaming scheme before you gave that money away?

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

**Mr. Roach:** Madam Speaker, the Mi'kmaq Confederacy of Prince Edward Island is an important organization to Prince Edward Island, to First Nations and to Canada.

As the opposition, again, knows, details on these loans issued through Finance PEI are confidential and I will not be releasing or breaking the privilege of any clients through that Finance PEI portfolio.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

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

This is a minister who doesn't want to tell Islanders whether or not he approved the loan. This is a minister who doesn't want to tell Islanders whether or not he sought out a legal opinion whether or not the government scheme was legal, which it turned out it wasn't. So he obviously didn't get a legal opinion, and I'll answer the questions for him.

He approved the loan and he didn't get a legal opinion because a legal opinion would have told him it wasn't legal because they found that out after the fact.

**Security on government loan re: gaming file**

Question again to the minister: What security was put in place to protect the taxpayers on your financing of this

government's secret online gaming scheme loan?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Finance, Energy and Municipal Affairs.

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

This loan – and it's been said many times in the hallways over the past number of days – are all based on being repaid with revenues from gaming initiatives here on Prince Edward Island, and that's how it will be repaid. No questions asked. That's how it's going to be repaid. There won't be a taxpayer dollar lost here.

I have to stand here and defend what this project was all about. As we've said many times here over the past four Question Periods, we will not back down from this initiative and why it was proper for Prince Edward Island at the time.

There are millions of dollars in just tiny Prince Edward Island that go offshore every year to unregulated sites online. We cannot stop it. Everyone across the globe has tried to do this differently. We were trying to find a way where we could police, regulate and tax this activity and keep those tax dollars here on Prince Edward Island for health and education, and at the same time, protect our constituency from unregulated games.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

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

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

I asked the innovation minister a number of questions here today, he read off a sheet of paper the same answer five times. I asked him a question about the security on this loan. The finance minister answered it and didn't answer the question.

I'm going to go the Premier again because the Premier is in charge of this whole event.

Premier, can you tell Islanders that there was at least security in place on this loan? Can you tell them what that security was?

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

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

Again, the loan would have went out after 2007. I'm going to guess 2008-2009. Realistically, what the hon. member is talking about is correct, that we were in a situation where there was Criminal Code issues with regards to that. We thought that if we could work with the Confederacy by looking for them to get new revenues from gaming – which they were looking for – that perhaps there was a legal component where we could do this. We know in some other provinces there are things like this taking place, and of course, that is why we loaned the money to the Mi'kmaq Confederacy so that they would be able to explore the options and the legal entities around being able to establish that here on Prince Edward Island.

That's essentially what happened. Nothing ventured, nothing gained. I have a great faith in the Mi'kmaq Confederacy, and we still are working on a number of different projects with them, and we believe that anything we can do to help out the Mi'kmaq Confederacy is a good thing for Islanders.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

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

**Security on government loan re: gaming file and legal counsel**

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

Back to the innovation minister, then. Was the security on this loan agreement reviewed by the department's legal counsel before you cut the cheque?

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

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

Again, as I've stated I think about four or five times already, it's a confidential deal agreement between Finance PEI and the Mi'kmaq Confederacy.

What I can say is that loan is not in default.

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

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

What I'm trying to find out is whether or not you have a security on the loan. The Premier's willing to answer questions on it. You're not. He's your boss. Maybe you could take that as a cue that you can also answer questions.

Isn't it true that your department's legal counsel is one of the Premier's closest personal and political confidants?

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

**Mr. Roach:** Madam Speaker, thank you.

Again, I'm not sure where the Leader of the Opposition is going with that, but as I've stated probably five times so far, any loans that came out of Finance PEI are confidential in nature. As such I respect the privilege of that with our clients, and I'm not at liberty to discuss those loans or what comes out of that portfolio in terms of loans out of Finance PEI.

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

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

Perhaps I'm not speaking clear and perhaps the member's not listening. What I asked him was who the legal counsel was, and I asked him: Is it true that the legal counsel – so I'll ask it again, and I'll slow right down this time – is it true that the legal counsel that you would use in your department is one of the Premier's closest personal confidants and political confidants?

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

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

Maybe I'll slow down my answer for the sixth time. As the Leader of the Opposition

knows, loans that go through Finance PEI are confidential.

I have no idea who the Premier's personal confidants are. He doesn't share that with me.

**Leader of the Opposition:** There you go. (Indistinct) –

**Mr. Roach:** And we deal with a lot of lawyers.

**Speaker:** Order, please!

**Mr. Roach:** We deal with many lawyers, and I have dealt with many lawyers. With respect to the loans that come out of Finance PEI, those are confidential, and I don't have the privilege of releasing that information. I do not want to break that relationship that we have with all of our clients in Prince Edward Island. They need to know that if they come to this government, that if they come to Innovation PEI, and those loans are confidential, that will remain that way, not just because the Leader of the Opposition wants that question answered here in the House, Madam Speaker.

We need to have that credibility.

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

**Speaker:** Order, please!

**Mr. Roach:** We need to have that credibility on economic development here in the Province of Prince Edward Island with all of our businesses.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

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

So suddenly confidentiality's very important to this minister, which is funny to hear him slamming other deals in this House previously, so maybe he's just learning about confidentiality. Maybe he just learned it in this role. I don't know.

**Government loan business plan re: gaming file**

Question again to the minister: Will you table a copy of your business plan and your due diligence that you based your loan approval on?

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

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

For the seventh time, as the Leader of the Opposition knows loans that are made through Finance PEI are confidential in nature and as such I will not break that privilege with any of our clients.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

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

I'm going to ask a different question. I'll get the same answer, but I'm quite enjoying the fact that you can't move off your script.

Question now again to the innovation minister: Did your business plan contain any contingencies for repayment in the event that the government's secret online gaming platform didn't work?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Finance, Energy and Municipal Affairs.

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

I'm standing to answer this question because this was part of the qualities of what we were doing with the Mi'kmaq Confederacy. I find it quite hard to believe that we're standing in the House, the opposition leader actually questioning the veracity of the Mi'kmaq Confederacy of Prince Edward Island.

With the Mi'kmaq Confederacy –

**Leader of the Opposition:** (Indistinct) stories you told.

**Speaker:** Order, please!

**Leader of the Opposition:** Pretty wild.

**Speaker:** Order, member!

**Leader of the Opposition:** Pinocchio would blush.

**Mr. Sheridan:** Of the relationship that we enjoy with the Mi'kmaq Confederacy of Prince Edward Island. The loan was presented in a fashion that the loan would be repaid with revenues coming from the gaming initiative. That indeed will be the way that's it's repaid.

Thank you very much.

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

### **Gaming file and government loan (further)**

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

Back to the innovation minister here, again. By the finance minister's own admission, this project was underway for close to five years.

Question: Was there only one time that your department supplied funds through a loan for this secret online gaming development?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Finance, Energy and Municipal Affairs. –

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

As the people that are a part of this have all been reached and I can now speak freely here in the House to tell what took place –

**Mr. LaVie:** Leadership.

**Mr. Sheridan:** – we know that –

**Mr. LaVie:** (Indistinct).

**Speaker:** Order, please!

**Mr. Sheridan:** – the Mi'kmaq Confederacy sent us a letter back in 2009 to ask if we would partake in this particular entry into the market. They had been doing a lot of the research themselves and they asked if the

province would go along with them to do some further research to see if we could actually bring this to fruition.

At that point, in about February of 2010, we brought in a few other proponents, a number of specialties to help us with this research. At that point the Mi'kmaq Confederacy established a loan through innovation and the proceeds were run through McInnes Cooper so that we could continue on with the research that was needed to try to bring this to a reality on Prince Edward Island.

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

### **Revenue from Native gaming initiatives**

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

Question again to the innovation minister. On Friday the finance minister said that the 2012 loan would be repaid to taxpayers through the proceeds of Native gaming initiatives – that's what he said – and you approved this loan, so question to the innovation minister.

What revenue from Native gaming initiatives will repay this loan?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Finance, Energy and Municipal Affairs.

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

Never would I have said that it was Native returns on revenues on gaming. These are from gaming revenues from the province that will repay this loan. This was work that was done hand-in-hand with the Mi'kmaq Confederacy and we worked very diligently to try to bring this solution home.

In 2012 we found that we had reached a dead end and that all provinces were now attempting to bring it in through their lottery corporations, and that's where it stands today. February 2012 we made the corporate decision to turn it over to Atlantic Lottery and that's where it is.

Thank you.

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

**Government loan repayment backup plan**

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

My question to the innovation minister, because surely he must know what the finance minister is talking about – he approved the loan and really, it falls on his shoulders to answer some of these questions.

Question to the innovation minister: What was the backup plan that you approved to repay this loan to taxpayers?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Finance, Energy and Municipal Affairs.

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

The agreement is that the money that flows through Atlantic Lottery captures all of revenue from gaming from Prince Edward Island and the other three Atlantic Provinces, just as the Premier was asked in the first question of Question Period. This is how it all flows. At that point the Island government of the day can make those decisions on how that money is spent into general revenue, of course.

So with our new gaming initiative we would take those funds founded from that game and pay back the loan. It would be dwarfed in size with what would be returned from taking advantage of the online gaming that exists today. If we can regulate it, police it and tax it that is the best case for all Islanders.

Thank you very much.

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

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

That failed. That plan failed. It's a pipe dream and it's a pipe dream that the finance minister has had many of. It's a social pass at best for him.

**Queens Wharf redevelopment status**

I want to move to the transportation minister. What's the status of the redevelopment of the Queens Wharf property on the Charlottetown waterfront across the street from the convention centre?

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

**Mr. Vessey:** Madam Speaker, we had a lot of interest in that when we went out with our RFP.

There is a developer that's looking at that to try and do some due diligence and when he does he's going to report back and we'll have more updates at that time.

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

**Queens Wharf redevelopment status re: gaming facilities**

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

Question again to the transportation minister: Have you received any proposals about redeveloping the waterfront property to accommodate expanded gaming facilities?

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

**Mr. Vessey:** No, I haven't.

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

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

Question again to the transportation minister: Have you had any conversations around the Cabinet table or elsewhere about redeveloping the waterfront property to accommodate expanding gaming facilities?

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

**Mr. Vessey:** Madam Speaker, as the hon. member knows, Cabinet has a code that we do not break Cabinet secrecy, but I haven't, outside, I haven't spoken to that at all, no.

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

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

Islanders have this code where they want to know where the money's being spent. I know it's a foreign concept to you guys over there, but to us we understand it quite well.

I'm going to move to the tourism minister: Have you received any proposals on the waterfront property to accommodate expanding gaming facilities?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Tourism and Culture.

**Mr. Henderson:** Madam Speaker, no, we have not.

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

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

Back to the tourism minister again: Do you think that adding gaming facilities on the Charlottetown waterfront will take away the support for the Red Shores (Indistinct) harness racing industry?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Tourism and Culture.

**Mr. Henderson:** I'm not really aware of what the hon. member is referring to, Madam Speaker.

We have the Red Shores racino and Red Shores in Summerside. Those are working quite well, Madam Speaker.

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

#### **GeoSweep re: online gaming file**

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

At the Public Accounts hearing the Atlantic Lottery Corporation mentioned that: Atlantic Canadians very much want to see this company providing that gaming option for them. They want us to do that because they

trust us. They know that responsible gaming is part of our mandate. Actually, central to our mandate, and they also know they'll get paid if they win.

Question to the finance minister: Did you bet millions of taxpayers' dollars on the GeoSweep project before or after you turned over your secret online gaming scheme to Atlantic Lottery for them to sort out on your behalf?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Finance, Energy and Municipal Affairs.

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

With all the speculation that's going on on the floor of the House today, I'm not quite sure which question to answer for the hon. Leader of the Opposition.

**Leader of the Opposition:** (Indistinct).

**Mr. Sheridan:** Madam Speaker, with regard to the GeoSweep account, this was a game, just like others, like the 6/49, like Lotto Max, that Atlantic Lottery works at each and every year.

They bring forward 10 games. They're successful on a great number of these. We hear all about the great successes, but we don't hear about the ones that don't quite make it. This one is very different because two provinces invested in this instead of four and that's why.

But when you compare it to the other failures that have already taken place, and GeoSweep has not to this point, we would be piling in comparison. We hope, through this new iteration, that we will see some success with it in the UK.

Thank you very much.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Tignish-Palmer Road.

#### **Cancellation of Tignish mobile pap screening clinic**

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

Recently it was announced that the mobile pap screening clinic that was held at the

Tignish Health Centre will no longer be available and my community is concerned. There were three or four clinics that were held throughout the year and there was actually a waiting list for women to get in on it. Many of these women felt more comfortable going to that clinic than they would to their family physician, if their family physician would actually accept them into the program.

My question is to the minister of health: Why was this decision made, and how will Health PEI address these concerns?

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

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

I want to acknowledge the work by D.I. Stewart, who is a physician in Cornwall, Prince Edward Island, who led the pap screening program for across the province. As part of his program he did have a day, day and a half, a week, mobile clinic where his staff went out to provide screenings, and we're extremely committed to improving access and having more women screened for cervical cancer.

We basically have been working with D.I. Stewart. We've trained 10 nurses. We will be deploying the 10 nurses in locations all across Prince Edward Island which will allow us to expand our ability to reach more Island women on a consistent basis and schedule more regular pap clinics.

**Speaker:** A supplementary question, the hon. Member from Tignish-Palmer Road.

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

That's great news to hear that we're going to have nurses trained specifically to do this screening.

Will the minister be able to commit to an RN at the health centre in Tignish to do the screening?

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

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

Currently, as I indicated, we have – the support and resources that were paid to Dr. D.I. Stewart to run the provincial clinic has been distributed to offset training to provide access and skills to 10 nurses across the province. I will get back to the Member from Tignish-Palmer Road in respect to the staffing, but as I indicated, there will be 10 nurses now.

Currently the mobile clinic is led by an administrator and a nurse – do go out in the communities, a day, day and a half, a week, but we're looking at expanding the number of nurses that are already out in primary health care networks across the province so we can get better access and more consistent scheduled screening access for Island women in the prevention of cervical cancer here in the Province of Prince Edward Island.

**Speaker:** A second supplementary, the hon. Member from Tignish-Palmer Road.

### **Women over 65 ineligible for pap screening**

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

Minister, I've been told that women over the age of 65 are not eligible for this screening. Is that correct?

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

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

I can also bring back – during screening processes there is heightened awareness for women in this (Indistinct) between a certain window in age. I don't have those specific age numbers right now but I can certainly bring that back and I'll have that here as soon as possible.

Thank you.

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

### **Confederation Bridge toll**

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

My question is for the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal.

Minister, the federal Conservative Government is replacing the Champlain Bridge in Quebec. The new bridge could cost as much as \$5 billion. The Confederation Bridge that is constitutionally in place with Terms of PEI joining Confederation was built at a cost of just over \$1 billion. There is much discussion on whether or not the tolls will be charged on the new bridge in Quebec. The toll, if charged, would be in the 2 to \$3 range.

Islanders currently pay an average of \$45 to cross the Confederation Bridge, a bridge that cost almost \$4 billion less than the Champlain Bridge to build. This just plainly and simply is not fair to Islanders. Will the minister look into this matter and ensure that Islanders are treated fairly?

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

**Mr. Vessey:** Madam Speaker, I do recall Senator Downe bringing that out into the media here not that long ago.

I can assure this House that all Islanders expect the same as any other Canadians on a piece of infrastructure such as the bridge tolls that any other Canadians would get. I would expect the same for Islanders.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Speaker:** A supplementary question, the hon. Member from Alberton-Roseville.

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

Yes, Senator Percy Downe brought this concern forward. He suggested that if there are no tolls on the Champlain Bridge, then there shouldn't be any tolls on the Confederation Bridge. I agree. But I also agree think that if tolls on the \$5 billion Champlain Bridge are 2 to \$3, then the toll on the \$1 billion Confederation Bridge should be at least the same.

**Mr. LaVie:** (Indistinct).

**Speaker:** Do you have a question, member?

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

Minister, will you meet with our federal Cabinet minister, Minister Shea, to discuss making the tolls that Islanders must pay comparable to tolls being proposed in Quebec?

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

**Mr. Vessey:** Yes, Madam Speaker, I will gladly meet with Minister Shea and discuss the options around that, and I'll also bring it up with federal Minister Raitt the next time I get the opportunity.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

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

Right before, when I was asking questions there, I heard a number of things from the finance minister. He talked about his other failures, which it's good to hear him finally talk about in this House.

I know earlier on in Question Period we heard about not being able to break Cabinet confidentiality. The minister couldn't talk about a loan which he then turned around and talked about and said it wasn't in default, so I'm not sure which it is. He can talk about it or he can't talk about it.

I'm going to go to the Premier and see if he can straighten this all out for us.

**GeoSweep re: online gaming file (further)**

Atlantic Lottery Corporation is in place to protect our interest when it comes to gambling in Atlantic Canada and they are well known and they've been known for a number of years.

The question that I asked the finance minister I'll now ask to you because he chose not to answer it or couldn't answer it. The millions of dollars that your finance minister gambled on GeoSweep: Do you know if he did that before or after he botched this secret online gaming file and had to shuffle it off to Atlantic Lottery to fix for him?

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

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

Here's what I do know. All games at Atlantic Lotto obviously need investments from the provinces so that we're able to reap the benefits from them. Whether or not you go back to 6/49, you go back to Super 7 which is now LOTTO MAX, and realistically, a lot of this comes from legislation that was passed in the late 1970s, actually during the nine-month spurt of Joe Clark as prime minister. Before that a lot of the gambling and lottery revenues in the country were devoted towards sports in our country. Then legislation was then enacted, I believe – I could be wrong on this, I'm going off memory here – to allow provinces to then have jurisdiction over this area, and it's allowed us.

I know that over the last 35 years there have probably been a lot of different games that have been invested in by the province, which the minister of finance has indicated. Just imagine if we didn't invest in 6/49, so then we wouldn't be getting those revenues. Or we didn't invest in LOTTO MAX or, I'm not sure – Pro-Line, I think is another game that is regulated by there. Obviously, there's going to be some winners and there's going to be some losers.

But as a province, we want to make sure that we're there to be able to regulate these things because there's no point allowing these activities to take place. If, in fact, it's going to stay in a black market, Madam Speaker, we want to see it be in a situation where we're able to invest it in health care and education and social programs in our province.

Thank you very much.

**Speaker:** The hon. Opposition House Leader.

### **Cost of 2014 celebrations**

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

Question to the tourism minister: Minister, your big 2014 party is close to wrapping up and many Islanders, including myself,

would like to know how much this farewell tour has cost Islanders.

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Tourism and Culture.

**Mr. Henderson:** Madam Speaker, our 2014 celebrations were a tremendous success.

We brought many tourists to Prince Edward Island, visitors. They had a chance to go all across Prince Edward Island and participate in many festivals, fairs and events and some of the events that 2014 put on.

I can tell the hon. member we invested \$17.4 million, I believe, over four years into the 2014 celebrations.

**Speaker:** The hon. Opposition House Leader.

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

I know when I turned 40 I didn't have a party this size, and it certainly didn't cost Island taxpayers. The minister did not include PEI 2014 in the budget book last spring so the House does not actually have any details on spending. It was reported as \$30 million, but we can certainly expect that number to be significantly higher.

Again, to the minister of tourism. Your colleague here in the House is finally providing a fiscal update today or it is reported that he will do so. Will you, too, finally cooperate and release all financials from your department and Crowns relating to the costs of 2014?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Tourism and Culture.

**Mr. Henderson:** Madam Speaker, the hon. member is no Father of Confederation either.

So when we're talking about 2014 celebrations, we're talking about one of the most significant events that happened in this country's history, and it happened right here in this building and in Charlottetown.

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

**Mr. Henderson:** It's obviously an event that's very worthy of celebration. Our government committed \$17.4 million to this over a four-year event. Obviously, 2014 hasn't concluded yet, and we'll be acknowledging all our expenditures when 2014 is concluded. I hope to see the hon. member in Summerside at the wrap-up celebrations for the 2014 year.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Speaker:** The hon. Opposition House Leader.

### **Tourism marketing of entire province**

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

Budget documents show this minister only budgeted \$3.9 million for marketing the entire province through Tourism PEI this year. This represents a 10% decrease from 2013-2014 for provincial tourism marketing.

Again, to the minister of tourism: Why was marketing our province from East Point to North Cape and all points in between not a budget priority for you?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Tourism and Culture.

**Mr. Henderson:** Once again, Madam Speaker, the hon. member has these facts wrong.

We did an integrated marketing strategy with 2014 funding and with the provincial Department of Tourism and Culture to promote Prince Edward Island as a premier destination and also to celebrate 2014. It logically would make sense that we wouldn't have two organizations out there trying to market PEI. We did an integrated marketing strategy, Madam Speaker.

**Speaker:** The hon. Opposition House Leader.

### **Celebration Zone value audit**

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

This government during the summer ran a fenced-in holding area for a prominent

government restaurateur on the waterfront for 70 days, the famed Celebration Zone.

Minister, will there be a value audit completed for the Celebration Zone?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Tourism and Culture.

**Mr. Henderson:** Madam Speaker, the Celebration Zone, once again, was another successful component of 2014 celebrations.

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

**Mr. Henderson:** We had the opportunity to promote – many provinces participated in that Celebration Zone and were able to promote their province as part of Confederation and the meeting that was held. We had concerts that had performers from all over the country. Islanders, visitors alike, participated in that.

Yes, obviously, when we complete the 2014 celebrations we'll be doing a review of all expenditures and trying to determine what the return on investment was, Madam Speaker.

**Speaker:** The hon. Opposition House Leader.

### **Celebration Zone cost**

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

Our caucus will certainly be waiting to see that value audit should it ever actually take place.

This area was set up to try and lure tourists in and away from private operators and certainly cost taxpayers a pile of money. It was originally reported to be budgeted to cost approximately \$5 million.

Minister, what was the total cost to operate this area from set-up to management to tear down and repairing the damage done to the site?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Tourism and Culture.

**Mr. Henderson:** Madam Speaker, the Celebration Zone was an opportunity to

promote all the other provinces in the country as well as Prince Edward Island and what makes Prince Edward Island important.

Some of our food, some of our breweries, wine, all of those products were at display. The Celebration Zone attracted visitors to Prince Edward Island, and those visitors also went all across Prince Edward Island to many other venues and events to participate in what makes Prince Edward Island so special, Madam Speaker.

**Speaker:** The hon. Opposition House Leader.

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

With the track record of this government we can only be assured that the \$5 million that was reported is just a drop in the bucket. But let's use that number, let's use the government's \$5 million figure for the Celebration Zone. If you break that down, \$5 million for a 70-day party in the Celebration Zone, that equates to \$71,000 a day – \$71,000 a day – of taxpayers' money.

Minister, since it cost \$71,000 per day, do you feel that that money was well spent?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Tourism and Culture.

**Mr. Henderson:** Once again, Madam Speaker, the hon. member has it all wrong in regards to the Celebration Zone.

Many provinces contributed to it, providing performers to perform at that particular case. The federal government was involved. Also the city of Charlottetown. There were numerous participants in the Celebration Zone as well as all of the events that occurred across Prince Edward Island, celebrating the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Charlottetown Conference. Obviously many people have participated, and all Islanders and tourism operators benefitted from this investment.

**Speaker:** The hon. Opposition House Leader.

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

Let's take that \$5 million and break it down just a little bit further. If you take \$5 million divided by the hours that the Celebration Zone actually operated, we're now talking about \$7,400 per hour it cost taxpayers – \$74,000 it cost taxpayers for the Celebration Zone per hour.

Minister, at \$74,000 per hour do you feel –

**Ms. Sherry:** (Indistinct) a day.

**Mr. Aylward:** Do you feel –

**Ms. Sherry:** (Indistinct) per day.

**Mr. Aylward:** Do you feel – \$71,000 is per day, \$7,400 is per hour.

**Leader of the Opposition:** She's thinking that's a lot of blizzards.

**Speaker:** Question, hon. member?

**Mr. Aylward:** Yeah, it would be a lot of blizzards.

**Speaker:** Hon. member, question.

**Mr. Aylward:** Again to the minister, do you feel that \$7,400 per hour was money well spent?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Tourism and Culture.

**Premier Ghiz:** Yes.

**Mr. Henderson:** Madam Speaker, when we're investing in the tourism industry in Prince Edward Island and promoting the culture and heritage of this province, yes, it is a great investment, regardless of who the payers are, whether it's other provinces, the federal government, city of Charlottetown or the provincial government.

**Speaker:** Final question, the hon. Opposition House Leader.

**Tourism marketing of entire province (further)**

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

Seventy-four hundred dollars an hour to operate a party zone while this province,

because of this government's fiscal mismanagement is over \$3 billion in debt – again, \$3 billion in debt, and that is what they're going to be able to hang their hats on at the end of their term.

Again, minister, will you agree that \$5 million would have been much better spent marketing our province as a whole from tip to tip?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Tourism and Culture.

**Mr. Henderson:** Obviously, Madam Speaker, we had invested in our tourism industry and obviously the hon. member opposite does not believe in the tourism industry.

He does not believe that this industry can generate money that provides the services that all Islanders expect.

But if the hon. member had ever had the opportunity to get out across Prince Edward Island –

**Leader of the Opposition:** (Indistinct).

**Speaker:** Order, please!

**Mr. Henderson:** – and attend some of these festivals and events like Rock the Boat, the Georgetown Playhouse, the PEI Shellfish Festival –

**Leader of the Opposition:** We'll never see the books before the election.

**Mr. Henderson:** – the Knutsford Women's Institute, the 1864 tea –

**Leader of the Opposition:** (Indistinct) bet they're cooked.

**Mr. Henderson:** – all those events, there were lots of people around them, all of those festivities made anybody that attended feel special. It was a great thing to promote our culture and heritage on Prince Edward Island, and I for one believe it was a great investment for the taxpayer of Prince Edward Island.

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

**Speaker:** End of Question Period.