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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
OF  
PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS AND ORAL QUESTION PERIOD  
(PRELIMINARY PROCEEDINGS)

FOR

WEDNESDAY, 16 NOVEMBER 2016



Responses to Questions Taken as Notice

Questions by Members

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

**Whistleblower legislation**

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

There's a common theme noted throughout the AG report on egaming: inadequate protection of taxpayers' interest. In the last election the PC Party proposed a whistleblower law to protect public servants who reported wrongdoing. Instead, the Premier brought in a policy that we said didn't go far enough. Turns out our concerns were right and the Auditor General agreed.

Question to the Premier: If you were really concerned about protecting public servants why would it take you nearly two years to bring in this law?

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** Mr. Speaker, we indicated in our election platform and in our throne speech in June of 2015, within a month of our election, that we would be introducing a whistleblower policy, which was done in November of 2015, and the steps have been taken to work with the public servants to implement that policy, to encourage them to follow it, and feel that they are protected and that they are being encouraged, as we've said on many occasions, to speak truth to power, and that's exactly what we did, and now we've got the advice from the Auditor General, and as I've said, on the day the Auditor General's report came down, that we will be implementing legislation and bringing that forward in the spring session of this Legislature.

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

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

Yesterday the Premier said that some of the senior government executives involved had

reservations about the failed egaming report and that project.

Question to the Premier. If a senior government executive had concerns they could have gone to either the Clerk of the Executive Council or the Premier with it. Is that not true?

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** Mr. Speaker, that is exactly what a senior public servant should do when they have concerns about things that need to be aired more fully or that need to be examined in government, and that's exactly the climate and the culture that we are encouraging with our senior public servants and throughout the public service.

That's the kind of government we're running. I think that's exactly, when the opposition talks about suspending public servants when they make decisions in good faith, that's exactly what we're trying to do in building a culture where public servants feel that they're part of a team that is giving good government to the people of this province.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

Question to the Premier: Will you consider making the new whistleblower law retroactive?

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** Mr. Speaker, I suppose I'd invite the Leader of the Opposition to give us some advice on exactly that would amount to –

**Mr. Trivers:** Maybe let the witnesses come to Public Accounts (Indistinct), let them speak their mind.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** – to make it retroactive, but that legislation will be introduced as a bill on the floor of this House in the spring session. The Leader of

the Opposition is welcome to make amendments if he thinks it can be improved.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### **Public Accounts and egaming witnesses**

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

Yesterday the Premier said there was a context missing in the story and actions of the deputies involved. Context was missing.

Question to the Premier: Will you drop the roadblocks at Public Accounts and allow witnesses to come before the standing committee to explain this missing context?

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** Mr. Speaker, this House has standing committees.

Public Accounts is chaired by a member of the opposition, which is a long practice, and the entire I'll say constitutional underpinning of the standing committees and other committees of this House is that they operate on the will and through the consideration –

**Mr. Trivers:** Reversing motions?

**Premier MacLauchlan:** – and consensus –

**Mr. Trivers:** You call that acting on the will of the people?

**Premier MacLauchlan:** – and cooperative and collaborative work of members of the House, and –

**Mr. Trivers:** (Indistinct) toeing the party line, shutting it down, covering up.

**Speaker:** Order, please!

**Premier MacLauchlan:** Mr. Speaker, it's not the job of the Premier to tell the Public Accounts committee what to do.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Trivers:** Maybe you should stop, then, stop telling them what to do. That's what you need to do.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Belfast-Murray River.

### **FOIPP and Premier's receipts**

**Ms. Compton:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Our office had to resort to FOIPPING the expenses of the Premier in order to get detailed receipts. The response we received has sections and pages of receipts missing and in some cases we failed to receive any receipts for expenses listed online.

Premier, why would our FOIPP request for your receipts have records missing?

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

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** Mr. Speaker, I'll look into this.

To tell you the truth I haven't been following these events, but it's certainly been our practice from the time I came to office that our – and it's the practice that's required of ministers and senior officials, that at the end of each reporting period –

**Mr. Trivers:** The rules are there, (Indistinct) to follow them.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** – at the end of each reporting period we post all of our expenses and I'll be glad to look into any situations.

If there happens to be a case where I may have been unable to produce a receipt – but I can assure you, as I did yesterday, and assure this House, that you can make a comparison –

**Mr. Trivers:** (Indistinct) follow the rules.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** – you can make a comparison of the expenses that have been incurred on my behalf since I became Premier with any number of my predecessors, and we're running a very tight ship and a responsible ship and one that's

getting results for the people of this province.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Belfast-Murray River.

**Ms. Compton:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

After that lengthy answer I think I'll move on a little bit here. Let's focus on one trip today. In December 2015 the Premier spent three days in the UK for business export sales development, a trip we received none of the Premier's receipts for.

In the deputy's receipts that we received there was a train journey from Cardiff to London Paddington Station, and according to your deputy's receipts three seats were booked with a government credit card – I believe Rhonda Sexton's credit card – and the travellers were the deputy, the Premier, and the Premier's partner.

Premier, why did the taxpayers of PEI purchase your partner's train ticket?

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** Mr. Speaker, I'll be happy to look into that particular transaction on the credit card.

But I can assure you that every penny that was expended for my partner to travel was paid for out of our own pockets, personally paid out of our own pockets.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Belfast-Murray River.

**Ms. Compton:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Premier, I believe, is a world traveller and would have his own credit card. The question is – I beg to ask it: Why would your partner's ticket be put on a government credit card?

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** Mr. Speaker, those travel arrangements were made through my office.

I have an office and I have a staff who do good work on our behalf, and we're very careful about the number of staff we have, and we're happy that they work and they work productively. I can assure you that any expense that was made through our office that was for the benefit of my partner's travel was fully reimbursed by our personal account.

Thank you.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Belfast-Murray River.

### Train travel

**Ms. Compton:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Treasury Board rules state: Every employee shall travel by the most direct route and the most economical mode of travel.

The train trip took place in first-class, and maybe some of your guilt was eased by paying for your partner's travel, but what about your own travel and the deputy's? It was a first-class ticket. Why did your deputy, you and your partner travel first-class on this train journey?

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** Mr. Speaker, it's not my practice to travel first-class.

I travelled in commercial flights of 15 hours over night from India back to Toronto earlier this year, so I expect it was that we got a better deal.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Belfast-Murray River.

**Ms. Compton:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We realize that you're running a parsimonious shop, is what I think you said yesterday. For those who don't understand that, it means frugal. I'm not sure how first-class becomes frugal, but you also stated:

“But let me say that the expense claims for my own expenditures or for deputy minister, or chief of staff, are posted and are publicly available. I think all Islanders can look at

that and see that we run a parsimonious shop.”

That was your statement yesterday. We understand you feel that travelling first-class on a train is frugal. There are probably 16 trains from Cardiff to Paddington Station on a daily basis. You probably could have traveled by bus for probably a twentieth or twenty-fifth of the cost, so please don't stand up and talk about parsimonious or frugal travel or frugal expenditures.

In fact, the rules state for train travel: That employee claims shall be restricted to coach class only. But this was first-class. First-class on this train meant reclining leather seats, free refreshments, at-seat service, and an exclusive Pullman fine dining car. I think you went at 10:30 a.m. in the morning so you probably had breakfast on china plates while Islanders are struggling to pay their bills and are lucky if they can go out for a meal at Tim Hortons.

Premier, is a first-class train journey purchased by the taxpayers showing high ethical standard?

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** Mr. Speaker, I welcome, obviously, the investigative work that the member of the opposition has done to determine if there was a better value for the taxpayer and all the work that went into looking at the schedules on those trains.

I have to say, you couldn't have looked very closely at what was available by way of eats on that train. There was a trolley went through the train and I don't even recall if we had anything. But that was indeed to travel from Cardiff to London and to do it between meetings that in either end were for the benefit and the economic development of the province.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Belfast-Murray River.

### Meal claims

**Ms. Compton:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm glad the Premier brought up the eats because during this three-day trip he spent \$1,500 on meals.

Premier, what value did taxpayers receive in paying for over \$1,500 worth of meals for your travelling party for three days in the UK?

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** Mr. Speaker, I'm glad to look into that.

I cannot imagine, to tell you the truth, what was put in that expense that would amount to that, but I can assure you we didn't eat anything close to \$1,500 worth of food so I'll have to look into it.

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

**Premier MacLauchlan:** I'll have to look into it, and I'll be glad to look into it, Mr. Speaker.

I said yesterday that I'd come back and show this House, in a comparative sense, how we're running such a parsimonious shop. I value the question being raised to whether we could have done things on more reasonable terms. Frankly, if there is a way to do things more cheaply, we will.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Belfast-Murray River.

**Ms. Compton:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's good to hear that you will look into that. On your public disclosure there are over \$1,500 worth of meal claims for those three days. No paperwork, no receipts.

### UK deals

I'm wondering: How many deals transpired from that three-day excursion in the UK and the money that was spent on behalf of this province?

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** Mr. Speaker, there were meetings in Wales, two of them with companies that have ongoing relationships

with our province, as there were in London where we also met with officials at Canada House.

The work that was being done there was with the prospect of a future visit to the UK by an Atlantic mission.

Let me just add this whole question of whether I'm in public life to get some kind of a free ride. I donate one-sixth of my salary to the United Way. Since I've become Premier, by the end of this year I'll have paid for \$14,000 worth of art that is given (Indistinct) this province and will stay – and by Island artists – and it will stay with the province after I'm through as Premier.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Belfast-Murray River.

**Ms. Compton:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I applaud the Premier. I'd just like to say most Islanders are not in a position that you're in to donate the money that they have and to come across as someone who supports the arts. We're struggling with paying the bills, that's what we're concerned with here, and we're talking about taxpayers' dollars.

### Hotel spa

During that trip to Cardiff the deputy stayed in a five-star waterfront hotel and spa. This luxury property includes comforts such as guaranteed private balconies, fine Italian furnishings, and marble bathrooms. Treasury Board rules also say that hotel stays must be the most economical rate.

Yesterday the Premier told the House that if people do not abide by the rules there are in fact ways that he has to deal with them. Premier, how do you intend to deal with your deputy's five-star hotel spa stay?

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** I'll look into that, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Belfast-Murray River.

### Treasury Board rules

**Ms. Compton:** Thank you, and I appreciate that, Premier. I would also like to request, Mr. Speaker, that the Premier table the receipt to pay for his partner's train ticket.

We're looking for receipts for all of that trip.

The message from the Premier is clear. The rules don't apply to him or his senior officials. Premier, please follow the rules, and why do they not apply to you?

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** Mr. Speaker, we do follow the rules.

We post our expenses regularly, and the fact that we do and the hon. member opposite has gone through everything and found something missing indicates that we do follow the rules. If there are gaps that need to be filled or where we can help to clarify things for the benefit of the member opposite, we'll be glad to do that.

We follow one rule overall, which is to respect the taxpayers, to do our work, and to be sure that we're getting good value for everything that we're doing.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque.

### Write-off date for IIDI egaming loan

**Mr. MacKay:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Can the minister of economic development tell the House when did the board of IIDI recommend the write-off of the egaming loan as recommended by the Auditor General?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Economic Development and Tourism.

**Mr. MacDonald:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

This file has been dragging out for the past year and a half. It was nine days into the mandate. The Premier sent this file to the AG for review. We came out very clearly in our mandate expressing transparency and

accountability, and we followed every request from, likely, the opposition, the media, and the AG, and we're fulfilling that mandate and we will continue to do so.

On the precise date, I will have to get back to the hon. member with the precise date.

Thank you.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque.

### Autonomy of IIDI

**Mr. MacKay:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Sections 3.6 of *Island Investment Development Act*, gives the board of IIDI the responsibility for the general management and operations of the corporation.

To the minister of economic development: Do you respect the authority and autonomy of IIDI as laid out by the law?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Economic Development and Tourism.

**Mr. MacDonald:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We just went through Engage PEI where we actually went out to Islanders and asked to sit them on these very important committees. They're businesspeople and they make tough decisions on a daily basis or a weekly basis or a monthly meeting basis, whenever they meet. We consider their value very important to the economic development of PEI.

What we've done in 3.66 is: "What action will be taken? Government's consolidated financial statements are prepared and audited in accordance with the *Financial Administration Act* and Public Sector Accounting Board..." What we've also done is we've said that if there's something of the significance of the last issue that we've been dealing with for a year-and-a-half we would send it to Cabinet, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque.

### IIDI egaming loan re: *Financial Administration Act*

**Mr. MacKay:** Mr. Speaker, the IIDI board approved the egaming loan without Cabinet or Treasury Board approval of the loan guarantee as required by the *Financial Administration Act*.

Will the minister of economic development agree that approving a loan of public money that was not compliant with the act is a case of someone doing something wrong?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Economic Development and Tourism.

**Mr. MacDonald:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Based on my recollection, and I could be corrected, the IIDI board did not approve this loan.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque.

**Mr. MacKay:** Mr. Speaker, the new member for Summerside-Wilmot certainly thinks that is.

During his debate in Summerside he said the following about egaming: This is an issue of folks not following the process.

Minister, you're the current minister. Do you agree with the decision of IIDI's board to approve the egaming loan in non-compliance with the *Financial Administration Act*?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Economic Development and Tourism.

**Mr. MacDonald:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The IIDI board is a very important board. We've seen the economic growth right across the province. From my recollection the IIDI did not approve this loan. This loan was basically said no to, and then it was pushed up the line by the minister. The minister sent a letter saying to sign it and basically that's where it ended up.

As you have heard the Premier say publicly, this is not the way this government does

business. We'll continue to be transparent and accountable to the public of PEI. That's exactly what we're doing. We've brought more legislation and more rules and regulations in around transparency and accountability than any government likely in the past four or five.

I feel very comfortable as minister of economic development that we're doing everything in our power to ensure that the taxpayers of Prince Edward Island can stand out there and say: You know what? These guys are doing a good job.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### Central pillar of democracy

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Question to the Minister of Workforce and Advanced Learning.

One of the fundamental pillars of democracy, perhaps its central pillar, is that of rule by the majority. Minister, do you agree with that statement?

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

**Mr. R. Brown:** Mr. Speaker, that has nothing to do with my department.

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

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** I didn't ask that. I just asked if you agreed with the statement, minister.

Actually, I think I know that you do because on *Mainstreet* you said this, sir: The MLA or the MP must be responsible to their constituents. I'm a firm believer in that. That's a direct quote.

Do you feel that as Members of the Legislative Assembly we sit in this House as representatives of the people and that their wishes must be paramount when we vote on issues in this Legislature?

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

**Mr. R. Brown:** Mr. Speaker, Question Period is to the ministers on their departments.

We'll have ample opportunity to hear what I believe in in the upcoming debate, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

**Speaker:** The hon. Leader of the Third Party, your second supplementary.

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's rare that as MLAs we have reliable data about how our constituents feel on a particular issue, but with this plebiscite on electoral reform we have more than a simple opinion poll. Although I did hear the Premier utter three times in Question Period already that we want this government to do things more cheaply to respect taxpayers and to get good value. Perhaps we should have just done a simple opinion poll if we're going to casually dismiss the results of it as this government seems intent on doing.

Minister, you represent District 11. Your constituents voted over 70% in favour of proportional representation. Will you honour the votes of your constituents by supporting the implementation of proportional representation?

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

**Mr. R. Brown:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

This member comes to the Legislature and talks about the rules of the Legislature and how we should follow the rules of the Legislature.

He stands over there sanctimoniously talking about how he represents the people of Prince Edward Island.

I represent my district and the people of Prince Edward Island, but we have a set of rules here in this Legislature that questions to ministers must be relative to their department.

You will have ample opportunity to hear what I feel in the debate when the debate comes up.

From someone who talks about the rules of the Legislature and how we're not following the rules of the Legislature, his first question to me is about breaking the rules of the Legislature, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you very much.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Lewis Point.

**Ms. Casey:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

If I could just for 30 seconds indulge you for a moment, I'd like to welcome my friend Irish Mythen, a world-renowned musician, to the House. Welcome, Irish.

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

### Shelter ceiling subsidy

**Ms. Casey:** Mr. Speaker, my question today is to Minister of Family and Human Services.

Minister, many Island families are being providing with assistance for housing. I have spoken to my constituents in Charlottetown-Lewis Point who tell me there is too much month at the end of their cheque.

Minister, could you explain what is a shelter ceiling subsidy, and can you elaborate how many clients of your department are receiving this shelter ceiling subsidy?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Family and Human Services.

**Ms. Mundy:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

This government is committed to providing supports and programs to Islanders who need it most when they need it most. Actually, all of our social assistance clients have a shelter rate that is built into their case plan.

The ceiling rate varies from person to person depending on their situation, for example, how many people are in the household. Also, the shelter ceiling rates or the shelter

rates, I should say, are transportable to both homeowners and to rental units.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Lewis Point.

**Ms. Casey:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Minister, some of my constituents are telling me they can't find affordable accommodations. What is the percentage of your clients who are living above the shelter ceiling?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Family and Human Services.

**Ms. Mundy:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Approximately 100 of our social assistance clients – that would be, I guess, about 3% – have had their shelter ceiling increased based on policy.

Thank you.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Lewis Point, your second supplementary.

**Ms. Casey:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Minister, how often does your department review the shelter ceiling subsidy level to ensure that it's keeping pace with the inflation rate?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Family and Human Services.

**Ms. Mundy:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The shelter rates are reviewed regularly, yearly, based on the social assistance regulations. If I'm not mistaken, the rates have increased approximately 11% over the last nine years.

As part of our platform commitment in the 2011 election we did commit to increasing the shelter rates and we still intend to do that, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

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

### Compassionate care benefits

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

My question's to the Minister of Workforce and Advanced Learning. Currently, minister, the federal government's compassionate care program provides employment insurance benefits to people that have children or family members at significant risk of death within 26 weeks. The eligibility criteria of death within 26 weeks is far too limited in scope to provide help to most caregivers. This is what I'm hearing from my constituents.

One such example would be of parent scaring for critically ill children, and they're limited to the acute state of health, yet there are many parents who may need time to provide extended care which might not necessarily be for a life-threatening condition.

My question to the minister: Has your department had any discussions with your federal counterpart about expanding compassionate care benefits?

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

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

I want to thank the member for this question that pertains to my department and abides by the rules of Legislature.

Compassionate care is a very important thing. Having a family member or child that is sick, your first thought is about that child or your parent or your loved one.

We must do everything we can to help in situations like that, and the EI program – which is worker-owned and worker paid for – is that program. The federal government has extended the program to 26 weeks, but there are other issues and other problems around the 26 weeks, and what is compassionate care, and who it extends to.

We have been away on federal/provincial meetings, and discussions are going on with the federal minister of PEI, and we are discussing this very issue with him with a lot of (Indistinct).

The EI system for PEI was changed. I think it was wrong, and we are discussing changes to the EI system that will help parents, loved ones, and parents with children especially.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton, first supplementary.

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

Again, a follow-up to the minister: Minister, has your department or this government made any recommendations to your federal counterpart in this regard?

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

**Mr. R. Brown:** Mr. Speaker, as I said, we are in negotiations with the federal government right now, the EI portion of it, in terms of what improvements can be made to this system.

I will ensure that this will be brought up again at the next federal and provincial meetings because, again, it's families, it's children, it's grandparents, it's parents. When they are sick their families' priorities should be about them, and we must do everything we can in order to ensure that they and their loved ones can be together in time of need.

If one thing this country can do is think about that situation and extend those benefits to the families even more, because that's the important thing here – we're here for families, we're here for parents, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

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

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a matter of privilege.

**Speaker:** Yes, I'm sorry –

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** After Question Period? (Indistinct).

**Speaker:** At the end of Question Period.

The hon. Member from Georgetown-St. Peters.

**Premier and Brudenell**

**Mr. Myers:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I was going to ask questions to the Minister of Workforce and Advanced Learning, but he scared me off so I'm going to have a few for the Premier today. See if he's a little calmer the next time I get up.

Question to the Premier. This summer you attended the Law Society of PEI's annual general meeting that was at the Rodd Brudenell, and you billed taxpayers for your expense. Why did taxpayers pay for you to stay in Brudenell?

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** Mr. Speaker, that meeting consists of a one-night stay.

There's an evening banquet, presentations to which I'm invited as Minister of Justice and Public Safety, and the following morning there's the annual general meeting and panel sessions of the law society, and I participated in those. It made sense to stay at Brudenell for the evening.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Auditor General letter**

**Mr. Myers:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Auditor General told the PEI Public Accounts Committee on November 10<sup>th</sup> that she sent a letter to government in October outlining specific concerns she found in egaming.

Question to the Premier: Was this letter the first occurrence of when you learned the auditor's concerns of Bill Dow's conduct in being an investor in the same deal that he was providing legal services to government for?

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** Yes, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Myers:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The auditor found government's lawyer was a shareholder in a related company while acting as government's counsel in a connected business deal.

Premier, do you agree with the auditor's concerns on this matter?

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** Mr. Speaker, that's the nature of a management letter, to raise those issues, and we're reflecting on the Auditor General's comments, and we'll have a response to the Auditor General.

We'd be happy to share that response with this House.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Egaming accountability (further)**

**Mr. Myers:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

While I sat in on that committee that day, I did say to the Auditor General that I looked forward to seeing what government's move would be on this, and I mean that quite sincerely.

Premier, you've told Islanders – and even I believed you at the time, foolish of me, I suppose – that you were going to do things differently and this wasn't the way that you operated government. Now we see that you're sweeping things right under the rug and you took no action on this. This is something that I would have expected a man of your background to take immediate action on.

Premier, why are there no consequences under your rule for this blatant scandal and abuse of public trust and of the public purse?

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** Mr. Speaker, there are indeed consequences.

The consequences are to put in place policies, laws, to bring forward now, including this session of this Legislature, further measures to address openness and transparency. The consequence is that we are standing by the 15 recommendations from the Auditor General. We're implementing those and we are committed to running strong, open, transparent Cabinet government, and we are committing –

**Mr. Trivers:** Consequences. Another million dollars lost by the province.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** We are committing to approach any opportunity for economic development with the utmost diligence.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Law Society of PEI re: Bill Dow**

**Mr. Myers:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's great to hear that the Premier believes in rules and thinks they should be followed moving forward and he's going to do everything to make sure. As the Premier well knows, the Law Society of PEI has an entire code of conduct and has a section that deals with conflict and the duty to avoid conflict of interest.

Question to the Premier: When did you inform the PEI Law Society of the Auditor General's findings on Billy Dow?

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** Mr. Speaker, I have not done so.

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

**Mr. Myers:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The law society rules also state that members must report conduct that raises a substantial question as to another lawyer's honesty or trustworthiness.

Mr. Premier, you are the Attorney General of this province by your own admission here today. Why have you failed to report this

very serious incident to the Law Society of Prince Edward Island?

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** Mr. Speaker, as I said previously, we have the management letter from the Auditor General and we are addressing the issues that she raised there.

I will inform this House when we have reached the point where we are reporting back to the Auditor General and where we are taking steps that flow from that management letter.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Myers:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Now I'm not only talking about your duty here as the Premier of Prince Edward Island and your duty to respond to the Auditor General and to take steps. What I'm talking about here now is the Law Society of Prince Edward Island.

You are the Attorney General of Prince Edward Island, so you're really responsible for the goings and comings in that area as it applies to government.

I'm not sure why you can't see how you should have taken this directly to the Law Society of Prince Edward Island. The auditor clearly states the conflict, you now clearly know about it, and the bylaws of the law society state clearly that you have to report it.

Question to the Premier: When will you report this to the Law Society of Prince Edward Island as is your duty?

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** Mr. Speaker, it's important to look into the full circumstances that are raised by the Auditor General's letter, and that's in fact what we are doing.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Trivers:** You don't have to be a lawyer to understand those rules.

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

**Mr. Myers:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's my understanding that the Premier himself is a practicing lawyer. If that's the case, he has already broken the Law Society of Prince Edward Island's rules by not reporting it, seeing as he knows about it, as it's one of their rules that he has to report it immediately.

Premier, what form of openness do you consider sitting on serious proof uncovered by the Auditor General on government's lawyer acting in conflict?

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** Mr. Speaker, we're not sitting on it.

We have a management letter from the Auditor General that was conveyed to government precisely as a result of her review, which is why we asked her to review this situation, and we are indeed considering and addressing the issues raised in that management letter.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Myers:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I find it very ironic that the Premier will lecture us every day on how things are going to be different under his rule, how things are going to be better under his rule, how he doesn't do business this way. He's breaking the Law Society of Prince Edward Island's rules. He is a practicing lawyer breaking the rules that say that no practicing lawyer cannot report. He has to report. It's a duty as a lawyer to report this, the findings of the Auditor General.

Not only that, he's the Attorney General of Prince Edward Island and the Premier. You'd think somebody like that would want way better for Prince Edward Island. You'd think somebody like that would want to set an example for all Islanders, that things are going to be cleaned up here on Prince Edward Island.

Little wonder people are sick of governments all over the world. You're a prime example of why people are sick of governments.

Premier, why are there never any consequences under your rule for senior bureaucrats and government officials and government lawyers who break rules?

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** Mr. Speaker, I don't necessarily concur with the hon. member's assertion that people are sick of government.

There are 27 of us here elected to this Legislature to look after the people's business, to give good government, to show leadership –

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

**Premier MacLauchlan:** Mr. Speaker, there are many people who work for our government, and who work in this Chamber, and who are in the process of doing their job –

**An Hon. Member:** That's why they want proportional representation.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** Who are doing their job conscientiously, and the practice of the opposition to assert every time something turns out other than the way they prefer that it's breaking the rules –

**Mr. Aylward:** It wasn't us, it was the Auditor General that brought it forward!

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

**Premier MacLauchlan:** – is more and more common.

**Speaker:** Order, please!

**Premier MacLauchlan:** Mr. Speaker, I am in the process of doing what I'm supposed to do in response to that management letter, and I've said I will report to the House on it, and that's exactly what I'm doing as Premier and as Attorney General, and I'm happy to complete my duties.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[End of Question Period]