



Session:	2/65
Date:	30 November 2016
No:	33

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
OF  
PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS AND ORAL QUESTION PERIOD  
(PRELIMINARY PROCEEDINGS)

FOR

WEDNESDAY, 30 NOVEMBER 2016



Responses to Questions Taken as Notice

Questions by Members

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

**Storm emergency response**

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

Today's storm, Sunday's storm, knocked out the power to thousands of Islanders. Maritime Electric has warned that these outages will stretch into Thursday or beyond, for many.

Question to the Premier: Can the Premier, who's responsible for EMO, explain government's lack of response in this emergency situation?

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** Mr. Speaker, the folks at EMO, the team there, have been in touch with first responders and communities throughout Kings County from Sunday and providing regular updates and initiative together with those responders.

I may say, in response to the previous comment, the Department of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy is indeed responsible for the roads throughout all parts of Kings County and has been on the job.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

Thousands are still without power, phone lines are knocked out of service, and lacking access to water. Environment Canada has issued a special weather statement regarding the storm that hit last night and will continue into the weekend.

Question to the Premier: How long does this outage need to occur before you declare an emergency situation?

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** Mr. Speaker, there hasn't been an initiative from any of the communities to ask for an emergency situation to date.

The matter is being dealt with by communities, by provincial services, by Maritime Electric, indeed, by power crews from outside of the province who came in to help who've now been pulled back to New Brunswick. We're keeping an active watch on this situation.

As I said, there's been a report from our director of emergency measures as of 11:00 a.m. this morning and we'll continue to monitor the situation and watch it with great concern.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Storm emergency response financial recourse**

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

The communities did step up to the plate and the communities are dealing with it, but your department has failed to. As the power outages stretch to Thursday and perhaps longer, many Islanders are facing extra costs associated with burst pipes and spoiled food.

Question to the Premier: Premier, do Islanders impacted by days without power, experiencing burst pipes and spoiled food, have any financial recourse for these unexpected costs?

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** Mr. Speaker, should it rise to the level of an emergency on the order of the washouts that we had in western Prince in 2015 there are indeed programs that we might pursue for that.

The measures that have been taken by communities – as members on both sides, on all sides of this House – have observed is in the tradition and in the great community spirit of Prince Edward Islanders to respond and to support each other. For folks who have damages to their homes there are

insurance policies. If there are people who are without insurance and who have damages we may indeed have some programs that we can (Indistinct).

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

### Compensation fund

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

I'm glad the Premier (Indistinct) the subject. There's a bill, *An Act to Amend the Premium Tax Act*, currently before this House. This bill will see the government collect up to an extra \$1 million a year in extra taxes from insurance companies.

Question to the Premier: Premier, will you commit today to set aside a significant portion of this money for a compensation fund for affected Islanders from this extended power outage?

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** Mr. Speaker, this is something that we may indeed be able to explore together with communities.

It's not the kind of thing – and I don't think that the taxpayers of the province want me to simply, in the course of Question Period, be hatching whole new programs. But if there are people who are in a bad situation and where the province can help, we'll be very happy to look into that and to explore it. I'm glad the Leader of the Opposition raised it.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

I'm glad you went down that road. Because last winter one of the first acts of this Premier was to give an extra \$2 million to the cities of Summerside and Charlottetown for extraordinary winter storm costs. Rural communities got nothing.!

Question to the Premier: Why will you not extend the same care and compensate Island families facing extraordinary storm costs for this extended power outage?

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier

**Premier MacLauchlan:** Mr. Speaker, for starters, I didn't say we wouldn't extend support to Island families, I said we'd consider it.

Let me say, just to go back to 2015 – actually it started in the fall of 2014, that winter – it was for the municipalities who pay for the road services in those municipalities. In our case, the Department of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy looks after those roads and is glad to do so and we're on the job.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

I'll clarify something. Other communities in this province have to pay for snowplow removal themselves. Okay? Remember that, Mr. Premier.

### Deleted government email accounts (further)

Question to the Premier: Whose emails did you delete?

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** No one, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

### Urgent mental health situation criteria

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

Question to the minister of health: Minister, please describe to this House what criteria would define someone as having an urgent mental health situation?

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

**Mr. Henderson:** Mr. Speaker, we always try to focus on the issues around most in need, most urgent, and I would put it in the hands of professionals that would make that determination.

It would not be me as minister that would determine the severity and acuity of a particular health issue.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

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

The legislative committee on health was told the average wait time to be getting psychiatry services through the province's community mental health programs is 75 days and that's for adults whose cases are considered urgent.

Again to the minister. That's shocking. What is your plan to deal with this critical lack of services?

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

**Mr. Henderson:** Mr. Speaker, we readily acknowledge that we have challenges in trying to deliver good mental health services in this province.

That's why we've just recently released a new mental health and addictions strategy in this province so we can make sure that we're providing the services that Islanders require, and in as urgent a fashion as possible, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

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

I'd like to remind the minister it took four long years for them to actually come up with the strategy, to actually put something to paper.

We're talking about urgent cases here. Seventy-five days is a very long time.

Who's looking after these individuals for the 75 days? Are they being looked after at home, in hospitals? Where, Mr. Minister?

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

**Mr. Henderson:** Mr. Speaker, when an individual has a particular health issue or challenge, whatever, we encourage those people to, once again, deal with their family practitioner.

If it's a case of an emergency or whatnot then it's to go to the emergency room at our facilities across the province. We have QEH, KCMH, PCH, and Western Hospital, and they will deal with the situations accordingly. If it is an extreme urgent situation Islanders will get access to health care services, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

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

The average wait time for youth who are having urgent mental health issues is 50 days.

Again to the minister: How can that be acceptable to you?

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

**Mr. Henderson:** Mr. Speaker, we are always doing our very best to make sure we provide as immediate service as we possibly can.

When it comes to the issues of wait times, there's a whole myriad of issues that are out there as far as where the wait times may be a little longer than we work on. In our department we are doing our very best to make sure that we have the resources and staff complements to deliver those services to Islanders in as prudent and as expedient a fashion as possible, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

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

Again to the minister. Island children are still waiting up to three years for psychiatric services, including psychoeducational assessments. Again, I want to remind this minister this is when your government has found \$65 million for a three-minute highway, but when it comes to the health of our children and our families dollars are suddenly tight.

Again to the minister: Why are people with mental health issues not a priority for your government?

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

**Mr. Henderson:** Mr. Speaker, I can assure the hon. member, and this House, that any individual with a health affliction, mental health issues, is a high priority to this government.

That's why we've done significant improvements in our wait times. We are dealing with youth that (Indistinct) dealt with, we're trying to make sure that they have better gains with as early interventions as we possibly can. We've invested over \$750,000 on the most pressing wait times for children.

Those wait times, I might add, at one time were up to two years. We've got them down now to seven and eight months for children with complex needs.

We'll continue to make sure that we reduce those wait times as soon as possible, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

### Health system and children

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

The minister can get up and quote all the stats he wants, but we know on this side from talking to families, to talking to professionals in the industry, that children are still waiting up to three years for a psychoeducational assessment.

Again to the minister. I recently had a call from a family whose eight-year-old son had

been experiencing severe behavioural issues. In fact, this child had to be restrained by first responders for his own protection and taken to the QEH. Upon arrival at the QEH he was admitted for a three-day period. A five-minute telephone referral with the IWK was conducted and resulted in a drug protocol being established. Eventually, a local psychiatrist saw this child and came up with a totally different diagnosis.

The mother was so concerned that upon her child being released from hospital she drove directly to the IWK ER, and within three hours was seen by a specialist, and this action resulted in yet another different but accurate diagnosis.

Again to the minister: Please explain to this mother why your health system is failing to meet the health needs of Islanders.

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

**Mr. Henderson:** Mr. Speaker, I can assure this House that we have some very competent and professional staff here on Prince Edward Island, but there are situations – sometimes a situation might change in an individual's case in a diagnosis.

We do have doctors that refer for confirming a diagnosis to deal with a particular issue that that individual might have.

I'll readily acknowledge when I say that we used to have wait times of two years and we got it down to seven and eight months. We want to do better, but there are significant challenges that we have in not only making sure we attract and retain staff here – some professionals are a challenge to recruit just because of the specialties that are in place.

We're doing our very best, Mr. Speaker, to make sure we deliver good, competent services to Islanders.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

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

I'm sure if the minister of education would get up he could quote as well that the wait

times for these children that are being diagnosed or waiting to be diagnosed with potentially a learning disability or a mental health issue is far too long.

Again, this mother has an eight-year-old child that she's been trying to get an accurate diagnose for for an extended period of time now. I spoke to her extensively. She is not blaming the medical professionals that she's interacted with here on Prince Edward Island, but what she is extremely concerned with is at no time was there access here on Prince Edward Island to a child psychiatrist. She had to travel on her own accord to the IWK for that service –

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

### Specialist recruitment

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

Again, to the minister. You can find \$65 million for a highway, but yet you cannot do anything about recruiting the required specialists here on Prince Edward Island. Minister, what are you going to do about this?

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

**Mr. Henderson:** Mr. Speaker, once again, in our department of health care we have a significant budget.

We continue to increase that budget on an annual basis. We've been very fortunate that our Premier and our government has seen a great emphasis on health care in this province.

Once again, when we deal with children, those are our future and we want to do our very best for them. We've implemented a number of programs. We're doing some research currently with UPEI to try to deal with providing – identify specific issues and how we can better serve children with complex needs, and we'll continue to invest in those types of initiatives, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

### Radiation safety regulations

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

To the same minister. The *Public Health Act* is in place to protect Islanders. How and why was the decision made to revoke the radiation safety regulations back on August 1<sup>st</sup>, 2016?

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

**Mr. Henderson:** Mr. Speaker, once again the safety of our staff is paramount, and when it came to some issues we make sure that our staff are providing those services in a safe manner, and we'll continue to see that happen, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

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

The minister can stand and say that the health and safety of his staff is paramount, but the revocation of these regulations back on August 1<sup>st</sup>, 2016 essentially eliminates inspection of radiation equipment here on Prince Edward Island.

Minister, how can you say eliminating inspection services of this equipment is showing your concern for the health and wellness of our health care employees?

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

**Mr. Henderson:** Mr. Speaker, when those acts and regulations changed we still make sure that this equipment is safe and operational, and we will be making sure of that as we move forward.

I can assure that any time that there is concerns of a particular piece of equipment we'll be monitoring that and making sure that equipment is operational as soon as possible, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

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

Again to the same minister: What experts did you consult when you decided to eliminate the inspection of this equipment?

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

**Mr. Henderson:** Mr. Speaker, to be more specific I'll have to get that question answered by my department and I'll get back to the hon. member as soon as possible.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

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

I've been hearing from medical professionals and they are extremely concerned with the elimination of these inspections. Not only just in our hospital facilities, but also in the dental offices as well. They're concerned not only for their health, but the health of their patients. With the elimination of these inspections there are no safeguards in place.

Minister, again, why was this eliminated? Is this just another mean-spirited cut-and-slash by your government?

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

**Mr. Henderson:** Mr. Speaker, just because there isn't a general inspection done doesn't mean that it can't be done by the equipment owners.

If there are private dental operators out there that operate those types of equipment they have every right to install or develop their own inspections.

But I can assure the hon. member that we have consulted with the Workers Compensation Board before we did this to ensure that, once again, staff are in a safe and operating fashion when they're operating this equipment, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

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

With that, I'm assuming that the minister is now telling us that our radiation technologists in our health care facilities and our dentists in our dental practices across Prince Edward Island, they're now responsible for taking on the expertise to inspect this equipment.

Is that what you're saying, minister?

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

**Mr. Henderson:** Mr. Speaker, there are, once again, many operators that use these types of equipment.

Like the hon. member had mentioned, many are in the private sector. It's up to the private sector to make sure that those pieces of equipment are operating safely. Once again, no difference than we are at Health PEI.

Once again, we will make sure that equipment is operational and up to the proper standards of safety as it pertains to our workers and those that are using those pieces of equipment.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

### **Deleted government email accounts (further)**

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

Question to the Premier: Whose emails were deleted?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Education, Early Learning and Culture.

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

As I've answered numerous times before the —

**Mr. Aylward:** (Indistinct). It's a simple question. Whose emails were deleted?

**Mr. Currie:** As I've answered numerous times on the floor of the Legislative Assembly, I have taken that information under advisement. I will bring that

information back. Looking forward to respond –

**Mr. Trivers:** One or two names –

**Mr. Currie:** – to the work of the Auditor General to make sure that our government lays out a plan and modernizes record information management, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

**Speaker:** Before I go to the hon. Leader of the Third Party for a question, I'm going to give way to the hon. Member from West Royalty-Springvale for recognition of guests.

**Mr. Dumville:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

I'd like to recognize Daniel Roode, a good constituent, and I guess a Newfoundlander who's over here looking after our Prince Edward Islanders. He does a great job with Salvation Army and is a great Rotarian and a great community man. I'd like to recognize him, and shout-out to Gordon MacInnis there, too.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

### **Agriculture diversification**

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

Agricultural biodiversity is essential to the future of farming as it maintains healthy soil, water conservation, soil fertility and biota, pollination, and it provides species with the ability to adapt to the changing environment by increasing their resistance to disease and their tolerance to the increasing extreme temperatures of climate change.

Question to the Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries: What is government doing to help diversify agriculture on Prince Edward Island and how is that process working so far?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

**Mr. McIsaac:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to say agriculture is changing on a daily basis. It really is. Our farmers are on top of this on a day-to-day basis.

We practice the four Rs of fertilizer application: the right time, the right fertilizer, the right place, and the right quantity. This is what we need to do. Our soil is the basis of everything we grow. We have to look after our soil and treat it right, and our farmers certainly are doing that.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

### **Funds for agronomy initiative**

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

The agronomy enhancement program, which was initiated in June of this year, is a collaboration between PEI's processing growers, Cavendish Farms, and the government. Its focus is on developing more research funding for the potato processing sector to increase marketable yields while producing environmentally sustainable potato crops.

A question to the minister: How much is the province paying for the new enhanced agronomy initiative, including the project leader position at the potato board?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

**Mr. McIsaac:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

We do support the Potato Board in many ways. If they have grants that we can help them out, if there's dollars we can put into certain programs that will help the industry through the Growing Forward 2 Program. In any ways that we can we work with all of our commodities to make sure that they improve, they grow, and they continue to drive the economy of this province.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

### **Agriculture sector spending**

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

I was hoping for a dollar amount and I hope the minister will get back to me with that.

Supporting Island agriculture is important to rural vitality on Prince Edward Island and it's essential to farmers. I think the minister would also agree that diversity in agriculture makes for a stronger agricultural sector.

A question to the minister: How much does government spend on supports, direct and indirect, for the potato sector, and how much does it spend, in comparison to the potato sector, in all other agricultural sectors?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

**Mr. McIsaac:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some of those numbers I certainly can bring back to the Leader of the Third Party.

But when we talk about diversity just to look back over the last couple of years in our new Future Farmer Program where last year we had 55 new entrants. Forty-one of those had no agricultural experience before. But they came to PEI, they liked what they saw, and they got into small business, small farms or whatever and carried forward.

This year we have 30 members now in the Future Farmer Program. This is where our future is. We're driving our economy forward, our young people, our new people want to be involved in this. One of the new farmers was, actually, a 74-year-old gentleman who wanted to get involved.

We help each and every one of those to get started, to do a business plan, whatever it might be, and where we can fund them we certainly will. But this is what we need in our fisheries and our agriculture to drive the provincial economy, and we will be right there with them.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

### **CADC**

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

The province has recently announced it's taken steps to take over the Charlottetown Area Development Corporation.

I'd like a question to the Minister of Economic Development and Tourism: What will replace CADC?

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

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

CADC was developed a long time ago, approximately thirty some years, 1974. It was developed for infrastructure and business development. It was basically set up for Charlottetown and Stratford, and as we heard in this House most recently, we always hear the comments about rural development.

I think this is a real opportunity for this government and PEI as a whole to put together something relevant that's going to be from East Point to West Point and everything in between to develop economic prosperity.

We will be starting consultations with communities over the next few months and working closely with different entities, such as the Souris Harbour Authority, and people and organizations like that to put together a plan that will help create economic development.

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

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

Is this going to result in job growth and economic activity in downtown Charlottetown?

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

**Mr. MacDonald:** I certainly hope it does. That's our full intention, Mr. Speaker, is to create more economic wealth right across Prince Edward Island.

With technology the way it is today and innovation, and the small businesses that we're seeing popping up in rural PEI, we can't put boundaries on economic development anymore. I think it's very important to recognize the fact that technology and innovation is spreading across the Island.

By limiting it ourselves to the two main centres, whether it be Summerside, Charlottetown, Stratford, I think is a detriment. We have to move outside those boundaries, Mr. Speaker, and I think that's what our intent is.

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

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

The CADC, they have rental units in downtown Charlottetown. Will those rental units be honoured going forward, minister?

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

**Mr. MacDonald:** At the present time, Mr. Speaker, there's no planned changes for the rental units.

They are a very important strategic asset to where their locations are and the people that live in them. They're viable economic spin-off, obviously, for a central area of Charlottetown and Stratford and Summerside.

We'll be looking at all of our assets and trying to define what's the best use for any of our assets or any of our infrastructure going forward.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Evangeline-Miscouche.

**Canada 150 celebrations re: PEI**

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

My question is for the Minister of Education, Early Learning and Culture.

Following on the heels of Prince Edward Island's very successful 2014 celebrations, Canada will be celebrating its 150<sup>th</sup> birthday in 2017. The federal government is the lead jurisdiction in planning of this anniversary and earlier this week the Confederation Centre announced plans for Canada 150.

Minister, could you please tell this House: Has the federal government had any discussions with the province in respect for other celebrations here on Prince Edward Island?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Education, Early Learning and Culture.

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

It's a great question from the Member from Evangeline-Miscouche. He is correct. In 2014 we had a province-led initiative of the celebration of this country, and in April of 2015 the federal government announced over \$200 million for the celebration and the recognition of the Birthplace of Canada. As all Members of the Legislative Assembly, we're well aware of our role as a province in the creation of this great country that we live in.

We're very engaged, and I've been very clear with the federal government that we will and want to be very much a part of that conversation, with support from the federal government, not only in Charlottetown, Mr. Speaker, but in communities all across Prince Edward Island.

Thank you.

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

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

**Mr. Currie:** Yes, all across, everywhere.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Evangeline-Miscouche, your first supplementary.

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

Supplementary to the same minister. The minister indicated that they would certainly be looking to entertain any projects. Do you have any of your own that you'd like to bring forward to this anniversary, Mr. Minister?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Education, Early Learning and Culture.

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

We do have an interdepartmental committee that is working very closely – will be working with Heritage Canada and Canada 150 who will be leading and creating an inventory of the projects, and we are currently working with organizations. Submissions are coming forward.

I'm very optimistic and very excited that communities all across Prince Edward Island will be part of the celebration and the investment to celebrate our place in the Birthplace of Canada, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

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

### **Robert Ghiz records storage**

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

Question to the Premier: Where are the records from the premier's office of Robert Ghiz currently stored?

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** They're with the public archives, Mr. Speaker.

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

### **Records information management under Robert Ghiz**

**Mr. Myers:** Thank you.

I'm assuming it includes the bunch of emails that we're looking for.

Question again to the Premier: Who was responsible for records management in the premier's office under Robert Ghiz?

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** Mr. Speaker, we had a very diligent person responsible for records and correspondence who continued to serve into my time as Premier, who served the province for the better part of 30 years, and I'm very proud of the good work that she did.

Thank you.

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

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

The *Archives and Records Act* sets out a public records committee that has to approve records management practices and record deletions.

Question again to the Premier: Will you confirm that Melissa MacEachern and Doug Clow were serving on this committee at the time of the egaming scandal?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Education, Early Learning and Culture.

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

As I've shared in the House, I've taken questions under advisement. I've asked today, again, that I would like to have that information, to bring that information forward in respect to the questions that I've taken under advisement.

I'm very pleased with the update I received this morning in response to the recommendations from the Auditor General's report. As the minister who's been at these tabled for almost 10 years, I take the recommendations and the work and have great respect for the office of the Auditor General. We will look forward to bringing forward a record information management strategy for the next five years to modernize electronic health records and policies and procedures into the future.

Thank you.

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

**Egaming re: officials**

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

Unfortunately the Auditor General's office is one of the very few offices of the government that's actually still respected and that's because of you guys and some of the things that you've pulled on Islanders over the years.

It was Melissa MacEachern and Doug Clow both sat on this committee, so I'll answer the question. It was: Yes. I'll go back to the Premier again.

Premier: Will you agree with the Auditor General and myself that these senior officials were also at the heart of the ongoing egaming scandal and cover-up?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Education, Early Learning and Culture.

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

I do want to add that we will be bringing forward – and I've had numerous conversations and questions in the Assembly, and have committed to taking the information and questions under advisement.

I'm very pleased that I'm getting briefings this morning on the strategy, and I must say that email protocols have been upgraded. The new email protocols were introduced in July of 2016 to ensure compliance with the act, and coming this spring, as the minister responsible for records information management, I take that responsibility very seriously as we provide oversight for all record management and policies and procedures all across government and government departments, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

It's great to hear from the minister of education on this file. I wish that the Premier would stop shirking his

responsibility to his portfolio, which is the Premier of Prince Edward Island, which is the top of all of this, and it's where all of the trouble started with this file, and it's where all the trouble continues to be, and it's your hiding from it.

**2007 government guidelines re: email**

The minister is right, but there was also a document that outlined how to handle emails in 2007, and you remember it very well.

Question to the Premier: Are you familiar with the government guidelines that have been in place since 2007 with reference to government emails?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Education, Early Learning and Culture.

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

What I do know is the path forward in respect to the recommendations. I'm very pleased at having the responsibility to modernize record information management as the minister responsible for the provincial archives and record responsibilities.

As I indicated, we're currently doing assessments. Those assessments will be – (Indistinct) to myself as the minister that I will be tabling in this Assembly to make sure that all government departments are meeting their responsibilities and compliances, to make sure that the policies and protocols are being held, and we'll be taking that work very seriously, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

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

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

These guidelines state that email records must be scheduled and retained for the appropriate period of time.

Question to the Premier: How long were these senior officials' emails supposed to be kept for?

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** Mr. Speaker, on the question that the hon. member asked about my familiarity with the regime for looking after official records, within the first week or 10 days of becoming Premier I had a meeting with the public archivist, Jill MacMicken-Wilson, who is responsible for that area, and was given a complete briefing on the regime and the protocols regarding official records, and a very competent staff that works with me to ensure that in the Premier's office those records are well looked after.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### **Records officer**

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

Question again to the Premier: Why is there no records officer listed in your office?

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** Mr. Speaker, I'll look into that and come back to the House.

I assume that had to do with the retirement mid-summer of the person who has done that job for the better part of three decades, but I can assure you that someone has the active responsibility for that on a daily basis.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### **Retention and deposition schedules**

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

This government's guidelines, the ones that they came up with themselves, point out that the *Archives and Records Act* states that government records cannot be destroyed or permanently removed from government custody without the development of records retention and deposition schedules.

Question to the Premier: How many records retention and deposition schedules have been approved by the Premier's office since 2008?

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** I'll have to get back to the House and I'll be glad to do so, take that under advisement, Mr. Speaker.

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

### **Destruction order re: emails**

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

These guidelines also say that absence of these schedules, a one-time destruction order, approved in writing by the public records committee, is needed to approve the destruction of government records.

Question again to the Premier: Will you table the destruction order for the deleted emails that are referenced in the Auditor General's report?

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** Mr. Speaker, I'll have to see if there is such a record in the first place and I'll get back to the House on that, Mr. Speaker.

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

### **Deleted government email accounts (further)**

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

The Premier would save himself an awful lot of time and effort on this egaming file if he would stop trying to, number one, cover it up, and number two, pretend like he doesn't know things except for when he wants to pretend like he knows things.

You know for a fact that there's not. Will you tell this House today, once and for all, whose email accounts were deleted?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Education, Early Learning and Culture.

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

I did indicate to the member, once again, from Georgetown-St. Peters, that I've asked

staff to bring that information forward and once I receive that I'll bring that forward.

I just want to let the Assembly know that we have a strategy that's in place. I'm looking forward to bringing that strategy forward. I have the responsibility under the legislation which falls inside the Department of Education, Early Learning and Culture to provide oversight and make sure that the compliance and the training and the assessments of proper modern record management is in place. I take that responsibility very seriously as the minister and I'll continue to work at implementing that strategy to the best of my capabilities.

Thank you.

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

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

Question to the Premier. You don't have to tell us who, but can you tell this House: Do you know whose emails were deleted?

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** Mr. Speaker, the minister responsible for public archives and records has indicated on a number of days now that this matter would be looked into, taken under advisement, and bring this back to the House.

The question is: Do I know? There's a minister responsible who has said he would take that under advisement and bring it back. I take the minister at his word, and I, like other members of the House, look forward to that answer.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

The Premier of Prince Edward Island is making a mockery of this House. He's making a mockery of this House by not answering the simplest of question. The question I asked was whether or not he knew. I didn't ask him to tell the House, I didn't ask for a song-and-dance, I didn't ask

for him to tell me the education minister was going to bring it back on some phantom date. I asked him if he knew who it was.

Mr. Premier, will you stop making a mockery of this House today and answer a simple question: Do you know whose email accounts were deleted?

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** Mr. Speaker, I'd have to say the member opposite makes a mockery of Question Period when he's gotten an answer on numerous occasions that the minister will bring back the answer.

The minister will bring back an answer that I expect will be very complicated. And no, I don't know the answer to the question.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[End of Question Period]