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

FOR

TUESDAY, 6 DECEMBER 2016



Responses to Questions Taken As Notice

Question by Members

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

**Power outage crisis cheques**

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

Last week we talked about EMO legislation and your government's response to the extended power outages in rural PEI. Many have been critical of the Premier's tone deaf response.

Question to the Premier: Why did you give cheques to the community centres on Friday and not to Islanders who lost food and other essentials?

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** Mr. Speaker, we chose to address these issues at the level of the community through the organizations or the communities that had warming centres, who know directly where the greatest needs are.

Each of those communities or organizations that had warming centres received a check for \$5,000. I can tell you they seemed to think it was a very generous move on the part of the province, and I'm very confident that those organizations and communities will know where the greatest needs are.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Myers:** I certainly heard they were laughing at you.

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

**Leader of the Opposition:** Mr. Speaker, I heard the opposite.

I don't think the Premier wanted to directly face Islanders, and clearly the criticism bothered the Premier. I know I have heard it, and the latest CRA poll shows that Islanders are losing faith.

Question to the Premier: Do you think that you running the roads and trolling for photo ops are what the people of eastern PEI needed at the time instead of direct help from you?

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** Mr. Speaker, the people I saw, and I spoke with them directly on Friday afternoon, believed that \$45,000 throughout those communities is exactly an appropriate response on the part of government and allowing the real initiative to be on the part of those organizations and communities that know where the needs are.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**Leader of the Opposition:** Mr. Speaker, it's right, it's almost about \$2 per person.

Islanders were looking for real help, not political damage control. The latest CRA poll shows that your leadership is out of touch with Islanders' needs.

Question to the Premier: Why would you not directly help rural Island families during this crisis they faced and only play Santa Claus with the community leaders that now have to pick and choose who gets the money?

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** Mr. Speaker, I have great confidence in the community leaders and the organizations to whom this financial support was made available, and I'm very confident that they know where the greatest needs are.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Myers:** You sure don't, 18% slide in the polls says (Indistinct).

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

**Leader of the Opposition:** Mr. Speaker, no one objects to helping the community

warming centres, but those cheques you delivered will not replace the thousands of dollars of food that was lost.

Question to the Premier: Why would you not work directly with Islanders in the affected areas that are in need of financial assistance from this crisis?

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** Mr. Speaker, we are working directly with Islanders through the community organizations and through the communities.

I'm very confident that those people and their leadership, and all of the ways in which they know their own communities, is exactly the way to get the help where it's needed the fastest.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Leader of the Opposition:** Let's face facts. You passed them a cheque and you ran out the door.

Many Islanders also had to shoulder the extra costs of running to the gas station to fill up jerry cans to run generators.

Question to the Premier: Does the Premier have any concept of what no power means for Islanders and what hardship they had to deal with as this holiday season approaches?

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I absolutely appreciate what Prince Edward Islanders went through in many communities throughout the eastern part of the province. When you go through you can also see the trees that are down and what the power crews dealt with. We stopped and spoke with them along the way.

**Mr. Myers:** You should have seen it right after afterwards.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** Mr. Speaker, we responded –

**Mr. Myers:** You waited until all the snow melted before you took your chariot out.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** – we responded within five days of the event. Those resources are now in the hands of the people who need it most.

**Mr. Myers:** It's like the Hunger Games. The president finally came.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** I can tell you from being through those communities on Friday the help was greatly appreciated.

**Mr. LaVie:** Santa Claus is always on time.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### **Emergency measures legislation update**

**Leader of the Opposition:** Mr. Speaker, the act governing EMO has not been updated since 2000.

Since then, Islanders have had to face seven disasters and seven relief claims have been filed with Ottawa.

Question to the Premier: If we are filing disaster relief claims almost every second year, shouldn't we look at updating our emergency measures legislation?

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** Mr. Speaker, as I indicated on Friday, that is indeed part of the work that is being undertaken as part of the climate change strategy that is being actively worked on, and for precisely the reason that the Leader of the Opposition indicates, and the question that was raised on Friday as well.

But let me say that I was in communities on Friday where those communities have generators and having warming centres and have gathering places – Murray Harbour being a good example – that was put in place directly because of the collaboration of the emergency measures officials in the province, and that's been underway for a number of years now.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

Most of these claims were related to damage from extreme weather caused by climate change: intense storms, heavy rain falls, hurricanes, and storm surges. This greatly concerns me.

Question to the Premier: Does our current emergency measures legislation give communities the tools and the ability to better prepare against these changes we are seeing in climate change?

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** Mr. Speaker, the number of communities throughout the province – and I know from my own time on our own municipal council, it was one of the initiatives that was taken through a planning exercise, together with emergency measures, to have gathering places for events, whether they might be caused by weather or through other situations, where the community needs to come to a common place.

That work has been underway. I think that's really the key to where the communities are in terms of how they are looking at the situations. Of course, there are communities that are looking at where they might have additional resources – for example, such as generators – and we're actively prepared to work with those communities.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

We see the effects in coastal communities all over the Island. Just this week the folks running the West Point lighthouse were sounding the alarm about recent shoreline damage they are experiencing.

Question to the Premier: Will the Premier answer our call for a review and update of

our emergency measures legislation immediately?

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** Mr. Speaker, thank you.

As I've indicated, and as the questions imply, this issue is of the moment because of climate change and adaptation and the issues around – it might be coastal erosion, it might be other weather events. The one that we had in West Prince, notably in West Prince – we had it throughout the province – in December of 2014 reminds us that we're seeing more extreme weather.

That's exactly the work that is underway through the climate change strategy and that will be presented in very short order, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

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

### **Community emergency plan funding**

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

I'm starting to get the opinion, or feeling, that our party is the only party that in this House, that's feeling the pressures of climate change.

When EMO spoke to the standing committee one issue was brought up and discussed, it was having communities develop and update their emergency measures plan.

Question to the Premier: Will you commit to ensuring communities can access funding for help to help them ensure their emergency plans are ready for the future?

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** Mr. Speaker, as the Leader of the Opposition indicates this planning is actively underway with the communities on the question of resources.

It's always a matter of where those resources can be found. I think that you'll

find as you go in the communities throughout the province that there's a great sense of enterprise and community leadership. That's, in fact, the way these things get done, and in fact, how the response took place last week to the events in eastern Prince Edward Island. It was at the community and in the organizations and we should be proud of it –

**Mr. Myers:** You did nothing. You waited until Friday.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** – and we should be proud of it and we supported them, and they appreciated it.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

### **Municipality number**

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

The new *Municipal Government Act* is aimed at creating fewer, but much larger, municipalities in the province and reducing the amount of unincorporated land.

This is a question to Minister of Communities, Land and Environment. There are approximately 73 municipalities now. What is your targeted number of municipalities for PEI?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Communities, Land and Environment.

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

Of course, as the hon. member is aware, we do currently have a new *Municipal Government Act* on the floor of the House in committee with a lot of broad discussion going on.

The purpose of this act is to modernize the *Municipal Government Act* that we work under now. It's to make communities and municipalities stronger, to broaden their authority, and to work in a better way for the constituents and the people that they represent, Mr. Speaker, as we move forward.

Thank you very much.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

### **Initiating of a new municipality**

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

Of course, the minister did not answer the question about the number of municipalities that the target is.

The new *Municipal Government Act* gives the minister the power to initiate the proposal for a new municipality.

Question for the minister: Can you give an example of a scenario that would prompt you to make such a proposal?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Communities, Land and Environment.

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

Most pieces of legislation contain parts that give the minister a certain authority to do various things.

My authority under the *Municipal Government Act* does come into play at particular times. For instance, if a council for some reason could not come to an agreement on a particular item that they're dealing with at their council table and decide to walk away as a council, I, as a minister, have to come up to appoint someone to take over that community. Preferably somebody from inside that community that can keep the business of the day going. That would be one case in particular. Another one may be that there's a possibility that all members of council may be in conflict for a particular item that they're dealing with, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

### **Dissolution of a municipality**

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

Again, that really didn't answer the question about why you would initiate a proposal for a new municipality.

This new legislation also gives the minister the power to dissolve a municipality. This is

for the Minister of Communities, Land and Environment, a question: What scenario would prompt you to dissolve a municipality?

**Speaker:** The Minister of Communities, Land and Environment.

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

I've done my best to make it aware to all members of this Legislature that this new act (Indistinct) municipalities, it provides municipalities the ability to strengthen their authority, to broaden the work that they do now. It's about a bottom-up approach of building communities and that will continue.

Municipalities are already choosing to begin discussion to work together to share some of this new authority that they have and they'll continue to do that, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

### **Restructuring of a municipality**

**Mr. Trivers:** Mr. Speaker, the minister would also have the power under this new Legislation to restructure an existing municipality.

A question for the minister: Can you outline to this House why you would need that power?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Communities, Land and Environment.

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

I think it's important to note that when we were out doing our consultation meetings with municipalities all across Prince Edward Island and discussing what this new act would look like, it was extremely encouraging for me, as minister, to sit in the room and watch these municipal leaders from all across Prince Edward Island talking in the backseats about having meetings, having open discussion of maybe how their municipalities could look at coming together to either share service or look at a new boundary restructuring.

I think that's very encouraging that Islanders, right now, can see an opportunity

for building the communities in a positive way, for strengthening the work they're doing, and continuing on to make it a better place for their residents to live in, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

### **Removal of ministerial powers re: *Municipal Government Act***

**Mr. Trivers:** Mr. Speaker, supposedly we live in a democracy.

Islanders deserve to have their elected MLAs debate major changes to our Island life here on the floor of the Legislature. Changes like minister-driven proposals for new, restructured, and dissolved municipalities.

A question for the minister: Minister, will you support amendments to the *Municipal Government Act* removing ministerial powers to unilaterally create, restructure, and dissolve municipalities?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Communities, Land and Environment.

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

My duty as minister in regards to this new act is to ensure that it's well addressed, it meets the needs of communities all across Prince Edward Island. I have indicated on numerous occasions to municipality leaders all across PEI that I will assist with them with many different supports that are required, including templates and discussions if they're looking at restructuring or getting larger or getting bigger. Or, in fact, if they think they're not big enough to do the business.

We will talk with them, we will sit with them, and we will help them in any way, shape and form that gets them to the level where they need to be.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

### **Legislative debate on futures of municipalities**

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

A question to the Minister of Communities, Land and Environment: Minister, will you commit to bringing all future requests to create, restructure, or dissolve municipalities to the floor of this Legislature for debate?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Communities, Land and Environment.

**Mr. Mitchell:** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question.

It may be a little late, as the hon. member know, that there's currently a great discussion going on in the east end of Prince Edward Island with seven existing municipalities that are in a strong level of –

**Mr. Trivers:** It's never too later. Bring it to the floor.

**Mr. Mitchell:** – discussion and they –

**Mr. Myers:** (Indistinct) legislators (Indistinct).

**Mr. Mitchell:** – see positive results and are going out into, in that case, in an unincorporated community area and embracing those folks and having a couple of representatives come to their table.

It's a very positive set of meetings that are going on down there, and, Mr. Speaker, I can guarantee there will be a great outcome down there in the very near future.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

### Protection of unincorporated areas

**Mr. Trivers:** Mr. Speaker, when it comes to amalgamation and annexation there is nothing in this new legislation that dictates how unincorporated areas are to be engaged in that process.

Question for the minister: Minister, why aren't you protecting the right of people in unincorporated areas to have a voice in the amalgamation and annexation process?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Communities, Land and Environment.

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

I'd like to go back and reference the seven municipalities that are working very effectively as we speak. They have embraced these unincorporated communities in their area. They have representation on their board. What they have suggested to me as minister and to me as a member of government is: Government, stay out of this, let us carry on, let us have our meetings, let us have our discussions. And it's working really well.

I think that is a very important lesson for myself to learn as minister. Be at the table when I'm asked to be there, but give them the time to do their work that they need to do on their own.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

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

That's all fine and dandy for people who are agreeable to the process, but we need representation for the people that actually need to have a voice if they're opposed to the process.

This government has no job creation strategy, no rural development strategy, no rural road strategy, no infrastructure strategy, no land use strategy – in short no plan, Mr. Speaker.

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

### Municipal responsibilities

**Mr. Trivers:** Question for the minister: Minister, is it your intention to download all of your government's responsibilities onto municipalities?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Communities, Land and Environment.

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

What I'd like to do is reference comments quoted in all local media from the president of the federation of municipalities that it is time for this act to be modernized, to be brought up to today's standards. They're

working under the 1940s on some of the items that are involved in there.

The federation of municipalities are very excited to see this come to the floor. This is an important piece of work with several stakeholders including municipal leaders, committee of mayors, the federation of municipalities, and staff from CLE. It's a very modernized type of legislation and the president of the federation of municipalities is very glad to see it come.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

### Land use policies

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

The Thompson report on land and local governance was released in 2010 and made several important recommendations. This government has had the power to bring in land use policies for six years now and has made very little progress.

In the new legislation, one of the mandatory requirements for municipalities is an official plan and bylaws, so this is a question for the Minister of Communities, Land and Environment. Minister, your government already has the power to bring in land use policies to ensure our land is properly managed. Why are you shirking your responsibility?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Communities, Land and Environment.

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

Our department is responsible for land use planning in unincorporated areas of Prince Edward Island today. I want to assure every member of this House and Islanders that we do a good job of it, we do a great job of it, with the tools that we have in place.

But municipalities that exist today have a much better method of doing things. They have their own planners, they have their own vision for their communities, and I think there's an opportunity for other areas of the Island to look at this, and in some cases to share that with existing municipalities and then strengthen their own communities in a very positive way, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

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

### Promotion of cycling

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

Regular physical exercise such as actively commuting to work promotes a healthy community by enhancing overall health, mood, and longevity, by improving environmental wellness, and by developing a culture of social activity, all of which helps decrease government health costs, not to mention the contribution that such activities make to reducing our greenhouse gas emissions.

Question to the Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy: Could you describe what actions are being taken to promote cycling in Prince Edward Island?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy.

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

That's a great question. We have had the opportunity to meet on a regular basis with Cycling PEI and have great discussions with them in identifying routes. We have, to date, paved and widened shoulders in over 30 kilometres across Prince Edward Island, just recently down in Hunter River and up in Alberton, Seven Mile Road, from Pooles Corner to Dingwells Mills, and as part of our construction across the North River Causeway. Within our plans for the Trans-Canada Highway extension we have already added widened bike lanes at the present time.

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

### Separated bicycle lanes

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

One of the most hazardous lengths in the cycling network of Prince Edward Island is the Hillsborough Bridge which, without bike lanes, is dangerous not only to cyclists but to pedestrians and motorists also. Although

progress has been made by Charlottetown, Stratford, and Cornwall independently on expanding bike lanes and trails, an obvious weakness still lies in the connections between those.

A question to the minister: Will government rectify this danger and add separated bike lanes to the Hillsborough Bridge and the entire North River Causeway?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy.

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

As noted, more active opportunities are useful to be in place, and I again want to bring attention to the trails that we have developed within Bonshaw park. That's 25 kilometres which are accessible to biking as well.

**Mr. Aylward:** Bonshaw is a long way from Stratford.

**Ms. Biggar:** But in regard to the Hillsborough Bridge –

**Mr. Myers:** Not if you're driving the Premier's chariot.

**Ms. Biggar:** – the other thing that needs to be addressed there is the approaches to the Hillsborough Bridge. It would be useful to have some further discussion with the city of Charlottetown in regard to the approaches to the bridge.

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

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

Later today I'll be tabling a petition from Josh Underhay on improving cycle infrastructure on Prince Edward Island.

This government has put a high priority on spending –

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

**Societal benefits re: cycling and Cornwall bypass**

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** As if on cue. This government has put a higher priority on

spending \$65 million on the Cornwall bypass than it has spending a small amount on cycling infrastructure. This is a curious decision given the many societal benefits that active transportation create, notably for health, transportation, tourism, and of course, our environment.

Can the minister explain how societal benefits factor into the decision-making process and somehow make the Cornwall bypass a higher priority than active transportation?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy.

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

Actually, the share of the provincial government with the Trans-Canada Highway extension is approximately \$35 million, not \$65 million.

But as part of that project, that actually increases safe passage for those who are biking. It takes a large portion of traffic away from the Cornwall area, but in addition to that we are again concentrating on installing bike lanes as part of that new Trans-Canada Highway extension which will take travellers right across North River bridge into the city.

We will continue to work with the city of Charlottetown on addressing the concerns and the approaches on the Hillsborough Bridge. We had a great conversation with Mr. Underhay just recently, and we'll continue to meet with Cycling PEI and thank them for their advice.

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

**Police review update**

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

My question is to the Premier. In the spring the Department of Justice and Public Safety announced a long-overdue police review involving community consultation that would be complemented by input from the provincial government, elected officials, police leaders, and operational personnel. The consultation was to focus on community safety needs and policing services.

Would the Premier provide the House with information on what stage this report is at?

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** Mr. Speaker, thank you for the question to the member.

The policing review started in the early spring. As the hon. member noted, it's been forty years since we've had a review of policing in the province.

We engaged the well-reputed consulting firm of Perivale and Taylor. They've been in the province – were here very shortly after the mandate, for example, of the federation of municipalities. They met with over 150 key stakeholders and policing partners. That work led to a preliminary report in July. There were some further questions raised, and they were asked to conduct some further work, and it's expected that that will be completed shortly.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Dumville:** To the Premier: Premier, when would this report be released to the public?

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** Mr. Speaker, it'd be my hope to be in a position to present that work through a ministerial statement to the House in the coming weeks, and to share it with the key stakeholders and municipal partners, and to then proceed to implement that work once it has been shared first with the Assembly.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Summerside-Wilmot.

### Repatriation of former Islanders

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

My question is for the Minister of Workforce and Advanced Learning. Repatriation of former Islanders is an

important component of growing our population and economy.

Minister, could you inform the House as to the efforts your department has undertaken to repatriate former Islanders?

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

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

As everyone in this House knows, the repatriation and retention of Islanders is a major component of the population strategy. The department is working (Indistinct) universities and colleges and seeing where the graduates are located through Canada. But we're also attending events in Calgary. I was at one about a month ago where former Islanders have a dinner each year to get together and talk about – plus they raise money to send people to the University of Prince Edward Island.

There's a lot of smart Islanders out there across this great country and across North America and we are working on bringing as many back as possible because they have lot of talents, they have a lot of investment to bring to Prince Edward Island. We're working extremely hard in identifying them, emailing them, writing them, and inviting them back.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Summerside-Wilmot, your first supplementary question.

**Mr. Palmer:** It is likely that the repatriation of Islanders is more likely to be successful if it is done in concert with business recruitment. Does your department have any cooperation agreements with Island businesses aimed at the repatriation of former Islanders?

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

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

That's a great question. We are working with our business community. We're working with EDT. As we know, Islanders are growing older, the baby boom is aging

out, and there's a lot of Islanders here that own good prosperous businesses, and they want to transition into new owners. We are working in that area to identify businesses that want to pass them on, not to their family in most cases, but to other Islanders. We're working through the Connectors Program and programs like that to ensure that Islanders have the first opportunities to come back to Prince Edward Island and take over a lot of these successful businesses.

One of them I may mention is Allan machinery. We visited out there. It's a very successful story. We also were at one this morning.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### **Billing of government (further)**

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

On Friday the Premier and I spoke about emails relating to the government's egaming scandal. The Premier accused me of sifting through the entrails of a vexatious lawsuit.

Question to the Premier: Are you saying that the emails that I talked about Friday are fake?

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** No, Mr. Speaker, I'm not.

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

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

Are you saying that the information that I talked about Friday is false?

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** No, Mr. Speaker, I'm not.

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

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

Question to the Premier: Are you saying that these people weren't working for the government or on government business in these emails?

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** Mr. Speaker, what I am saying and what we've said in the course of last week, and what we came to with the presentation of the multi-year strategy for official records or government records and the approach to emails, is that we are dealing here with thousands of public servants whose email accounts have been removed upon the completion of their government work and that is in the course of good government, proper business practice.

That's where we are as a government is endeavouring to produce good government and to approach emails and other records on a proper basis.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Myers:** On Friday we talked about the emails that could constitute fraud if the Attorney General would actually do something with them. He confirms today that the emails weren't fake, he confirms today that the information was not false, and he confirms today that the people who were in the emails were working for government. I think he's got another step to take.

#### **Billing of government and IT contract**

In 2012, in the Auditor General report, she talked about contract management in the tourism department, and one was an IT contract that was \$50,000. The work was invoiced on the same day that the contract was signed, on the same day that the cheque was actually cut.

Question to the Premier: Would this be the same contract that was talked about in those emails that I brought to the House on Friday?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Finance.

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

The member, what he's referring to is the Auditor General's report that we all received this spring. We're going through the Auditor General's report very methodically. The Auditor General pointed out areas where improvements could be made, where policies could be changed, where legislation could be changed so that there would be clear set rules when it comes to records.

We've gone through that, and the majority of the recommendations have been met, and we'll continue to work through that, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

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

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

The Auditor General's report I was talking about was 2012. You talked about contract management in 2012. It's not about the current one. Nobody's working on anything, you've completely ignored it, and you've spent this whole session of the Legislature trying to run and hide from all this stuff, so much so that a fifth of the total voters of Prince Edward Island today told you exactly what they thought.

Question to the Premier: Can you confirm that the contract flagged in section 4.31 of the 2012 auditor's report was the contract that funneled payments through the government to Simplex through a local third party contractor of government?

**Mr. Trivers:** Stop covering it up. Stop covering it up.

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Finance.

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

Whether it's the Auditor General's report of 2012 or whether it's the report that she just came out with, the Auditor General did make a recommendation with respect to policy on contract and Treasury Board – I think what she said that Treasury Board take action to enforce compliance with its policies because the policy is there.

In compliance with the Auditor General's recommendation on that, the Treasury Board

is currently monitoring each and every one of its submissions that it receives, and that recommendation has been met and completed.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

It seems funny that the Minister of Finance is the one answering this question, but it was his deputy that we're talking about when he was the minister of innovation. It was his deputy from then that he's sticking up for. Boy, did she ever hang you out to dry, you and many others that came before you.

### Simplex travel

Question to the Premier: Did government staff ever travel to Europe to meet with Simplex over their loyalty card program?

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** I'll have to take that under advisement, Mr. Speaker.

I wasn't Premier at the time, but we'll see if we can get an answer.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

It's Tuesday. I feel a little bad for you, you got hammered in the polls this morning, I'll answer it for you. Yes, you did.

In 2011 the staff of the tourism department travelled to London, England to meet with Simplex about the loyalty card program. The tourism department official who travelled to London to meet with Simplex was the same official whose email I was talking about who coordinated this payment through another vendor.

Question to the Premier: Does it trouble you that the tentacles of the egaming scandal and cover-up keep extending deeper and deeper into your out-of-touch government?

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** Mr. Speaker, our government received the Auditor General's report on the 5<sup>th</sup> of October.

We asked the Auditor General to look into this nine days after coming to government. We have acted on all 15 recommendations. Our commitment is to take the advice of the Auditor General and to put this province on a strong footing going forward with the best possible government that Islanders and Island taxpayers deserve.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

Islanders have said to this government exactly how upset they are with them. One-fifth of the total voters told you today that they wouldn't vote for you in the next election. One-fifth of a drop from what you actually had, so 18% of your total vote.

For nine straight days we've asked. We've gotten no answer at all. You're elbows deep into this cover-up now.

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

Question to the Premier: Whose emails were deleted?

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** Mr. Speaker, I think it's very clear to Islanders what the choices are that are being presented by the questions from the other side and the responses from this side, and that is that the opposition is going backwards and we're going forwards.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

Question again to the Premier. You seem to like to play games with this. Over here, this

is the start of the fourth week of the Legislative Assembly and we've asked questions about numerous things. We've gotten next to no answers. A handful of ministers will sometimes try to answer questions. You make no attempt at all. You like to play games. You like to pretend like you're above the rest of here. You like to pretend that you're better than Robert Ghiz.

Robert Ghiz answered questions in here. You're not even close to what Robert Ghiz was in here.

Question again: Whose emails were deleted?

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

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

It has been shared on the floor of this Assembly numerous times that the Auditor General made some very clear directions. As the minister responsible for records information management all across government I take that responsibility very seriously.

Last week my staff presented to the Assembly, and to Islanders, a three-year plan to modernize records information management. I'm very pleased to say that currently there are assessments being done on government departments to look at policies and procedures (Indistinct) bringing in legislation in the spring for stronger compliance and higher levels of accountability.

We're hiring full-time staff to support government departments to make sure that records information management is done, and that we continue to modernize records information management.

All government staff will be required to take records management training to ensure compliance. Sufficient capacity will be required to provide safe and secure storage to maintain government records.

**Mr. Aylward:** Imagine what would happen if you just followed the rules.

**Mr. Currie:** Mr. Speaker –

**Mr. Aylward:** Follow the rules, that's all we ask.

[End of Question Period]

**Mr. Currie:** – we're very pleased at the response, and the timely response, and the seriousness that we're taking the work of the Auditor General.

Thank you.

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

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

I know how frustrated Islanders are with this government. The poll today should be a great indicator to you that you should be answering this question a little more forthwith. You should be taking this seriously. You shouldn't be getting up reading from a book. Shameful, shameful. You should be embarrassed –

**Mr. Aylward:** What about openness and transparency?

**Mr. Myers:** – you should be embarrassed for hiding this.

Question to the Premier: Why is it more important for you to protect Robert Ghiz and Wes Sheridan than it is to be straight with Islanders?

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** Mr. Speaker, as we've said at numerous junctures in the course of the questions that have been answered, always seeming to look for somebody to throw under the bus, or somebody to oust from their job, or somebody to condemn.

**Mr. Trivers:** (Indistinct) we just want some answers.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** We have taken the report of the Auditor General and the advice of the Auditor General, together with our commitment to openness and transparency and good government, and, Mr. Speaker, that's exactly what we're doing together with the support and the leadership and the initiative of a professional public service.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.