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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF
PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS AND ORAL QUESTION PERIOD
(PRELIMINARY PROCEEDINGS)

FOR

TUESDAY, 25 APRIL 2017

Responses to Questions Taken as Notice

Questions by Members

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Power cable project

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

The power cable project across the Northumberland Strait was launched in October and was supposed to be finished before the winter ice hit.

Question to the minister of energy: Just exactly how far behind schedule is this project?

An Hon. Member: Great question.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Biggar: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The cable project is an integral piece of infrastructure for Prince Edward Island, second to none to the Confederation Bridge. It's a \$142 million project, which is going to support and secure the electricity and economic viability for Prince Edward Island.

There are two 180 megawatt cables being laid. They started in last October. The ice came in early. There were some difficulties. We have gone back out into the strait and the work is on schedule.

This week it's continuing. The weather is cooperating. We are about 40%, from what I understand from Maritime Electric, of completing that work. The cables are connected end-to-end. Once that cable is finally laid in the middle they'll be turned on.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. R. Brown: Impressive.

Ms. Casey: Great project.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: It's unbelievable, Mr. Speaker, how this minister can blame the ice.

During the fall sitting, minister, during the fall sitting you told the House –

Mr. LaVie: I ain't (Indistinct)

Leader of the Opposition: – the project would be completed by December –

Ms. Casey: Can't fight Mother Nature.

Leader of the Opposition: – it's now almost May and the best case scenario is that the install work will not be done until the end of May.

Question to the energy minister: When will power be flowing through these cables?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Biggar: Mr. Speaker, thank you.

As I noted, the cables, the connections end-to-end was completed last fall. The ship, the *Isaac Newton* over-wintered in Halifax Harbour. It returned back to our harbours in late to mid-April and has been dispatched to Borden, and has been continuing that work ever since.

That project is well on its way to completion.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Cost of Maritime Electric cable project

Leader of the Opposition: Mr. Speaker, in Hansard, you told: December.

Question to the minister –

Ms. Casey: Mother Nature (Indistinct)

Leader of the Opposition: – we've had months of over-delays on this and cost overruns. Islanders have been feeding the meter for this multi-million dollar cable-ship to sit in Halifax all winter, and now come back to finally finish the job.

Question to the minister: You have the information, how many millions has your mismanaged project cost?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Biggar: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As I noted, it is a \$142 million project, which is being managed by Maritime Electric and laid by LS Cable company. All the responsibility for laying that cable and any cost associated with any overruns are the responsibility of that company, not Islanders. It will not be on the backs of Islanders.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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

When projects like this generate cost overruns someone ends up on the hook. Maritime Electric ratepayers and Island taxpayers, who are the same people.

This is your – you're the minister that mismanaged this project.

Question to the minister: Why do you refuse to tell Islanders the story, yet behind another mismanaged project by your government?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Biggar: Mr. Speaker, as I noted, Maritime Electric are the managing project manager for this. When the project is completed Islanders will take ownership of those cables.

Any cost overruns, and I want to make this very clear so that that message is out there: Any cost overruns are the responsibility of the cable company that are laying those cables.

Mr. R. Brown: Great.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

Exclusive zone on scallop area

Mr. LaVie: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This project was supposed to be done by Christmas. Then, the promise was by spring. Now, we see it running into the summer scallop season.

Question to the Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries: When did you approve the fishing exclusion zone for this project area?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

An Hon. Member: Oh!

Ms. Biggar: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Trivers: I thought he wanted questions.

Ms. Biggar: I think if we check our calendar we know when summer starts. This will be done –

Mr. Myers: (Indistinct) say that?

Ms. Biggar: – before summer starts. It will be done in the spring.

DFO put an exclusion zone on, which represents 7% –

Mr. LaVie: Who requested that?

Ms. Biggar: – of the fishing zone –

Mr. LaVie: Who requested that? Somebody has got to request it.

Ms. Biggar: – DFO put the moratorium on that area of 500 metres on each side of the

cable. DFO are the ones who are responsible in the water –

Mr. LaVie: Someone has got to request it.

Ms. Biggar: – and to make sure that the work can be done safely.

It is progressing. We're about 40% done now of the final installation. By the end of May we anticipate we will turn the power on in those cables.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

Mr. LaVie: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's funny, this minister knows when the summer season is, but you don't know when your scallop seasons are over there –

Mr. Myers: It's true.

Ms. Biggar: You don't know that.

Mr. Myers: It's true.

Mr. LaVie: You don't know your scallop season.

There were promises made by this tired Liberal government that the project would not run into the scallop season. Another broken promise.

Mr. Myers: Yeah.

Mr. LaVie: Now, this government, also, put in a fishery exclusion zone around the project. Somebody has got to put in the request from DFO. Somebody has to put the request in.

The exclusion zone was presented to local fishers last night in O'Leary.

Fisheries minister and meeting

Question to the Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries: Minister, why did you not attend this meeting?

Mr. Myers: Good question.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

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

Thanks for the question, finally. It has taken a year to get one –

An Hon. Member: Two a year.

Mr. McIsaac: – but that's great, it's a really good question. SFA 22 –

Mr. Myers: (Indistinct) when she answered for you.

Mr. McIsaac: SFA 22 actually is between May 1st and June 3rd, as you well know.

It is unfortunate that the area around the cable is not going to be fished in for this area for this time. Maritime Electric informed DFO that they would need some time. DFO has then put in the exclusion zone, 500 metres on either side of that. That's the way it will be.

They'll finish up very soon, hopefully. They also have put a fund aside if it needs to offset loss of catch of whatever that may be.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

Mr. LaVie: Mr. Speaker, very soon don't put scallops aboard a boat. Very soon don't put supper on the table.

Mr. Myers: No, it doesn't.

Scallop fishing in smaller areas

Mr. LaVie: Very soon don't pay the electrical bill.

These fishers need to know and you fellows put in exclusion zones.

Do you have any concerns about the health of the fishery if more fishers are forced to fish in smaller areas?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

An Hon. Member: Minister of agriculture (Indistinct)

Ms. Biggar: Mr. Speaker, this project is for the benefit of all Islanders to secure our energy going into the future to be able to look at other sources of energy that Islanders can benefit from.

In terms of the project that is ongoing at the moment there is a contingency fund that has been put in place by LS Cable. It's a \$500,000 fund –

An Hon. Member: Oh!

Ms. Biggar: – it's a 7% exclusion zone, 500 metres around the project area to ensure safety –

Mr. LaVie: What's the science on this?

Ms. Biggar: – of fishers' safety –

Mr. LaVie: Science on this (Indistinct)

Ms. Biggar: – of the workers that are laying that cable on behalf of all Islanders, who will benefit, not today, not tomorrow, but for the next 50 years for secure energy to this Island.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

Mr. LaVie: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries was looking for questions. I asked him three questions so far, and he answered one of them so –

Mr. Myers: One out of three –

Mr. LaVie: – far –

Mr. Myers: – ain't bad.

Mr. LaVie: Mr. Speaker –

Mr. Myers: – thirty-three percent.

Mr. LaVie: – this is the same minister –

Mr. Myers: He's more popular than the Premier.

Mr. LaVie: – this is the same minister that was on the missing list for fishermen when they were going through the carapace size. Or the mackerel shut-down. This is the minister that was absent during the halibut quotas, or Transport Canada –

Mr. Myers: Oh! Shame!

Mr. LaVie: – the minister that could not be found.

Exclusion zone permanent

Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries: Do you plan to make this exclusion zone permanent?

Mr. Myers: Good question.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

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

I don't make the exclusion zone, anyway –

Mr. LaVie: You put a –

Mr. McIsaac: – DFO does that –

Mr. LaVie: – request in.

Mr. McIsaac: No, we work with the fishers, hon. member –

Mr. LaVie: (Indistinct)

Mr. McIsaac: – and it is unfortunate that the project wasn't finished on time –

Mr. LaVie: Had to get the critic down from Ottawa to meet with the fishermen.

Mr. McIsaac: We have been working with the fishermen. We have been working with Maritime Electric. We're working with DFO on this.

We were hoping the project would be finished on time. It wasn't finished on time.

So, we have talked to the – Maritime Electric has asked DFO, as was explained, to put in an exclusion zone for a temporary period –

Mr. LaVie: (Indistinct)

Mr. McIsaac: – for a temporary period, until the project is finished, and there are dollars set aside –

Mr. LaVie: He just said Maritime Electric put the request in.

Mr. McIsaac: – as a fund.

Anyway, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

Number of child psychiatrists on PEI

Mr. Aylward: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

No segment of society is immune from challenges of mental health, not even children or youth.

A question to the minister of health: Currently, how many child psychiatrists do we have working in our health care system here on PEI?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Henderson: Mr. Speaker, we certainly, on this side of the House, understand the toll that mental health illnesses can have on Island families, especially when it deals with our younger population, and we're always working at trying to alleviate any particular health care issues.

Currently, we do not have a child psychiatrist on the Island, but we are actively recruiting and trying to attract one here.

But, we do have many other services that are for children with psychiatry needs, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

Child psychiatrist treatment via Skype

Mr. Aylward: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We know, in many specialized health fields, the demands for services are heavy, forcing less-than-ideal situations.

A question to the minister: Currently, how many off-Island child psychiatrists are providing treatment to Island children and youth via Skype?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Henderson: Mr. Speaker, we're successful in developing a new telepsychiatry program here in the province that was created in February, 2017, with the help of a doctor in Ontario. I believe the doctor's name is Dr. Kiesselbach, and we're certainly doing everything we can to alleviate the situation in trying to recruit and retain more child psychiatrists.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

Mr. Aylward: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

A question again to the health minister: Minister, would delivering child psychiatry services by Skype from another province normally be considered a best practice?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Henderson: Mr. Speaker, you know, obviously there's situations occur when it comes to recruiting and retaining physicians, for whatever the specialty would be. Although I would not say that it is the ideal situation, it is at least providing the services and needs that children require when it

comes to psychiatric services in this province.

But, we have many more services that are also out there, and I (Indistinct) mention, one would be the Insight Program, programs with our behavioral support team, with Dr. Rhonda Matters, and there's a number of other programs that are out there too, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

Mr. Aylward: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Well, delivering child psychiatry services to Island children and youth through Skype would seem to be a stop-gap effort.

A question again to the minister of health: How did we get to the point where we're forced to use off-Island psychiatrists to do triage by Skype?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Henderson: Mr. Speaker, we're very fortunate in this province that we actually are in the process and have implemented a 10-year mental health and addiction strategy in this province, and that's going to encompass a basically – a new path that we'll be taking in trying to deliver services to both, mental health people who require it, as well as addictions in this province, and we'll continue to recruit.

We have a number of psychiatrists in this province, as well as psychologists and many other health care professionals, and in a collaborative approach, we'll do whatever we can to help any Islander that's in need of mental health services in this province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

Non-psychiatric professionals and treatment

Mr. Aylward: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The minister's correct; there are various other services here. There are other psychiatrists.

But, if the minister was to get out of his office and actually talk to some of these people that are trying to access care and treatment, they would quickly realize – or he would quickly realize – that the psychiatrists that are not trained in child psychiatry are actually refusing to see these children. So, along with child psychiatrists, there are many health care professionals who provide services in this area for Island youth and children.

Again, a question to the minister: How are non-psychiatric mental health professionals like psychologists utilized to help treat Island children and youth?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Henderson: That's a good question from the hon. member, Mr. Speaker.

Yes, we do have a lot of different services, and we are able to use a lot of different health care professionals when it comes to the delivery of issues of mental health.

One of the ones that I'm quite proud about is our behavioral support team, and that does work with treating individuals of an age 4-12, and we've worked already with 44 families in that, and I certainly commend the great work that Dr. Rhonda Matters is doing in that particular case.

We also have services that are provided – you know, telepsychiatric health services, too, and we have an arrangement with Dalhousie University where students are working with families on this Island, too, to help alleviate some of the different situations that are out there, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

Resource availability for inpatient treatment

Mr. Aylward: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The first hope when a child or youth presents with a mental health issue is that they can receive proper treatment through counseling and outpatient services. Unfortunately, there are cases where inpatient treatment is needed.

Again, a question to the minister: When Island children and youth require inpatient mental health treatment, what resources are available?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Henderson: Mr. Speaker, we have many different services that are available to people with mental health, especially when it deals with young individuals in this province.

And I think that the first stop is always usually the family physician, and then the referrals can be made from there.

But we also have many services that are walk-in oriented, and people can come and access services.

And then, once again, the special referrals are out there.

But, we certainly have a whole myriad of acute care and mental health services within our facilities across this province, and those professionals work hard in resolving those issues.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

Youth placed in adult psychiatric unit

Mr. Aylward: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

On Prince Edward Island, we don't have an inpatient unit dedicated to children and youth with mental health issues. Our regular pediatric wards are used, and in severe

cases, children and youth end up being placed in an adult psychiatric unit.

Again, a question to the minister of health: Is having Island children and youth placed in adult psychiatric unit an effective model of treatment?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Henderson: Mr. Speaker, once again, in this province we really try to focus on a collaborative model of care when it comes to the delivery, and we have a number of different health care professionals that deliver health care services, and those professionals – once a patient identifies a particular issue – they take the appropriate course of action, and they will put people in the appropriate locations for those services, whether that's in acute care services or intermingling with adults.

It's all up to a choice that our health care professionals would make in the delivery of mental health services, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

Addressing re: overcrowding of youth

Mr. Aylward: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Recently, I talked to a desperate parent whose child spent 13 days in the psychiatric ER ward at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital because of overcrowding in the youth wing at Unit 9.

Again to the minister: Do you think that the \$2 million a year that you've negotiated for mental health programs over the next 10 years will be able to address the overcrowding problem in our youth mental health situation here on PEI?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Henderson: Mr. Speaker, we were very fortunate to work out a negotiated settlement

with the federal government when regarding to health accord, and we do have resources that will be added towards mental health services in this province, as well as home care and a number of other services.

And, with those services, we will be making the appropriate investments where we see need that is most urgent, and that is going to be working with young people in the school system, and we'll be making announcements in the near future regarding the details around that situation.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

Mr. Aylward: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The youth I referred to in my last question finally made it to the Unit 9 youth wing, but after a week, he was discharged and started the Strength Program in Summerside.

He then became suicidal. The protocol was to call his mother to come and get her son because of health – self-harm concerns.

This started the cycle all over again. He was taken to the emergency room at the QEH, but no beds, once again, were available.

So, a question to the minister: You talk about all the resources and all the supports that are out there; do you feel that the proper protocol in a case like this would be to call the mother and ask her to come and get her child?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Henderson: Mr. Speaker, once again, as a minister responsible for health care in this province, we have – once again – a collaborative model of care. There's many professionals out there, whether that's with the Canadian Mental Association – whether that's our doctors, psychiatrists, psychologists – the list goes on.

We are always trying to improve the continuum of care that we provide Islanders when it comes to mental health services and

these are very complex and challenging issues and I'm sure that Island families that experience these situations – my empathy is there for them. We will continue to work on trying to make the best investments that we can to alleviate those issues, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Child Protection Act review

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

Twice last week the Premier cited the *Child Protection Act* review to justify his refusal to support an independent child advocate. And yet, in a *Guardian* article published earlier this year, it was noted that – and I quote: Although the committee did hear feedback from Islanders calling for a child advocate for Prince Edward Island, review chair, Patsy MacLean says the committee felt it was better to focus on the services Islanders want as part of that request.

A question to the hon. Minister of Family and Human Services: Did the chair of the committee provide you with their rationale for ignoring the feedback of Islanders?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Mundy: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The *Child Protection Act* review was a wonderful process and it engaged Islanders from tip to tip. We had over 34 consultations and we spoke to nearly 400 Islanders, Mr. Speaker, who all said the same thing: that caring for children and protecting them from parental harm is everyone's responsibility. It's the responsibility of government, communities, as well as families.

The recommendation surrounding a child advocate – the committee felt that it was a very simplistic view. There were 66 recommendations that came out of that review and to say that a child advocate was going to solve them all, that would be a very, very simplistic view.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Mr. LaVie: (Indistinct)

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

I realize that the review of the act is mandated in legislation and that the composition of the advisory committee is set out in their regulations, however, I have to question the independence of a committee where nine of the 15 members are employees of government.

Minister: Are you at all concerned about a decision to reject third-party oversight when it comes to a committee, the majority of whose members would be subject to that oversight?

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

Ms. Mundy: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

When the committee spoke with Islanders, again – tip to tip – almost 400 of them, and anytime a child advocate was brought up, they were asked: What does a child advocate do? What is the objective of the child advocate? Or, what is it that you feel a child advocate would do? They said there was five ways that a child advocate would intervene.

They felt that there would have to be policy oversight, systems oversight, authority to conduct third party reviews – and you will see when my budget is on the table that there is money in the budget for third-party independent reviews, public awareness about the rights of a child, as well as legal representation.

The hon. Minister of Justice has gotten up and he has spoken about the legal representation for the children, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Mandate of a child advocate

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

As we know, the mandate of the child advocate varies from one province to another. I feel that the advisory committee is less independent from government than the many other organizations who have recommended that Prince Edward Island needs a child advocate, such as: The coroner's jury, the Advisory Council on the Status of Women, and the Canadian Council of Child & Youth Advocates.

Could the minister explain why she is so determined to favour the advice of her committee and ignore all the independent recommendations?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. LaVie: This government doesn't listen.

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

Ms. Mundy: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

To say that we've ignored advice, I think, is very, very contrary to what we have done and what we have said we were going to do. We said that we were going to focus our commitment right now where we needed it most, and that is on the frontlines. That is catching families and catching children before they fall into the system. We have implemented – the hon. Minister of Justice was on the floor implementing bills and legislative changes that we will implement that are going to prevent it. So, our focus right now is in the preventative nature.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Diagnostic tests and referral trial

Mr. Perry: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

My question is to the hon. Minister of Health and Wellness: A year ago, you had a presentation of a collaborative practice trial at the Tignish Co-operative Health Centre. Dr. Fox, the nursing staff and Brian Hiscock

– who’s a physiotherapist – have developed an orthopedic assessment service for clients that provides specific diagnoses and same-day intervention, which prevents additional diagnostic tests and referrals to other health specialists. The results of this 18-month trial were very positive.

My question, Minister, is: Has there been any progress on this from your department?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Henderson: Thanks, Mr. Speaker.

I have to admit, it’s been a year, I guess, since I had the opportunity to attend the annual meeting of the Tignish Co-operative Health Centre and I heard they had a meeting last night, actually. It is a great example of a collaborative model of care – where you do have many different health care professionals working together. Not only do you have a medical doctor – one of our doctors is based out of there, as well as a physiotherapist. We have other public health services that are offered there.

Our department has provided resources to that facility in the past and we certainly see great value in the work they’re doing and we’re continuing to monitor the work that Mr. Hiscock and the collaborative model that Dr. Fox put in place there.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Perry: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Minister, a chart audit revealed that over 60% of the patients seen and given self-managed interventions didn’t require further referrals, diagnostics or treatments. This design represents potential for huge cost savings with our hospital and specialist services that are already strained.

Minister: Will you endorse this collaborative practice design?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Henderson: Mr. Speaker, well I said, once again we are monitoring the situation there, but I will say that the model that the Tignish Co-operative Health Centre puts in place is something that’s very worthy of endorsement and we will be continuing to work on that. I am hopeful that, as we move forward, that Health PEI will take a hard look at the services that are provided there and we’ll look at trying to provide more stable funding as we do move forward on that.

I think it’s important that we are focusing our resources on, like the hon. member said, where we can see good health care outcomes and where we can see those cost savings as we move through the system in health care delivery.

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

Mr. Perry: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Minister, yes I did attend the AGM last night also, and the board was very thankful and appreciative of all what our government has done to support them in the past and in the present.

Will your department commit to supporting the Tignish Co-operative Health Centre into the future?

Mr. LaVie: Oh yeah.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Henderson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I think the key component in this is what the Tignish Co-operative Health Centre is doing. It is collaborative in its approach. It’s everything in the essence of what I stand for as a minister – where you have multi professionals working together in delivery of health care. I’m hopeful that, as we work forward together – whether it’s a doctor, whether it’s a nurse practitioner, whether it’s a physiotherapist, occupational therapist – that we can continue to deliver more of those services and I definitely will be doing what I can to instruct my department to see if we can come up with more long-term, stable arrangements with that particular location.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton.

Restoration of Province House

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

Mr. Speaker, my question is for the hon. Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy.

Minister: Province House national historic site and home of this Legislative Assembly is currently closed for extensive conservation work. I understand you recently received an update on how that work is progressing. Can you please share this information with this House?

Thank you.

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

Ms. Biggar: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Indeed our Province House is a site that's near and dear to Islanders and to our Legislature, and the work that is happening with it is of interest to all of us, and of course it has tremendous value as a national historic site due to the site of the Charlottetown Conference.

You have probably seen some work happening around there. Today you may have noticed, so the contractor for the phase 1 is on site has begun mobilizing this week and you'll see lots of activity happening around there in the coming weeks and months. I did receive an update and I'll be happy to table that later.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Restoration of Province House

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

Minister, as one of the finest parliamentary buildings in this commonwealth, Province House attracts many visitors. When will Province House reopen to the public, and is the restoration on schedule?

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

Mr. Myers: They're not in charge of it (Indistinct) project management has been handed off to Maritime Electric.

Mr. LaVie: (Indistinct)

Mr. Myers: (Indistinct) just read what Vessey told (Indistinct)

Ms. Biggar: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The project management is under Parks Canada. The estimated completion date is 20-20 which is – we're all anxious to have that completed. Parks Canada is working very closely with my department and the province, and we're all aware that we have lots of interest in the project and we're looking very forward to having that completed on schedule as much as possible.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton, your second supplementary question.

Budget for Province House restoration

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

Minister, the last we heard was that the expected cost of this project was approximately \$41 million. Can you advise this House as to whether the project is on budget?

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

Mr. LaVie: You'll say yes today.

Ms. Biggar: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

In fact, hon. members, the Legislature itself and the Speaker's Office works very closely in relationship with Parks Canada to ensure that things are being done to what we would

like to see completed for our work and I thank them, certainly, for the collaboration that we have together with them and Parks Canada.

I'm very happy that the federal government has committed \$140 – oops. That's the cable.

Mr. LaVie: (Indistinct)

Ms. Biggar: Although, the federal government has given us so much money it's hard to keep it straight, but the money for the Province House is \$41 million and I know that that money from the federal government, we're very thankful that has come in. Through Parks Canada, they are working within that envelope to set priorities for the work on Province House.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

ACOA investments in Mill River deal

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We know the province is putting more than \$7 million into this tired Liberal government's Mill River deal. Question to the tourism minister: How much money is ACOA putting into this project?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. MacDonald: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

That would be between ACOA and the new owners of the property.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Actually, it was part of the Sawler Report because it's a \$50 million project that's going on up there, but it seems rather strange that the minister doesn't know anything about it.

Question, again, to the minister: Did ACOA get cold feet after they saw you jump all over this low-ball offer?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. MacDonald: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's interesting that we've discussed this several times and tabled many documents and through estimates –

Ms. Biggar: (Indistinct)

Mr. Myers: (Indistinct)

Mr. MacDonald: – we continue to talk about the Mill River deal. Mill River is a flagship.

As economic development minister and tourism minister at the same time, it's a real opportunity for me to get up and talk about this deal because it is a good deal for West Prince and it's a good deal for the taxpayers of Prince Edward Island.

This government has got nothing to hide. In fact, we've got everything to be proud of; moving our industry forward and moving our communities forward in rural PEI and we will continue to make these investments.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Investment of Don MacDougall in Mill River

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Funny, in April 24th, 2009, there was an article in *The Guardian* that says: For-sale sign of provincial golf courses. Valerie Docherty said at the time: To have a garage sale of our courses just was not in the best interest of Islanders and taxpayers.

It's funny that at the time, and they were getting much more offers – or bigger offers than you guys were getting. But, on media

interviews on the weekend Don MacDougall was trying to spin this new deal and he said that he would be investing \$1 for every \$6 that this government spends.

Question to the minister: Does \$6 of public money for every \$1 of private investment sound like a good deal for Island taxpayers?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. MacDonald: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I can tell you through my lending portfolio, that we have 17.9% of our lending portfolio, which is roughly about \$65 million, out in the tourism entity right now right across Prince Edward Island. We give out \$2.3 million in grants each year to tourism industry so we continue to invest in the tourism industry and Mr. MacDougall – it's unfortunate that he has to come and write an article or do a report in the paper because –

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Mr. MacDonald: – as the minister responsible for prospecting companies to come here to invest in Prince Edward Island, we're doing a very good job of it. As you well know, the economy is in really good shape and we'll continue to do that.

But, Mill River is a good deal. The property needs a lot of work. He is willing to make that investment. We're willing to move that property forward and make sure that it stays a flagship in that community.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Sawler Report 2013

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I don't think it's unfortunate at all that Don MacDougall had to go to the paper. You guys wouldn't answer any questions about it all week. You guys were the ones that threw him under the bus and I seem to recall the

article saying he called from his Toronto mansion so no Islander should feel bad for him.

The 2013 Sawler Report on Mill River estimated that an investment of \$50 million was needed to make this project a long-term success. Using the 6-1 ratio that Don MacDougall told Kerry Campbell, that's a \$43 million investment needed from public dollars.

Question to the tourism minister: Where is the rest of that money coming from?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. MacDonald: I'm not sure, Mr. Speaker, if that an admittance of a good deal on behalf of what we had just done with government, but it almost sounds like it.

Mr. LaVie: (Indistinct)

Mr. MacDonald: The cost to renovate and upgrade that facility to get it back where it was is obviously a lot more than what we're paying, so we're glad of the deal. We will continue to – last year they had 40 – our own components of this deal at \$480,000 in losses. That's not – you take that over 10 years or 12 years, or whatever you want to do, our expenses were \$1.46 million through the campground, the fun park and the golf course so you can do the math any way you want to do it.

At the end of the day, the taxpayer is going to come out ahead as we move forward, and I'm not sure but I'm at a loss at words sometimes, but it's a confused conservative opposition –

Mr. LaVie: (Indistinct)

Mr. Myers: (Indistinct)

Mr. MacDonald: It's interesting that they continue to bring this up on a daily basis. We have tabled almost every document that we could possibly table and we're still –

An Hon. Member: Almost.

Mr. MacDonald: – no further ahead with the opposition.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

He hasn't tabled the contract. He hasn't tabled the deal. He hasn't tabled the response to the RFP, or anybody's responses to the RFP, for that matter. He is hiding quite a bit. Funny, when somebody sells their house they use a realtor or a professional business person to sell their house. If you want to sell your business, the Member from West Royalty-Springvale – he does it there now, too. He helps you sell your business.

When it comes to a major asset like a golf course, you bring in somebody with expertise like Colliers or one of the other companies who sell major assets like that.

Ms. Biggar: Question.

Government staff involved in Mill River deal

Mr. Myers: Question to the – I'm going to give this one to the Premier. You can thank her for that.

Question to the Premier: Why instead of using Colliers did you use former Liberal party president and PNP bag man and your chief of staff, instead of using Colliers?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. LaVie: (Indistinct)

Ms. Compton: Good advice.

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Mr. LaVie: Are you the bag man?

Premier MacLauchlan: I'm not sure what those adjectives were meant to describe, Mr. Speaker, but in the case of government, we had two of our most senior people; the chief of staff in the Premier's Office, the deputy minister of finance are working in close collaboration with the deputy minister of

economic development and tourism and that's a very senior experienced team and they reached a very good deal for the taxpayers of this province.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Myers: Thank you.

I didn't realize that a PNP bag man and your chief of staff were experts in selling golf courses. I guess they are now. They are probably the only people in Prince Edward Island who ever sold one for nothing, so you've got quite an experienced team up there for giving away Islanders' assets.

In 2009, your tired Liberal government took the for sale signs off the golf courses, telling the media that you've got dismal offers. One of those offers was from Tim Banks, who offered to buy Crow Bush for almost \$7 million.

Question to the Premier: If \$7 million from Tim Banks for Crowbush was a weak offer eight years ago how would you describe paying someone else \$7 million to take Mill River off your hands?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, the numbers that are being talked about relative to Mill River include a very important component that the opposition continues to overlook and that is a complete reinvestment in the hotel property at Mill River that will renew it, which is very much needed as a flagship in that part of the province. And for our total tourism industry in this province.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Purchase of Rodd hotel

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Don McDougall, on the radio, this morning, I heard say that the resort, the Rodd resort, was never ever part of the deal. It wasn't part of the RFP. He didn't respond to it. He didn't even want it.

Your government, when you were trying to force him to buy it forced him to take the hotel.

Question to the Premier: Why did you force Don McDougall to take the Rodd hotel, a hotel that Rodd's weren't even looking to sell?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. MacDonald: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. McDougall has a vested interest, not only in the Rodd property and the surrounding entities that we own, but the whole community of West Prince. That can't be overlooked.

One important thing and the Premier stressed it a little bit in his answer was where that property sits today. We all know that property is tired and it's in need of major upgrades –

Mr. LaVie: You guys know what tired looks like.

Mr. MacDonald: – Mr. McDougall talked about \$3 million of his own money going there.

To get to this point to say that it's not a good deal is completely false and misleading the general public.

Mr. Myers: Oh.

Mr. MacDonald: This is a good deal –

Mr. Myers: Misleading?

Mr. MacDonald: This is a good deal for the taxpayers of Prince Edward Island.

We'll continue to pursue these types of deals to get the taxpayer off the hook for that

\$850,000 that it's losing each year, Mr. Speaker.
Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

[End of Question Period]