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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF
PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS AND ORAL QUESTION PERIOD
(PRELIMINARY PROCEEDINGS)

FOR

WEDNESDAY, 3 MAY 2017

Responses to Questions Taken As Notice

Questions by Members

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Phase two Cornwall bypass tender

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

On April 4th, a tender closed for the second phase of the Cornwall bypass.

Question to the transportation minister: Who won that tender?

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

Ms. Biggar: Mr. Speaker, we only had one tender.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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

To the minister of transportation: Can you tell me who won the tender and how much was that tender for?

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

Ms. Biggar: Mr. Speaker, I don't have that information with me. I'll have to have a look into it and see what I can bring back.

Mr. Myers: One tender and now you don't know who it was.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: I can't believe, Mr. Speaker, that the size of that project and the minister doesn't know who won the tender.

Phase one Cornwall bypass tender

Question to the minister of transportation: Who won the main tender for the work of

the phase one of the Cornwall bypass last year?

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

Ms. Biggar: Mr. Speaker, thank you.

The tender did just close on the Phase 2A so that contract hasn't come through to me as yet to finalize. Certainly, I know that we're just getting things going. I will check into that again.

If memory serves me correct, last year, it was a similar situation where there was only one construction company tendered. I think it was Island Coastal.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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

We all know that Island Coastal won the contract last year. That should—no reason why that couldn't just come right out.

The reason I ask, is these tenders, last year and the year and this year don't have the winners posted on the government tender's website.

Posting of tenders on government tenders' page

Question to the transportation minister: Why aren't the winners of these tenders also posted online through the government tenders' page?

Mr. Myers: Good question.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Biggar: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

If memory serves me correct, how it goes with tenders; if you are a contractor bidding on a tender you have a certain code that you can go in and you can check to see who were successful on those tenders. Unless

you are granted that code as a contractor, those particular, even though they might be in there, you may not see them. I will certainly go back and see what that process is, and what it is in order to ensure that if someone wants access to that, they can have.

I do know to get tenders off of the website you have to have a code as a contractor in order to do that.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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

I have to wonder if somebody didn't go and delete the codes.

There are tenders for smaller items on the Cornwall bypass where the winning bids are posted. You can find out details about the hundreds of thousands of dollars spent on overhead signs. We're talking about millions of dollars for these Island Coastal tenders.

Secrecy of dollars for Cornwall bypass

Question to the minister of transportation: Can you explain why your tired Liberal government is being so needlessly secret about millions of dollars of public money for the Cornwall bypass?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Biggar: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Again, in terms of tenders, those are all publicly advertised and due diligence done on them.

Anything to do with the TransCanada Highway Extension is all in partnership with the federal government. Everything we do is audited by the federal government. Everything has to be sent there and finalized.

There is nothing secret, contrary to what you would like the public to believe. Hon. members like to twist the words and twist the facts. But I can tell you here, right now here today, everything that we have done on this TransCanada Highway Extension is in line with our responsibilities in partnership with the federal government.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Premier admitted last week that the justice department has had no conversations with the RCMP around the e-gaming scandal.

RCMP and contact with Crown Attorneys

Premier: Will you confirm if the RCMP has been in contact with the Crown Attorneys over conflict of interest, breach of trust, insider trading or any other Criminal Code violations related to your government?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Myers: Good question.

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, if there has been any such contact with – between the RCMP and Crown Attorneys I have no knowledge of that. I'm not able to share anything with the House on that matter.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Yesterday in QP we spoke about the unprecedented steps the auditor took to bring her concerns around conflicts of interest and other potential criminal wrongdoing on the e-gaming scandal.

Scope limitation to Auditor General

Premier: Why did your government deliberately limit the auditor's scope?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, the scope given to the Auditor General was, indeed, wide. It was to look into all aspects of those transactions and, indeed, she did. She interviewed almost 60 individuals. Thousands, more than 10,000 documents, and the Auditor General gave a very thorough report. That included, in the course of her evidence before Public Accounts as I understand it, and in her report, that the Auditor General has no reason to believe that there was any criminal activity.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Myers: She sent you a letter.

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Well the Premier says the Auditor's scope was wide. She wrote an entire appendix outlining her scope and about how it was limited by Cabinet.

Premier: What is your tired Liberal government hiding from the Auditor General and the people of PEI?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Myers: Good question.

Mr. Myers: Didn't you hear his new radio ads? Everyone likes (Indistinct).

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

An Hon. Member: According to the radio.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, the Auditor General was asked to look into all of the events and the scope was indeed wide if you go back to the Order in Council from early March of 2015, and the Auditor

General took time. She looked into all of the evidence. She considered these matters. She made 15 recommendations, and government has acted on all 15 of those, and this all relates to activity that would have been concluded by early in the year 2012.

We have said from the outset that this is not the way we do business, and indeed that is evident. We have taken to heart everything the Auditor General has brought forward on this, and indeed we're learning and moving forward.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Belfast-Murray River

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Premier talks about the thousands of documents, and I guess it's quantity versus quality.

She did not get all the documents that she needed or requested, and definitely did not get the whole story.

Premier, will you admit the reason your government limited the Auditor's scope was to avoid evidence from reaching her?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, there was no such intent and no such activity or initiative on the part of government. There were multiple hours, and indeed days, spent together with the Auditor General, and as any issues arose in the course of her work, those were addressed directly.

As the House will recall, even after the Auditor General produced her report and raised some concerns, we acted on government's initiative, together with the cooperation of the Mi'kmaq Confederacy to provide even further documents.

This was a wide open enquiry. It was fully considered on the part of the Auditor General, and it was fully taken to heart by government.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Truth and Liberal government

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Well, there's a whole page in the appendix about scope limitations by this government. The Auditor clearly outlined that her scope was limited. There were literally hundreds of documents that she never saw, that this government continues to hide away; or maybe they are gone forever.

Premier, why is your tired Liberal government so afraid of the whole truth coming to light?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, I mentioned earlier, and I'll say again, that the Auditor General looked into every aspect of this, into activities that had been really brought to a conclusion by February of 2012, and indeed, if there's anyone who's tired here, I believe it's the opposition in continuing to ask these same questions –

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct).

Mr. Myers: Oh how is he in Ottawa (Indistinct) skipped Question Period yesterday (Indistinct).

Premier MacLauchlan: These same questions that have been answered –

Mr. Myers: You skipped Question Period yesterday (Indistinct) Ottawa.

Premier MacLauchlan: They've been answered by the Auditor General. They've been taken to heart by government, and indeed, we've made it very clear, and you can see it in how the economy of this province is going –

Mr. Myers: How was he in Ottawa?

Premier MacLauchlan: – and how we are going with more and more transparency and openness –

Mr. Myers: Who paid for that?

Premier MacLauchlan: – that this province is going ahead because of the leadership that this government is giving.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Myers: Prove it, because Islanders don't believe it, you won't last (Indistinct) Old Home Week, and you know it.

Ms. Biggar: (Indistinct).

Mr. Myers: Tweet about it.

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

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As much as they try to change the channel, I keep coming back to this because Islanders want answers.

Mr. Aylward: That's right.

Ms. Compton: Mr. Speaker, the Auditor took an entire chapter to spell out apparent conflict of interest situations for both Chris LeClair and Melissa MacEachern. She managed to identify these conflicts despite government destroying all records for both of these employees.

Covering up of senior executives

Premier, why are you covering up corruption and criminal activity by your government's senior executives?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Myers: That's a good question.

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker –

Ms. Biggar: (Indistinct) provided some proof for that.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, those are –

Ms. Biggar: You'd better provide proof for that one.

Premier MacLauchlan: Those are –

Mr. Myers: (Indistinct).

Premier MacLauchlan: Those are strong words, but let me remind –

Mr. Myers: She said LOL afterwards.

Premier MacLauchlan: Let me remind this House and the opposition that within weeks of coming to government in 2015, this government extended conflict of interest requirements and the whole regime to deputy ministers and senior officials, and that's precisely because – as we said – that we are a government that does business a new way, with openness and transparency, and that's exactly what we're giving the people of this province.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

For some reason, I need to keep reminding these guys that the Auditor General is the financial watchdog. She's not a police officer or a criminal investigator.

She was deliberately handcuffed by this government and still managed to find these conflict of interests, even after all records were destroyed.

Avoidance of investigation into egaming and deleted emails

Premier, why are you so desperate to avoid a proper, independent investigation of your egaming scandal and deleted emails disgrace?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, on the question of emails, this House would be well aware that government has come forward with a whole new initiative. It's been considered in estimates. There's legislation before the House. There's been a program outlined with a five-year plan as to how we're going to deal with this and then deal squarely with the public records, the emails in a way that's going to meet the concerns that were raised by the Auditor General. That's another indication of the good government that we're giving this province on a go-forward basis.

And indeed, we have, from the very beginning –

Mr. Myers: You read the poll?

Premier MacLauchlan: We have, from the very beginning, looked at this question that was given to the Auditor General as an opportunity for our government, for this House, for the people, to learn and work together on a go-forward basis that's going to give all of us good government. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

Awarding of tender re: Hillsborough Hospital report

Mr. Aylward: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

On November of 2013, Health PEI commissioned a report on the future role of the Hillsborough Hospital called *Meeting the Inpatient Mental Health & Addictions Care Needs of Islanders*.

Question to the minister of health: Minister, who won the tender for this work?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Henderson: Mr. Speaker I'm not aware of who got that tender. That was a little before my time, but I'd be happy to get that information and bring it back to the hon. member.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

Mr. Aylward: Thank you, Mr. Speaker

Corpus Sanchez, actually, was the firm that won that tender, and the report in 2013 of November.

Corpus Sanchez, in fact, has done a lot of work consulting on Island health care in recent years.

Question to the minister –

Ms. Biggar: Tory government, too.

Cost re: Hillsborough Hospital report

Mr. Aylward: Can you advise how much this report cost Island taxpayers?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Henderson: Mr. Speaker, as – if the hon. member is suggesting that Corpus Sanchez got the tender for that report, I'll have to look that up and find out what the tender costs were, because I haven't – it's just a little bit before my time as minister, and I'll get that back to the hon. member in the immediate future.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

Mr. Aylward: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

This report took place over several months, and in fact a wide range of frontline employees were consulted. Our office actually submitted written questions on the report and the studies commissioned by the health department and its entities.

Strangely, this report was not included in the answer we received back.

Report results not included in written questions

So a question to the minister of health: Why wasn't this report included in the answers to our written questions provided by your department?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Henderson: Mr. Speaker, once again, I have to say that I am not aware what date that actual question was put in, but I'll follow that up with in my department.

But I can say that in the Hillsborough Hospital, we are trying to make sure that that facility is providing the utmost of care and safety standards for the patients that are there, and we do have monies allocated in our Capital Budget for 2019. We've already invested, I think, over \$600,000 in security upgrades, and we'll continue to invest in that facility until it's replaced.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

Mr. Aylward: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

This report on the Hillsborough Hospital by Corpus Sanchez had many recommendations. In fact, there were seven recommendations.

Recommendations implemented by Corpus Sanchez report

Question to the health minister: How many of the recommendations did your government implement from this report on the Hillsborough Hospital that was conducted by Corpus Sanchez?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Henderson: Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member mentioned, that report was done back in 2012. It's 2017 at the moment. I've been minister about a year and a half now. I'd be happy to look over that report and ask the appropriate questions to my department

and get the appropriate answers back to hon. member as soon as possible.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

Safety net role of Hillsborough Hospital

Mr. Aylward: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, as the minister stated, he's been the minister now for a year and a half and we know of the serious issues around mental health here on Prince Edward Island, so I would think that the very least this minister could do was get up to speed on his file over the last year and a half. What have you been doing? Obviously nothing.

One of the big issues flagged is the safety net role Hillsborough Hospital plays for those who struggle to integrate back into our community. One of the recommendations for the Chief Mental Health Officer to set up a working group to fast track proposals to resolve the housing issues that are currently being served by Hillsborough Hospital under the safety net role.

Question to the minister of health: Was this recommendation implemented?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Speaker, the hon. member would know that – I have to say, as the minister of health and wellness, I have some very significant files and they're very large and I'm doing my very best to be as up to speed in those as possible. 2012 – I don't know if I've gone back that far, but I will say that the Hillsborough Hospital, as well as all of the mental health services that we provide Islanders, we certainly are working hard to do the investment. We've made significant changes from adding programs, we've added more services to deal with mental health issues and we continue to work in dealing with people with mental health illness, whether that's on an inpatient basis or a transitional basis as they transfer back into society.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

Out-patient treatment implementation

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

Mr. Speaker, another big issue flagged in this report was around out-patient treatment. The Corpus Sanchez Report recommended establishing a working group with two out-of-province providers – namely East Coast Forensics and Homewood – to determine how joint care planning can be enhanced so that Islanders are better served during treatment off-Island and, most importantly, follow-up care back here at home.

Question to the minister of health: Was this recommendation implemented?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Henderson: Mr. Speaker, we have had numerous contacts with East Coast Forensics and, once again, we are dealing with some of those issues. East Coast Forensics are also seeing significant inpatient challenges that are awarded through the courts and we are doing our best to try to accommodate the challenges that we're faced with on that. When it comes to issues around Homewood, yes – sometimes Islanders think that services are better found off-Island, but in this case we have found that Homewood has not been providing any different outcomes than what we've been doing internally.

Once again, I think I'll leave that to our chief medical director regarding psychiatry and they determine what's the most appropriate location for a person to receive the appropriate services and get them as expediently as possible.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

Data tracking for Hillsborough Hospital

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

The Corpus Sanchez Report identifies, and it's quite obvious, that there are currently no programs here on Prince Edward Island that even come close or matching Homewood. The difficulty is, when those individuals that are lucky enough to be referred off-Island to this great facility, there are no supports or after care programs here on the Island to support the treatment that they had off-Island. One challenge noted in the study was around records management and data tracking. We've heard in the House over the last weeks about these problems persisting.

Question to the minister of health: What concrete steps are being taken to fix this issue around data tracking for Hillsborough Hospital and the Islanders that facility serves?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Henderson: Mr. Speaker, when any patient is discharged, there is usually a medical plan that goes with that particular patient to reintegrate – whether that's back into society, whether it's back to your home, whatever your situation based on your illness would be. Those medical plans are done up by the professionals within the departments and they look at all the resources that are available to that individual and sometimes those supports can be from family, sometimes it can be supports from other services within our health care system – the list goes on.

Once again, I may not know the details of each individual case plan, but everybody has a case plan when they leave a public institution in the health care system.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Reversing decision to ban corporate donations

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

Last week the Premier informed this House that he reversed his position to ban corporate donations to political parties following advice from the Leader of the Opposition.

A question to the Premier: What arguments did the Leader of the Opposition use to convince you to reverse your original position?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Maybe the Leader of the Opposition would like to answer. But, in any event, it's simply this: that there's a long tradition in this province of people who support political parties by buying tickets to publically advertised dinners – there's one tonight – and there's a practice, and it's one that's honourable and it's above board, of people writing cheques against their firm or their company when they buy those tickets. It was considered desirable in the traditions of support for the democratic process of this province to continue with that tradition.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

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

A quick scan of the political donations would expose why both the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition would be happy to collude on such a turnaround.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct)

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Corporate donations to both parties are counted in the hundreds of thousands of dollars every year, accounting for the majority of party revenues.

A question to the Premier: Do you have concerns about the political influence that businesses may acquire by donating to political parties?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition is obviously talking about the past and let's recognize that the proposal that's being brought

forward would, for the first time in the history of this province, put a cap on the amount that individuals or corporations or unions can donate to a political party. That number that's been suggested is \$3,000 and that would be, actually, at the low end of such caps across this country and that's precisely in the interest of transparency and openness and continued support for the democratic process in this province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Business owners and corporate donations

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

The Premier's current suggestion as he just outlined is that corporations be allowed to contribute as much as individuals are to a maximum of \$3,000 per year. This would allow, by the way, current donations to the party – for the government to accept 80% of the current donations they are getting – virtually makes no difference to the state of affairs.

It reminds me of when property owners could vote in each and every district in which they owned property. Donating to political parties, after all, is like voting with your money and business owners get two votes.

A question to the Premier: Given that all Islanders can already donate as individuals, why should business owners have the ability to make a second donation?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to clarify. This is not on a per-district basis that we've put forward this proposal, it's province-wide and it's \$3,000 and I don't think there's anybody out there who thinks that that's going to open up any floodgates to any kind of influence that an individual or a union or a corporation can have over the work of a government that's running an annual business of \$1.8 billion. This is very simply to continue traditions that have been in place, and indeed, have generated generous support for political

parties and for the political process in this province.

I repeat: There's a dinner tonight. It's publically advertised – they all are. Frankly, people are happy to support the political process in this province and we appreciate it.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Summerside-Wilmot.

Attracting people and jobs to PEI

Mr. Palmer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Workforce and Advanced Learning. We know that an available and skilled workforce is critical to attracting economic development. Research says jobs go to where the people are. We know we have an aging workforce here in PEI and we should be working to create new industries.

Minister: What is your department doing to attract people and ultimately jobs on PEI?

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

Mr. Gallant: Mr. Speaker, we are helping all Islanders access training. We're also helping Islanders connect to jobs, and we're helping Island companies that are growing to help them with their labour market needs. When we can't fill this with Islanders, we are trying to bring people back home to help out these local companies.

I'd like to say, I think our efforts are paying off as a result of the news we had earlier this week. We're leading Atlantic Canada in population growth and we have the third highest GDP in Canada.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Casey: Good answer.

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

Measuring job and economic growth in Summerside

Mr. Palmer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We know the Summerside area is a significant economic unit in Prince County. It is important to track economic activities so we can build on our successes. We also know Stats Canada has a lagging report revealing data that is not current as one would like.

Can the minister describe how the department measures job and economic growth in the province, and in particular, Summerside?

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

Mr. Gallant: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

There are province-wide economic numbers and they are published monthly by workpei.ca, and I'm pleased to report that in March of 2017, there were 8,200 employed persons in Summerside. This represents an increase of 1,200 more employed persons over the year.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Some Hon. Members: Wow.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Summerside-Wilmot, your second supplementary.

Mr. Palmer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Minister, what are the goals of your department in relation to job growth in Summerside, and how do you measure success?

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

Mr. Gallant: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As I had indicated before, our department works with companies in key sectors and we're working with the aerospace industry

and the IT sector in the Summerside area, and right across the province.

Also, in Summerside we are supporting an operating grant at the Holland College. We supported \$2.6 million, also, with our federal counterparts for the campus there to do some renovations to the police academy. We also support training through programs through Skills PEI.

As far as our success and our measurement, we watch this through our job and our population numbers and we keep track of that and when we have our numbers we'll report it to the public.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. R. Brown: (Indistinct) the MLAs from Summerside are doing a great job.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton.

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

Mr. Myers: Here it comes.

Supports improving student well-being

Mr. J. Brown: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Education, Early Learning and Culture.

Mr. Myers: Come on.

Mr. J. Brown: With the provincial budget, came the announcement that Island students will be receiving new supports to improve student well-being and help them overcome challenges in school that impact their performance.

Can the minister elaborate –

Mr. Myers: Elaborate?

Mr. J. Brown: – on how the initiative will help students address the complex needs of our youth in schools?

Mr. Myers: Can he elaborate?

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Myers: Yes, I can elaborate (Indistinct)

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

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

As the minister, I am very grateful for the support of a number of government departments besides our own department of education. Our focus will be services on the ground for children and families in school families across the Province of Prince Edward Island.

The priority of the school teams will be to – as we've talked and debated all week – around the whole area of mental health and providing supports and services to children in schools with a range of different professionals, whether it be OTs, counsellors, youth service workers. I'm very pleased and very proud of the initiative by our government.

Mr. R. Brown: Great job.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. J. Brown: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Minister, how much funding has been allocated for this support initiative and how will it be used?

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: (Indistinct)

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

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

We have approximately eight families of schools in the Province of Prince Edward Island. The first two targeted schools will be the Westisle Family of Schools and the Montague Family of Schools, both in rural areas of the province. That investment will be a joint investment; a \$400,000 investment

from the department of education and a \$300,000 from the Department of Health and Wellness, to support OTs, occupational therapists, youth service workers, counsellors that will work to support teachers, but most importantly children, for a combined investment of a three-year rollout of over \$5 million.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Schools and timelines of programs in schools

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

Minister, what schools will offer these new supports and what is the timeline of when parents and students expect to see the programs implemented in their schools?

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

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

We will be pleased to begin the rollout this fall in the Westisle Family of Schools and in the Montague Family of Schools, but we will be – the following September we will be targeting the Colonel Gray and the Souris and Morell family; the Bluefield family as well. In year three, we will be targeting Charlottetown Rural and the Kinkora, Kensington and the Three Oaks families.

Very pleased, once again, and extremely grateful for the collaboration of government departments and putting children first by our government, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Liberal Party executive director

Mr. Trivers: Mr. Speaker, can the Premier explain why the Liberal Party website fails to list Charles Curley, who was hired in

February, as your party's new executive director?

Mr. R. Brown: Put it on bradtrivers.com.

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, Mr. Curley commenced his work as executive director of the party on the Tuesday after Easter and I know he has been very busy and I have been impressed with the diligence with which he has taken to his many tasks and I'm sure the website is probably somewhere near the top of the list now.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Mr. Speaker, does the Premier believe hiring the current chair of the Order of PEI Advisory Council as the Liberal Party's new executive director creates an ethical dilemma?

Mr. Myers: Good question.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, the members of the Order of PEI Advisory Council serve without remuneration. They are great citizens. They are chosen for that reason. They have contributed to our community and to our province in many ways and if those qualifications – the same qualifications or the similar commitments to our community that got Mr. Curley appointed or asked to serve as chair of the advisory board or the Order of PEI coincided with his qualifications to serve as the executive director of the Liberal Party, I don't see any reason why any reasonable person would think there would be any conflict between one and the other and he resigned as chair of that advisory committee before accepting his new duties.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Myers: (Indistinct) Order in Council (Indistinct)

Speaker: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Myers: (Indistinct)

Mr. Trivers: Well Mr. Speaker, the Premier says he resigned, but we don't see an Order in Council that would be required to that affect.

Charles Curley has concurrently served this Premier as the chair of the Order of PEI. He is still the chair of the Order of PEI and the Liberal Party executive director for a number of weeks. Premier: How is this acceptable?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, there is a letter of resignation from Mr. Curley that I received quite some time ago and there's no problem of any overlap between one responsibility and the other.

Indeed, Cabinet met yesterday and dealt with the changes in the makeup of the Order of Prince Edward Island Advisory Committee and I expect that those decisions will be Gazetted –

Mr. Myers: Cabinet met yesterday while you were in Ottawa?

Premier MacLauchlan: – before the end of the week.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Myers: (Indistinct)

Mr. Trivers: Mr. Speaker, today, right now, the government website lists Mr. Curley as still serving as the chair of the Order of PEI. The Liberal Party deadline was February 15th for executive director applications. We are now in May. Mr. Curley has been in conflict for at least two months.

Mr. Premier: Is this what you meant when you said you would do business differently?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, there is no overlap.

The websites – and I appreciate the hon. member drawing it to our attention. That will be corrected. As I said, Cabinet dealt with that yesterday.

Let me be clear about the work of the Order of PEI Advisory Council. Those nominations are open until the end of March. The new committee, the one that will be unveiled as a result of Cabinet decisions yesterday, we'll deal with those nominations that come in and they will meet sometime in the month of May and it will be long after Mr. Curley will have submitted his resignation for the very reasons that he would not serve in both roles.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Aylward: Took them a while to get your name off of the website –

Mr. Trivers: Mr. Premier –

Mr. Aylward: – (Indistinct) get kicked out of Cabinet.

Mr. Trivers: – for the first time in Island history the Chair of the Order of PEI is a paid staffer for the governing party.

By having the Executive Director of the Liberal Party wear two hats, this Premier has created an untenable, ethical crisis–

Some Hon. Members: Oh! Oh!

Mr. R. Brown: Crisis!

Independence of Order of PEI

Mr. Trivers: Premier: Will you move immediately to fix this problem and restore

the independence of the Order of PEI Advisory Council from the Liberal Party?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, let me be very clear that the Order of Prince Edward Island Advisory Council has been an upstanding representation of the volunteer commitment of citizens across this province; two people from each county, one of whom is asked to be chair, and six other members who comprise that Order of PEI Advisory Council. Indeed, the work of the council is supported by the Office of the Clerk of this Legislature.

I have no concern, whatsoever, nor should Islanders have any concern, and I regret that these issues are being raised in the way they are, that there is any conflict or any concern about the basis on which people are named to and nominated to what they represent for this province when they are named to the Order of Prince Edward Island.

The advisory council is above any question of any concern about conflict. Cabinet has dealt with that. Stay tuned, you'll get the Order in Council on probably, Friday, is it?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Myers: Paid clappers.

Mr. Trivers: Mr. Speaker, last time I checked you couldn't issue an Order in Council retroactively.

The Order of PEI is the highest provincial order that can be bestowed on a citizen of this province. It should be free of politics and the perception of partisanship.

Mr. Roach: And it is.

Mr. Trivers: An Order in Council is required to make changes to make changes to the Order of PEI Advisory Council. To date, Cabinet has issued no Order in Council revoking Mr. Curley's appointment or replacing him with a new chairperson. That's fact.

Premier: When will Islanders see an Order in Council revoking Mr. Curley's appointment?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

An Hon. Member: Some pretty neat claps.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, to be very clear that Order in Council was dealt with by Cabinet yesterday. Islanders will see it Friday, it may be late Thursday. Those are Gazetted in the normal course.

I do want to go back to the basic point that is being raised here: Islanders should have no concern about the integrity and the upstanding people and the decision-making of the Order of Prince Edward Island Advisory Council.

They give a great service to our province. They select, it's not an easy job, from a lot of nominations from worthy Islanders. It's a great thing for our province to select those people –

Mr. Myers: They gave it –

Premier MacLauchlan: – and to honour them –

Mr. Myers: – you and asked you to be leader –

Premier MacLauchlan: – because in –

Mr. Myers: – the same day.

Premier MacLauchlan: – doing so we honour ourselves –

Mr. Myers: Tell them to (Indistinct)

Premier MacLauchlan: – and we should all, in this House –

Mr. Myers: (Indistinct) they asked you to be leader the –

Premier MacLauchlan: – Mr. Speaker –

Mr. Myers: – same day.

Premier MacLauchlan: – in this House –
Speaker: Go ahead, hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: We should all, in this House, be doing our upmost to uphold the integrity and the reputation of these institutions.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Aylward: (Indistinct) that's what we're trying to do (Indistinct)

Mr. Myers: (Indistinct) I said LOL.

Mr. J. Brown: No, you said the institution was –

Mr. Myers: No (Indistinct)

Speaker: Hon. members –

Mr. J. Brown: I heard you say –

Speaker: Order, order!

We're getting out of order here. Losing respect when people are answering.

The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald, you have the floor.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Unfortunately, this Premier is bending the rules just like the last premier did with the Order of PEI Advisory Council.

Premier, I mean, surely you, a former member of the Order of PEI Advisory Council yourself, and a former recipient of the Order of PEI, would recognize the inherent danger of politicizing this process the way you have.

Premier: How did you allow this situation to occur?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, when someone resigns from a body, the Order of Prince Edward Island Advisory Council as Mr. Curley did, as I have informed the House, and they shouldn't be surprised. We had two other vacancies from Queens County. No, Mr. Curley's from Queens

County. We had one vacancy from Prince County and one from Queens County.

There is an Engage PEI process by which people come forward and express an interest and people are chosen through that process. That takes time. The work of the Order of Prince Edward Island Advisory Council does not really start until the month of May.

In that window of time, and through the open and transparent process of Engage PEI, people have been identified to fill, and have a full complement in order for the Order of PEI Advisory Council to do its work in a timely way and in a respectful way and in a way that has no trace whatsoever of conflict.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: Final question from the hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Tabling of Mill River contract (further)

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

Question to the tourism minister: When will you table the contract for your sweetheart Mill River deal?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. MacDonald: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We've heard this question, I think this is five times from five different members, but that's okay.

Mr. Myers: No answers.

Mr. MacDonald: Because it gives me the opportunity to talk about the tourism industry and how important and vital it is to the economy of Prince Edward Island –

Mr. Palmer: And West Prince.

Mr. MacDonald: Rural PEI plays an integral part of that with \$65 million being invested in the tourism industry as we speak.

It's interesting that you get these questions from the opposition, but if this was happening in one of their ridings it would be a turn tail of events, I'm sure.

We're doing things right. Obviously, workforce and advanced learning talked about the number of jobs created. The hon. member's own riding, if I remember correctly, we got about \$22 million invested in his riding and over 500 jobs and more to come. I don't hear him applauding that.

I hear criticisms on taking a flagship property in rural PEI; maintaining jobs; maintaining property that needed capital improvements; and working with that community; making sure that tourism with a \$430 million investment and expenditures on Prince Edward Island comes back into hospitals and health care and schools.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

[End of Question Period]