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**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
**OF**  
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**TRANSCRIPT OF  
STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS  
AND THE  
ORAL QUESTION PERIOD  
FOR**

**Friday 24 November 2006**



**ORAL QUESTION PERIOD 24 NOVEMBER 2006 PRELIMINARY PROCEEDINGS**

**STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS**

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

**ISLANDER TRACK AND FIELD CHAMPION**

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

Well, Mr. Speaker, Kurt McCormack of Souris West in my district is a young man who certainly knows how to take a great leap of faith. This past summer 18-year-old Kurt competed in the Canadian Junior Track and Field Championships in Sherbrooke, Quebec, winning the triple jump event with a leap of 14.62 metres.

Not only is he the Canadian Junior Champion, but he also broke the provincial record with an impressive 14.2 metre jump only a few days earlier.

This past summer he coached with the provincial Run, Jump and Throw program conducting training sessions for young athletes in a variety of communities throughout Prince Edward Island. During this time, he also continued his training with Eli MacEachern and Colin MacAdam.

Since that time, Kurt has been recruited by Coach Pete Stanton of Dickinson State University Blue Hawks of North Dakota and is presently there on a full athletic scholarship, which our whole district is quite proud of. Dickinson State University has won the American National Outdoor Championships for three years running and Coach Stanton is very pleased to have recruited this talented young man into their

ranks.

Needless to say, Kurt's parents, Tommy and Myrtle McCormack are very pleased and proud of their son's success.

Mr. Speaker, I congratulate Kurt on his outstanding achievements and wish him well in both his athletic and academic pursuits.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

**CHARLOTTETOWN CHRISTMAS PARADE**

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Spring Park.

**Mr. MacAleer:** Mr. Speaker, as the Leader of the Opposition has already noted, Charlottetown will be hosting its annual Christmas Parade and I'd like to elaborate just a little further on this. It starts at the University of Prince Edward Island at 5:00 p.m. and proceeds along University Avenue to Grafton Street, then west along Grafton Street to the parking lot of the provincial government.

This year there'll be volunteers on hand to collect food items for the Upper Room and the Canada Post employees will also be present to collect letters from youth to Santa Claus.

I'm delighted to say that the parade marshall this year will be Patricia Campbell. Mrs. Campbell lives at the West Royalty location of the Andrews Lodge, a former neighbour of ours. I'm sure that she'll be delighted to see

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many people along the route.

Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to add there are two other events occurring at Charlottetown during this period; one is the Charlottetown annual Wintertide celebration and the other is the Maritime Electric Victorian Winter Festival, which is on display until January 7<sup>th</sup> of 2007. Wintertide adds spirit and sparkle to the nighttime sky of historic Charlottetown and is a happy mixture of lights, community events, and programs for all ages.

As part of the winter festival on Friday, November 24<sup>th</sup>, which is tonight, Province House will host a candlelight promenade through Christmas Tree Lane, which is Great George Street, well known to all of us where they will host an official Christmas tree lighting ceremony with plenty of seasonal entertainment. Father Christmas will also be in attendance.

Mr. Speaker, I take this opportunity to extend a special thanks to the organizers and the dedicated volunteers, particularly those who volunteer and all who have worked so hard to make these wonderful events possible.

This sense of celebration at this time of year on Prince Edward Island is another way of celebrating this season of accommodating the winter period but also of bringing warmth to our communities in showing what we're really known for and that is to share and care and make this place a wonderful place to live.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Crapaud-

Hazel Grove.

**ORDER OF THE EASTERN STAR**

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

It gives me great pleasure today to recognize an individual from our district and an organization. The Order of the Eastern Star is the largest fraternal organization in the world to which both men and women belong, approximately one million members worldwide. The stated purpose of this organization are charitable, educational, fraternal, and scientific.

This year, Marion Miller was appointed worthy Grand Matron, Order of the Eastern Star for Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island. And she knew that over the course of her visitation of the 26 chapters that she would be visiting that probably you would (indistinct) like sometimes when people from organizations visit and speak to groups. So in lieu of gifts, Marion approached the membership and said: Perhaps let's do a project. And the project led into the making of quilts, covers, comforters and the chapters thought perhaps they would make about 100 quilts. It ended up that they made 310 quilts and these are presented to children of the pediatric unit of the QEH and other children across our province and into the Nova Scotia area as well. So this is I think a great story to be told at this time of the year as well.

And not only that, the Order of the Eastern Star as well in Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island raised over \$41,000 this year to go towards the Children's Wish Foundation. So I think that it certainly serves the purpose of this organization. It's serving the children

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of PEI and Nova Scotia and I think just to bring - Marion, I think, she is doing a great thing and in terms of seeing these blankets being made by the membership and giving these to children on Prince Edward Island.

So I thank her for her work, the organization's work and in closing, we as legislators here on PEI I'm sure extend our best wishes to this organization and to her and in her capacity. And she is persevering with the key organizational values of charity, truth, loving, and kindness.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Speaker:** Questions by Members starting with Responses to Questions Taken as Notice.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

**COST OF FISHERY QUOTA LAWSUIT**

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

I was hoping we'd get a little information back today but today I'm going to ask my first few questions to the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Aquaculture. And my first question has to do with the fact that the minister is still in the process of suing the federal government over quota for the Province of Prince Edward Island. Last May he informed this House that those costs had reached \$350,000. I'm wondering if the minister can please tell this House what the price tag is now at?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Agriculture,

Fisheries and Aquaculture.

**Mr. Bagnall:** Mr. Speaker, I don't have the exact figure at the present time on that but I can get that figure and bring it back to the hon. member. I know that it was at the last time we checked over \$300,000 but I will get the figure and bring it back.

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

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

I was kind of hoping that we'd hear that they'd finally dropped the court case and start trying to save taxpayers' money but, unfortunately, that's not the case. This government complained at length about the previous government but their chosen Prime Minister, Stephen Harper, is now in power and Islanders were left with the impression that a federal Tory government would deal with this court case effectively and hopefully start to save taxpayers some money here. Given those statements, why does this government continue to believe that the court case is necessary now that Stephen Harper is Prime Minister?

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

**Mr. Bagnall:** Well, I guess you can probably go back to the reason that the court case was even necessary to begin with. It was necessary because we didn't have representation that would look after the PEI interest in the fishery here on Prince Edward Island and what happened is that we were not allowed to have any kind of quota in the crab and the shrimp and all these species in the fishing industry.

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And what happened is we had to finally make a move on the federal government as to get our equal share. And what happened is we moved forward with a court case because we were treated unfairly and unjust and so we moved that way.

You know, we have a new federal minister there now that has been doing a lot of good things for our area, you know, like for instance, MacLeod's Ridge up on the western part of PEI.

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

**Mr. Bagnall:** We've been fighting over that issue for 10 years. We got one meeting. We got one meeting with the federal minister on this issue and guess what? It's fixed. That's all that had to be done. Some little mark of the pen, sign his signature on it, have it looked after and our federal minister has done that. That's the type of cooperation we need and we're starting to get it for the first time in 10 years.

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

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

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

It's hard to believe that we're getting responses like that from our minister of fisheries here on Prince Edward Island. He should know full well that the court case is about challenging the absolute power of the minister. It is not about quota. It is not about anything else. It is about challenging the absolute power and, unfortunately, this is something important for Islanders to know. If

in fact Prince Edward Island ever does win that court case, which I doubt will ever come to fruition, the point is Prince Edward Island will get nothing more in return from that court case. The only thing they're doing is challenging the absolute power.

But Mr. Speaker, the court case was endorsed several years ago by Newfoundland MP, Loyola Hearn. Mr. Hearn is now the federal fisheries minister so I assume that the minister has received assurances that the provincial stand on this issue is supported and that Mr. Hearn is in support of your court case.

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

**Mr. Bagnall:** Well, Mr. Hearn has, I can tell you, has been talked about on this issue because I spoke to him on it but the problem is it's in the legal hands right at the present time. It's a topic that it cannot be discussed and dealt with while it's actually in the courts. But you know, what's happening though is because of that we are starting to get some more allocations. Like the tuna, for instance just recently, we picked up another 28 metric tonne of tuna because we need it for our fishers. You know, we were never receiving enough and, all of a sudden, now we got some more and we're working on getting quota increased again. So with the court case and these things, I think we're starting to see the benefits already and they're making some changes for us.

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

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

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Here's the thing. If our provincial minister is in favour of getting rid of this absolute power and if the federal minister, like this minister likes to claim, is in favour of getting rid of this absolute power and this court case is costing Island taxpayers hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of thousands of dollars, costing the federal government hundreds and hundreds of thousands of dollars, wouldn't the two ministers sit down and solve the issue, settle it out of court and start saving taxpayers' money? No, they wouldn't because the only thing that this government is interested in is grandstanding. But when Mr. Hearn first endorsed the Island court case back in November of 2004, he said he thought it was a great idea, a great idea, this court case because he was hoping Newfoundlanders would finally get access to PEI's rich lobster stocks. Has the minister discussed this inflammatory suggestion with his federal counterpart?

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

**Mr. Bagnall:** Mr. Speaker, you know, it's kind of ironic that the hon. member would get up here and talk about this court case because when the herring dispute was on in Souris, this hon. member stood on the wharf in Souris and supported this case 100%. He was supportive of it but yet when he came back to Charlottetown, he did a complete flip-flop. So I don't know why he keeps bringing this up because he's changing his stand on it continuously. So Mr. Speaker, sometimes you wonder how credible the questions are that are coming across.

**An Hon. Member:** That's right.

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

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

And just so this minister can get his facts straight, I was in full support of a court case with the federal government over the herring lines in the Souris area but luckily, luckily, we have Lawrence MacAuley as a federal Member of Parliament who got that resolved.

**Mr. R. Brown:** No court case (indistinct).

**Leader of the Opposition:** My question goes back to the minister though. Mr. Minister, back in November of 2004 when Loyola Hearn mentioned how great this court case was and how he thought it would be wonderful for Newfoundlanders that access the Prince Edward Island's rich lobster stock, I'm wondering: Have you raised those inflammatory suggestions with your federal counterpart?

**Mr. R. Brown:** Good point. Good point.

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

**Mr. Bagnall:** Mr. Speaker, there was so much noise coming from over on that side of the House I couldn't hear the question. Could you ask him to repeat it for me.

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

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

All I have to do is tell him that it was the same question as before the one that he didn't

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answer. Back in May of 2004 when Loyola Hearn thought that it was a great idea at that time for Prince Edward Island to be suing the federal government and wasting taxpayers' dollars, he said that he thought it was a good idea because perhaps it would give access to our rich lobster stock to Newfoundlanders. I'm wondering: Has the minister raised those inflammatory comments with his federal counterpart?

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

**Mr. Bagnall:** Mr. Speaker, I've had more opportunity to speak with the federal minister of fisheries right now than we had with the other minister in 10 years. He would not allow us to even get to meetings. He would put it off for 18 months before he would meet with you and we have accessibility to the new minister. Mr. Speaker, the minister, federal minister is working at the fishing. Right now, he is working to change a lot of these issues and what he's doing right now, he's bringing in a new fisheries act for Canada. The problem we're going to have is the Opposition will be fighting against it because they don't want to see it happen. They don't want to see progression and they don't want to see the industry move forward. They never have. DFO has always been very non-supportive of our fishery here. For the first time, we're starting to see support from DFO and we're starting to see support from our federal minister and, yes, we bring up every topic when we meet.

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

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

Unfortunately, we're not getting any answers from this minister of fisheries but that's not a surprise. Like the hon. Member from North River-Rice Point would say, I hope he gets up to speed on his file.

**Mr. R. Brown:** Yes. Get some sanity.

**SENIORS' ASSETS FOR NURSING CARE**

**Leader of the Opposition:** But Mr. Speaker, I hope he gets back and brings back the information that we've been looking for but I'm going to move on now to the minister of health.

And last week in announcing long delayed reforms to long-term care, the minister said the cost would be somewhere between \$8 million and \$10 million and I applaud the government for that announcement. It's something that we've been pushing for on this side of the House going back to the Member from Crapaud-Hazel Grove. I'm wondering: Should Islanders infer from those statements that this government has taken between \$80 million and \$100 million in assets from seniors over the last 10 years?

**Mr. R. Brown:** Shame on you!

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Health, Social Services and Seniors.

**Mr. Bagnall:** Mr. Speaker, (indistinct) our department before he started there. I'd like to respond to it.

**Speaker:** All right, okay. The hon. Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Aquaculture.

**Mr. Bagnall:** Mr. Speaker, and I just wanted



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to reiterate that the federal minister right now is working on a new fisheries act which will deal with those issues. And as long as he wants to talk about it, there will be a new fisheries act coming forward and it's being worked on at the present time.

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Health, Social Services and Seniors.

**Mr. Gillan:** Mr. Speaker, no, that is not the case. Approximately, about \$50 million is expended on these patients per fiscal year and the amount of income coming in is certainly in no way would even come close to meeting the cost. Although we have seen over the years that other provinces and now ourselves, we are going to separate. It was never an intention to have the seniors be able to pay most of our half. It's a very, very small portion of the income that was generated and, basically, the taxpayer over the last 8 or 10 years has shouldered the responsibility or the major responsibility of the bill.

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

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

My question was if it's supposed to cost Island taxpayers \$8 million to \$10 million a year for this new program, which I think is a great program, I'm wondering: Does that mean over the last 10 years it has cost Island seniors between \$80 million and \$100 million in their own assets?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Health, Social Services and Seniors.

**Mr. Gillan:** Mr. Speaker, I suppose if you do

the math in that respect as to how much the seniors have had to put out and the population of Prince Edward Island, that would come to approximately the figure. But I have just indicated in no way were they intended to pay all of their costs and the majority of the bill has been shouldered by the taxpayers.

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

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

I'm wondering. This move has been too long in coming, as we all know, and I'm wondering: Will there be any retroactivity for seniors who have had their assets taken away over the last number of years?

**Ms. Bertram:** Good question.

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Health, Social Services and Seniors.

**Mr. Gillan:** Mr. Speaker, it's always difficult when you're coming in with a new program to decide on when exactly is going to be the implementation date because it involves a lot of factors. Obviously, there has to be a strategy, a plan. The policy has to be changed around and there are those that are going to be very close to a cutoff date. We have indicated that it is going to be January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2007. Well, somebody who has made payment in December of 2006, are they going to get any money back? And unfortunately, we're not able to say, yes, you can. So there's not going to be any retroactivity for those who have paid in the past and right up until January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2007. It's not intentionally trying to impose hardships but a date has to be set for these programs and that will be the implementation

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date with no retroactivity.

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

**Leader of the Opposition:** Mr. Speaker, another question for the same minister and according to the Auditor General, there was a report prepared looking at this issue. I'm wondering: Will the minister please table that report in the House?

**An Hon. Member:** Good question.

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Health, Social Services and Seniors.

**Mr. Gillan:** Mr. Speaker, I will take a look at that and if it is possible, I will do so.

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

**NEW LEGISLATION RE SENIORS**

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

You would hope that a report prepared for the Government of Prince Edward Island would be able to be tabled in the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Prince Edward Island.

I'm wondering. A new question for the minister: When can this House expect to see the legislation that will finally change the way that seniors are charged for long-term care?

**Mr. R. Brown:** Great question.

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Health, Social Services and Seniors.

**Mr. Gillan:** Mr. Speaker, some of the legislation that we are taking a look at will come and reflect and mirror what has happened in Nova Scotia. We have been looking at that legislation. We have been looking at their policies and their programs. There was a lot of work over quite a period of time in Nova Scotia. In fact, I'm told that five to six staff were set aside to do that programming and policy implementation. We don't have the luxury of the number of staff although we have indicated that by January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2007, we will have our strategy, a new policy and a new program obviously in place. But there is going to be a period of time when we have to be able to get it all written up to get to the legislation aspect. I'm simply indicating that it is a lot of work. We don't have that many staff. We're going to get it done as soon as we can.

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

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

A lot of the assets that are taken away from seniors and a lot of the income that is taken away from seniors takes place through regulations. I'm wondering: Has the minister changed those regulations already since they made the announcement last week?

**Mr. R. Brown:** That's a good question.

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Health, Social Services and Seniors.

**Mr. Gillan:** Mr. Speaker, I disagree with the tone that the hon. Leader is impugning that the money is taken from the seniors. Obviously, what it is, of course, is that the

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senior if they have the ability to pay a portion of their upkeep is asked to do so. All of the other provinces started off with the program so it is not intended as a type of harsh treatment or a penalty for having dollars and I think that most of the seniors and their families throughout the province realized it. Obviously, at the same time in saying that, when someone works so hard all their lives that they like to leave some of the work behind in the form of remuneration dollars to their family members and those are the types of concern that we have had and we are listening to that. But it was not intended as a government stiff penalty in no way and I think most of the families do recognize that. However, having said that, it is now time to move forth and with the separation of paying for the medical treatment, the nursing care, it's now going to be severed from the accommodations and, as I have indicated, we are working as fast as we possibly can and as diligently and we hope that we will have that all taken care of in the near future.

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

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

Just a quick, almost hypothetical question to the minister. There are regulations in place right now which take away seniors' assets to help pay for their medical costs when they go into long-term care.

I'm just wondering. If a senior is putting money aside or has been putting money aside for perhaps their grandchild's education through an RESP, I'm wondering: Would your government take that money away right now from those seniors?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Health, Social Services and Seniors.

**Mr. Gillan:** No, Mr. Speaker. The regulations that the hon. Leader is referring to are very well established. The senior is able to take their personal assets, the house that they have, the area or the land immediately under the home, et cetera. There is no way, obviously, that they're going to reach out into their children's assets and be able to do that. Those type of regulations are not going to be going into the new legislation at all.

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

### SENIORS' EMERGENCY HOME REPAIR PROGRAM

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

I'm going to ask the minister a couple of different questions now. In the 2005 Budget, this government announced the seniors' home repair program would be delayed. I'm wondering: Has that money been reinstated yet?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Health, Social Services and Seniors.

**Mr. Gillan:** No one has them and we do get a number of phone calls and reminders that it was a very good program. I will remind the Islanders, of course, who are listening as well as the Assembly members here. The reason is is that the Department of Health and the Department of Social Services and Seniors, like all other government departments, had to trim our budgets. We had to live a little bit closer to the quick and it was expected of our

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departments that we would be able to trim some of the programs. That particular program that he is speaking of has been delayed. It was a popular program because it was doing good work and it would certainly be hoped in the future that the government would be able to reinstate a portion at least of that program.

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

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

And that's a very important program and you just have to look back to the last election when the Conservative Party under this Premier went out, pictures with seniors, promised to double the funding for senior home repair program - more meaningless promises. I'm just wondering why would you make those meaningless promises to seniors who were depending on the programs and then come back and cut them shortly after.

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Health, Social Services and Seniors.

**Mr. Gillan:** Well, Mr. Speaker, all the programs that a government and this government, of course, would like to be able to do. We're certainly - they are long, long lists, well enumerated. The minister of the treasury obviously has meetings with community groups prior to - they put an ask in front of the minister. The rest of the ministers as well, we are met by community people, organizations, NGOs, and they remind us that their cause is a worthy one and they would need to be supported in the budget but we can't accommodate everybody. Even though some of the programs for the seniors and, in

particular, the one, the repair program met with good success and it is a very worthwhile program. We're not able to do everything but I think what we have been able to do is to demonstrate fiscal accountability and I am very, very happy to be part of the government that has been able to take care and to pay its bills and to still keep the social programs alive.

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

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

I urge the minister not to make false promises to the seniors here on Prince Edward Island and that's essentially what this government has done. And I recently heard from seniors' representatives from the Kinkora Seniors Club who are very dismayed by this minister and this government over the cuts to the seniors home repair program.

But it's interesting that over the last number of years, your government really has no vision when it comes to this. Really, you're just all talk and no action and it's really quite unfortunate. You just have to look at press releases from 2003, press releases from 2004 where, unfortunately, your government can't even change its own messaging in the press releases. They're exactly the same quotes from one minister to through next.

**Mr. R. Brown:** They said the same thing.

**Leader of the Opposition:** The exact same thing but then you come out and you go ahead and you cut the seniors home repair program. I'm wondering: Do you think it's a good idea to cut that and will funding be reinstated?

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**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Health, Social Services and Seniors.

**Mr. Gillan:** Mr. Speaker, I would laugh at the comments or chuckle if they were not so serious. Mr. Speaker, I think we do have a vision. We do have a policy. We do have a strategy for and with seniors and that is a big part of the program is that this has been a partnership. We have been talking for some time of the need for a secretariat. We finally do have a secretariat. That is probably why -

**Speaker:** All right, hon. members.

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

That is province wide at the insistence of the seniors that we are able to work further. It is all about enlightenment so we have been listening. We have been planning. We know where we are going. The seniors know where they are coming with us and I'm sure that the secretariat that is formed now and is beginning its work and they do have a mandate established. They have decided among themselves what that mandate is going to be that we will see a proliferation of programs coming out in partnership with the government .

**Some Hon. Members:** Shame, shame!

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

**MEDIA COVERAGE OF LEGENDS OF GOLF**

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

I have a few questions for the Minister of

Tourism and it concerns the visit to Prince Edward Island in early summer this year of two icons of the sport of golf: Tom Watson and Jack Nicklaus. And I think it was dubbed, 'The Legends of Golf', if memory serves me correct. And at the time, there was a lot of talk about the media reach that this event was going to give to Prince Edward Island. Does the minister at this stage of the year have a little more of a handle on just how effective was that media reach?

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

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

And I'm very delighted to inform the House as well as all Islanders of the tremendous benefit of that particular event. People know the names Jack Nicklaus and Tom Watson are synonymous with great golf and Prince Edward Island has become known as a great golf destination voted number one in Canada over the last few years. But this particular event was a made-for-TV event and the global television network broadcast it across the country as well as the RDS network, the TSN affiliate on the French language broadcasting band broadcast it nationally. Now the national audiences exceeded 200,000. The Sky network in Europe broadcast this and it was the audience there was in the hundreds of thousands. As well, the New England sports network broadcast this and an additional hundreds of thousands of people seen the benefit of this. From the media point of view, there were more than 210 stories written about this event, publications all over the world. The audience reach is in excess of 88 million people who had access to this so it was an unprecedented success and many, many

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people were able to learn of it.

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

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

That does sound very impressive in terms of the numbers that the minister mentioned but could you give us some idea of what the real on-the-ground effect might be of this 'Legends of Golf' and the kind of reach that it had out there?

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

**Mr. P. Brown:** Well, certainly, we did customer satisfaction surveys at the event for people who participated and 84% of the people, the 6700 people who came to view the event over the two days, 84% said that their main reason for coming to Prince Edward Island that time of year was this legend's event. The other examples of the potential impact on tourism are great and when the broadcast was on the global network, our call centre received many, many calls just after that broadcast. One small antidotal part of it is a person from Connecticut who summers on Prince Edward Island called our department just to let us know that once the broadcast took place on the New England sports network, he had a dozen friends call him because they knew that he visited PEI to play golf. And a dozen friends call him and said: How do we go there? We seen the broadcast on TV and we want to make plans to come next summer. So the event reached many and the benefits will be coming to Prince Edward Island for years to come.

**Speaker:** Final supplementary, the Member

from Winsloe-West Royalty.

**Mr. Collins:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and it will be a short supplementary.

Given all that, are we going to do it again?

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

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

And I'm delighted that when we entered into the agreement with the international marketing group, the IMG Canada, we entered into a three-year agreement with them and we will be producing the 'Legends of Golf' event in 2007 and 2008 and beyond.

**An Hon. Member:** Ah, wonderful!

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

**CHILD CARE BENEFIT PAYMENTS**

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

I have a question for the Minister of Finance. In the spring, the government announced that they would pass through the full benefit of the federal universal child care benefit payment. Could the treasurer update the House on how this will be achieved?

**Speaker:** The hon. Provincial Treasurer.

**Mr. Murphy:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I want to thank the member for the question.

We did make a commitment in the spring that

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we would pass on the full benefit of the universal child care benefit and, of course, this is the benefit that flows \$100 a month into families for every child under six years of age. The question did come up in the Legislature in the spring. Was that going to be taxable from a personal income tax point of view? And we had made a commitment at that time that, no, it would not be a taxable benefit. So in order to achieve that, we have to institute a young child tax credit which gives a full benefit of that flowing through to the parents. We do that because of the arrangement we have with Canada Revenue Agency on our tax collection agreement and, effectively, that's the method we have to use to make sure that 100% of that money will flow through to the parents and to the children who qualify.

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

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

Just a quick supplementary question: Can the Provincial Treasurer inform the House as to when the young child tax credit will be available?

**Speaker:** The hon. Provincial Treasurer.

**Mr. Murphy:** Yes, Mr. Speaker. The young child tax credit will become effective July 1, 2006, or when the universal child care benefit begins to flow from the federal government to families. In order to necessitate that we'll have to bring forward some changes to the provincial *Income Tax Act* this fall sitting of the Legislature will allow those provincial tax forms to be changed in time for when people in the spring go to file their taxes for the 2006 taxation year. So I'll bring forward those

changes in the fall sitting of the Legislature.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Kings Square.

**GAMING AND PROBLEM GAMBLING REPORT**

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

My question goes to the Provincial Treasurer. Mr. Treasurer, when you were putting slot machines or slots in the Racino out at the racetrack last February or March or April, did the minister of health show you the gambling study that was done at that time?

**Speaker:** The hon. Provincial Treasurer.

**Mr. Murphy:** Mr. Speaker, I'm aware of the information on gaming, broad spectrum of information and the various analyses that have been done. I don't know what particular study the hon. member is referring to but certainly during the course of deliberations on this and proceeding with the gaming machines, we had access to all kinds of studies and information.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Kings Square.

**Mr. R. Brown:** A question to the minister. The study was done and released to the Cabinet I assume - I hope it was anyway - in February, 2006, well before the decision was made in putting slots in and it's called Gaming and Problem Gambling in Prince Edward Island. That was done by the Department of Health. Did he table this and did he bring it forward to Cabinet?

**Speaker:** The hon. Provincial Treasurer.

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**Mr. Murphy:** Yes, Mr. Speaker, we discussed that study. I don't believe it was that early at that time but we certainly have discussed the study. I believe that's the study that has been released within the last month. We've had a discussion of that when the study was complete in Cabinet. I don't believe it was that early. In fact, I think it was much later than that.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Kings Square.

**Mr. R. Brown:** The minister of health, social services.

One of the key recommendations of that study that the minister gave to Cabinet was that an assessment be done before any new gambling devices were introduced or any new gambling mechanisms were introduced to Prince Edward Island. Minister, when you tabled that document and when the slots came to Cabinet to put into the Racino, did you express your concern that a study should be done on this before we go ahead with this?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Health, Social Services and Seniors.

**Mr. Gillan:** Mr. Speaker, although it was a recommendation of the report, the implementation of all of those recommendations is going to take some period of time and, no, it was not discussed at that time as to whether something such as following up immediately on their recommendations was absolutely necessary.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Kings Square.

**Mr. R. Brown:** And the other question to the minister (indistinct). So the minister of health had a report done professionally, done about the problem gambling in Prince Edward Island, sat on it, brought it to Cabinet while these slots were going in out at the casino and not saying a word about it, not bringing it up. Why did you sit on that report? Why didn't you take this recommendation seriously or is this report just going to gather dust like all the rest?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Health, Social Services and Seniors.

**Mr. Gillan:** Mr. Speaker, that is not the case at all. We did have a committee prior to the opening of the entertainment centre before the Racino opened at all. It was the opinion of that committee and the Department of Health that indeed a study should take place prior to the opening so that we would have a benchmark to compare with what was done in 1999 and now in 2005 before the Racino opened. It was not an attempt to try to capture the early experiences or what was going on with the Racino in its infant stages; it was prior to that. When we did get the release of the report early in 2006, it was also thought that within the department that it would be wise to see what is going to happen over the next couple of months as to whether there's going to be a drastic change. We did monitor for a number of months. There did not seem to be a drastic change. It was never the intention to sit on the report. We did not sit on the report. We did indicate that it would be released and we have done so.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Kings Square.



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

Another question to the same minister. You did see it on the report. You kept it secret. It was done in February. You could have tabled it in this House before the slots went in. You decided to sit on the report, allow the slots to go in and table this report outside the Legislature before the long weekend thinking it would be hidden. Well, it's not hidden.

One of the main recommendations was 3.2. Before introducing new forms of gambling on Prince Edward Island, it is recommended that a potential impact of the new forms of gambling on the overall health and well-being of the population is assessed. Did you do that? You had this report in your hand. You discussed it in Cabinet about slots going in at the new Racino and the tables going in. Did you do the assessment before that recommendation went forward?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Health, Social Services and Seniors.

**Mr. Gillan:** Mr. Speaker, I've already indicated that we were not ready at that time to act on the recommendations and it is pure speculation when the hon. member accuses of the fact that we were sitting on the report. It was not so. He may have his reasons as to why the report was not released immediately. I have indicated, I have made it public that it was done intentionally prior to the opening of the Racino. It was not a snapshot of the Racino this month or this particular week and we did wait a number of months just to see whether or not there were going to be changes. It would have not changed, obviously, the report. It had already been

documented. It had already been printed and we were definitely going to release it on its own merit but we did wait for a number of months to see whether there were any changes at the entertainment centre and there weren't significant changes.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Kings Square.

**Mr. R. Brown:** Mr. Speaker, this discussion was brought up in March of last year, March and April. This minister sat in this House knowing full well that he had a report in his hand. In avoiding any debate on the topic and avoiding discussion in this House, he chose to hide this report during the last sitting of the House when discussions were taking place over this facility. That's a shame. That's a shame. I want to know why he waited so long to release this report. Now he's talking about we wanted to see how things would happen out. You have a report. Why didn't you release it in February or March when it was done?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Health, Social Services and Seniors.

**Mr. Gillan:** Well, Mr. Speaker, I've already replied to those particular answers. But let me just give you a few statistics as to what the report did indicate remembering exactly as the reason when we did and why we did. And it found that this report of 2006, 79.1% of the sample representative adults in Prince Edward Island were considered not to be problem gamblers. That had not changed since 1999. There is the significance. Approximately 80% of Prince Edward Islanders are not problem gamblers; however, 1.2% were found to be at low risk, .7% were moderate risk, and .9% are

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problem gamblers. Mr. Speaker, a lot of time, a lot of effort and a lot of expense went into putting individuals who were hired at the entertainment centre to find out, to monitor on a day by day and a monthly basis exactly what individuals and how many of those individuals were at a risk stage. And after a number of months, it was found that indeed there were no different, statistically different replies coming out of the entertainment centre than there had been previously. That is the reason why we didn't release it immediately. We wanted to know exactly what is the difference and there was not a significant difference.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Kings Square.

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

On page, one of the pages, relative risk ratio for problem gambling - the highest one in the report is video lottery terminals. Close to 40% of people who play this game can get hooked on it. This report basically says it's the crack cocaine of gambling.

**An Hon. Member:** Does it say that?

**Mr. R. Brown:** Yeah, pretty well.

**Speaker:** All right, hon. member.

**Mr. R. Brown:** Minister, you held this report. You held this report while changes were made. That's a shame, Mr. Minister, because you're here to protect the health and wellness of people. This is National Drug and Addiction Week and he held this report while we had a debate in the House. He didn't want this report tabled for a good discussion in this

House and that's a shame. What are you doing about the other recommendation that says VLTs should be reduced on Prince Edward Island?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Health, Social Services and Seniors.

**Mr. Gillan:** Well, Mr. Speaker, once again, he can look at one particular aspect, one line of a report and indicate that a particular form of gambling is more injurious or could be related to problem gamblers. I understand that and I accept that. These are gambling devices and we have to be very diligent. It is my job as the department, as a representative of the Department of Health to monitor just exactly those who are having problem gambings. Let me indicate again we can only learn and attribute as to the success, i.e., are we treating these people, do we have the program set up as to the final statistics as who avails themselves? Let me remind you that in 2005, the gambling addiction services in Mt. Herbert received 102 inquiries and requests for service. Of those 102, 56 individuals participated in individual counseling for gambling, people with gambling problems and nine people completed the group program. It is the intention, it is the responsibility of my department to identify those who may be a risk to come up with the programs. That's exactly what we were doing. We had commissioned a study in 2006 prior to the opening of the Racino. We did wait a few months to find out are there problems there that we had to pay attention to right away and our monitoring program indicated no.

**Speaker:** Final question. The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Kings Square.

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**Mr. R. Brown:** Your job is to protect the health of the people in Prince Edward Island. One of the other recommendations in the report is that we allow, we enforce Atlantic Lotto to do some counter-advertising, counter-advertising. All our advertising is geared towards buying tickets and gambling. Governments are hooked on gambling and hooked on the money that it brings into their coffers. We force tobacco companies to advertise negatively or not to advertise at all. We put ads on about the problem about drinking and that but when it comes to a government run operation, we tend to go away from it. I do not like Atlantic Lotto's advertising policy.

Will you support our resolution in this Legislature asking for Atlantic Lotto to spend at least 10% of their advertising budget, 10% of their advertising budget, explaining the problems with gambling and the potential addictiveness of this problem. Will you support our resolution and these terms?

**Speaker:** The hon. Provincial Treasurer.

**Mr. Murphy:** I'll answer the question, Mr. Speaker, as the minister responsible for the lottery corporation. With regards to the resolution, we'll certainly debate that. I can inform you that we spend well in excess of 10% now, hon. member, but if you'd like to debate the resolution, that's fine. You know, we do agree and the lottery corporation would also agree they have a responsibility to make sure that people game responsibly. Nobody likes to see people who do not game responsibly so there is a bevy of methods that they use to make sure that people are playing responsibly and I'd certainly be happy to expound on those in a later Question Period or

when we get into the debate on the resolution.

**Speaker:** End of Question Period.