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TRANSCRIPT OF
STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS
AND THE
ORAL QUESTION PERIOD
FOR

Friday 1 December 2006

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD 1 DECEMBER 2006 PRELIMINARY PROCEEDINGS

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

Mr. MacAleer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

With the limited time available, I - Mr. Speaker, today immediately following the regular sitting of the Legislative Assembly, it's already been noted by previous speakers the 19th annual Rotary Youth Parliament will begin a two-day legislative session. The Throne speech will be read by the hon. Barbara Hagerman, the provincial Lieutenant Governor and the debate will be directed by the Speaker from Souris-Elmira, you, Mr. Speaker.

Students assume the roles of Island legislators, including that of Speaker, clerk, pages and conduct business within the guidelines of the Canadian Parliamentary tradition.

By participating in actual functions, this experience gives Island students the opportunity to learn first-hand how the Legislature operates and to gain insight into issues elected officials deal with on an ongoing basis. It's very interesting. Some of the issues that will be debated include nuclear energy partnerships, fluoride free water, obesity, tobacco products, and physician shortages.

Mr. Speaker, students have worked hard to prepare themselves for the Rotary Youth Parliament and from what I've seen in the past, they come to listen as well as to spread their own points of view.

Much of the success of this program must be credited to its sponsors. I'd like to thank everyone involved including the Rotary Clubs of Charlottetown and, in particular, Mr. Lou Robinson. I believe the gentleman is from Montague. He's a former police officer or currently police officer and he's been the chairman of the Youth Parliament Committee for some time and the success of this venture must be credited to him. We also have other sponsors including the provincial school boards, the Department of Education and, of course, your office, Mr. Speaker.

In particular, I would like to recognize the Youth Parliament Premier who is Denise Beaton of the Charlottetown Rural and the Leader of the Opposition, Jocelyn O'Brien who comes from Montague High.

I encourage everyone to see these youth parliamentarians in action. The proceedings begin in this chamber at 1:30 today, I understand Mr. Speaker, and will go until 8:30 tonight and they will begin again at 9 o'clock tomorrow morning and will proceed until noon. It is an exciting time for these youth and I'm sure that they would appreciate any of the public who would like to drop in and hear them make their presentations.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Park Corner-Oyster Bed.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD 1 DECEMBER 2006 PRELIMINARY PROCEEDINGS

ISLANDER WINS MISS CANADA GALAXY PAGEANT

Ms. MacKenzie: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

What does a young lady do if she's bright, energetic, and looking for a new challenge? Well, if you are Ashley Murphy, you pack your bags and head for Toronto to represent Prince Edward Island in the Miss Canada Galaxy beauty pageant and you win.

This isn't the first time for Ashley. In 2004, this third year University of Prince Edward Island student without any sponsorship entered the Miss World Canada pageant and placed in the top 12. This time around Ashley was a bit hesitant to enter but she followed through and registered.

On the big night, the pace was hectic and judging seemed to take an eternity. Needless to say, Ashley couldn't believe it when they announced Miss Prince Edward Island was chosen as Miss Canada Galaxy. With the title comes a scholarship, photo shoot, and all-expense paid trip to the World Miss Galaxy Pageant in Orlando, Florida, next July.

Mr. Speaker, as Ashley explains, the judges not only look for physical beauty but rate the contestants on intelligence and inner beauty as well.

Ashley is the daughter of St. Clair and Mary Ellen Murphy of Millvale in my District No. 18 and the granddaughter of Mary Murphy of Whisperwood Villa.

I congratulate Ashley on winning the Miss Canada Galaxy title and wish her continued

success in all her future endeavours.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

BIG BROTHER BIG SISTER PROGRAM

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

And today I'm going to stand up and promote one of my favourite charitable organizations and it is a bit of a conflict for me since I happen to be a volunteer myself. But I think it's a great organization and I just want to see if we can get more people involved and that is Big Brothers Big Sisters.

If you have what it takes to become a part of something big, our volunteers come from all walks of life but have the common goal of wanting to help a child. It's easy to get involved. You don't have to change your life. You just have to make a bit of room for a new friend. Be a Big Brother, Big Sister and share a little magic. If your time is limited, consider one hour per week through our in-school mentoring program. Share the experience with your spouse and become a big couple.

If you're thinking about becoming a Big, consider the benefits children in our program gain. Ninety-one percent feel better about themselves. Sixty-five percent have improved self-confidence. Sixty-seven percent have a better sense of right and wrong. Seventy-six percent show improved school grades. Eighty percent have a better school attendance record. Eighty-two percent develop better relationships with their teacher and 90% get along better with their kids. So Mr. Speaker,

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD 1 DECEMBER 2006 PRELIMINARY PROCEEDINGS

I urge people to get involved and if you're interested in getting involved, you just have to phone 569-KIDS. Again, that's 569-KIDS.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

LEGENDS OF GOLF TICKET SALES

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

My first question today is for the Minister of Tourism and I understand that you and most of the Cabinet had a front row seat for the Legends of Golf event this year. I'm wondering: How much net revenue did the province take in from ticket sales from the Legends of Golf event?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Tourism.

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

The event was very successful. I don't have the exact number here but I'd be pleased to bring it back next week.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: A new question for the minister and that was an interesting answer considering last week in this House the minister was full of information and statistics from the event when he received a question from one of his members of the House.

Again, my question relates to the net revenues from the event. When will the minister have this information?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Tourism.

Mr. P. Brown: I think I just answered that question. I can bring it back on Tuesday. There were 2500 spectators on the first day of the event. There were 4200 spectators the second day of the event. Some of the packages sold were two-day tickets or two-day passes for the event and there were some of those people that were part of corporate sponsorships. So I don't have the absolute net amount of the ticket sales today but I would be very pleased to bring that back as I already told the hon. member.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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

You'd think the minister would have that information on his fingertips considering when an hon. member from his own party asks the question, he's got all that information available. But Islanders are tired of the games that this government plays.

The event management agreement that your deputy minister signed clearly states that the profits from the Legends of Golf will be shared between IMG and Tourism PEI. The agreement says, and I quote: IMG agrees that the final accounting will be sent to Tourism PEI no later than the First of December of each year. The agreement goes on to say: Upon calculation of net profits, IMG shall promptly pay Tourism PEI 50% of such net profits. Mr. Minister, what are the net profits

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD 1 DECEMBER 2006 PRELIMINARY PROCEEDINGS

for the event? Today is the deadline. How much did IMG write a cheque to you for?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Tourism.

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

And as I stated earlier, I don't have that agreement with me here today. I will be very pleased to bring it back but the hon. member makes a good point. This was a very successful partnership between my department, Tourism PEI, as well as IMG, the international marketing group that represents many of the professional athletes, including Mr. Watson and Mr. Nicklaus, and the event was very good. IMG continues to sell the event to networks throughout the world. And as I said in question last week, we expect that this event will be broadcast on networks throughout North America and the world. Indeed, Sky Television broadcast it in Europe this fall and so the revenues continue to roll in. But IMG is a very trustworthy firm and they will be submitting the final documentation. Today is December 1st and I haven't received that yet but I'm sure that it's on the way.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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

And the minister stands up and talks about what an important event this is. He gets one of his members to ask a question in the House so this minister can stand up and gloat about how successful he thinks this event was. I'm just wondering. If this event was so successful and if he's done such great work with IMG, surely

since today is December 1st he must have an idea on whether or not this whole event made any money for the province. Does the minister have any idea whether or not he will be receiving a cheque from IMG or not?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Tourism.

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

And this event made a lot of money for the province because these events spin off in a lot of ways. Eighty-four percent of the people who came to the event came to Prince Edward Island that particular time of the year for that event alone. That was their motivating cause. Those people stayed in hotel rooms. Those people bought meals at restaurants. They bought souvenirs. They contributed a lot to the Island economy and, of course, we know when every contribution is made to the Island economy, there's a tax revenue recovered. But as far as the full accounting of the event itself and I think that's what the hon. member is referring to, I'd be happy to bring that forward. Now today is December 1st and that was the deadline for that being done. It is normal in these things that that becomes the year end of that particular event.

As I've already explained to the House, this is a three-year event so we're beginning today for next year's event as well. And so we do the accounting up to December 1st and when that's all done, the statements will be sent to the department.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD 1 DECEMBER 2006 PRELIMINARY PROCEEDINGS

GOLFING WITH NICKLAUS AND WATSON

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

Seems to be a lot of spin coming from that minister. I'm going to ask the Premier a question. Perhaps he can shed some light on this event. After all, I understand he had a front row seat.

On June 19th as part of the charitable program of the event, a number of lucky Canadians paid for the privilege of golfing with Jack Nicklaus. I'm wondering: Did the Premier also golf with Jack Nicklaus?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier Binns: Yes, Mr. Speaker. On the Pro Am day, I had the opportunity of accompanying Mr. Nicklaus and other sponsor participants and it was a great day. It brought a lot of recognition to Prince Edward Island's scallop product. Jack Nicklaus, of course, is probably recognized in the world as the top golfer historically, 'The Golden Bear', and he brought a lot of credibility to our product. He spoke very highly of our facilities here and, of course, that television product is being aired across North America and the world bringing even more attention to Prince Edward Island.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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

As I said, a lucky Canadian bid for the opportunity to play with Jack Nicklaus and I

understand those proceeds went to charity.

Mr. Premier, I'm wondering: What did you pay for your once in a lifetime opportunity to golf with Jack Nicklaus? That is quite an honour and it must have cost you dearly. I'm wondering if you can inform this House how much you paid to golf with Mr. Nicklaus.

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier Binns: Mr. Speaker, I was there as the government representative representing the Province of Prince Edward Island and since we own the golf courses and facilities and we're the major sponsor of the event, I was there as the government representative.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: That's an awfully nice perk, Mr. Speaker.

I'm wondering, Mr. Premier, I also heard that your chief political operative, Peter McQuaid, was on the golf junket as well. I'm wondering: Did he golf with Jack Nicklaus or Tom Watson?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier Binns: Mr. Speaker, I'll have to check back as to exactly who golfed where. I will bring that information on Tuesday.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you very much.

Was he in your group?

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD 1 DECEMBER 2006 PRELIMINARY PROCEEDINGS

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier Binns: I don't believe so, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Your golfing with Jack Nicklaus must be quite the honour. You just mentioned how great he was and everything and he doesn't even remember who was in his group.

I'm wondering - a supplementary question: Does he know if his political operatives paid for their round of golf?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier Binns: Mr. Speaker, the government participants would not have paid for their rounds of golf. They were there as part of the government sponsorship of the program and given that our people were involved in promoting the event in bringing the event to Prince Edward Island, we wanted to be there to make sure that it would come off successfully. As to who golfed where, I can bring that information back. Sometimes I don't remember every detail of every event that takes place and I think the hon. member would understand that.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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

I've got a new question now for the Premier. And one of the great things about the Pro Am was the fact that it was charitably run by the Making the Connections charity and that they

donated one of their spots to the Heart and Stroke Foundation. And the Heart and Stroke Foundation then auctioned off that spot for \$17,000, all of which went to their charitable causes. Is it true, Mr. Speaker, a spot that you took for free was valued at \$17,000?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Tourism.

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

And it is true that the main sponsor that Pfizer, the company that was main sponsor contributed a huge corporate sponsorship to this event offered to the Heart and Stroke Foundation places on the Pro Am teams with Mr. Watson and Mr. Nicklaus. And in fact, there were two spots on the teams that were earned by people of the auction. They originally put up one and then there was one also on the Pro Am team for Mr. Watson as well and those were contributed by the main sponsor of Pfizer International.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Wow! Couple of charitable spots and then the Premier and his buddies. Quite the deal. I'm wondering - the Premier didn't want to seem to answer the questions on that. I'm wondering: Did the Minister of Tourism also lay golf with them or just the Premier?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Tourism.

Mr. P. Brown: Mr. Speaker, I'll have to admit that it was an opportunity of a lifetime. I participated in the Pro Am with Mr. Watson.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD 1 DECEMBER 2006 PRELIMINARY PROCEEDINGS

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

I'm going to go back to the Premier then because I'm asking questions about golfing with Jack Nicklaus. But before I do that, why don't I go to perhaps the Minister of Tourism because he has perhaps a better knowledge of remembering that day. I'm wondering: Did you - you said you golfed with Mr. Watson. Who else played in your foursome?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Tourism.

Mr. P. Brown: I'd be happy to bring that back. There was a representative from Pfizer. It was a person who competed for the auction and so if you want me to bring back the names, I know we kept that information. It would be at the office.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you.

Another person who has a legendary day on a golf course and doesn't remember who was in the foursome. Was Peter McQuaid in your foursome?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Tourism.

Mr. P. Brown: No, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you. It's nice to know that the Minister of Tourism has a little bit better knowledge of what happened that day than perhaps the Premier did.

Mr. Premier, this raises serious questions why

you and one of your ministers would take up a couple of golf spots perhaps valued in the \$34,000 range. After all, the purpose of the event from one perspective was to raise money for charity, not to give you and your minister a once in a lifetime opportunity to golf with Jack Nicklaus and Tom Watson.

With all the worthwhile charities that could have benefited from this event, what made you feel that you were entitled to such extravagance?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier Binns: Mr. Speaker, it was not extravagance. As I say, the province was the lead in terms of bringing this event to Prince Edward Island and for that reason, obviously, we were involved. For clarification, I was actually a guest of Pfizer in the golf Pro Am and felt that because they had taken this major role in the event and sponsorship that it was probably the right thing to do to attend along with them.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: That's interesting. I hope everybody is paying attention. Earlier the Premier was talking he was golfing because he owned the golf courses. The province owned the golf courses because they were one of the main sponsors and now he's talking about now that he's a guest of Pfizer. I'm wondering. Does the Premier not believe that perhaps he should have said to Pfizer: That's okay. I don't need the spot. I notice you can get \$17,000 for charity. Why don't we raise a little bit more money for charity. I don't need that opportunity to golf with Jack Nicklaus.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD 1 DECEMBER 2006 PRELIMINARY PROCEEDINGS

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier Binns: Well, Mr. Speaker, obviously, Pfizer brought a lot to this event. They invested in it. They would want their partners, being government to be involved, and I was asked to participate on that basis. And I know he wants to create some sort of political story here. The reality is that this was a great event for Prince Edward Island. We had two of the world's best golfers come to Prince Edward Island to help bring exposure to our golf product. I mean we have the finest facilities in Eastern Canada, sometimes recognized as the best facilities in Canada. And if we don't promote that, Mr. Speaker, other people around the world aren't going to know and as a result of the promotion, we do have people who come to Prince Edward Island to golf our product, to stay in our hotels, to eat in the restaurants, to attend the theatres, to buy the crafts. And so when you have sponsors at an event like that, you pay a little bit of attention to them, give them support. You work with them and that's exactly what we did and we're proud of it.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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

Wow! If Pfizer agrees to sponsor the Legends of Golf event and I guess one of the conditions for them sponsoring the event was that they wanted the Premier to golf with Jack Nicklaus. I guess the Premier must carry quite a bit of weight.

I've got the agreement here between IMG and the province. I'm wondering. Can the minister point me to the page where they wanted to

make sure that the Premier was golfing with Jack Nicklaus to get that sponsorship?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Tourism.

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

And the hon. member would know that that wasn't a part of the agreement. Pfizer put forward that offer at that time and just in response to the previous question, he asked if Mr. McQuaid was on my team and he wasn't because every time I golfed with Mr. McQuaid I always remember because we're usually in the sand.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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

Just one more question to the Premier. I'm wondering. Next year the event is coming up. There's going to be some new faces here, some new legends. I'm wondering: If you get the opportunity again to be offered to golf with someone when those prizes are going or those spots are going for somewhere around \$17,000, I'm wondering would you take that opportunity again or would you do the right thing and perhaps put it up for charity or allow someone else to take that position?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier Binns: Well, Mr. Speaker, I think it is my responsibility to work with these sponsors when they come to Prince Edward Island and help bring recognition to the product we have. And if I can cooperate with them in making Prince Edward Island to continue to be a leading destination in terms

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD 1 DECEMBER 2006 PRELIMINARY PROCEEDINGS

of golf, then I will work in that regard. I make no apologies for having done that. He's trying to create a political issue here where there really isn't one but I'm sure he thinks it's good spin. He's now trying to denigrate our golf product, our industry on PEI that we worked so hard to do. This is a \$70 million industry. It brings a lot of revenue, a lot of attention to Prince Edward Island. The tourism business in this province, to a large extent, depends on this industry for a good portion of its revenue and we have no qualms about supporting it. If he wants to try and take it down, that's up to him.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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

And that's quite a shame that the Premier believes that he has to be there to participate in these events when he could be offering those spots for charity. It's just quite unbelievable but that's, obviously, a different of opinion between that side of the House and this side of the House.

SCRAPING OF DIRT ROADS

I've now got a question for the Minister of Transportation and Public Works. I'm wondering: Can she inform me how many times a summer do dirt roads get paved?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Transportation and Public Works.

Ms. Shea: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I assume if a dirt road got paved, it would get paved once.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Good point, Mr. Speaker.

I meant to say: How many times does a dirt road get scraped?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Transportation and Public Works.

Ms. Shea: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

That would vary depending on the condition of the road.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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

I've had concerns from people who live close to the Old Town Road who claimed that last summer the road was scraped twice at the beginning and then after no one managed to come back. I'm wondering: Would the minister be willing to check into that information and come back and find out why it was only scraped twice at the beginning of the summer and then neglected for the rest?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Transportation and Public Works.

Ms. Shea: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

After the initial scraping in the spring and the application of calcium to the road, then we try not to scrape it again because what happens is you scrape the calcium off. So we go back and scrape it only if necessary but I will look into that matter.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD 1 DECEMBER 2006 PRELIMINARY PROCEEDINGS

Speaker: The hon. Member from Glen Stewart-Bellevue Cove.

**EMPLOYMENT POLICIES RE
SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS**

Dr. McKenna: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think it's a pleasure to give the Leader of the Opposition a break.

My question is to the minister of education and I got a few phone calls last week regarding our policy on substitute teachers. I have a young aspiring teacher, I guess, who graduated last year from the education program and is getting very few days as a substitute teacher. Can you give the House the policy on hiring substitute teachers?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Education and Attorney General.

Ms. Dover: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Yes, and in relation to teachers who took the package, for example, the early retirement package, there is a prohibition on their returning to substitute for five years. Now we did leave the door open a little bit, hon. member. If, for example, the teacher has a certain expertise that is not easily available when the call goes out early in the morning to find a substitute, for example, if it's a teacher who teaches advanced math and a substitute is needed, let's say, in Souris, then if no one else can be found easily under what they call kind of a dire need, that person who took the package can be called in. But unless it's that kind of a circumstances, teachers who took the retirement package are not supposed to come back into the schools for five years. Now other teachers who retired, let's say four

years ago or whatever, can go back into the school system to teach but we try and encourage the teachers who took retirement to not do that unless it is, like I say, an exceptional circumstance because we do want these younger teachers who have gone through or paid for their education who are teachers - some might call them teachers in waiting - but we do want to get them into the classroom because that's where the strength of our future teachers will come.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Glen Stewart-Bellevue Cove.

Dr. McKenna: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Now what can I tell this young student or young teacher because she got two days in this year and the school she goes to, she says some teachers are there three times a week who are retired. Does she have to go visit the principal? What do you suggest she would do to get on the list to be called more frequently?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Education and Attorney General.

Ms. Dover: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

There seems to be more of a problem in this regard in the Eastern School District, I have to say. We haven't gotten any complaints from the western or the French school boards. We've spoken to both the superintendent and I know the superintendent has spoken to the principals in the school to make sure that teachers who took the package are not brought back in unless they have a specific expertise. But in regard to the young lady that you're talking about, she should be sure that she has her resume in. It might be useful for her to go

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD 1 DECEMBER 2006 PRELIMINARY PROCEEDINGS

to the principals and talk to them about her special qualifications and make sure that when the call comes in the morning that she is available because, obviously, they're going to go back to someone who is available upon the call. So those would be the kinds of things that I would urge the young lady to keep in mind.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Borden-Kinkora.

CLARK MILL BRIDGE

Mr. McCardle: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

My question this morning is for the Minister of Transportation and Public Works. The Clark Mill bridge over the Wilmot River on the MacMurdo Road has been closed to all but passenger vehicles for this past year. This bridge is in the very heart of the potato growing districts of 19 and 20 and is of major importance to farmers and commercial truckers alike. Can the minister update the House on replacement structure for this very important transportation link?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Transportation and Public Works.

Ms. Shea: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I am happy to report that we will be replacing yet another bridge structure. The structure is very expensive to replace and I guess we only realize their full value to our highway system when a bridge fails and the road has to be closed. So the design for the Clarks Mill bridge is currently being worked on over this winter and we expect the replacement work to start in the spring of 2007 and the work will

take approximately four to five months to complete. I want to thank the public in that area, the traveling public, for their patience. I know it's been inconvenient but I'm sure that the modern, new structure will be well worth the wait.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

YOUTH ADDICTION TREATMENT

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

My next question is for the minister of health and I've had the opportunity recently to attend some meetings with some parents who are very concerned in this province about youth addictions. And I'm wondering: Can you go through the process on exactly what, where a child who does have an addiction, what the process is to get that child treatment, where the facility is on Prince Edward Island for them?

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

Mr. Gillan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The issue which the hon. Leader is referring to is a serious one and the government is certainly taking it seriously. In recent years as you are probably very well aware, youth substance abuse as opposed to addictions - not all of the individuals are addicted at this early age - but there is a substance abuse issue which the parents often will bring to the attention of either school authorities or to the government. The solutions are not readily found. We do have individuals throughout the province who will work with our addiction

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD 1 DECEMBER 2006 PRELIMINARY PROCEEDINGS

support program, i.e. the government officials who are trained in this substance abuse and who offer counseling. Some of the schools do have programs and teachers and guidance staff work with those individuals. But over and above that, this problem is getting more widespread rather than disappearing and the government along with interested parents' groups are now taking a look at a more long-term better solution.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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

And this is a very serious issue and substance abuse and youth addictions are becoming much more common today. And I believe, as government, we should be moving in a direction to help out these families and to help out these youth. I'm wondering right now. A youth who does have a substance abuse program or an addiction program, is there a facility in Prince Edward Island for them to go to?

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

Mr. Gillan: Mr. Speaker, there is a facility and I believe that most individuals in the province who are suffering from this at some time or another have contact with and maybe entrance into the Mt. Herbert Addictions Centre. That is the provincial centre treating addictions. Alcoholics, gamblers - we've talked about that and also those who are suffering from drug abuse, not only the youth but more particularly, that treatment centre is aimed at helping adults. And there, Mr. Speaker, is the crux of the situation is that

there are a couple of beds depending upon the population at any particular time which the youth could go for a limited number of days and receive some help but really what we are looking at now is to have a separate facility to be able to address the needs. Presently, if an individual, a youth that is of the extreme case where they do need emergency type help and they do need it now, individuals have been sent to New Brunswick. There is an establishment there, a treatment centre there that we can have access. It is of long term. It is also at the voluntary admission state meaning that only those individuals who want to go to be treated do go and it can last anywhere from one to three months.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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

And I find it quite unfortunate that here on Prince Edward Island our youth really don't have their own facility to go to. And as the minister mentioned, they can go to Mt. Herbert. There's a couple of beds there but that facility is with adults as well. And as we all know when you're looking for treatment along those lines, it's not good to mix the adults and the youth together.

I'm wondering. I've met with many parents, especially in the East Prince sort of area of the province who are very concerned about this. They mention there that the youth custody facility in Summerside is not being utilized to its full extent and some are hoping and I believe it would be a great move on government's part if they turned part of that facility into a youth addictions' centre. I'm wondering: Can the minister tell us whether or

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD 1 DECEMBER 2006 PRELIMINARY PROCEEDINGS

not he thinks that would be a good idea?

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

Mr. Gillan: Well, Mr. Speaker, in my previous responses, I had indicated that it is a relatively recent idea in the last 10 years and we do want to take our time to be sure that we're making the very best possible use of funding opportunities of existing facilities. We are very pleased with the programming that was offered out of province but it doesn't apply readily to everybody and these families would prefer to have their youth closer to home, i.e. in the province.

We have looked at the program need first of all. That led us then to examine the possible facility options here in the province and the Summerside correctional area institution there is one of those which we have looked at. The quick difficulty is that as a centre that would again have to be shared. There are both advantages and disadvantages but it is one of the areas that we have looked at, one of the facilities along with a number of other areas. We want to do the very best thing for these individuals and while I am responding at this time, I would also mention the fact - and the Leader may not agree with this point - but with the law presently as it is, this has to be voluntary. And we're cognizant of that that it is a voluntary entry into a facility no matter where it is located in this province or elsewhere and if the individual did not want to stay, then there is no law that can force that individual so we're looking at that as well. We are definitely wanting to work with the parents. We definitely do need a type of facility which we do not have now and that is the area which we are pursuing.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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

And the minister mentions that this has been a relatively new problem over the last 10 years. I disagree with that as well. I think youth addictions have been around for quite awhile now. Whether or not we're talking one month, one year or ten years, every day longer that we wait to help get these kids treatment is being more detrimental on their lives and on the lives of their families and on society in general.

I'm wondering: Does the minister have any time lines on when his government is willing to move on this? I urge him to move as quickly as possible.

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

Mr. Gillan: Yes, Mr. Speaker, we do have a time line. We now have a strategy. We have listened to, I'm sure, the very same people, the youth group, parent group that the Leader of the Opposition has heard from. We have been listening to and working with those individuals. We are now at the policy stage. We will be pursuing for sure. It's not something that we are going to say, well, we will sit on it for awhile to see whether there is a deepening need or a worsening need. We know that the need is there. We are going to work on it. It's now at the point of where best should it be located, what it will look like, who it will serve. All of those details are we are now looking at.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD 1 DECEMBER 2006 PRELIMINARY PROCEEDINGS

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you very much.

Just one quick question just back to the minister here. This is an important issue. I know you said you have a time line and you have a strategy. If you do that, you should be able to tell this house. Are we looking at one month before a facility opens? Are we looking at six months or are we looking at a longer period of time?

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

Mr. Gillan: Mr. Speaker, we would be in a position to fairly early in the new year indicate to these individuals exactly where we are looking for a facility to be located, what the type of programming would be offered and then it will be a matter of, I'm sure, only months before we are actually able to do the necessary physical renovations and/or adjustments to a facility to get it ready for occupancy. So this is not something that we wanted to sit on. As I said, early in the new year information now will be able to be shared with those individuals. The policy is pretty well firmed up.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

SPECIAL WARRANT - CREDIT LOSSES

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

And I urge from this side of the House the minister to move as quickly as possible because I've had the same meetings and I know this is a very pressing issue here in Prince Edward Island but I've now got a

question for the minister of development. In early November, a special warrant was passed by Cabinet for \$2.3 million. It's to cover - and I quote - provisions for possible credit losses. Will the minister please explain why you need \$2.3 million for possible credit losses?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Development and Technology.

Mr. Currie: Mr. Speaker, it's an accounting principle that we have to apply on loans that we have out and it's money that we set aside for possible losses in the future.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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

I find this particular special warrant puzzling. On the one hand, it talks about possible credit losses yet on the other hand, it also covers the last fiscal year. So will the minister please explain why \$2.3 million was put aside from last year's budget to cover possible credit losses?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Development and Technology.

Mr. Currie: Mr. Speaker, it's a standard procedure that you have to apply when you lend money that you have to set aside a certain amount of money for possible losses and it's just an accounting principle that we apply when you lend money.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD 1 DECEMBER 2006 PRELIMINARY PROCEEDINGS

Is it standard to always put it out through special warrant or isn't it always included in the budget for these losses?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Development and Technology.

Mr. Currie: Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member should be aware, anything over a million dollars that's put out in this case when it goes through Executive Council, it is posted.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: I realize that but a special warrant is something that happens outside the budget. I'm wondering why these provisional losses aren't included in the budget.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Development and Technology.

Mr. Currie: Mr. Speaker, in this case, it's the amount of money that we have owed and we have to apply it and we do it every year.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you.

So last year did you loan out extra money that was not included in the budget and that's why you had to issue the special warrant?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Development and Technology.

Mr. Currie: Mr. Speaker, it's the size of a portfolio and you have to account a certain percentage of that for possible losses and that's what we applied.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: So are you telling this House that in the budget you don't provide any special provisions for losses? You wait until the next year and do it all through special warrants.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Development and Technology.

Mr. Currie: Mr. Speaker, we do have a line in our Budget Estimates for provision for losses but as our account grows or decreases from year to year, it's applied accordingly.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you and I understand that. So you would have a certain amount in the budget for loans and then you would have a certain amount for provisional losses. You would think that they would match up. I'm wondering: Does that mean that last year you in fact put out more loans than you were anticipating in putting out?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Development and Technology.

Mr. Currie: I believe the hon. member is starting to understand and that's exactly what we have done. And certainly I think by the look of our economy and the way jobs are created on this province and our faith in the private sector, it shows.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD 1 DECEMBER 2006 PRELIMINARY PROCEEDINGS

And I wish the minister just had of said that at the beginning. We could have saved a little bit of time here but I'm wondering: Can the minister please tell us which extra loans that you gave out last year that were not included in your budget?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Development and Technology.

Mr. Currie: Mr. Speaker, we lend a lot of money to the private sector across PEI and I think you can see that this government has engaged the private sector over the last number of years and we've been very aggressive on rebate programs and certainly to make them competitive to compete across the world. I think it shows in the amount of jobs that was created on PEI and, certainly, I think we're very proud of what the private sector has done and very proud to support them.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: I guess he didn't hear my question. I'm wondering: Can he bring back a copy of the extra loans that you obviously loaned out last year on why you need these provisional losses now?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Development and Technology.

Mr. Currie: Mr. Speaker, I'll probably bring back the sectors. I don't think I'll be specific in what companies we're loaning money to.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you.

Can you bring back how much in additional

loans you put out next Tuesday in the House?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Development and Technology.

Mr. Currie: Mr. Speaker, yes, I'll bring that back.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

CORNWALL BY-PASS

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

I'm going to go back now to the Minister of Transportation and Public Works. Way, way back in the late 1990s, the former minister of transportation said a by-pass around the community of Cornwall was a major priority of this government yet the project has stalled. For several years now, this government has blamed Ottawa for its inability to move forward on the by-pass. Now there seems to be a change in Ottawa with the new government. I'm wondering: Are you ready now to start construction on the Cornwall by-pass?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Transportation and Public Works.

Ms. Shea: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I wasn't around in the late nineties when the former minister was there and I wasn't privy to the conversation that was had between the minister and the federal minister at the time. But I do understand that the federal minister at the time had made a commitment to the Cornwall by-pass which was never followed through on. Since that time, we have focused

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD 1 DECEMBER 2006 PRELIMINARY PROCEEDINGS

on upgrading route 2 and we have focused on trying to get route 2 to become part of the national highway system, which we were successful in doing. And any of the traveling public who travels route 2 would know that there has been some very major upgrades happening and we hope to continue that. And we have made our case to Ottawa for additional funding that does include the Cornwall by-pass but, first and foremost, our top priority is route 2 and secondly is the Cornwall by-pass.

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

SENIORS' EMERGENCY HOME REPAIR PROGRAM (FURTHER)

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

And I'm not sure who to go to now. I think I'll go back to the minister of health because I've got an important question for you and we were having this debate last week and it was over the Seniors' Emergency Home Repair Program, the one that during the last election your government had promised to double and then for some reason shortly after the election a year or so after the election, you cancelled it. I'm wondering: When can we expect to see that program re-instated? Will it be re-instated in the next budget?

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

Mr. Gillan: Mr. Speaker, again reverting back to the previous conversations and we did have a number of them on this very worthwhile and practical program. And we on

the government side of the House are as anxious to be able to re-instate that program as is the Opposition. Obviously - and I know that the hon. Leader of the Opposition knows this - there is a procedure to go through and it's called Budget Cabinet. I certainly, on behalf of my Department of Social Services and Seniors, will be putting forth that as an initiative and it is hopeful that we will be able to re-instate it.

Speaker: End of Question Period.