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

**Wednesday 6 December 2006**



**ORAL QUESTION PERIOD 6 DECEMBER 2006 PRELIMINARY PROCEEDINGS**

**STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS**

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from West Point-Bloomfield.

**O'LEARY LADIES AID AUXILIARY**

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

On November 14, 1956, an energetic group of ladies met in the basement of the O'Leary Elementary School and thus began the Community Hospital O'Leary Ladies Auxiliary. At that time, the organization was known as Community Hospital Ladies Aid.

Over the last 50 years, this dedicated group of ladies has accomplished a great deal and provided the hospital with much needed and useful pieces of equipment and materials. Today the community Hospital Ladies Auxiliary operates the New to You Shop out of guardian Drugs as a fundraiser and provides clothing for needy families as well. In total, they have provided the hospital with more than a half a million dollars in funding over the years.

Recently, the Community Hospital Ladies Auxiliary held a 50h anniversary celebration and presented gifts to numerous individuals. To mention a few, presentations were made to Marion MacKenzie, a founding member and the first president of the auxiliary, and to Isabel Stetson, the only charter member still active. In addition during the banquet, Ruth Smallman and Wanda Dunbar performed a short skit which highlighted some great memories of the auxiliary's many years of community service.

Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the members of

the Community Hospital O'Leary Ladies Auxiliary for their untiring efforts over the past 50 years and I know work continues and plans are made to continue into the future.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Belfast-Pownal Bay.

**SPECIAL RECOGNITION TO SHELLFISHERS**

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

What I'd first like to recognize the shellfish industry and it's chairman, Clifford Bernard, who I understand is in the gallery.

Two longstanding members of the Prince Edward Island shellfish industry were honoured recently for their contributions and development of this industry. Provincial Minister Shellfish Recognition Award was presented to John MacLeod of Vernon, better known as 'JD' and Sandy Mills of Lower Newtown.

The shellfish industry contributes almost \$70 million to our Island economy and provides employment for more than 2500 people. JD MacLeod has been involved with the shellfish industry for 50 years and is deeply connected to the Vernon and the Orwell Rivers. He purchased his first oyster lease almost 40 years ago and has always had two or three leases on the Vernon and Orwell Rivers.

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John is married to Jean and they have two children, David and Kim, and five grandchildren. JD and his son, David, also operate the family farm.

In 1994, John was a founding member of the Orwell-Vernon River Watershed Management Association and he continues to work very hard to conserve our rivers. John has also been a long-standing member of the Queens County Shellfish Association, the PEI Aquaculture Alliance, and the PEI Shellfish Association.

Sandy Mills also has been active and a member of the mussel industry for many years. Sandy began working with Joe VanDenBrent, Prince Edward Island's pioneer mussel farmer in the early Eighties and now works for United Mussel Farms. Sandy puts long hours in as a crew supervisor-boat captain and is also a diver. He continues to work hard in many aspects of the daily operations of the mussel industry.

Sandy lives in Lower Newtown with his wife, Jeannette, and two children and says he is very optimistic about the future of the shellfish industry.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of my colleagues, I extend sincere congratulations and a big thank-you to these two fine gentlemen.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

## MONTREAL MASSACRE REMEMBRANCE

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

Earlier today, members of this Legislature and of the community came together at Memorial Hall for a service of remembrance because on December 6, 1989, classes were in session at the École Polytechnique at the University of Montreal located on the north slope of Montréal. It was the largest engineering school in Canada with about 5,000 students enrolled at that time. A six-storey, yellow brick building housed the classrooms and offices.

To the students, it seemed like a normal day, cold and drizzly. It was the last day of the session, final presentations going on in different places. About 60 students sat in the classroom on the building's second floor. It was just after 5:00 p.m. and the sky had darkened. For some that made it easier to focus on the lecturer offered by two students about the mechanics of heat transfer, the incident that day only minutes away. For 45 minutes that day 17 years ago, an enraged gunman roamed the corridors of this university killing 14 women.

Marc Lepine, 25, separated the men from the women before opening fire on the classroom of female engineering students. Violence of this nature, regardless of motivation, is always deeply disturbing. This incident, however, was doubly shocking due to the motivation of the killer. Lepine blamed many of his problems in life, including not being accepted into engineering school on females. This eventually manifested itself in what is now called the Montreal Massacre.

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Today we remember those women, their families, their friends. We also remember all victims of violence. Marc Lepine was a troubled man in his twenties and was an at-risk youth in his formative years. Violence, hate, and revenge led to such a horrific loss of human life and potential.

We need to ensure that both men and women are respected. We need to raise both to believe that aggression and violence are unacceptable forms of self-expression. We need to encourage and model values of empathy, respect, and care rather than strength and dominance. Let us not forget that the strongest people are actually the most self-aware and caring.

So Mr. Speaker, in closing, we remember their memories today but also the hope that by continued work to create a healthy society we can promote and inspire connection, inclusiveness, and non-violence in all relationships.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

The hon. Minister of Tourism.

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

And at the end of Question Period, I'll be tabling a number of documents relative to the questions asked about the Legends of Golf event.

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

**NEW MONTAGUE SCHOOL  
(FURTHER)**

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

Hopefully, he doesn't have selective amnesia like the Premier and will remember who was golfing that day. But my first question is for the minister of education today and, Madam Minister, on a November 28<sup>th</sup> media report, you indicated that a public meeting would be held last week to discuss the results of the environmental assessment of the Montague School.

Mr. Speaker, the minister is not being open with the parents and students of the Montague School. An environmental site assessment was never undertaken. Why, Minister, why would you suggest that a proper environmental assessment was being undertaken when, of course, that was not the case?

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

**Ms. Dover:** Well, Mr. Speaker, the environmental part of building any school or any building like that is done under transportation and public works but what I did indicate in the House when I was asked about it was that there was an environmental assessment done, that there was going to be a meeting of parents and staff in Montague with members of the transportation and public works and with some education staff. That meeting was held and it's my understanding that the gentleman from transportation and public works did an excellent job, I'm told, in explaining just what was in the report and answering the questions that were there. My

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staff say that the people who were in attendance were very pleased with the answers that were there and I've tabled the assessment, environmental assessment, last week here in the House.

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

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

Madam Minister, was that a public meeting? Was that open to anyone?

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

**Ms. Dover:** Mr. Speaker, the meeting was held at the request of parents and staff and the - it was actually a meeting that was called by the principal, it's my understanding. It wasn't one that we called ourselves but it's my understanding that the principal sent out messages to the parents of the students and that the staff were invited as well.

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

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

It was my understanding that it was not a public meeting and if you have to send out invitations, it's not an open, public meeting. A new question for the same minister and I don't believe that an environmental assessment has been carried out. What you carried out was an asbestos abatement study. You also found that there were PCBs present. I think the Friends of Montague High School put it best when they say: An environmental site assessment would expose all possible, harmful hazards

located in the present high school site. Madam Minister, when will the full environmental assessment be undertaken?

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

**Ms. Dover:** Well, Mr. Speaker, it's my understanding that transportation and public works did the same kind of environmental study that they do on any one of these schools. It's my understanding that their results were made available to all members of the House and thence to the public through my tabling of the document last week. So if there are any concerns that some of the parents have indicated to the Opposition, then certainly they should get in touch with the transportation and public works department. I'm sure they're more than able to answer any questions relative to the site.

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

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

I thought all those questions were going to be answered at a public meeting but I guess since that public meeting was not a public meeting and there was no environmental assessment, that's why there's still questions being asked.

I've now got a question for the minister of environment. And your minister of education does not believe the existence of PCBs and asbestos and the current site warrants an environmental assessment I guess. The Friends of Montague High School have a different view. They are concerned about the health and safety of the students. Do you share the minister's view that an

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environmental assessment is now not necessary?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Environment, Energy and Forestry. The hon. Minister of Education and Attorney General.

**Ms. Dover:** Well, Mr. Speaker, thank you.

I think if the hon. member wants to go back into Hansard, he'll see where I said last week that the public meeting or the meeting that was going to be held in Montague was for the parents and the staff and that was the wording that I used. It was not advertised in the paper because it was a meeting that the principal had initiated and it was - and he invited, my understanding, he invited the parents and the staff of the school. It's also very clear to me that the hon. member may be trying to misrepresent the situation because it seems to me that transportation and public works are well aware of what needs to be done, what needs to be tested in an environmental assessment. They did that and as I indicated last week in the House, they've done this in all the schools that have been built across the province. There have been assurances made to everybody involved in all of those schools and in Montague that these are professional people who know how to adequately deal with situations that might present difficulties, not just to the, not just for the environmental health of the building but for themselves, the staff, the students, and anyone else involved. They are concerned about the environmental issues.

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

**UPDATES NEEDED AT ELM STREET SCHOOL**

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

Obviously, the minister should be uncomfortable to hold a public meeting but this is a clear indication of what happens after you're in power for 10 years. Forget about what the parents and the students are saying. The government is right; they're wrong.

I've got another question now for the minister of education. On October 16<sup>th</sup> of this year, the Member from Crapaud-Hazel Grove and I accepted an invitation from the Elm Street Home and School Association. We went and took a tour of the school. Apparently, we were the only MLAs who took them up on their September invitation. Is it little wonder, Mr. Speaker? This school has no cafeteria. Students cook food in microwaves in the classroom. It is drastically over-crowded. The windows are leaking. The roof is leaking. It's electrical system can't accommodate current usage. It was built in the 1960s and is woefully out of date. Madam Minister, when do you plan on visiting Elm Street School?

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

**Ms. Dover:** Well, Mr. Speaker, it seems to me that the hon. member cannot chastize this government in relation to schools across the province. When we got into government, we had to replace one where there was mold and we've since worked with the school boards. They identified the priorities, Eastern, Western, and French School Boards. Each year we have built and worked on schools

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across this province. We have certainly upgraded more schools in our 10 years in government than they did before. As I say, there is absolutely no way that they can chastize this government for any lack of capital repairs and building construction for schools across this province. We've done certainly our share.

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

**Leader of the Opposition:** Again, Mr. Speaker, a minister who stands up and says don't worry about the parents are saying, don't worry about what the students are saying, don't worry about what the teachers are saying. We're the government; we're right. Everyone else is wrong. My question is: When are you going to tour Elm Street School?

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

**Ms. Dover:** Mr. Speaker, I don't know whether the hon. member thinks he can put words in my mouth but he certainly can't. I'll speak for myself and I don't like my words being misrepresented by him standing up and saying she's saying this and she's saying that when I didn't say that. If he wants to quote what I've said, certainly, he's free to do that but if he's going to misrepresent my words, that's not his prerogative.

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

**Leader of the Opposition:** That was a great answer, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Leader of the Opposition:** That's a clear indication of what happens when you're in power for too long. When will the minister be touring Elm Street School?

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

**Ms. Dover:** Mr. Speaker, I've already been to Elm Street School.

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

**Leader of the Opposition:** Thank you very much. When were you there?

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

**Ms. Dover:** Mr. Speaker, I don't have the exact date.

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

**Leader of the Opposition:** Another clear indication of how this government has selective amnesia. They can remember everything that governments did wrong going back to the early 1900s but they can't remember anything that they did wrong over the last 10 years. It's really quite unbelievable that a government can be in that situation but I guess that's what happens when you're in power too long.

More importantly, Madam Minister, when will this school be getting the much needed upgrades that they so desperately need?

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



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**Ms. Dover:** Well, Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned earlier, the school boards indicate their priorities to government and each year we receive those priorities. We work with the school boards and we also do capital repairs around the whole province. We have our current capital projects listed and those are available for the public. I think they were indicated last year during our capital budget. The Minister of Finance will be making his capital budget known again for this year and so in cooperation with the school boards, we designate the schools that are up for repair and/or replacement.

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

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

It's unfortunate that the Elm Street School has been allowed to deteriorate to the extent that it has over the last 10 years. Perhaps one of the greatest problems is the lack of an adequate gym. As the minister knows, an adequate gymnasium is essential for a population of 500 students. I'm sure the minister is aware of the very peculiar problem that the gym poses. Could she inform this House of what that problem is and how she plans on fixing it?

**Ms. Bertram:** Good question.

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

**Ms. Dover:** Well, Mr. Speaker, we have built three new gymnasiums in that area if my memory serves me correctly. We have Athena. We have - we're working certainly on Parkside. Mr. Speaker, we work in

cooperation with the organizing bodies, whether they be school boards or tourism associations. We work with our groups not against them.

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

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

I don't know who the minister is listening to and I wish she'd please listen to the questions in the House because these are very important questions for parents of students who are going to Elm Street School, for potential parents, for the students, and for the teachers.

My question was the gymnasium has a very peculiar problem. I'm wondering: Could you please tell us what that problem is and how you're going to fix it?

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

**Ms. Dover:** Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm sure that information is available to my staff and to the people who are in charge of capital repairs and to the school board. So if he's looking for a list, I can get that and bring the answer back tomorrow but I don't have it on my fingertips right now.

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

**Leader of the Opposition:** Surely, Madam Minister, like you said if you toured the school like you indicated, you would know what the peculiar problem is in the gym. How are you going to fix it and what is the specific problem?

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

**Ms. Dover:** Well, Mr. Speaker, we can't really go in and take the posts down without actually doing a lot more than that. And so the necessities required to fix Elm Street have been pointed out to me by my colleague who represents that area and, certainly, she has made me aware of the issues there. We work, as I say, with the school boards. The school boards identify their top priorities and we will continue to do that.

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

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

Madam Minister, 10 years ago mobiles were put in at the Elm Street School on a temporary basis and guess what? Ten years later the mobiles are still there and they are still full. Here's a school whose enrollment has increased to 510 this year. They actually had to send 30 students to another school because of over-crowding. Madam Minister, here's a school that is old, out of date, and bursting at the seams. They are even teaching in the hallways. Why, Madam Minister, why is Elm Street School being ignored by your government?

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

**Ms. Dover:** Well, Mr. Speaker, actually it's not being ignored by our government. We are currently working on Parkside. That was the top priority identified by the Western School Board and Elm Street is the second on the list. So Mr. Speaker, when we finish the work that

we need to finish in Parkside, it's my understanding that Elm Street will be the next one to be addressed.

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

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

A new question for the same minister and it's clear that for whatever reason, Summerside's voice both around the Caucus and Cabinet table has been either sadly silent or, worse yet, ignored. The students and parents of Summerside deserve better. Madam Minister, give me a date and the parents a date and the students a date when the problems will be addressed at Elm Street School.

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

**Ms. Dover:** Well, Mr. Speaker, as I indicated to the hon. member, we are currently working on Parkside. Elm Street is the one school that the Western School Board has identified as the next priority. As I indicated, I think the hon. member had better look back in history, see what their record was in relation to the mold in the schools and look at the gyms that we've replaced both at Athena and Summerside High and so on, Summerside Intermediate, and I think that the hon. member should actually be giving our government credit for the work that we've done. We've done a lot of school work around the province. We have a capital budget that spans a five-year time span and I think that our government has committed itself to quite a lot of construction during the 10 years that we've been in government.

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

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

And it's unfortunate that the only thing this minister can get up and say is what other governments did in the past. I'm not concerned with that. I'm concerned with what we can do today to make sure that our students can have the best possible education in the safest and best learning environment. That's what I'm concerned with, Madam Minister.

### SCHOOL FOR STRATFORD

But I've got a new question for the minister of education. Parents and community leaders in Stratford are waiting for word on whether or not they will be getting a new school. They're anxious to know what the government plans are. How does Glen Stewart student population projections compare with other schools in the Eastern School District?

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

**Ms. Dover:** Mr. Speaker, I might like to remind the hon. member that when we came into government, the students in Athena were occupying the basement of the old vocational school and the mold that was there was certainly something that the previous government had ignored. The school was condemned and yet they have the audacity to stand in the House and criticize our government. We've spent millions of dollars in the last 10 years to build schools and maybe if the previous, if their previous colleagues had paid more attention to the

schools in Summerside, they wouldn't be in the shape that they were in when we took over or the shape that the hon. member is describing now.

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

**Leader of the Opposition:** Mr. Speaker, a couple of things and the minister used to be a teacher. I wish she'd listen to the questions. I asked a very specific question. I'm not concerned about the past. I don't care if they were Liberal, Conservative, NDP, Green. What I'm concerned with today, Madam Minister, is the education that our students are receiving and I want to make sure that they can receive the best possible education. I want to know a direct answer to this question. How does Glen Stewart student projection populations compare with other schools in the Eastern School District?

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

**Ms. Dover:** Mr. Speaker, maybe if the hon. member would listen to the answers, he wouldn't have to ask the same question all the time. But Mr. Speaker, in relation to Glen Stewart, I think we have to understand that as my colleague, the Minister of Tourism tried to point out yesterday, you work with your associations, with the groups. We have duly elected representatives of the people. The school boards, the trustees are elected. It's a democratic process. They represent the people and they - we work with them. They have asked us to help them look at a study that will be quite pervasive, not only in relation to populations but also in relation to a number of other issues, economic and so on, across not only the Eastern School Board but probably

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the Western School Board and maybe even into the other provinces. But we have to take a look at the declining enrollment issue across our whole province and so the Western School Board has asked us to cooperate with them on that and that's where we are right now.

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

**Leader of the Opposition:** Thank you and just so the minister knows, Glen Stewart, I believe - I could be wrong on this - is in the Eastern School District. But Mr. Speaker, I want to know. In the minister's views, what is an acceptable number of Stratford students to warrant a new school?

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

**Ms. Dover:** Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member knows, the figures for not only Stratford but for Stone Park, all the surrounding schools have been made available, were made available in the report from the Eastern School District and so we're working with the Eastern School District in relation to the issue of declining enrollments in the schools across the province.

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

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

And I understand that, hopefully, there's an assessment underway into the viability of a new, intermediate school in Stratford. I'm wondering: When will that report be ready and will it be ready before the next election?

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

**Ms. Dover:** Well, Mr. Speaker, the Eastern School District just recently submitted their report to the Department of Education and, as I indicated earlier, - Maybe he wasn't listening - we will work with the Eastern School District in order to decide where we go from here.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from St. Eleanors-Summerside.

### FUNDING FOR GENERATION XX

**Ms. MacDonald:** Mr. Speaker, my question today is for the Minister of Development and Technology.

Generation XX in my district is a non-profit, youth organization in Summerside which recently celebrated its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary. This youth centre offers life skill development and a safe haven for 13 to 18-year-olds in the city. My question for the minister is the volunteer board recently made an application to the Community Development Bureau for funding towards its capital campaign. Can the minister inform this House the status of this application?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Development and Technology.

**Mr. Currie:** Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased to announce that we did make a funding requirement for Generation XX and it certainly plays an important role in the city of Summerside for the youth. I'd like to thank the volunteer board for the hard work they do with the youth of Summerside and also for the

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two members from Summerside and very pleased to announce that we've contributed \$20,000 to Generation XX.

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

**PUBLIC TRANSIT FUND**

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Alberton-Miminegash.

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

I have a question for the Minister of Community and Cultural Affairs who I understand is responsible for the public transit fund for Prince Edward Island. I'd like the minister to inform the House if there's any money for support for research for an Island-wide transit system.

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Community and Cultural Affairs.

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

Yes, under the public transit funding that's available to the province, there are applications that were in from the PEI Coalition along with West Prince transportation for studies.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Alberton-Miminegash.

**Mr. Dunn:** Under the same fund, I'm just wondering if there's any assistance going to be provided for Transportation West which is an organization of volunteers in the West Prince area who provide a wonderful service for people who have challenges and I'm wondering if there's any consideration given

to that organization under the funding program.

**Leader of the Opposition:** Good question.

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Community and Cultural Affairs.

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

There was an application in from the Transportation West for the study and as I said earlier, the application is combined. The PEI Transportation Coalition will be doing the study based on the need across the whole Island and West Prince will be considered under that application.

**Speaker:** Final supplementary. The hon. Member from Alberton-Miminegash.

**Mr. Dunn:** Mr. Speaker, I'm not getting the answer I'm looking for.

**Leader of the Opposition:** Now you know what we feel like.

**Mr. Dunn:** I'm wondering if the minister can inform the House if there's any money set aside for buses or vans for Transportation West.

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

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Community and Cultural Affairs.

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

Yes, there is money set aside and it will be approved.

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

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

**Y O U T H A D D I C T I O N  
T R E A T M E N T ( F U R T H E R )**

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

My question goes to the minister of health. Last May I asked the minister a number of questions about treatment for youth drug abuse in Summerside or Prince Edward Island in general. There was a good debate in this House at that time and there were commitments made that things are going to be done. I want the minister to inform this House what has been done since May, especially with the Summerside area.

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

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

And I certainly do have good recollection of those debates here. They have carried over in a discussion on a province-wide basis now and the hon. House Leader of the Opposition may have known from recent media that we have moved it along to the policy stage now. We are looking at doing something here in-province. It was agreed upon pretty well by all of those that we had contacted, not only our own staff experts but also the parents in particular of these affected students who are suffering from substance abuse that while the program that was provided by their province, and it still is, to move these individuals out-of-province was not sufficient for the large and growing number of students. So Mr.

Speaker, we're at the stage now we are taking a look at an in-province facility.

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

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

The Leader of the Opposition and myself met with a group of parents in Summerside the last couple of weeks and they were very concerned and they thought something was going to be in the Throne speech. I'm just wondering: How many times did you, Minister, meet with this group from Summerside, a group of parents who are really concerned about this problem?

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

**Mr. Gillan:** Mr. Speaker, I think the group that he is referring to addressed Caucus on two occasions, one for sure, on two occasions. I, myself, did not meet the last opportunity with these individuals but there have been contacts through my staff. I think there has been a very fair sharing of information. This particular group that he is referring to in the Summerside region did have the Minister of Finance at a recent meeting. I don't think that there is any information that either my staff or that I have not been made privy too so I think the idea of communication has been wide open. I know that like all concerned citizens and groups that they want to get things done as soon as possible and don't spare the cost. It's not a matter of sparing the cost. It is a matter of doing what is the very best and most efficient and professional way to deal with these needy youth and I think that we are doing that.

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

**Mr. R. Brown:** A question for the Attorney General.

The group in Summerside has asked for space to be utilized in the Summerside youth facility. I understand there are rooms available that are not being utilized. Can you tell me how many rooms are not being used in the Summerside Youth Offenders facility?

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

**Ms. Dover:** Mr. Speaker, the facility when it was built was made up into quads as the hon. member might know and there aren't very many people, I have to say, both those in closed custody and those in open custody they don't total up to a very large number and so I think there is a possibility of doing just what the hon. member is suggesting. And I've had consultations with the minister of health in that regard. We just haven't come to a final decision on that, hon. member.

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

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

Another question to the Attorney General. How many people work at that facility?

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

**Ms. Dover:** Excuse me. Did you say how many people are in the facility?

**Mr. R. Brown:** How many people work in the (indistinct)?

**Ms. Dover:** Work in the facility? I don't have that number but I can bring that back tomorrow for the hon. member.

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

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

Can the minister tell me how many incarceration days were utilized in that facility last year?

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

**Ms. Dover:** Again, Mr. Speaker, I don't have that number but the hon. member would probably understand that there weren't very many. Those figures I can bring back tomorrow. We certainly have a base staff that's required 24/7 in that facility but the numbers are not great. Even when we transferred the youth from Georgetown to that facility, it still didn't add up to a whole lot of people and there may be days when there are certainly fewer than a dozen there and we have to take a look at occupying that space in a more fruitful way.

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

**Mr. R. Brown:** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the minister for her answers there.

Back to the minister of health. The Nova Scotia government has just released an inquiry report yesterday and the name of the report is

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*Spiraling Out of Control - Lessons Learned From a Boy in Trouble.* Has the minister read this report?

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

**Mr. Gillan:** No, I have not, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. R. Brown:** Mr. Speaker, a question to the minister of health.

This is a very good report. It was commissioned last year by the Government of Nova Scotia on the recommendations of the tragic death of Theresa Envoy. It is the story about a young person's path to a very tragic event that left three children without a mother. I want to make it clear. I'm not talking about the staff at the Young Offenders' facility. I know we have great staff at the Department of Health and Social Services and child family.

Is the minister aware of this, you know, the problems that they had in Nova Scotia and how we can help out and read this report and get some recommendations from it?

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

**Mr. Gillan:** Mr. Speaker, I think I'm fairly knowledgeable because of the information that I have read through research but, most importantly, have been given to me by my staff and what we are working on collectively. I don't think there was ever a moment when we denied that there is substance abuse by an ever-growing number of youth. Many I think

erroneously refer to the problem as youth addictions. I don't think in many cases or most cases that the youths are necessarily addicted at this point but still there is a tremendous substance abuse and that is what we have to address. And I know that in most instances, the police are not able to handle this. These youths have fallen through their jurisdictional ability and that is why it is necessary to put in the programs that will help them and we do have and have been working with these programs for quite some time. And I think that although the hon. House Opposition Leader is not inferring that this government is deaf to programs that other provinces are doing and we have given guidance counseling at many different levels. I'm sure that you've heard me speak of that in the past but it is in the in-house facility aspect that we are now looking at and, as I say, we do want to march in a steady fashion towards culminating that. This past week on the Compass program there were interviews aired regarding a facility and the advantages of this and I'm quite aware of all of this and I think that the steps that we have taken and will take in the near future are going to be the correct ones.

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

**Mr. R. Brown:** Mr. Speaker, also like the minister talks about the education system and the teachers and that. I understand that. I understand how hard the teachers work and in the report, in the commissioner's report from the other side or from Nova Scotia, I want to just quote: The issues teenagers and their families face today are much changed from the past. Teachers today are having to attend to more specific behaviour issues than in the



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past which translate into what appears to be a huge increase in the number of suspicions and behaviour issues within the school. We cannot expect our teachers to be spending so much time as this report said on some of these students. We need a facility here so some of these troubled students to go out. We cannot expect our teachers to be everything to our society here today. Our parents are - like we have double - people working double jobs nowadays and we are putting too much emphasis on our teachers and I'm not against the teachers. I believe in the teachers. They do a great job on Prince Edward Island but we can't expect them to do everything and does he not see my point? Like we need facilities on PEI and we need it soon before this spirals out of control.

**Leader of the Opposition:** Good question.

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

**Mr. Gillan:** Not to be abrupt but I do not disagree with any of the remarks that the hon. member has just said.

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

**Mr. R. Brown:** That brings me back to my point then. This group in Summerside - and I commend them. I met with them. I feel for them. I feel for these parents. They really love their children and they really want to do something about it but they approached this government in 2003 right after the election. I guess they didn't need to be looked after at that time and they've been working with this government. This is a couple of years now and they've been recommending that we use the

Summerside facility for some sort of treatment facility. We can't be sending them off to Sussex because I just have a report here from Sussex which is looking for more money. There are students living in squalor, I guess you can say according to this report. There's no gymnasium. The worst problem is the boys' dorm is in the basement. We can't be sending our children off to this type of environment. Can you not understand that parents of this area and these parents are parents across Prince Edward Island. There's just not a Summerside issue. Can you not understand? You've been at this job for 2003. Why can't we have this facility up and running for our youth on Prince Edward Island?

**Leader of the Opposition:** Good question.

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

**Mr. Gillan:** Mr. Speaker, I disagree with just about everything that the member has uttered this time. To suggest for a moment that we here on Prince Edward Island would be sending this disaffected youth off to a place of squalor is unheard of. The individuals, the families that have gone over to the Portage in New Brunswick have been very satisfied.

But Mr. Speaker, there is a steady progression, yes, 2003 and beyond and I think that the substance abuse probably could be paraphrased by suggesting that there has been a movement there the last 10 to 15 years here among the youth in this province as to substance abuse. And we have been working in different fashion with different mechanisms to try to cure that. An in-house facility is one of the latest. There are problems of that and

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again I refer to this particular television program that was aired this week and it suggested that a number of provinces have passed regulation that the youth can be put in an involuntary method into these establishments and be kept there. That type of legislation is seen to be fairly proactive. In other words, some people would say that under the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, an individual has the authority or the right or the privilege if they don't like a confinement to leave from a place. And the facility in New Brunswick is one of those that operates under voluntary confinement. In other words, the individual suffering from the abuse must want to go there and throughout the course of the treatment, they must want to say. So we're looking carefully at that. We do not want to have an establishment or a facility or programs based on a policy that we cannot implement for the benefit of the individual and their families.

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

**Mr. R. Brown:** Mr. Speaker, I'll table the report on the Youth Addiction Centre in Sussex and the people that work there concerns about the facility. One of the quotes is: The centre's two classrooms are (indistinct) into five trailers assemblies, which also includes offices. Students are often forced to sit in hallways because the classrooms can't hold enough. There is no gymnasium. The worst problem is the boys' dorm in the basement. I'll table that later. He makes it look out like some shangri la over there, Mr. Speaker.

I want to just read a quote - and it's going to make a minute but it's going to be very fast -

from the report, from the commissioner's report. AB, which is the young person's name that was convicted over in Nova Scotia, is now and this is his final recommendations to legislators and government.

AB is now receiving support and opportunity. He's taking advantage of them. I wish him the best as he continues his sentence. He should recognize the opportunities in the midst of this tragedy and do the best to get his life back on track. Unfortunately, it took a criminal conviction and a custodial sentence to reach him. (And I agree with the minister on changes to the containment or getting these children in treatment.) This should not have been the only way that our society is able to reach a small group of troubled teens who are at risk of spiraling out of control. We should be able to halt the spiral through prevention, through quick action, through creative thinking, through programs that address clearly identified needs and we should be able to stop behaviour like AB's once it starts through a more flexible and responsive provisions in our youth criminal laws. (Here's the main line, Mr. Speaker.) Our children and our youth at risk deserve it. Their families deserve it. Our society deserves it. I urge the government to take action. AB's situation must not be repeated.

Minister, I'm going to ask you. We need this facility in Summerside or we need a treatment facility for our young people on Prince Edward Island. I hope that this government is just not waiting for another polling period in order to make this announcement and use it for political advantage. The children of PEI deserve this. They need this. Minister, you've been at it for three years. Give me a date when this facility is going to be available.

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

**Mr. Gillan:** Mr. Speaker, what started out as good debate at a professional level for a logical reason and a very severe problem has now gotten down into one of political guttering as to the fact that we are playing politics. I think that the House and the gallery watching, and particularly all people watching understand the severity of what we are talking about. And particularly, if there was any one sector of our population that when they get in trouble, if anyone does not pay heed, it is the youth. I have spent my previous life working with youth. Our Assembly here is full of individuals who give time. We talked about volunteering last evening here in this House on volunteering, and particularly, to the youth. We are doing this for the youth. We need to do it in a logical, sequential stage. We need to do and put in place the very best programming that will help the most precious segment of our population, the youth.

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

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

All talk. That's all you are, Mr. Minister, all talk. Great speeches, great talk, no action. This group has been after you since 2003. We know there is a problem on this Island. I know there's a lot of members want to put their heads away on this one and not think it's here. It's here, Mr. Speaker. There's crystal meth on the street. You just talk - I talked to the police chief of Charlottetown. We have a problem. Let's face up to it and let's do something about it than just political rhetoric. That's what we in the Opposition are calling

for - action and less talk. When are you going to make this facility available for the youth on Prince Edward Island?

**Leader of the Opposition:** Good question.

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

**Mr. Gillan:** Mr. Speaker, the hon. Member of Charlottetown-Kings Square started off our debate by suggesting that there was nothing in the Throne speech. I'm holding up a copy as you can see of that Throne speech. On page 7 there is a paragraph which states: "A Youth Addictions Strategy will be developed emphasizing community-based programming to offer a range of necessary services for young people from harm prevention to addiction treatment." Mr. Speaker, we are following through on that promise.

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

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

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

Another question to the same minister - just more paper. We met with Dr. Sheldon Cameron up there. God bless this person, Mr. Speaker, an excellent person. That group in Summerside has an action plan. They have ideas. We have the facilities. We have the people that could man those facilities. They're not being utilized. They're being under-utilized right now. What is holding you up? That's the simple question that the parents of the Summerside area and Prince Edward Island are asking. What's holding you up?

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

**Mr. Gillan:** Well, Mr. Speaker, although it is Question Period, he should obviously also still pay attention to the answers. I've indicated a number of things that we have been working on. I've indicated probably one of the latter ones that we have to be able to clear out of the way, a hurdle, and that is the idea of confinement. When we do have a facility, when we do incarcerate or put into confinement an individual even though it is for their own better health and the health of their family if they're put in there by their family, that individual according to the *Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms* - and I know that the hon. Member from Charlottetown-Kings Square is on his feet repeatedly reminding us of the Charter and its abilities and that we should stay under the umbrella of it. I know that he would not as an individual to do something that is outside that Charter. So we have to be sure that as we take our final steps that they are the correct ones.

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

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

It didn't stop Alberta. It didn't stop Saskatchewan and it's not stopping Manitoba from implementing those kinds of legislative changes because they put their youth ahead of their political careers. Now I ask the Minister of Finance: Will you make the money available, Mr. Minister, in order for this facility to be open for the young people of Prince Edward Island?

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

**Mr. Murphy:** Well, Mr. Speaker, it's interesting a lot of comment about East Prince and Prince County in the Legislature today, which is good. Just as we made the money available for Parkside new gym, just as we made the money available for the renovations of SIS, just as we made the money available for a new school at Athena, just as we're going to make money available for Elm Street, just as we made money available for the new hospital, we'll make money available for youth addictions treatment.

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

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

**Speaker:** End of Question Period.