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STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS AND ORAL QUESTION PERIOD
(PRELIMINARY PROCEEDINGS)

FOR

Friday 19 October 2007

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Speaker: The hon. Member from Tyne Valley-Linkletter.

SUPPORT FOR PARENTS OF DISABLED ADULTS

Ms. Biggar: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

This morning I'd like to talk about support for adults with disabilities. While my statement falls under the umbrella of the Ministry of Health, Social Services and Seniors, I would like to address this particular area and that would be the services or lack of service for Island adults with disabilities.

Today there is a serious shortage of housing for this special group and aging parents are getting to the point where they themselves need care but they are still caring for adult disabled children. Those dedicated people who deal with this situation have found that there are many parents in their seventies and eighties who are caring for their sons and daughters who have a variety of needs and levels of care. There are cases reported where both parents and families are at risk. Parents are tired and frustrated and don't know where to turn for help. They worry about what will happen to their loved ones when they are no longer able to provide care. For example, Madam Speaker, the parents worry if their adult children will be treated well. Will they be comfortable? Will they have companionship and have their basic needs met?

Sadly, the number of residential resource providers in the Island community has diminished over the past few years mainly due

to a sentiment that they are not compensated adequately for what is expected of them. They are talking in terms of room and board, supervision, transportation and respite care. These Islanders want to live in the community where their families and friends are where they are familiar with the area and close to their day programs or work locations. I cannot over-emphasize the need, the urgent requirement for a province-wide plan for these concerned neighbours of you and I. I feel, as do many other concerned people of our province, that it is time we provided the needed housing and essential services for this deserving segment of our population.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Vernon River-Stratford.

PEI TEACHERS FEDERATION CONVENTION

Mr. McIsaac: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

On behalf of the colleagues in the Legislature, I would like to congratulate the PEI Teachers Federation who are meeting in a convention at the Delta in Charlottetown. I know some of us here have family members who are participating in that. I, for myself, and my wife was there. I have a brother and two sisters who are participating. I know some of the other members do as well.

Because of this, I had the opportunity to read through the convention brochure and took

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notice of some of the interesting educational sessions they are attending. Some of these are I'll note: creating welcoming classroom for newcomers, strategies for supporting students exposed to family violence, engaging students with veterans, parental harassment, and thinking and acting as global citizens. These are only a few of the subjects which are being addressed at the Teachers Federation Convention.

And the facilitators for these workshops did not just come from the Island. They came from coast to coast across this country.

And once again, on behalf of my colleagues, congratulations to the PEI Teachers Federation for their all-encompassing vision. And I would also like to acknowledge that over 350 educational assistants and youth service workers are holding their professional development workshop in the city as well.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

BIOSCIENCE INDUSTRY

Mr. M. Currie: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I would like to take this opportunity today to commend all the Islanders who are working in the bioscience industry in this province. It certainly goes to show that over the past number of years a lot of the success has been laid down by people in the academics, the private sector, and government that put

forward and put in place a host of packages and tax exemptions that allowed this industry to grow. And certainly coupled with all the experience we have with aquaculture and veterinary medicine, it's certainly an industry that we see a lot of potential in and I'm glad to see the government is going to follow through on their promise and continue to allow this industry to grow.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: Questions by Members starting with Responses to Questions Taken as Notice. The hon. Minister of Transportation and Public Works.

Mr. MacKinley: Madam Speaker, when I was away, I did get a question that was related to our department and it was a cost and I will table that information concerning the cost, what it cost the department to paint an office and I'll table that.

Speaker: Shall it carry?

Some Hon. Members: Carried.

ORAL QUESTIONS

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition. The hon. Member from Georgetown-St. Peters.

ELECTRICITY RATES INCREASE

Mr. M. Currie: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I believe Islanders woke this morning to see a crisis, I guess you'd call us, upon us with a 19% - 20% increase in electricity rates. I think

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that this is certainly going to have a devastating effect on all our Islanders but all our business community and I believe this is probably one of the largest price increases for electricity in the history of this province. I'm just wondering along with all the other anticipated tax increases -

Speaker: Is there a question in there, hon. member?

Mr. M. Currie: Yes, it's coming - is anticipating HST. I'm just wondering what the minister of development is going to do to stop this increase.

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier Ghiz: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

And that's a very good question by the hon. member from Georgetown-St. Peters. As he well knows, Maritime Electric is a private company. We want to make sure that Islanders are being protected so we're going to look at their submission to IRAC and if there is an opportunity for us to intervene, we will look to intervene but we have to look at putting in ways now so that Islanders can reduce down on their energy consumption and we believe that that's a good first measure. But you also have to look to long-term planning and, unfortunately, the previous government over the last 11 years did not have a coherent plan in place for when this eventuality may come whether or not it was the refurbishing of Point Le Preau or the rise in oil costs. So this is the situation we're in. We're going to do our best to make sure that we can protect Islanders every step of the way.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. M. Currie: So that new plan is you're going to tell Islanders to turn their lights off earlier or buy candles. Is that your new plan?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier Ghiz: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

And what our plan is going to be is we're not going to be reckless like the previous government where the previous government came in and said that they were going to eliminate New Brunswick plus ten as everyone in this House can remember. I believe the minister at the time who was responsible for energy in the province stood up in this Legislature and said that your rates are actually going to go down if you we get rid of New Brunswick plus ten. Well, Madam Speaker, we all know that the rates have not gone down since the previous government introduced, got rid of New Brunswick plus 10%.

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

PUBLIC AWARENESS OF RIPTIDES

Mr. M. Currie: It certainly doesn't look like they're going to go down with 20% increases.

My next question is for the Minister of Tourism and I'm wondering if she would entertain an idea. A number of years ago, I had the unpleasant experience, I guess, of getting

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caught in a riptide. Certainly, it's a very scary position to be in. I know every year, Madam Minister, that we have a number of people who lose their lives from inexperience or getting caught in riptides. I'm wondering if you would take to put forth, I guess, as Minister of Tourism - it's an important industry and we all cherish our ocean - that you would create an education awareness program for these riptides and currents that occur in our province and make them aware of the dangers that are out there.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Tourism.

Ms. Docherty: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The department is in the process of working in a variety of manners on how we can ensure that we do educate not only visitors but also Islanders who may for some reason not be aware of it. We'll do a number of projects in conjunction with Parks Canada but one of the big things we want to do is to ensure that the message that both Parks Canada and ourselves put forward is the same message. We're also going to ensure that in the parks that we have lifeguards at that there will be signage. We're going to do everything in our power to ensure that we educate the public as best as we can to make sure that we don't experience any tragedies again like we did last summer.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. M. Currie: Maybe, I don't know, the minister could proclaim the first week of June as PEI Island beach safety week and you could

issue a proclamation to that event.

I had an individual in my district, John MacInnis from Cable Head who also lost a friend and nearly lost his son this summer and this fall. He brought it to my attention again but there are ways of - I have, I guess, some documentation that I would like to give to the minister and see if she would entertain that idea.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Tourism.

Ms. Docherty: Sure. Please do.

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

RAILS TO TRAILS STAFF

Mr. M. Currie: Madam Speaker, I was pleased yesterday to hear the Minister of Tourism indicate in her comments about how she was so pleased about all the dedicated staff and the volunteers that work on Rails to Trails. And I'm wondering if she has that support for all her staff and the volunteers. Do you still have that support?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Tourism.

Ms. Docherty: Most definitely.

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

Mr. M. Currie: Madam Speaker, then could she tell us why you fired John Callaghan.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Tourism.

Ms. Docherty: Madam Speaker, I'd like to

clarify that. Mr. Callaghan was not fired. Mr. Callaghan actually had a contract with the Department of Tourism, a fairly lengthy contract signed the first of April for five years, which is an unusual type of employment contract. And the history behind that, for everybody's benefit, is the fact that Mr. Callaghan was offered a classified civil service position during casual conversion and turned it down because it was not high enough pay so he asked instead for a contract. We - the previous administration offered him that contract but, unfortunately, due to some re-organization that we're going through now, the work that he was doing was duplicated and one of our permanent staff has actually taken over the Confederation Trail.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. M. Currie: Madam Speaker, it's my understanding that the individual is doing a good job and he had a good evaluation but you terminated his employment and then you went out and advertised for the position. So if you are giving the work to somebody else, why are you advertising it?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Tourism.

Ms. Docherty: Madam Speaker, I'm not aware of the fact that we advertised the position for the Confederation Trail. The gentleman of classified civil service status is Kevin MacLaren who is actually managing that particular position.

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

TAX RELIEF FOR FIREFIGHTERS

Mr. M. Currie: Madam Speaker, my next question is for the minister of community and cultural affairs.

I did mention briefly the other day about some compensation, I guess, for our volunteer firemen and I understand this weekend is the annual meeting in New Glasgow, which is your riding. Did you come up with a comprehensive plan that would allow some sort of an income tax, provincial income tax deduction for our firefighters to entice more people to get into the volunteer fire departments?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Communities, Cultural Affairs and Labour.

Ms. Bertram: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Yes, as the hon. member stated, I will be attending the annual convention for the PEI Fire Association in New Glasgow and I am going to be bringing greetings on behalf of all this Legislature. But as a new government, obviously, we have budget numbers. But I think what the hon. member is bringing forward and I think it's been discussed that the support for our firefighters on Prince Edward Island should be, you know, what we can provide to them. I know at federal government there are initiatives that they are looking at as well and as a new government, we are looking into that also.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

REPAIR TO DUNEDIN BRIDGE

Mr. M. Currie: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

And I guess it's medicine for my eyes today to see the minister of transportation back in the House. He was gone for a week or so and, certainly, we were receiving a lot of calls from residents in his area who are very upset with the minister. He's been in office now for six months and he's made a lot of promises over the years to those residents and, certainly, they went to the ballot box a lot of times to get him elected.

My first question is to the minister. When are you going to fix the Dunedin Bridge?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. MacKinley: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

It's quite obvious why the minister when he was in government, the former minister didn't win any seats out in the Dunedin Bridge because the Dunedin Bridge was represented by the minister of community and cultural affairs. It was in her riding and now it's in the Minister of Tourism's riding and we have got an engineer looking at it to see if we can come in under the \$3 million projection that you people promised to build under Don MacKinnon a long time ago, which we never saw yet. The previous minister - in other words, when we say we're going to do something, we'll do it and when we decide to do it, we'll make the announcement.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. M. Currie: Well, Madam Speaker, they waited a long time to give this minister the opportunity to put pen to paper and, certainly, he's now going to be the minister of excuses. He doesn't want to do it.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

TRAFFIC LIGHTS AT WINSLOE

Mr. M. Currie: Madam Speaker, I'd like to go to Winsloe. We've been receiving a lot of calls from the area about changes in the development and the new set of lights that's going in Winsloe. I'm just wondering if the minister would tell us where this new set of lights is going to be put exactly.

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

Mr. MacKinley: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

These sets of lights will be going in the upper intersection up by Red Rock, I believe, coming out by Red Rock up from the Irving service station on the right hand side that's already there now unto the highway. Why they're going is to make the intersection safe for trucks and that from North Winsloe, people from North Winsloe that have been neglected under your government. We're trying to make this intersection safe. There's studies I can table that were done by, I guess, by your previous government that were never acted on. It's totally ridiculous how a member could get

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up and make, being a former minister of transportation, allegations that are so funny that almost a set of colouring book and crayons back.

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

Mr. M. Currie: Madam Speaker, could the minister tell us how much this set of lights is going to cost?

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

Mr. MacKinley: These sets of lights were going to be in the vicinity - I believe the tender went out and I believe it went to Island Coastal, a great company, for \$524,000 to put in this set of lights.

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

Mr. M. Currie: Madam Speaker, I was minister for four years and I phoned the previous minister before this minister and, certainly, she indicated to me that she never heard tell of any such request for this new set of lights and the closing of the road from Winsloe. I'm just wondering: was the minister lobbied by anyone to put this set of lights in?

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

Mr. MacKinley: I've been lobbied for a number of years and as highway critic from the people from North Winsloe from the surrounding area, from Armour Transport which basically can't turn left or can't turn right between 7 o'clock to 8:30, 9 o'clock in

the morning. It's quite obvious but the way the couch is worn out in my office, the minister spent a lot of time on the couch rather than getting out in the district to find out what was going on. So if he wants me to continue it, I'll give you the background.

For some time there's been concern about the intersection at route 2 and Winsloe Road, which falls under the jurisdiction of the city of Charlottetown, meets route 2 at an angle of approximately 32 degrees. This is much less than ATC recommendation angles of 70-110 degrees. Now you went to, I think it was, India or somewhere. Did you find out when you were looking at stones or whatever it was over there how they fill the roads with stones or something? You went on some transportation junkard. There's also another city street, Melody Lane, and there's significant commercial development in the immediate area, all of which affects traffic operation. The department was also made aware of a commercial development being proposed further west opposite the Campbell Road. The department felt it was pertinent to conduct a safety review of this matter. Actually to date, the department has engaged the services of Delphi MRC of Halifax to get a road safety review of route 2 in Winsloe. The evaluation by Delphi looked at a number of factors during these interviews, such as (Indistinct) et cetera.

So the key thing is here we're making it safe. I mean go out there. If you had to travel and get out of your own area down there when you were minister of development and noticed that if you were a farmer coming down from North Winsloe and you got to turn right and go up towards say Cavendish Farms, it's almost impossible with the degree. I know probably the biggest thing you ever did was haul your

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boat or something but it's easier for truckers, safety.

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

**PURCHASE OF WINSLOE
CORNER PROPERTY**

Mr. M. Currie: Madam Speaker, I am not going to disagree with the hon. member in regards to coming down the North Winsloe Road and turning right. You do have to look over your shoulder. Certainly, I don't think the residents were in an upheaval over it but what I thought, hon. minister, would be why wouldn't you just go buy that little house there and when cars come down, they could be perpendicular to the road and look both ways and then it's safe access unto the road and then you don't have to spend the \$600,000 up the road?

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

Mr. MacKinley: Well, you know, the ministers know how to do intersections now but the only intersection I believe he ever did was the one where his wife's Mercedes Benz got wrote off or something down at Poole's Corner and you made a mess of it. Why didn't you do it right the first time and look after the safety of the people in the area?

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

Mr. M. Currie: Could the hon. member tell us if he bought the property at the end of the road to accommodate those changes?

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

Mr. MacKinley: Which property is he talking about? Like I just give the orders to go ahead and do it. We have engineers that do all this so which property are you referring to? The house on the very V, the house there, is that what you're talking about?

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

Mr. M. Currie: Madam Speaker, I'll explain it to the minister again. When you're coming down the Winsloe Road and when you stop at the intersection, there's a house on your right that would certainly if you bought that little property, it would allow you to change the intersection so that you could be perpendicular to the road and have great access and great vision both ways. I'll ask you again. Did you buy that property?

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

Mr. MacKinley: I believe we did because we're going to make it to go up one way. We're not shutting that road off altogether. The traffic going to be able to go up there. They just can't come down and what we're doing is for safety. This minister - I mean I will give the previous minister credit. She made a tremendous job on the no. 2 highway and the Minister of Finance probably from Kensington, they made a tremendous job on the highway. But what happens is when you get this highway widened out and everything, you just can't stop on the spot. You got to proceed through and just because it's in the city, it's still in a rural area and you got to be

looking after the safety of Islanders and that's what we're trying to do. The minister can't seem to get it through. I mean he was so busy losing money on Polar Foods and everything else. Like he should have taken a drive around and looked a few of these intersections but I guess he wasn't the minister.

An Hon. Member: There you go.

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

Mr. M. Currie: Madam Speaker, it's quite apparent that the member has bought the property. I don't know for how many hundred thousand dollars and he's also going to go up the road and close this road off and spend another \$500,000 or \$600,000 and I'm just wondering why you would do that when all the permits are not in place for the transfer of this service station across the road. You go ahead and spend the taxpayers' money of \$600,000 before this is even approved.

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

Mr. MacKinley: See Madam Speaker, it's no wonder the boys in Calgary were telling me that we should bring out the minister and bring out a CBC reporter because every Friday night there's like a - what is it called? Act like the donkeys or something out there show and the boys in Calgary told me -

Speaker: Do you have an answer to the question, Mr. Minister?

Mr. MacKinley: I'm just trying to explain out. Madam Speaker, the question is this minister hasn't did anything when he was in

there for the time and safety to the Province of Prince Edward Island. I give his predecessors some credit but when he was in minister of highways, all he wanted to do was bring in the RCMP and investigate, investigate, and put a lot of wasted money out there and made people's lives (Indistinct), fired 800 people. We're out there for the good Islanders for the good of those young children that are here. Ask them if the corners are safe or not. Now the whole island is not perfect but I'm going to tell you. As far as the gentleman that that belongs to the city and somebody else, that has nothing to do with us. We're going ahead and do this anyway. It wasn't because of some application. It's none of our business whether that goes through or not. You'd better check with your buddy, Clifford Lee, or somebody to find that out.

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

SERVICE STATION AT WINSLOE

Mr. M. Currie: Well, Madam Speaker, apparently, he is going to look after some of his good old boys.

Could you tell me who the developer is that's putting up that service station?

Mr. MacKinley: Clifford McQuaid is the developer but it's under his company's name. I had a search done on the company. I just don't have the - I'll use his name but, basically, it's under a company but he's the sole control of the company because I did check it out.

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

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Mr. M. Currie: It's all right to proceed with an expenditure of \$600,000 or \$700,000 and this developer does not have approval from IRAC to move his station from one side of the road to the other.

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

Mr. M. Currie: See he did so many political things for his friends and made so many millionaires. We're interested in the safety of Islanders. Whether he gets a permit or not, really it's none of our concern. That's between IRAC or that's the concern of the city of Charlottetown. We were going to do this intersection anyway. The residents of North Winsloe - go talk to a few of them out there, Harold Kneabone. Go talk to the manager of Armour, Diamond Transport. You guys would not do nothing for years and now you're worrying about some developer. Well, you looked after your developers so bad see he can't think. Thank you.

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

TRAFFIC LIGHTS AT CORNWALL

Mr. M. Currie: Madam Speaker, I'll move to another area seeing I'm getting questions are going nowhere with the individual here.

I'll now go to Cornwall. Are you putting another set of lights up in Cornwall, hon. minister?

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

Mr. MacKinley: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

We're putting a set of lights up into the industrial park, Mr. Minister, so the trucks and that. The problem is industrial park, Madam Speaker, I'll have to give him a history of it. He approved, I believe it was, a temporary access when he was minister and everybody was against it but he put it in. Next thing you know it was paved. Basically, what should have been done was go down, hook up to MacRae Drive and put a set of lights in there but, as usual, he bulldozed ahead and he messed up bad. And now after many years, it's got to be us that come along and fix your mistakes again because you've made it then a permanent access onto the highway and he doesn't even remember the deal he had with the town.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Summerside-Wilmot.

CLAIMS FOR DIABETES TEST STRIPS

Ms. Sherry: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

My question this morning is to the minister of health and social services. I've had quite a number of requests from people in my district who either have diabetes or are caregivers for people who do suffer from this affliction. Many of these people are troubled by the fact that they cannot claim for the expense of the testing strips which are used daily. Madam Speaker, can the minister inform this Legislature if this issue is being considered by his department?

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

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Mr. D. Currie: Madam Speaker, in order for all of us to be in the House here today, we had to participate in an election campaign and work very hard. During that process, we all had and I had the opportunity to meet a tremendous amount of seniors across District 11, Charlottetown-Parkdale. And there was one, clear, common message that I picked up that we have a tremendous amount of seniors living in this province and living in various districts that are struggling financially. Seniors in this province are making decisions on whether they purchase fruit and vegetables or whether they take their medications to the capacity that needs to be delivered upon and, certainly, I don't think that's any secret to anybody in this House here today and it's certainly a priority with myself as the minister responsible for seniors to address the needs for seniors across this province. Right now, one in ten of every health care dollar is being consumed by the treatment of diabetes. We certainly inside the department, we're working on a proposal to come forward to address the interventions and to enhance services for the delivery. We have gone on record and made a commitment to seniors in this province for the assistance in paying for insulin strips and it is a priority and will continue to be a priority. Right now, one of the biggest challenges that we do have on the heels of restructuring in 2005, almost two full-time positions have impacted the ability to provide services in the area of diabetes and we are addressing that through presentations to the department of health. And I'm committed as the Minister of Health, Social Services and Seniors to address this challenge.

An Hon. Member: Great job.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Summerside-Wilmot.

Ms. Sherry: I do have a supplementary question. If the strips will be allowed for compensation by the health department, when can we expect this program to be put in place?

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

Mr. D. Currie: Madam Speaker, as I indicated, it's a huge priority and the impact that diabetes has on the health care system, we need to act decisively and we need to act quickly. We're working on a plan. I'm working closely with the department officials and looking how that plan and delivery of services will take place. It was an election promise and it is a priority.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from O'Leary-Inverness.

SENIORS HOME REPAIR PROGRAM

Mr. Henderson: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

My question is for the minister of health. I've had several calls from the good constituents of O'Leary and Inverness who want to know exactly how to apply for the assistance under the recently announced Senior Home Repair Program. As the minister is well aware, O'Leary-Inverness has an above average percentage of seniors living in their own homes and many seniors in my riding could use a little help getting their homes ready for winter. Is there going to be more information

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on this particular program made available to the public and how will they apply for this particular program?

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

Mr. D. Currie: Madam Speaker, as minister responsible for seniors in this province are and will continue to be a priority under our government. The Senior Home Repair Program is the reinstatement by our government to send a clear message to all seniors in this province that we want to support them and allow them to stay in their homes. We all have had discussions with seniors about frustrations. We have a tremendous amount of seniors living in this province on fixed incomes and their ability to continue to live in their homes. Right now we are going online as of November 1st with grants of up to \$1500 for seniors living under a joint income of \$30,000 and we welcome the applications and I do want to acknowledge the support from the Leader of the Opposition yesterday after the announcement and I commend her for that because this House has to be about the priorities about the people of Prince Edward Island and our government will provide the leadership and be decisive on the direction that we take providing those services. Not only have we reinstated the Senior Home Repair Program, which we've already received 60 calls in the last number of days for supports for seniors across this province, but we've also made another commitment to the Senior Secretariat and our objective inside the Department of Social Services and Seniors is to build that department and to assist in directing the Senior Secretariat in providing us with good consultation and collaboration to address the needs of seniors in this province

and it is a priority.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from O'Leary-Inverness.

Mr. Henderson: Supplementary, Madam Speaker, to the same minister. I gathered there were a number of seniors who had their names crossed off the list when the former administration cancelled the Senior Home Repair Program previously. Will there be any consideration given to those who were penalized by that cancellation or will those seniors have to re-apply again?

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

Mr. D. Currie: That's a good question. Names that we have inside the Department of Social Services and Seniors right now will be given priority. My understanding that there are 60 names as early as yesterday when I inquired within the department and those individuals will be contacted and we will have to look at the application process and how that's been done to date for the management of the program. We certainly feel that we have to continue to show respect of all Islanders in respect to seniors irregardless if the application has been in as of November 1st or prior to November 1st.

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

DEVELOPER'S CONTRIBUTION TO LIGHTS AT WINSLOE

Mr. M. Currie: Madam Speaker, a question

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to the Minister of Transportation and Public Works.

On the set of lights in Winsloe, is the developer making a contribution to the cost of those lights?

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

Mr. MacKinley: Yes, \$25,000 and any land - actually, the developer I know tried to sell us land but we didn't. We're taking it and also charging him \$25,000 for the lights because it's going in across from his business and we believe in doing that.

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

COST OF LIGHTS AT CORNWALL

Mr. M. Currie: What is the set of lights going to cost over in Cornwall, hon. minister?

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

Mr. MacKinley: Well, you know, you'd think that the minister who made so many promises that he would know that himself. For instance, in 2001, July, 2001, the Department of Transportation and Public Works approved the development of a subdivision road to the Cornwall business park. Access to the road (1) (Indistinct) shall be a temporary access, which was done by Mr. Minister, (Indistinct) to approve with the department. Your community should be aware that when the business park development reached beyond six or seven - This is what I meant with the crayon books - there may be a long delay for trucks entering

unto route 1 from the subdivision road that's referring to the industrial park. Improvements to route 1 will be required in the future provide proper access to business park road and the department will provide the improvement as required. Subdivision and road development agreements should be signed between the town of Cornwall and the department. Further information of this agreement assigned should be attained from Jake Bartlett who is now retired. Signed Florence MacDonald, I believe is retired too. That's how long it took you to not even keep up with your promises.

Premier Ghiz: Shame, shame!

Mr. MacKinley: And if you go out by there right now at the business park, I can count at least six businesses. I know my granddaughter counted three, four, five, six or seven businesses in there and we met the number.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. M. Currie: Madam Speaker, I guess I didn't get an answer from the individual but I'm wondering. This is a four-way set of lights that's going to be there.

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

Mr. MacKinley: The answer to the individual was - should have been extra too but I took so long. I mean it takes so long to get it through him and that reporter, if he had of done his homework, they would have saved the TV time because the people out in Calgary were laughing at it. Apparently, they get CBC news

at three o'clock and if they don't watch it at three o'clock, they tape it and they watch it that night. The boys in Calgary really know more about what's going on here than I do sometimes so they even knew about the intersection and they were getting a great laugh about that when I saw them. The question is there was 180-some thousand dollars to put the intersection in and across the street there's a road there where the intersection will become a four-way if the developer follows through on spending about \$150,000 to move the house and if he has to pave in to wherever the pavement is.

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

DEVELOPER OF CORNWALL INTERSECTION

Mr. M. Currie: Madam Speaker, and who was that developer?

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

Mr. MacKinley: Well, it's quite obvious the minister didn't know any of these developers because these are the developers that make the thing happen. If you look at the development across at University Avenue was done by the same developer. Look at the development of the former hospital, Charlottetown Hospital, the same developer. This is what we need is developers like this. We have the MacPhails and we have different developers, the Banks, and all these people that we need in this province and we need them to make developments that works and they're using their own money rather than what that government did was fill their friends' pockets.

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

OWNER OF PROPERTY IN NORTH RIVER

Mr. M. Currie: I'm glad he brought that issue up because I feel there is somebody filling their pockets here and, certainly, the minister has now acknowledged that it's the same individual that's building both developments and it also, I guess, enhances the value of the property to a great degree all around there. I'm just wondering: do you own land next to this property, hon. member?

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

Mr. MacKinley: On the opposite side of the road from the industrial park, we own from there right near to North River corner. Actually, right down to North River corner probably takes all the MacKinleys in. That's how far we own. The developer put this in. He bought the land through Parker Beer, which was the next door neighbour, and it went to the town. I believe in 2005 it was approved along with your department of highways. I know he's not up to speed with it but I believe it was 2005 or something. I could table the development agreement from the town of Cornwall. I'd just have to check because it's between the town of Cornwall and the individual whether the privacy thing comes in. I know it's not between us.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

STUDENT ASSESSMENTS

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you,

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Madam Speaker.

My question today is for the minister of education. Like most Islanders and parents, we supported the recommendations of the Binns government appointed task force on student achievement. And I know one of your promises, one of your many Liberal promises, and I can quote. The Liberals will place a moratorium on standardized testing but I didn't realize there was any standardized testing done. I believe that they're actually doing educational assessments. My question is: when will the results of the grade three literacy and grade nine numeracy assessments will be available or could you even highlight the results to the House today please?

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

Mr. Greenan: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

From my understanding of the question, the hon. member is asking when information will be made available. That information has been passed on to the school boards, the three school boards, and the school boards disseminate that information to the schools who then give it to the teachers and then the decision - then the teachers hand that off to the parents so that information is already out there.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Madam Speaker, my next question is to the minister of health. Have you been briefed on the results of these assessments and could you please share that briefing with the House?

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

Mr. D. Currie: I'll take the question under advisement.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: I'm going to re-ask that question to the minister of education. Would you please tell us if you've been briefed on the results of these assessments and if so, could you share the results with the House?

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

Mr. Greenan: Madam Speaker, I have not been briefed on all of the details on the assessment. I know that the assessments have occurred. The results are in. The information has been given to the school boards and it is up to the school boards to provide that information to the stakeholders and I will stand by that.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

My next question is to the minister of education. Just in the areas that you have been briefed on, whether it's grade three or grade nine could you please update the House on the results of these assessments?

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

Mr. Greenan: Again, I will repeat that that

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information I was briefed on; however, that information has gone to the stakeholders. When that becomes - when they make that decision to make it public, then I will be able to make some comments.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

My next question is to the minister of education. I'm not sure. Could you clarify? I believe on one question I asked you said you weren't briefed. Then you were partially briefed and now you are fully briefed. My question is: could you please give us an update? When you mentioned stakeholders, all the people in here are stakeholders so please feel free to give us the results.

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

Mr. Greenan: Madam Speaker, when I was given the briefing way back, it was provided to me. A lot has happened in between that and the question. The information, as I understand it, has gone to the school boards and given to the schools, given to the parents and when that - and they are the - it was their children who were assessed. When they have that information and I will be able to make comment on that information after they've been informed.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

My next question is to the minister of

education. Is it true we're still the lowest in terms of results for grade three and grade nine in the country with these assessments? And with your briefing, would you be able to table in a written form your notes from your briefing in the House?

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

Mr. Greenan: I will look into that.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

REDUCTION OF STUDENT CLASS SIZE

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you.

My next question is the minister of education. It was another election promise. It has to do with reducing grade one to grade three class size to 15 students or less. Are you introducing legislation this session to make that happen?

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

Mr. Greenan: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The question was with regards to reducing class size. That is one of the priorities of our department and we are looking into working on that in this mandate.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

NEW SCHOOL FOR STRATFORD

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

My next question is to the minister of

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education. In your commitment to look at that legislation and bring it in this session, I guess my question: does the Budget reflect that or if not this Budget, the capital budget to include a new school for Stratford?

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

Mr. Greenan: With regards, Madam Speaker, in response to the question from the Leader of the Opposition with regards to a new school for Stratford, that is not on the capital requests of the Eastern School District and is not being considered.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

TUITION REDUCTION FOR STUDENTS

Mr. Bagnall: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

And my first question is to the minister of education also. Mr. Minister, when you were campaigning your district in the election campaign, you were knocking on doors. You were talking to students. You were talking to their families. You were telling them that if you were elected, you were going to bring in \$2,000 off their tuitions first year. Madam Speaker, I look at the campaign literature and the Premier stood up and said: Island students entering UPEI a \$2,000 entrance fee for the year 2007. Now I know that the Premier is not going to let you answer this question because he knows you'll put your foot in your mouth.

Speaker: Is there a question there?

Mr. Bagnall: Yes, I'm getting to it, Madam Speaker. So why did you not fulfill your

commitment for 2007? Why did you abandon the students of PEI and why did you forget all about it after you got minister of education?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier Ghiz: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

And the Premier will answer this question for a very simple reason because it refers to a promise that I made during the election and quoted me. And the simple answer is the fact is when we formed government back on June 12th, we indicated to the department of education that we wanted to go down this road. Unfortunately, as you well know, the planning for the next school year was already well in effect. They already had a lot of plans in place. What we were able to do was move it around so we could have \$400 for first year students and \$400 for second year students because there was only supposed to be \$100 under the previous administration for first year students and what that would have in effect have done would have created a situation where the cost of delivering the program would have cost more than in fact what the students were receiving. So we wanted to put it on a more equilibrium to make it more fair and this is one of the promises that we're looking forward on delivering on.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: Final question, hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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You know, it's all good to stand up and make promises to say one thing and do another. This- we are getting a pattern from this government that they promise to do one thing and don't follow through. To the minister of education, why did you not commit to the students of PEI? The commitment was made that regardless of what dollars were available, we were going to do this for the students entering first year university and equivalents to Holland College. Why did you abandon the students? Why did you tell them one thing and do another? Why is your word not good?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier Ghiz: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

And that's a very good question because the minister is absolutely right. Over the last 11 years, we've seen educational funding to the University of Prince Edward Island be one of the worst in the country where our tuition has been on the rise dramatically over the last number of years. And I was very happy when I saw the former government - and I'll be the first person to admit - came in the last budget that they were able to introduce and they introduced a 10% reduction in tuition and I applaud them for that initiative. One of the things that they forgot to do on that was also include all students at UPEI, those also involved in taking Masters degrees. That's why we were very happy - graduate students - that's why we were very happy when we were able to form government that we got in and we were also able to cover off those other students and we're going to be looking forward into the future, most likely in the next budget, to be able to introduce a program where our first year students in this province will be well

funded so that they can enter into higher education.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

End of Question Period