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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF
PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS AND ORAL QUESTION PERIOD
(PRELIMINARY PROCEEDINGS)

FOR

Tuesday 23 October 2007

Statements by Members

Speaker: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Sherwood.

UNICEF REPRESENTATIVE AT TEACHERS' FEDERATION

Mr. Mitchell: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Sometimes our youth can teach us great lessons in humanity and generosity. Such was the case just a few days ago.

As we all know, the United Nations' program, UNICEF, raises money for child welfare around the globe. Last week an 11-year-old from Richmond Hill, Ontario, visited schools here on the Island and addressed the PEI Teachers' Federation convention here in Charlottetown. Young Bilaal Rajan, Canada's national child representative for UNICEF, challenged our teachers and our students to join his crusade to eliminate global poverty.

He reminded his audiences that children his age cannot get food, schoolbooks, nor all the accessories our children enjoy for their education. He pointed out that "less than 50% of all students presently enrolled in schools globally will make it past grade 5."

This young representative, who has been influential in raising thousands of dollars across Canada and enticing industry tycoons to donate money, prescription drugs, and educational tools, left his admirers with a profound message. He said: "Remember. You are never too small to make a difference."

Taking up that challenge, the students of Sherwood Elementary School raised over \$2,000 last year, and because of that, Bilaal Rajan paid them a visit this year to recognize this school as the top UNICEF fundraiser on Prince Edward Island.

Madam Speaker, it was inspiring to have such an important young ambassador with us for a short time, and I certainly hope his words will inspire all Islanders to play a part, to whatever degree, in reaching the ultimate goal of eliminating global youth poverty.

Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Atlantic Agricultural Hall of Fame Inductee

Mr. McIsaac: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Today I'd like to recognize a very important member of our farming community. In 1945, William John or, as he is better known, Billy Hayden, bought his first farm. It was only 70 acres. He bought his first tractor too, an open tractor, one where he could feel close to nature and feel the wind in his face. Billy Hayden has been close to nature ever since.

He was born in 1922 in Cherry Valley on a farm where his dad raised Hereford cattle. As a youth, he did community grain threshing and he cleaned seed for his neighbouring farmers. With his new farm he expanded into the potato business. In 1965, he purchased a bagger digger and in 1974 he

constructed his new Hayden Produce Inc. warehouse.

After Billy and his wife, Lillian, raised four children, he began to understand the importance of having a strong community attachment. So he invested his time and energy into the Cherry Valley 4-H Club. He saw to it that the youth of his community became involved and interacted with youth all across our island. He became a school trustee. He provided guidance and leadership to those same young Islanders.

Billy's commitment to his church was reflected in his everyday business dealings. These qualities were reflected in his respect for people and for the care of his animals. Often seen on horseback surveying his holdings and his cattle, he was skilled in the art of animal husbandry.

Madam Speaker, this gentleman is one of the most significant contributors to the agriculture industry on PEI.

As a farmer myself, I hope you will understand why I agree with the Federation of Agriculture that William John Billy Hayden be inducted into the Atlantic Agricultural Hall of Fame.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

RED RALLY TO HONOUR TROOPS

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Canadian Forces has a long and storied history in the province. Their roots can trace from current activities: the Prince Edward Island Regiment, 721 Communications Squadron, and HMCS Queen Charlotte, to the former CFB Summerside, and even to the World War II pilot training air station in Charlottetown.

Some of PEI's best and brightest young men and women have served or are currently serving in duty for our country. The Canadian Forces are well known throughout the world as some of our finest soldiers to ever serve.

It is important as proud Canadians to actively support our brave men and women. The Military Family Resource Center of Prince Edward Island is holding a Red Rally in honour of our troops. This rally is taking place next Friday, November 2nd, at noon at the memorial fountain across from the Daniel J. MacDonald DVA building.

All are invited to wear red and attend this rally to show support for our strong and proud Canadian Forces. I'm encouraging members of the House and the general public to show our support for our troops, their families, and to please attend this rally on November 2nd.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Responses to Questions Taken as Notice

Questions by Members

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

STUDENT CLASS SIZE LIMITS

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

In May of 2007 this government won government. They won the endorsement of the people. That was five months ago. They had a long, long list of expensive promises. My first question today goes to the minister of education.

In the spring campaign, at least 100-plus promises were made with no costing for each promise. My question to the minister of education: Will you be introducing legislation this fall that will provide for the class sizes in grades 1 to 3 to be no more than 15 students as promised in your campaign literature?

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

Mr. Greenan: Madam Speaker, in response to the Leader of the Opposition's questions, directly, no, we will not be introducing legislation this fall. It is in our projection to do so in our mandate, and I would expect that this spring 2008 you will see such legislation come forward.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

This question goes to the minister of education. In regards to the legislation that you'll be bringing in to reduce the class size

in May of 2008, will it also include the provision where only the classroom educators will be included of the model of student-teacher measurement?

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

Mr. Greenan: Madam Speaker, could I have that question repeated?

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Madam Speaker, this question goes to the minister of education.

In regards to the new legislation education will be bringing forward in the spring of 2008 to reduce the classroom size for our grades 1 to 3 students to no more than one to 15, will the legislation when it arrives on the floor of this House include the provision that only classroom educators will be included in the model of student-teacher ratio?

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

Mr. Greenan: Madam Speaker, in response to the Leader of the Opposition's question, that is a very good question, something that our department will be investigating, and we will be using the staffing model that was introduced, known as the Gar Andrew report, in our deliberations on this new legislation.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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I understand that that report the minister just referred to actually does not include in the model of student-teacher measurement the ratio. They actually include all other kinds of support staff including psychologists and such. So will your legislation remain the same as presently is in the practice with the Department of Education or will it change?

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

Mr. Greenan: Madam Speaker, in response to the member's question, we will be taking into consideration all aspects and we certainly want to provide the best educational opportunity for the students, especially in the beginning years, in grades 1 to 3.

It is widely known that those are very formative years in children's learning and we will be doing all we can to provide - to work within that framework of 15, no more than 15 students in a grade 1 to 3 classroom.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

STANDARDIZED TESTING OF STUDENTS

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I'm going to need a little bit of clarification from government. I notice that the Premier's not here today so I'm going to ask the minister of education. During the election in May of 2000 of this year, the Liberal platform stated clearly that there would be a

freeze on standardized tests. To the education minister: Is there a freeze on standardized testing, and was it part of your government's platform?

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

Mr. Greenan: Madam Speaker, the issue with regards to standardized testing - our government does not support standardized tests.

When we look at the term standardized tests, they are tests that are purchased from groups who produce these en masse and sell them to provinces, districts, organizations. We as a government do not support standardized tests.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

RESULTS OF MOUNT STEWART STUDENT ASSESSMENTS

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Mr. Minister, for that answer. Madam Speaker, this is why we are a little bit confused, and so is the general public.

The Premier and the Minister of Communities, Cultural Affairs and Labour are on record time after time stating that there's no difference between standardized tests and common assessment. However, I am personally of the belief, the same as the minister, there is a great deal of difference. But I'll leave that discussion of policy difference between the minister of education, the Premier, and the minister of community and cultural affairs.

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My question is: How did the grade 3 students in Mount Stewart Consolidated School perform in the area of literacy and reading comprehension in regards to the common assessments results that you had since June?

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

Mr. Greenan: Madam Speaker, in response to the member's question about the students at Mount Stewart in grade 3, that information would be available from the principal of Mount Stewart.

My understanding is if the principal wants to provide that information to the Home and School and the member wants to get that information through that method, that's available to them, but I am not going to be in this House standing and giving out results of a specific school.

Thank you.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

In regards to the results that Mount Stewart, St. Theresa's, any of the schools across the province that have grades 1 to 3, I'll ask the question this way. Last Friday in the Legislature the minister of education told us that he would not let the Legislative Assembly in on the details of the assessments that took place for grades 3 and 9 students. He told us that we were not stakeholders in the process, even though the assessments are paid by the taxpayers on

Prince Edward Island.

I would ask the minister of education once more: Would you please share the details of that report to the House today?

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

Mr. Greenan: Madam Speaker, in response to the request of the Leader of the Opposition, I do not have that report with me today.

That report is being worked upon as I speak, and I would expect that it is being put together. I should by week's end have that report, and hopefully at that point I will be able to bring it forth to the Legislature and table it.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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

My next question. I'll go back to the minister of education. That's great that you're planning on doing some work on this report. But my understanding is the report was completed in June of 2007. So my question is: Are we going to receive the details from that report or is your department working on changing some of the figures, the data from that report? What are you actually going to table on Friday of this week?

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

Mr. Greenan: Madam Speaker, what am I actually going to table?

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I have not seen the finished report and when I do see that, then I'll be able to answer the opposition's question. But I will be tabling a report that will provide the public information regarding the first common assessment done in the province.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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

Madam Speaker, I'm not sure what the problem is here. Any Member of the Legislative Assembly or any member of the public, for that matter, can access these results through the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. Why is the minister of education making people go through this route? If, for example, by Friday we don't have the actual report tabled here, we can put the request in through information and privacy, but that would put a lot of extra work on your departmental staff who are probably extremely busy and could be doing other things.

So my question is: Will the minister table the report that was completed and in the Department of Education's hands since June of 2007 on Friday of this week?

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

Mr. Greenan: Madam Speaker, the report that I will table on Friday, if that's when it's ready, will provide this Legislature with the information it needs to understand what the results are of the grades 3 and 9 assessments that were done in May and June of this past school year.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

For the minister of education, I have another question. Under his leadership - and I applaud the minister who now seems to recognize the importance of common assessments. I must say I'm a little concerned that someone may be doctoring the report up, but I'm looking forward to receiving it on Friday.

REPORT ON SEMESTER SCHOOL SYSTEM

Another question to the minister is: The Department of Education had commissioned a report under the recommendations of the task force on education. This particular report was on high school semestering systems. Madam Speaker, I'm wondering. The question is for the minister. When will that report be released to the public?

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

Mr. Greenan: I will have to ask officials at the department and get back to her on that.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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

Madam Speaker, just to be sure it's the same report that we're referring to, this particular report - this question goes to the Minister of Education - on high school semestering system, the committee was chaired by

educator Clayton Clow.

It was made up of a committee of about seven or eight school department educators and stakeholders, and I understand there was a teacher on that commission as well, or that committee. The report was completed in September and it discusses the pros and cons of continuing or changing the semester system. In terms of - with the report, do you know any -

Speaker: Is there a question there?

Leader of the Opposition: Are there any recommendations in regards to stop the practice of semestering?

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

Mr. Greenan: Madam Speaker, in response to the member's question, I am not familiar with the report and I can get the information, and would be able to table the report when I get that.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you.

So when we listen to some of the answers around education, it sounds like the Liberal government had commissioned a \$100,000 study on changing enrollment. My question to the minister of education: Is this study to help decide which schools are going to have to close?

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

Mr. Greenan: The question around the enrollment study - this enrollment study is certainly a timely one.

The Eastern School District had requested of the department to do such a study. When the department looked at it, the other two stakeholders, the French School Board and the Western School Board, wanted to be included. So the provincial study will be undertaken and that study - we do not know what will come out of that study. It's certainly - we'll look at the trends in where the population, actual schools - there are some schools in the province where there is an increase in enrollment and there are definitely other schools where there's a decrease. So the results will be quite interesting and certainly will provide school boards and government with lots of information.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

HARASSMENT INVESTIGATION

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you. My next question, Madam Speaker, is to the minister of health.

My question to the minister of health is: When did you find out your deputy of health was under an internal investigation for a complaint against him for harassment?

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

Mr. D. Currie: Madam Speaker, in respect to the personal issue of the deputy minister, as the minister of health I was very comfortable with the leadership and the

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decisiveness that the Premier's office handled the situation, which I think is a personal issue with the deputy in question and the Premier's office.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you. Madam Speaker, my next question goes back to the minister of health.

When did you find out your deputy minister, who's being paid by taxpayers, was under an internal investigation for a complaint against him for harassment? When did you find out? Was it July, August, or September?

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

Mr. D. Currie: Madam Speaker, as the minister responsible for health, I certainly have the responsibility of dealing with addiction services in this province.

Not knowing all the details of the personal nature of the situation, certainly respect the confidentiality of the issue, and once again, very competent with how the Premier's office handled the situation.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

My next question's for the minister of health. When did you find out that your deputy minister was under an internal investigation for a complaint against him for harassment? How did you find out? What action did you take as minister of the health department?

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

Mr. D. Currie: Madam Speaker, the nature of the issue, once again, I feel very strongly is a personal issue.

It's an issue that was handled by the Premier's office. I supported the direction and I certainly provide support to the family of the individual who's away for treatment from this province.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: My next question is for the minister of health. How many people work in the department of health? What's the percentage of women? What type of support did you give them when your deputy minister was under investigation, and who was the head administrator running the department of health while the internal investigation was going on?

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

Mr. D. Currie: Madam Speaker, issues in the Department of Health and health care are a huge priority in this province.

Certainly, there's no question that this is a serious issue that was dealt with very handily by the Premier's office. It was my responsibility as the minister of health to make sure that the agenda and the great work that's being done across this province in health by a lot of dedicated, wonderful health professionals was the priority, and that continues to be the priority today.

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Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

It will be interesting to hear how the general public feels about the fact that here's a senior deputy minister responsible for probably the largest government department in the province.

My next question actually goes to the Attorney General's office, to the minister responsible for the Attorney General.

ORGANIZED CRIME

My question for the Attorney General is: How is your department dealing with organized crime in the province?

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

Mr. Greenan: In response to the hon. member's question, the department is working with the RCMP in concert with other police forces in the province in combatting organized crime.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

My next question is for the Attorney General's office, to the minister responsible. You just answered that you're doing some work with the RCMP and some other police departments. My question for the Attorney General: Could you give us your top three areas of focus that you're working on to do

policing for illegal tobacco smuggling in the province?

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

Mr. Greenan: Madam Speaker, I'm going to have to defer that question and get back to the hon. member with a response.

I know that things are happening but I want to be accurate in my responses for the hon. member, and we'll get that information for her.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you.

I look forward to getting the results back. The next question is for the minister responsible for the Attorney General's office. This question is: How much does the Attorney General think we lose in terms of dollars, an amount, in the run of a year due to illegal tobacco sales?

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

Mr. Greenan: Madam Speaker, I do not have that number for the hon. member but I will get the answer for her.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

LOST REVENUE FROM TOBACCO SALES

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you.

My next question is for the minister

responsible for the treasury, the finance minister. Last week, I believe on Thursday or Friday, you reported to *The Guardian* an amount that you figured was in lost tobacco sales tax. Could you tell the House in terms of dollars how much you believe is lost in lost revenue because of tax dollars lost with tobacco sales?

Speaker: The hon. Provincial Treasurer.

Mr. Sheridan: Thank you very much for that question, hon. member. Impossible at this time, of course, to know how much is lost in illegal tobacco sales. The numbers that were bandied about last week were somewhere in the vicinity between \$3.5 million and \$4.5 million.

Thank you.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you.

Then the minister better check with what he was quoted in saying in *The Guardian* to the tune of \$4 to \$7 million.

FUNDING TO SCHOOL OF NURSING

My next question is for the minister of health. Last week we noticed in your government's department budget, there was actually \$1.5 million going to the University of Prince Edward Island. My question to the minister of health is: How much of this money is actually going to go to the school of nursing?

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

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

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

ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS OF WEST POINT

Mr. Henderson: Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Environment, Energy and Forestry.

It's regarding the coastal erosion issue concerning the community of West Point, which is causing serious danger to that historical coastline. A number of people in my district contact me regarding some of the facts that erosion is taking place at a very rapid pace and is actually putting in jeopardy the famous Prince Edward Island icon, the West Point Lighthouse. This historical site has been used as a logo and symbol for our tourism ads as well as on the front page of *The Journal-Pioneer* as well. This erosion is also having an impact on the only provincial park in the District of O'Leary-Inverness.

Speaker: Is there a question there?

Mr. Henderson: Cedar Dunes Provincial Park, and it's one of the few parks on the Northumberland Strait. My question is: Could the minister please inform this House and the people of the community of West Point, along with the people of O'Leary-Inverness, are there any plans to protect the environmental integrity of this valuable piece of property?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Environment, Energy and Forestry.

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Mr. Webster: Madam Speaker, we do acknowledge that there is a significant amount of coastal erosion on that site.

There is a lot of coastal erosion around Prince Edward Island in many different areas. We also do know that this is the most valuable real estate on Prince Edward Island, our coastal regions. We are looking at the West Point situation. It is a beautiful spot and we recognize that, and it's a key issue for tourism in the western end of the Island.

We also looked at the maps from 1970, ortho maps of 1970, 1985, and 1998, and there is a significant amount of coastal erosion in that particular area. It's a major issue. We're sure of that.

We do on a continual basis issue permits to reinforce coastal areas throughout the province and that option could be available there, but at this time we don't have a particular plan as to what direction we might go with that site.

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

Mr. Henderson: Supplementary, Madam Speaker, to the minister of environment.

Could the hon. minister at least inform us what sort of a time frame they may be looking at putting in place this here plan?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Environment, Energy and Forestry.

Mr. Webster: Madam Speaker, we were certainly made aware of the seriousness of this site within the last two weeks.

We've looked at the maps and so on to determine that it is very significant. We are trying to develop - will be working on developing a plan with the community to go forward on that particular site in the near future, maybe two months, three months.

Speaker: Thank you.

The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

STUDENT COMMON ASSESSMENTS

Ms. Dunsford: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

A question for the minister of education with regards to the common assessments, student common assessments as well. As we've heard from the Leader of the Opposition what standardized testing is, could the minister of education please clarify what student common assessments are for the House?

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

Mr. Greenan: Madam Speaker, Member from Stratford-Kinlock, I thank you for your question.

The common assessment that was developed here on Prince Edward Island is not a standardized test. It was developed by Island teachers and it assesses the curriculum that is delivered in our Island schools. It assesses the student's knowledge in the mastery of the outcomes that are in our provincial curriculum and it does not involve any comparison with other provinces.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Stratford-

Kinlock.

Ms. Dunsford: Another question for the minister of education.

So we've also learned that we have a time frame to have a look at the assessments that the teachers and parents and the students who I assume are now in the process of reviewing. Are we to assume that there's a time frame that you have set for us for those results, then, to become public? Are we looking at something in the near future?

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

Mr. Greenan: Yes, Madam Speaker.

In response to the member's question, we are, as I had indicated earlier, preparing a statement on the outcome, the results of the first school assessment, and we will have that prepared by week's end. I would be prepared to provide the opposition with that prior to tabling it in the House if that is their wish.

Thank you.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE COSTS

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

My next question's for the minister of social services and seniors. I need to applaud you. I see you have extra dollars in the budget of social services and seniors to increase the shelter costs for people living on assistance.

But my question: Should Prince Edward Island adopt the HST, will your government through the Department of Social Services and Seniors, will this money be actually money used to help the social service client base cope with increased costs on their shelter and personal care? Is this money really there because of the imposition of this increased tax?

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

Mr. D. Currie: Madam Speaker, just in respect to the discussion on HST, as the minister responsible for health, social services, and seniors, I haven't been privy around any table that I sit at regarding an implementation or discussion around HST.

But I do know something that is a fact. I do know that there was a \$1.8 million infusion into the budget of social services and seniors, and I do know that we are recognizing individuals in this province with disabilities. We are recognizing families that are having struggles in this province and families, single-parent mothers, and seniors who are living in very challenging situations.

So we have made a commitment. We are making some inroads into a number of areas in respect to the social services and seniors budget. As the minister responsible for these two departments, I'll continue to advocate for people in this province and put a real face on government and make sure that people in this province who need supports, to get them to a level where they can be self-sustained as far as their abilities, it'll be a priority.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

**FUNDING FOR UNIVERSITY
ENTRANCE FEES**

Mr. Bagnall: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

My question is to the minister of education. I asked a question last week, but unfortunately he wasn't allowed to answer it. So I'm going to ask it to him today. Can the minister of education please tell me why the \$2,000 entrance fee for university students that your government promised for 2007 is not being kept?

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

Mr. Greenan: Madam Speaker, in response to the member of the opposition's question, he is correct.

That did not happen in September, 2007. We came to government on June 12th. We were sworn in. At that time the university was well into its publishing of its literature, bursaries, what-have-you for their incoming students. We will introduce that legislation in the spring and that will be in place for September 2008.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: I'll ask the minister of education, Madam Speaker.

Will you be giving them \$4,000 next year

because of your shoddiness that you weren't prepared to do it for this year? Will you be giving them \$4,000 rather than \$2,000 to honour your commitment, the commitment that you made when you campaigned in your district? When you knocked on doors, you promised, you promised - you promised - that you would deliver \$2,000 for entrance students. Will you make it \$4,000 for them next year to honour your commitment that you didn't do this year?

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

Mr. Greenan: The simple answer to that question is no.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: Madam Speaker, that's a real trend coming from over there: no, no, no, to all the promises they've made.

Every promise they've made they're breaking. You know it's funny when we ask questions, we can't get any answers, yet the minister will stand up and he'll tell you everything that's going on in his department like he knows what's going on. But when he gets to answer a question, doesn't know the answer.

Speaker: Do you have a question, hon. member?

Hog industry

Mr. Bagnall: Yes, I'm getting to that, Madam Speaker.

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My next question will go to the minister of agriculture. Could you please give us an update to the meeting that was held on Thursday night dealing with the hog issue on Prince Edward Island?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture.

Mr. LeClair: Yes, Madam Speaker.

I believe the meeting was held Wednesday night. We had a great discussion, an open discussion. As far as conclusions, we're still working on them, and I believe I'll be in touch with the hog board and the industry this week again for sure. The meeting itself was a very informative one.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: That's very reassuring to the hog industry who've lost eight producers in the last three weeks, that we've lost 1,600 sows which relates to 160,000 pigs. How are we going to survive if you continue to allow the industry to dwindle away? What are you doing?

Mr. Brown: What did you do when you were there?

Speaker: Order.

Mr. Bagnall: What are you doing as minister? Can you tell me one constructive thing you've done for the hog industry since you've been here?

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct).

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture.

Mr. LeClair: Madam Speaker.

We are very interested in the hog industry. It's a very - how should I put it? - taxed industry at this time. I could do what you've done and leave all the books on the table until the new government took over, but we're not. I walked into that office. The first day I walked into that office, that file was on my table. Now I could do that, but we haven't. We've been working with the hog industry since I took over, and we intend to continue working with the industry until we can find a solution to this problem.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The hog industry tells me nothing's happening. The hog industry tells me that you haven't done anything. They haven't got any money. You haven't helped the industry. You haven't done anything. The only thing they tell me is you went to Russia to get away from them. What have you actually done?

Mr. Brown: You went to Switzerland.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct).

Speaker: Order.

Mr. LeClair: Madam Speaker, I'm very pleased to see that he's taking an interest in the industry now. (Indistinct).

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

An Hon. Member: Right on.

Mr. LeClair: And I might add, something I forgot to tell you last week, that that was your industry trip to Russia. It was started with your government and I was asked to attend. Because they figured that if I didn't attend it would have taken away from the trip for them.

An Hon. Member: You're just mad you didn't get to go. You're mad you didn't get to go!

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

BUDGET FOR CAPITAL PROJECTS

Mr. M. Currie: Madam Speaker, we'll take that minister off the ropes there. He's having trouble.

I have a question for the Minister of Transportation and Public Works. Last year there was a budget for capital projects approved, about \$68 million. Are you still using that same budget?

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

Mr. MacKinley: Approved for \$68 million, capital budget. Some of it we're not going to use it because we have to rethink some of those ideas that were in it. Capital is a new expenditure. Some of them were pretty off in left field and we want to do things right.

Speaker: The hon. Member from

Georgetown-St. Peters.

BUDGET FOR LABORATORY SERVICES

Mr. M. Currie: Madam Speaker, one question I have for the member is: There was \$4.1 million allotted in the budget for laboratory services, for combining all the lab tests for water, dairy, soil, and whatever in one facility. Are you still going ahead with that project?

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

Mr. MacKinley: That is one of the projects that is very important. I'd like to allude about it. The minister of environment and the minister of agriculture and I did a tour of the building and we did a site preparation. You people wanted to move it. I believe your government was going to refix up the old - no, PVI building. We came out there and the first thing we saw, I mean, you're building a lab? You're 50 feet away from children playing. There's all those apartments and everything that Mr. McQuaid built there, his company you were talking about before. He built them there but they're only 50 feet away from young children playing there.

So what we did, we've gone back among ourselves. We're definitely committed to building the lab. We're not quite sure where we're going to do it, but we will either fix an old building up or we'll have to construct a new one. But we're definitely not going to put one that close to where young children are playing. That's (Indistinct) causing problems down the road.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. M. Currie: Madam Speaker, we have a facility that's owned by government and we can get out of current rents and leases now and combine all the services and the expertise into one facility and have common parking.

But the hon. member doesn't see fit to do that. I'm just wondering: Where are you going to build the new facility?

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

Mr. MacKinley: Well, that's a question. You get the minister of Charlottetown lobbying for it. You get the minister from Hunter River area lobbying for it. You got the minister from Bedeque lobbying, the Minister of Tourism lobbying for it and the minister from Kensington, believe it or not, he's looking for more up there too.

So we're not quite sure where it's going to go. All I know is your concept was excellent, of putting all the lab - the health lab, the feed-soil analysis, the water testing analysis. My argument to the minister from Charlottetown is that you shouldn't need water testing in the city of Charlottetown because it's on central water system. So I would like to see it move out a little farther than Charlottetown but I haven't won any arguments on that.

So the question here is - you came up with a great idea. But you were just putting it in the

wrong place. Like, you never seem to think outside the box. It's like you're looking in the box and looking out instead of getting outside and looking in. It's no wonder you never got much done. It's no wonder that when you read all the information I have -

Speaker: Mr. Minister, do you have an answer?

Mr. MacKinley: Yeah, I gave him the answer. Just listen. I'm giving him the answer. The answer is we're not quite sure where it's going to be but all members, including members on that side, are lobbying. McIsaac Motors, out by McIsaac Motors, is one place that it might be going. They're lobbying for that, and all the other MLAs are lobbying and -

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct).

Mr. MacKinley: I know it. So there's a lot of discussion here of where it's going to go.

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

Mr. M. Currie: It'd be interesting, Madam Speaker, who's going to win out on this major lobby that they're all more interesting in lobbying for a building to be put in their riding than they are about looking after health care and education. It wouldn't happen to be going into your riding, would it?

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

Mr. MacKinley: I wish I could make that announcement. No, I can't make that

announcement because I'm not sure where it's going with all these people lobbying.

But the member brings up a good thing. We should be putting it into education and health care and all that. Safe water is good for health care, if people become sick on water. Nitrates testing is going to be good for the health of the people of the Province of Prince Edward Island and we got to look after - preventive medicine is what it's called. More than what you people did. We're getting preventive medicine to look after our Islanders and anybody who wants to come here or tourists.

Mr. Brown: That's a good answer.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

NEW LABORATORY TO TENDER

Mr. M. Currie: Madam Speaker, would the minister indicate to the people of Prince Edward Island that he'll go to a tender for this facility now that he's not going to use an existing government building that already has available space and waste taxpayers' money?

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

Mr. MacKinley: Yeah, we're looking into that. We're looking into going to public tender. We're looking even at design, build right from day one. We're not quite sure what we're going to do.

But I'll tell what we're going to do better than your government. When we put out to tender, either we don't go to design and build, we're going to have project managers so local companies can build it rather than bringing them in from New Brunswick, Ontario, and everywhere else the way you did and have them sue our local people trying to get out of the deals. We're going to look after Islanders and the trade people in the Province of Prince Edward Island, and it will be going out to tender. We're just not sure how it goes but I can tell you this: If we put it out to tender, it will be for the best interests of the labour people in the Province of Prince Edward Island (Indistinct).

Mr. Brown: Right on.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. M. Currie: Madam Speaker, I'm not quite sure that he is going to go to tender by the sounds of it.

I believe he's probably just going to probably reward somebody. So you're not prepared to commit at this given time. Could you give us a time frame when you're going to place this in your own riding?

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

Mr. MacKinley: I hope you back me to get it out there because you haven't put anything there for years, but I'm not sure where it's going to go.

Really, I like you, Mr. Member, I might even give you a little more paving if you could do that. But the question is we are going to put it out for tender. I told you that. A building like that is going out for tender. We're not sure if we're going to go out for tender such as design and build. That means somebody tenders, designs, and builds it the same way the federal government does, buys the land, the whole works or - I know one thing we're going to do. We're not going to tender it all out as one block.

We're looking at going the same as we did with the Queen Elizabeth Hospital where it's gone out to somebody to tender, a project manager. Then it (Indistinct) split the bids up into 20 or 30 little bids so our local people here in the province, the people that pay the taxes in the province, get a chance to bid on it and they're not being taken advantage like the companies that you people had in where they came in low in the tenders but then they hammered the local businesses.

Speaker: Hon. minister, please answer the question.

Mr. MacKinley: I am answering the question. How much does he want? He can't seem to get it through (Indistinct).

Speaker: Final question.

The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

PROVINCE-WIDE BREAKFAST PROGRAM

Mr. Bagnall: Yes. My question will go back to the minister of education, Madam Speaker.

My question to the minister. Province-wide breakfast program is another one of your promises that you made when you were campaigning at the door, especially in Summerside area and around, because you said to them: When I get in there and elected, that's the first thing I'm going to do is bring that in.

Mr. Minister, I don't see that in the Budget. I'm wondering: Will you take the \$2,000 student money that you're saving from all the university students and put that into a breakfast-wide program that's so drastically needed here on Prince Edward Island? We've had too many businesses that are helping out that they thought that you were going to take this so they didn't have to -

Speaker: Question?

Mr. Bagnall: - go out and get money. When are you going to deliver on this breakfast-wide program?

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

Mr. Greenan: Madam Speaker, in response to the member's question, we have already begun discussions with the stakeholders on this issue, and we will be beginning our planning on rolling out this initiative, and it will happen.

If it satisfies the member and we take the \$2,000 per student and use that, that would be great, but we will deliver on this promise, I assure him.

Thank you.

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Speaker: End of Question Period.