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| Session: | 1/63 |
| Year: | 2007 |
| Date: | 1.11.07 |
| No: | 11 |

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF
PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS AND ORAL QUESTION PERIOD
(PRELIMINARY PROCEEDINGS)

FOR

Thursday 1 November 2007

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

ABORIGINAL PEOPLE OF PEI

Ms. Biggar: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

As the MLA for Tyne Valley-Linkletter, I represent the largest First Nations' community of Lennox Island. Our aboriginal peoples are the first people of Canada and also the first settlers of PEI or Abegweit, as referred to by those aboriginal peoples.

Madam Speaker, I bring to your attention the needs of our aboriginal people as it pertains to health care, education, and access to services.

In preparation for the first aboriginal women's summit in Cornerbrook, Newfoundland, a provincial summit was held in April of this year and it saw some 72 women from PEI gathered in Charlottetown, aboriginal women, and discussed challenges and opportunities faced by aboriginal women and their families here on the Island.

At the national conference, some 300 women leaders attended, women leaders from all representations of aboriginal people in Canada.

Madam Speaker, many of the issues faced by our aboriginal people across Canada are the same issues which are faced here by our aboriginal communities on the Island. I feel there is a need for child care, parenting education, more aboriginal teachers, and cultural sensitivity training in the areas of justice, education, health, and economic

development.

It is my hope that we, as a new government, will concentrate our efforts in dealing with the complex issues facing these communities and that there will be a partnership to ensure effective change for the benefit of our aboriginal communities here on PEI.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

YEAR OF THE POTATO - 2008

Mr. Henderson: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Whatever may befall the rich and famous in 2008, the humble potato will be there to share the spotlight. The United Nations has designated 2008 the International Year of the Potato.

I rise today to recognize the tuber that has created and sustained the economy of our province, that same humble potato rich in carbohydrates and vitamin C with the highest protein content of any root or tuber and yields more nutritious food more quickly on less land than any other crop. My district of O'Leary-Inverness is arguably known as the potato capitol of PEI. The district hosts the O'Leary Potato Blossum Festival and it is the home of the PEI Potato Museum.

This year's PEI potato ambassador, Melissa MacLean from West Devon is also leaving tonight to represent PEI at the Royal Winter

Fair. My region is understandably proud to have a large number of potato growers and potato processing facilities including O'Leary Potato Packers operated by Orville Willis and Warren Ellis. And O'Leary-Inverness also hosts a number of businesses affiliated with the support of the potato industry; businesses like fertilizer plants, lime spreading, transportation related companies, and the O'Leary Farmers Co-Op where supplies integral to the potato industry are available to farmers of all walks.

Madam Speaker, potato yields have increased over the last quarter century with average yields now surpassing 300 hundredweight per acre. The industry is improving its environmental sustainability on a yearly basis and technology and ingenuity displayed in the industry have been truly impressive.

Prince Edward Island ranks first in production of potatoes in Canada. We grow over 30% of our national potato production and we are the second largest exporter of seed potatoes in the world.

I think it's obvious that we have something significant to celebrate in 2008, the International Year of the Potato. And I would encourage all Island organizations affiliated with our province's finest potatoes to do their part and promote this product so important to our economy.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

AGREEMENT WITH TAXOLOG

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

Certainly, I would like to offer congratulations today to Regis and Joan Duffy and Ron Keefe with the announcement of signing a new agreement with a pharmaceutical company out of the United States, Taxolog. I think they've done a fantastic job in working in the bioscience industry. I certainly have had the pleasure over the years watching this company grow from a very small company until now employing almost 200 people and I think that they deserve credit, Regis and Joan and Ron along with their staff. They're doing a fantastic job.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

The hon. Minister of Education and Attorney General.

ROLE OF PUBLIC GUARDIAN AND TRUSTEE

Mr. Greenan: Madam Speaker, the other day at the end of oral Question Period, the hon. Leader of the Opposition asked me about the role of the Public Guardian in assisting seniors and their families when dealing with mental illness. I believe the hon. Leader of the Opposition was referring to the public trustee or the Public Guardian.

The Public Trustee, who is an employee of the office of the Attorney General, manages the financial affairs of an individual who is in law

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deemed incapable of managing his or her financial affairs. In most instances, this determination is made where the individual is suffering from dementia or another incapacitated medical issues. Sorry for that. The trustee works closely with the office of the adult protection and where a determination is made by adult protection that an individual may be the subject of financial abuse and it is determined that the person may be incompetent, the individual will be assessed by two medical practitioners. On receipt of medical certificates, the public trustee will work quickly to protect the individual's finances.

Now the question with the role of the Public Guardian, I believe my colleague responsible for the Department of Health has that under their jurisdiction.

TOBACCO TAX ACT

The other - yesterday the hon. Leader of the Opposition asked for more information about a proposed *Tobacco Tax Act*. In response to that question, I advised the House that the province loses an estimated \$3.9 million per year in tax revenue due to tobacco smuggling and I confirmed that one of the three main areas government is focusing on to deal with tobacco smuggling legislation and, as such, a new tobacco act is being prepared.

On October 17th, the hon. Provincial Treasurer tabled for first reading Bill No. 2 *Tobacco Tax Act* and I suggest that since the hon. Provincial Treasurer is the proponent of this legislation, the question about this new act and how much taxes may be, how much in taxes may be collected should be directed to my colleague.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Questions by Members

LA SOCIÉTÉ ÉDUCATIVE

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

My first question today is for the minister of education. The minister confirmed this week when he was doing his budget estimates that la Société Éducative will be receiving their charter as a community college. My question for the minister is: In the new upcoming budget year of 2008-2009, how much money do you expect to have for the French community college.

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

Mr. Greenan: We are preparing and signing a memorandum of understanding on that issue with la Société Éducative and the monies that are currently in our budget, I believe, total about \$200,000 towards the la Société Éducative.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

PROVINCIAL SALES TAX ON ELECTRICITY

Mr. Bagnall: Thank you.

My first question today is to the Premier.

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Yesterday, Premier, you talked about tax fairness in your speech in one of the questions. I was wondering if the Premier could tell us today how much PST the province collects this year from Islanders on their household electric bills.

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

PROVINCIAL SALES TAX ON GASOLINE

Premier Ghiz: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

Currently, right now what this government is trying to do is look at ways that we can deliver more tax fairness to Islanders. What we've currently done so far, of course, is to reduce the gas tax in this province by 4.4 cents a litre. We've also gone out and frozen property assessments until the year 2010, which will save Islanders more money as well. In that one announcement that we made with regards to the cut in the gas tax by 4.4 cents a litre, that will save taxpayers of this province \$10 million annually, which will put more money in their pockets to go out and spend on other necessities in life.

With regards to electricity, the hon. member knows the answer to that question and the answer is none.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

PROVINCIAL SALES TAX ON HOME HEATING FUEL

Mr. Bagnall: Thank you for that long answer for that, Mr. Premier.

My next question is to the Premier. Can you tell me how much PST did the province collect this year from Islanders from their home heating fuel bills?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier Ghiz: Exactly. Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

And the hon. member knows the answer to that question and the answer to that question is none.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

PROVINCIAL SALES TAX ON CLOTHING

Mr. Bagnall: Thank you, Mr. Premier.

Getting shorter on his questions, which is nice. Another question to the Premier: How much PST did the province collect this year from Islanders on their clothing and footwear?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier Ghiz: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

I think the hon. member knows the answer to that question as well and the answer is none.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

HARMONIZED SALES TAX(FURTHER)

Mr. Bagnall: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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My next question is to the Provincial Treasurer. Mr. Minister, why are you selling out Islanders to balance your Budget?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier Ghiz: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

The hon. member's question really has no basis whatsoever. What we're trying to do in this province is to deliver tax fairness to all Islanders by reducing taxes in this province. The hon. member knows full well that the federal government is approaching the five provinces that currently do not have HST and we've already made a commitment that we are not going to introduce any new taxes in this province that is going to be a burden for Islanders. We have to look at the big picture in this province and we will make sure that the only measure that we bring in for taxes in this province will be more tax fairness for Islanders by reducing taxes in this province, as we've already demonstrated with our reduction to the gas tax.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

My next question is to the Provincial Treasurer if he will be allowed to answer. Obviously, the Premier has no confidence in his ministers. He has to answer all the questions so the next question. We all know that you are desperate for cash for a cash deal with Ottawa in order to get the money to balance your spring budget and I want to know why are you doing this on

the back of all Islanders?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier Ghiz: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

The hon. member knows full well that his question holds no water whatsoever. He knows full well that it's the federal government that's approaching the provinces when it comes to this and we've already indicated very clearly on this side of the House that the only thing we're interested in is tax fairness for Islanders to make sure that Islanders can have more money in their pockets at the end of the day.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: Madam Speaker, we all know - we're not very slow - that by putting the HST tax on the individuals on Prince Edward Island, it's going to cost each individual over \$1,000 extra in taxes a year and that's what this government is trying to do. There was no PST, no GST on fuel oil on these issues. Now, there's going to be. There was GST, I'm sorry, but there's not PST. The PST will be added now to all of these things so there is going to be a cash grab for the minister.

But my next question to the minister is: Is the \$60 million that you're going to get from the federal government from Ottawa, is this a one-time deal to balance your Budget for this year? What are you going to do for next year?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier Ghiz: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

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And really, the hon. member should really check his facts before he gets up in the House. It's been proven already that the hon. member has trouble when he comes to this House in making sure that he has his facts checked and I know last night I saw the hon. Leader of the Opposition on the news talking about how telephone bills would be going up as well. Well, we all know that that would not be true. In fact, telephone bills would be decreasing if the HST was brought in. We're the last government that wants to add new taxes to Islanders. We're not going to do that. What we're going to do is look for tax fairness but we need to make sure that all Islanders have the facts and that's why we will do our due diligence. And if these new taxes, if in fact HST comes into place and it will be bad for Islanders, our government will not bring it in.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: Madam Speaker, it's shameful that this government will bring in a tax on home fuel oil. It's shameful that they'll bring in a tax on electricity and clothing hurting those people who need tax breaks the most. Why are you doing this on the backs of the people of Prince Edward Island?

Speaker: The hon. Provincial Treasurer.

Mr. Sheridan: Madam Speaker, there's only one shameful fact here and that's the fact that the previous administration continued opposition by the Opposition is that they will not pull their heads out of the sand and try to look for fairness in taxation for everyday Islanders. If the Opposition would take a look

at this and agree to come alongside this government as we look to try to make tax fairness for this Island as opposed to continuing to grow taxes as they have over the past 11 years; gas tax, property tax, every tax that could possibly be taxed to give them more money to put into friends' pockets - if they would just sit back, relax, take a look at this with us. This is not something that will be thrown on Islanders. This is something that is being done with great due diligence.

The facts that the hon. member has put forth in this House today, if we want to call them facts, is pure rubbish. And we would like him to come along for the ride, take a look at this with us and make sure this is what we need for everyday Islanders. Thank you very much.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: Madam Speaker, it's really shameful that we can get a minister to stand up in this House and say that there's not going to be any burden to taxpayers that they're going to have to pay 15% on clothing where they don't pay anything today to say that they are not going to suffer. I mean he better get his head out of the sand and look at a few issues here. Why are you accepting this money, one-time deal out of Ottawa to balance your Budget this year on the backs of Islanders?

Speaker: The hon. Provincial Treasurer.

Mr. Sheridan: Madam Speaker, no one has accepted any money from the federal government, first of all. We're in very early negotiations. We are looking for tax fairness for Islanders. That's all that we're doing. No one is going to be injured by this tax. We have

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told the hon. member that over and over and over again from this side of the House. We will not put undue pressure on Islanders through taxation as the previous administration have. Thank you.

Premier Ghiz: That's right.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: And I take it that you mean by that - will you commit today in the House - this is to the minister of treasury, provincial treasury. Will you commit today in the House that you will not bring in HST to burden the people of this province to put an extra tax on them, which would mean at least \$1,000 to every single individual across PEI? You are bringing in a tax that is going to hit every single taxpaying person in this province.

Speaker: The hon. Provincial Treasurer.

Mr. Sheridan: Madam Speaker, again, I'd ask the hon. member not to quote numbers like \$1,000 per Islanders. Obviously, that's how much research that the previous administration did. Let's stop quoting numbers that they're pulling out of the air. The question here is: Will we not bring in HST? We will not bring in a tax burden to Prince Edward Islanders that is going to impact them negatively, period. We're saying it in the House. I think the Premier has stated it many times over. I'm stating it to you now we will not bring in a tax through HST that would be a burden to Prince Edward Island.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: I take it from that, Madam Speaker, that the Provincial Treasurer has agreed they won't be doing HST so thank you very much for that commitment today.

POTATO BOAT IN ALGERIA

My next question is to the Minister of Agriculture. Is it true - and this is very discouraging that we have a load of potatoes that was shipped to Algeria sitting in Algeria waters that cannot be unloaded at the present time?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture.

Mr. LeClair: Madam Speaker, I don't think that's true, to my knowledge I don't think.

Premier Ghiz: Get your facts.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: Okay, hon. member, I'll rephrase that question then a little bit. Do we have a load of potatoes that was shipped out of Summerside, PEI, for Algeria that have come down with ring rot and are going to be held up at the Algerian borders and if not, will you explain why?

An Hon. Member: You're quite an Islander.

Speaker: Order.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

An Hon. Member: Good question.

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Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture.

Mr. LeClair: Madam Speaker, the question that the member opposite is asking is something that hasn't been confirmed yet. We're working on this issue and to my knowledge, there's no boat in Algeria that's sitting there not being unloaded.

Premier Ghiz: Great.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: My next question is to the same minister. Is the boat being unloaded?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture.

Mr. LeClair: Madam Speaker, we're working on that right now and when I have a confirmation of the answer on just exactly what - Let me put it this way. We were listening to allegations awhile ago about numbers out of the air. Well, my answer will be confirmed before I give you an answer.

An Hon. Member: Good.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: Minister, you know and I know that the ship is sitting there in Algeria not being unloaded while the Canadian government has been inspecting these load of potatoes so why are you not answering the questions when you know, you know the answers to this? Why are you trying to mislead the public here?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture.

Mr. LeClair: Madam Speaker, this is a very sensitive issue. I'll not be answering the questions until I'm sure that the answers are confirmed. I'm not in Algeria. I can't tell you what is going on in Algeria right now. We are working on it. It is a very sensitive issue. You should know this because of where your previous occupation was in my chair over here. You know, we have a very volatile industry here, potato industry, which we want to ship worldwide. And when I'm sure of the answers, I'll certainly let you know. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: Mr. Minister, is it true?

Speaker: Which minister?

Mr. Bagnall: Minister of Agriculture.

Speaker: Thank you.

Mr. Bagnall: Is it true that we allowed Quebec to truck in potatoes to PEI to be put on the ship to be shipped to Algeria?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture.

Mr. LeClair: Madam Speaker, we do allow potatoes and we have allowed potatoes to come here to be loaded onto a ship from Quebec, yes, certainly.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

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Mr. Bagnall: Hon. Minister of Agriculture. So I take from that answer that, yes, potatoes from Quebec were loaded on that ship.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture.

Mr. LeClair: Madam Speaker, yes, potatoes have come to PEI and have been loaded on a ship.

Mr. MacKinley: So has carrots.

Speaker: Order.

Mr. LeClair: And they have been loaded along with potatoes from New Brunswick and PEI and, certainly, they're on that ship.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: Hon. Minister of Agriculture again, Madam Speaker. Can you tell us who did the inspection on those potatoes that came in from Quebec before they want on the ships?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture.

Mr. LeClair: Madam Speaker, CFIA was to do the inspections.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

An Hon. Member: That was Stephen Harper.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: Thank you. Hon. member, we had a load of potatoes shipped and my sources tell me that the ring rot that the ring rot that is

on that ship came from the Quebec potatoes that were trucked in here and put on the ship to go to Algeria. Can you confirm that?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture.

Mr. LeClair: Madam Speaker, I can confirm that potatoes came in here from Quebec and were put on a ship and were sent to Algeria with the other potatoes from New Brunswick and PEI. That practice is not unusual. I mean we trade between provinces all the time. Thank you.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: Mr. Minister, Minister of Agriculture, Madam Speaker. Do you know by bringing these potatoes in that you've put the reputation of PEI potatoes at stake that are going to other parts of the country? Canada has no - Prince Edward Island had no problem getting potatoes into Algeria but now we have a boatload sitting there that can't go in now because of this disease of the potatoes. Why would you allow this to take place?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture.

Mr. LeClair: Madam Speaker, that's trade. There's individual companies bring potatoes into this province. I have nothing to do with the potatoes that are coming into this province. CFIA does the inspections, allows them to come to be loaded onto boats and, you know, if we're looking for trade and to continue trade, I think the minister across should take a second look at what he's doing here.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: Madam Speaker, to the Minister of Agriculture. I talked to the Minister of Agriculture on this issue before and I asked him if these potatoes were going to be unloaded or what was going to happen. He was going to let me know. I haven't heard anything. I also talked to the potato board and he was going to get back to me with information, which they didn't. So I guess the only way I'm going to bring this information out is to ask the questions here.

Mr. MacKinley: Wait for them to answer.

Speaker: The hon. member has the floor.

Mr. Bagnall: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Premier Ghiz: Make stuff up.

Mr. Bagnall: Premier is pretty touchy over there.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: I guess what I would say here is this has been mishandled from the beginning. My fear right now to the Minister of Agriculture is if these potatoes are not going to be unloaded in Algeria, are you going to allow those ring rot potatoes to come back into Prince Edward Island?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture.

Mr. LeClair: Madam Speaker, when it's confirmed what's going on with the potatoes whether they're being unloaded or not being

unloaded, we will make that decision at that time. And as far as getting back to you, I told you just a minute ago when I had the confirmed answers I will let you know and you know where my office is. I'm sure you could find my phone number and I'll certainly let you know when this is confirmed. Thank you.

Premier Ghiz: Exactly.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: My last question on this issue - and it's to the same minister - is Mr. Minister, if your worst fears are confirmed, are you going to allow that ship to come back into Summerside and unload those ring rot potatoes here on Prince Edward Island?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture.

Mr. LeClair: Madam Speaker, now it's in the hands of CFIA. This is between Canada and Algeria. To my knowledge, these potatoes will not be coming back. I am pretty confident that these potatoes will be unloaded and we'll not have a problem with having to worry about bringing them back and you'll be able to set your mind at ease on that one. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Alberton-Roseville.

JACQUES CARTIER PROVINCIAL PARK

Mr. Murphy: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

My question is directed to the Minister of

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Tourism. I've heard some concerns from the people I represent about Jacques Cartier Provincial Park in Kildare, which is in my district 26. This park is truly a valuable asset for my area of the Island. People concerned want to know what our new government's plans are for this precious part of our Island. What is generally known, work is required on that property. Could the hon. member please inform this House and the people of West Prince just what is going to be done to maintain and improve this property and when will we see the work started?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Tourism.

Ms. Docherty: Madam Speaker, the hon. member and I had the opportunity to visit this park, Jacques Cartier, which was my first visit and it is indeed a beautiful park. And to that point, we do have in our capital budget for next year \$135,000 which will be spent. My understanding is that money will be used next year to build new three-way hookup sites and the work will begin as soon as the weather and whatnot cooperates next spring.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from O'Leary-Inverness. The hon. Member from Evangeline-Miscouche, sorry.

HIGHWAY PROJECT IN NINE MILE CREEK

Mr. Gallant: My question is to the hon. Minister of Transportation and Public Works. Could the minister bring this House up to speed on the progress of a major highway construction project that is taking place out at Nine Mile Creek?

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

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

The question to that is, of course, Nine Mile Creek is very close to my heart. I represented the area for a lot of years, probably 19 or 20 years, played hockey out there, Nine Mile Creek Bulldogs and Nine Mile Creek has been waiting a long time to get their intersection fixed out there. I believe it's been suffering for seven or eight years where the intersection sort of ripped apart and there's no pavement or nothing. They're pretty well in the mud and, yes, we're going to do it and we're going to get it done as quick as we can.

An Hon. Member: Great.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Evangeline-Miscouche.

Mr. Gallant: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Supplementary question to the same minister.

Was the public consulted before this project started and on the design issues, was everything resolved before the machinery and everything went there?

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

Mr. MacKinley: Basically, what we did and I will give the previous administration, the Tory government - cause we had to fix the intersection out there. Norm MacPhee was the member at that time and we had great problems

in fixing the intersection there by Afton or just before you get there. I can't think of it right now but Gass's service station, MacQuarrie. It's Gas's now. See the minister hasn't even been out. It's changed hands to Gass's to the store. See you got to get out in these ridings a little more. You'd know what's going on there, the former minister. But anyway, we had public consultations with the residents at Afton Community Center and it worked real good. And in this case, we did the design and took the design out to the residents along with the Minister of Tourism was there. We heard from them and if they had any concerns, we tried to adjust them the best we could so this will make a lot safer intersection there and I believe the cost was something like \$301,000 or \$302,000 done by Island Coastal.

Premier Ghiz: Great job.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

BEEF PLANT

Mr. Bagnall: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

My question is to the Minister of Agriculture again. Minister, you and the Provincial Treasurer stood on the steps of the Legislature here two weeks ago Friday after and talking to the media about the great deal you've got coming in right away on the beef plant. At that time, it was going to be either a matter of minutes or hours before you would have the information that you would be able to tell the public at that time. Can you tell the House today why haven't you made this announcement or maybe the Premier would like to answer because he answers all the questions for them.

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier Ghiz: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

And it is my pleasure to take this question. And as the hon. member knows, when we first formed the government we were put in a situation where we were told that the beef plant is losing approximately \$600,000 a month with no end in sight. We went out right off the bat and said enough is enough. We want to support our agriculture industry but we have to make sure that we're being responsible to the taxpayers. So we went out right away led by the hon. Minister of Agriculture and the Provincial Treasurer and started doing negotiations with Nova Scotia and New Brunswick and, of course, with the federal government. Those negotiations are still ongoing. We're hoping to be able to see a resolution to this matter as soon as possible but I suggest that what we're going to do is make a decision here that's going to be in the best interests of agriculture and the taxpayers of this province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: I want to thank the Minister of Agriculture for that answer. My next question is also to the Minister of Agriculture. This deal that you are supposedly going to get for the beef plant. Is this the same deal that when I was minister we were working on with ACOA where ACOA was going to put in the \$6 million and each of the provinces were going to come up with \$2 million or is there a new deal on the table or is it the same deal you're

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talking about?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier Ghiz: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

When we got sworn in on June 12th, there was absolutely no deal in place. And being a former minister of the Crown, the minister would know full well that to be discussing what could be under negotiations can only jeopardize that on the floor of the Legislature so I'm not going to mention what we are and what we're not negotiating for. What we're trying to do is put in the best possible deal for the people of Prince Edward Island, whether or not it's the agricultural industry or the taxpayers. And I urge the minister here to be careful here because he would not want to do anything that would help jeopardize the beef plant any further.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: Madam Speaker, to the same minister.

He knows very well we were working on a strategy at the beef plant at the time and he knows that that was the deal that we were working on when I was minister there. I'm just asking is he working on a new deal for himself or is he continuing with the same deal that was in place when he became minister?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier Ghiz: Thank you very much, Madam

Speaker.

And as a new government, we want to be responsible to the people of this province and we're not going to go out and talk about deals we're trying to negotiate and hurt those negotiations in public. The minister or former minister should know full well, being a former minister of the Crown, that any discussions in public could jeopardize these very important negotiations and we're going to do our best to make sure that we get the best possible deal for our agricultural industry while also protecting the interests of the taxpayers.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: Madam Speaker, to the Minister of Agriculture again.

And you know, Premier, that was a great speech you just made but if you would read in the paper in the last four weeks, your Provincial Treasurer has been in the paper saying that he's got a great deal coming through. The Minister of Agriculture has also made comments that they have a deal coming through. So to say that I'm bringing this up, you people have been bringing that up for the last three months.

Speaker: Question? Is there a question there?

Mr. Bagnall: My question, Premier, if you're such a great negotiator, why is this deal taking so long?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier Ghiz: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

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And I think what we have to realize here is when the former government first put this beef plant in place, everyone thought it was a good idea but, unfortunately, the due diligence was not done. We got into government on June 12th of this year. We were presented with the situation where no one in the province knew about it. In fact, when we tried to ask questions when we were in Opposition, we were shouted down by the government of the time. You shouldn't be asking questions on this. Well, we get in and we find out that the beef plant is on the hook to the taxpayers of this province for over \$30 million. We find out that the beef plant is losing \$600,000 a month with no end in sight. We've gone out. We've drawn the line in the sand. We said we have to protect the taxpayers in this province while also protecting the agriculture industry. We're in the middle of negotiations right now. We hope to be able to come forward with a deal and that's what we're working very hard to make sure that we do for the people of Prince Edward Island.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: The Premier is pretty good with his numbers. Too bad they're not correct.

The second part of this - I have another question to the Minister of Agriculture. Can you please explain the exit strategy that you're using for the hog industry and fill us in as to how that's going to take place?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier Ghiz: Thank you very much, Madam

Speaker.

And I would really like to question the hon. member, who was the former minister of agriculture, and he should know that those numbers that we did receive came from the same people who were there before with regards to the \$30 million on the hook and the \$600,000 a month. So I ask you, please do not be insulting the bureaucrats who do fine work in this province and we're working overtime right now to try and make sure that this beef plant can be successful in the long run.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I'll stand by my statement. My question to the Minister of Agriculture was not answered. I'm wondering if he's prepared to answer that question.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture.

HOG INDUSTRY(FURTHER)

Mr. LeClair: Madam Speaker, yes, I kind of forgot the question now but he likes to keep bringing up the exit strategy. We're in a transition. We have a transition plan and we're in the middle of that also so I would like to have all the facts before I comment on that any further also but it's a transition strategy.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

CLYDE RIVER GOLF COURSE

Mr. Bagnall: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

There's quite a pattern there is that no answers and he's always in the middle of something that he can't tell anything about so I'll change to another minister.

A question to the minister of environment. In the House yesterday, I asked you about the Clyde River Golf course about land being plowed to the water. You told me you were going to investigate that today. Can you respond to the House your findings?

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

Mr. Webster: Madam Speaker, I was made aware of that yesterday when we were doing estimates. My planned response was to table, to respond to four questions I believe the hon. member had and I was going to do that at the beginning of estimates. But I can tell you that site that you speak of is currently, as we speak, under investigation at the moment and I will have the details in the next day or two.

Premier Ghiz: Great work.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Bagnall: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: I want to thank the minister for that. You were also going to check into the information that your enforcement officers gave the complainant. Can you follow up on that for me please?

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

Mr. Webster: Madam Speaker, if my recollection is right, you said my director of my enforcement officer, John Clements said, you said that he said that under section, I believe, 11 there would be no charges laid on buffer zone violations. I contacted him this morning and he said that's an absolute fabrication by the hon. member from the Montague-Kilmuir area.

An Hon. Member: Another one.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: Well, Madam Speaker, then I will have the individual that called me with that information take it up with the minister because he was very upset with the comments that he had got back.

And Minister, I guess I'll turn this one over to the minister (Indistinct).

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

WINSLOE TRAFFIC LIGHT DOCUMENTS

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

My question is for the Minister of Transportation and Public Works. I had asked a week or so ago if you would table the design, the research and tender documents for the windfall in Winsloe, the lights, and I'm wondering if you brought that information with

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you today.

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

Mr. MacKinley: Well, I stand to be corrected but I believe you asked the Premier that and he did table that information for you. You got to spend a little more detail on what is being tabled but I do believe I might just have that in my briefcase.

Mr. Brown: Table it for him again.

Mr. MacKinley: I can table it for you again. You're talking about the lights in Winsloe. The big question people are asking me is you guys had 3600 days. If it was so simple to fix that intersection, why didn't you just buy that house and do it. You had 3600 days to do it. That's what people are asking me.

An Hon. Member: There you go.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. M. Currie: Well, Madam Speaker, it never was that much of an issue but what was tabled an invitation to bid, I believe, for the lights that are going over next to the hon. member's property. If you do have that information, I'd appreciate if you tabled it because the Premier did promise it. You said you were going to table it so we don't have it.

Question then for the minister: Did you promise these lights before the election?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Transportation

and Public Works.

Mr. MacKinley: Do you want the truth? The truth of the matter is before the election, I didn't even know (Indistinct) position. And if I ever did that, I'd be a lot smarter than anybody here on Prince Edward Island. (Indistinct) because we're going to lay you people all out when I'd be minister of transportation. I think that's a little far-fetched.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. MacKinley: I mean that is - I know I can see far ahead and I can try to plan but I never really planned it like this and I can honestly swear on the Bible or anything else that I didn't. I knew we were going to win but not this big.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. M. Currie: Madam Speaker, I can see we're getting nowhere here so I'll try another avenue. Was the Minister of Transportation and Public Works, were you lobbied by MacDonald and McQuaid for these lights in Winsloe?

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

Mr. MacKinley: Well, getting back to his first question here, I believe this was tabled but maybe they missed tabling it. (Indistinct) route 2, Winsloe, and there's a quite a bit of document here, must be the planning, yes. I'd like to - if you want this now to read up on it, you can take it over and table it later.

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Speaker: You can table it under Tabling of Documents, Mr. Minister.

Mr. MacKinley: All right. I was just going to help out the member - \$659,000 it cost. I assume this was all done and there should be a design here somewhere. I mean we're doing so much work it's just hard to know which designs we're doing. They're using lights and everything but anyway, I will get you that information. And I mean the particular friend you're talking about, they tell me pretty well directed the fifth floor in your office, not your office, the Premier's office because numerous times he met with senior Cabinet Ministers and bureaucrats on your side. He must have been telling them what to do if you're saying that, Mr. McQuaid, because he used to meet and I can tell you where they met with him.

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

PURCHASE OF HOUSE ON WINSLOE ROAD

Mr. M. Currie: Madam Speaker, another question for the minister. You did confirm in the House after I pried it out of you that you did buy the house down at the end of the Winsloe Road. Did you buy that after you made the deal with McQuaid and MacDonald, the lights?

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

Mr. MacKinley: Well, number one is there was no deal made and number two is the only thing that when McQuaid heard that we were out buying property which, I guess people know. See the thing is when you get into this,

he already owned a service station on the right hand side. If he wants to move the license across, it's the city's problem and he could have moved it across, have access in and out on that side. We're looking at the safety. We're not worrying about Mr. McQuaid and I didn't realize that (Indistinct) MacDonald was in it until it was brought up in the House. I'd have to check that fact. I knew she did business management for him but the only time I had with Mr. McQuaid was when he approached our department after he found out putting these lights in saying he was going to sell his property and we said we're not buying the property and we're going to charge him \$25,000 for putting them in. And he didn't like it and really I haven't seen him since.

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

Mr. M. Currie: But why would you see him? You're after giving him over a million dollars for lights. He doesn't need you any more.

The house that you bought on the end of the corner. What I was trying to get out of you, did you buy that after the McQuaid and MacDonald application or did you buy it before?

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

Mr. MacKinley: Well, I'm not sure but I will tell you one thing I'll get up to speed on. There was a mess in properties in our department. It was unbelievable. Bulldozers were coming down the road. One prime example is the member from community, cultural affairs, where we had to go out and pay three times as much to build it because your minister

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neglected to buy the building. Same thing happened up west. Bulldozers coming down the road. I get a phone call and, all of a sudden, they missed a house up there too and we paid - What did we do? Expropriate it? No, we didn't have time and, normally, governments don't expropriate. So what I direct my department to do is any major event that's going on that we're doing, let's hope and get ahead of the bulldozers because your government - I believe it cost me probably \$780,000 in mistakes just in property paying too much for that property since we came to power of neglect on your government. Like you ran it so ruthless, it was unbelievable and I'm still busy looking into the 300 and some thousand or whatever it was of people you had paid and you told them to stay home. Give them a cheque and they stayed home. I just can't believe some of the antics going on under you. You, Mr. Minister, know about it all right because the lady said you got very red. She thought you were going to have a stroke or something when you told her to get out of the office. So the question is there's such a mess in that government, mess that I'm trying to clean up and do it right and you'll be hearing about how much we saved in the tire tender. You people were putting them out, I think, I believe it was \$2.20 a tire. We're saving over a million dollars and that would be another - No, but I'm just trying to say the money we saved.

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

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

I'm wondering if the hon. minister will now tell me if he's resold that House at the end of

the Winsloe Road.

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

Mr. MacKinley: Well, to tell you the truth, I'll have to get back to you on that one because I'm not sure if we own it and I'm not sure if we resold it but I believe we did buy it as I said. But one thing I did, if we resold it, we certainly moved a lot quicker than you people because normally what you people did was just bulldoze them down.

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

Mr. M. Currie: Madam Speaker, we're not getting anywhere here today.

Speaker: Final question.

EASTERN SCHOOL BOARD LAWSUIT

Mr. M. Currie: Oh, final question. I asked the minister of education the other day when he was doing his estimates if he could find out if the Eastern School Board had settled a lawsuit. Could you update us on that information?

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

Mr. Greenan: Madam Speaker, I did not follow up on that but I will bring that information to the hon. member.

End of Question Period