

May 8, 2015

[Original]

## Courthouses

**Mr. Northrup:** Time after time after time, we have sat in this House and listened to the Premier and his colleagues talk about talking to stakeholders and about consulting with New Brunswickers, the great people of New Brunswick. We have heard that from day one, but we have had a few examples, especially yesterday, where day care operators were not consulted at all, seniors have hardly been consulted at all, and, now, the municipalities are not being talked to.

My question today is to the Deputy Premier, Minister of Public Safety, and Minister of Justice: Has he communicated with the town of Sussex, and why has he closed the courthouse in Sussex?

**Hon. Mr. Horsman:** It has been a while, but I thought this would be coming. First of all, I want to say that the priorities of our government are job creation, fiscal responsibility, getting our fiscal house in order, and families. We have to make tough decisions, and this is one of those tough decisions.

Court closures are on our radar, but this was not just in the last four or five months. These decisions have been thought about in the Department of Justice for years. As far as I understand it, the former minister and the members opposite knew these were coming. These were not decisions that were just thought of and consulted on just recently. These decisions have been years in coming. They knew that, when the courthouse in Saint John was up and running—a nice, safe, and secure institution—both the Sussex and St. Stephen courts were going to be closed. They knew that well in advance. I stand by those decisions.

**Mr. Northrup:** I am standing here today very proud that former Premier Alward and I stood up for the courthouse in Sussex and said it would stay open. It is the right thing to do. All the mayor and council are asking is that the Minister of Justice come to Sussex, talk to the stakeholders, and see the courthouse with his own eyes. That is all we are asking.

An email was sent to the minister a month ago today, actually. I have the answer right here on paper. It says: Absolutely, yes, I will come to Sussex. It has been a month or so. I would like to ask the minister what has changed between a month ago and today. Did he get word out of the Premier's Office that he cannot go? Did he get word from his staff not to go to Sussex? Is it yes or no? Is he coming to Sussex? I am standing up for the courthouse, and he has to come explain to the people why it is closing.

**Hon. Mr. Horsman:** The member opposite personally asked me the question. It was not a letter or an email. He personally asked me, and I said that, yes, I would certainly go to Sussex. He asked me about the time frame, and I did not have a time frame because of what is going on in the House.



Not only do I have to worry about the court in Sussex, but also I have to worry about courthouses all around the province. I personally emailed the mayors of Sussex, Grand Falls, St. Stephen, and Grand Manan to come to Fredericton or to speak with me anytime. I welcome open conversations with any of the mayors to do this.

We want to make sure that people have a safe, secure environment when they attend certain institutions, and the courthouse has to be one of them. As we have seen around the world, in Canada, and even in Fredericton yesterday, we are now getting strange packages that might be threatening to the people who attend courthouses. We want to make sure that we have great courthouses for the safety of the public and the people who work there. Thank you.

**Mr. Northrup:** I have to disagree with the minister. I have it here in writing. I will send it over to him if he wants to read it. His exact words are down on paper: Yes, absolutely, he will come to Sussex to talk to the mayor, the lawyers, different groups, Social Development, and the RCMP. I have it in writing. This is not just something out of the blue.

I am asking: Is he coming to Sussex? Yes or no? There is no halfway answer in this.

**Hon. Mr. Horsman:** Again, I was asked personally, not only by the member opposite, but also by the mayors of Sussex and other communities. I have said: Yes, I will go. I did not say that I would not go, but that I would go. At this time, I have to be in the House, and I have other duties. Not only do I have to worry about the courthouse in Sussex, but I also have to worry about everything around the province.

(Interjection.)

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

**Hon. Mr. Horsman:** It is unfortunate that the former minister, when he was in government, did not deal with these situations.

(Interjection.)

**Mr. Speaker:** The Leader of the Opposition will come to order.

**Hon. Mr. Horsman:** We have to worry about our finances and the safety of the people who are attending courthouses around the province, as well as the people who work there, including judges.

Again, to answer the question, yes, I will go to Sussex and, yes, I will go to St. Stephen. I have already been there on other matters, but I will continue to do so as the Minister of Justice. Thank you.



## Bridges

**Mr. Wetmore:** The Cherryvale bridge was washed away in the flooding of April 2014. It is now a year later, and the people who depend on the bridge are understandably concerned. They have been awaiting word on if and when the bridge will be replaced. I have been trying for months to meet with the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure to discuss the bridge. Meeting after meeting has been scheduled, only to be cancelled by the minister's staff.

Winter is behind us, and we are now in the month of May; so there is no reason to delay moving forward with plans to replace the bridge. Will the minister please advise the House as to when we can expect the Cherryvale bridge to be replaced?

**Hon. Mr. Melanson:** I am fully aware of the situation to which the member is referring. I have communicated with him. As the minister responsible, I can tell him that we are assessing the situation. We are trying to clearly identify what could be a solution to that situation. Again, we had scheduled one meeting. Unfortunately, we had to change it, but that does not mean we are not on this file. We are working and doing our due diligence.

However, we have to remind the member and everybody listening today that we have a fiscal situation in the province that we need to address and we have a limited amount of money that we can invest in infrastructure. Certainly, as we do this assessment, we will identify the best solution while respecting our fiscal situation.

**Mr. Wetmore:** We certainly get the impression that the Cherryvale bridge is not a priority of this Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure because it falls under the disaster assistance plan and a good portion of it will be covered under that project. We are not talking about an infrastructure maintenance issue. We are talking about a bridge that has washed away and left people with an unacceptable alternate route that is prone to flooding throughout the year.

I mentioned that I have had several meetings cancelled, and it is several meetings, Mr. Minister. I will ask here in the House: Will the minister agree to meet with the Cherryvale bridge committee and me, along with Assistant Deputy Minister Dale Forster, no later than next Thursday, May 14, and will he commit to keeping this appointment? We will come to the House to meet him. Thank you.

**Hon. Mr. Melanson:** I can see the passion from the member with regard to this situation, but I think the passion of the member should be shared with some of his colleagues. They have been criticizing us over and over again about our investing more money for infrastructure.

(Interjections.)

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.



**Hon. Mr. Melanson:** They have been using this argument that we should not be investing significantly in infrastructure to stimulate the economy and to address some of the most deteriorating infrastructure we have in this province. You have to get your message straight and understand your priorities.

(Interjections.)

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, member. The member for Gagetown-Petitcodiac will come to order.

**Hon. Mr. Melanson:** You cannot just keep criticizing when it is the appropriate thing for you to do for political reasons and then, when you have a situation in your own riding, say that you need more money. Get your facts straight and organize your ideas, and then we will address the issue.

(Interjections.)

**Mr. Speaker:** The member for Gagetown-Petitcodiac will come to order.

### Day Care

**Mr. Coon:** The consequences of taking funding away from the women who run private child care and early learning centres are already being felt.

(Interjections.)

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, member.

Excuse me for one moment, please. I do not want to interrupt question period.

I have asked you to come to order on several occasions now, member for Gagetown-Petitcodiac. I ask that you do come to order immediately, or there will be consequences.

Leader of the Third Party, you may start your question over.

(Interjections.)

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Coon:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The consequences of taking funding away from the women who run private child care and early learning centres are now being felt. Childhood educators are being laid off this week. Next, the cost of child care will have to rise. My question is this: Did the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development actually receive an analysis from his department...

(Interjections.)



**Mr. Speaker:** Order, member

**Mr. Coon:** ...of the consequences for parents and child care operators of withdrawing up to \$12 000 from every private child care centre in the province? Yes or no?

*[Translation]*

**Hon. Mr. Rousselle:** I thank the member for Fredericton South for his question. As I have said, and will say again, we made a choice, which was to redistribute the budget in this day care assistance program envelope. Yes, some people will receive additional money, meaning the \$400 000 that we are going to add to the \$2.4 million. These funds will go toward jobs held mostly by women. We want to ensure these female educators who will work with our young children benefit from this money.

So, we are not taking funding away, but rather adding some. I remind you that the \$2.8 million will be used to recruit and retain qualified personnel in order to provide quality education and day care services to our young children.

*[Original]*

**Mr. Coon:** I am referring to the consequences of the minister's redistribution. The consequences are being felt. Early childhood educators are being laid off from private child care centres with up to \$12 000 being withdrawn from the operators of those child care centres. It is likely that the next thing we will see will be rising costs for the parents who use those private child care centres. My simple question—and I would like to have it answered—was this: Did the minister receive an analysis of the consequences of redistributing this money in the way that he has?

*[Translation]*

**Hon. Mr. Rousselle:** Since 2008, the day care sector has grown by 60% in terms of the number of spaces. Indeed, our analysis shows 60% growth, and we want this to continue, since it is important that our children be able to benefit from services from licensed child care facilities that provide quality education programs with qualified staff. Because of this 60% growth, we added \$2.8 million to recruit and retain qualified staff.

*[Original]*

**Mr. Coon:** I am beginning to get the sense that the minister did not receive any kind of analysis from his staff in terms of the consequences of withdrawing the money from the women who operate private day care centres in this province. That means that this decision to remove that money and, as he says, redistribute it was made without consideration of the consequences. Consequences are what we are seeing—consequences in terms of child educators being laid off.



Soon, we will see rising costs of child care for those centres and for the parents who use those centres. That leads to this question: Has the minister consulted with his colleague the Minister of Social Development to determine how to deal with the fact that we are going to see people who will no longer be able to afford child care? They might end up having to leave their jobs if they are currently living cheque to cheque, or, if they have gone back to school to better themselves, they may have to abandon schooling and go back to minimum wage jobs.

This is the question: Has the minister consulted with his...

**Mr. Speaker:** Time, member.

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Mr. Rousselle:** I must admit that I find it sad that the Green Party member has joined the official opposition in fearmongering. We have a \$23.6-million program here in the province, and the \$400 000 increase will be primarily invested in enabling women to deliver quality services. So, we have very clear proof that this money is being directed to employees, mainly women, and that they are the ones who will continue to deliver quality child care to our young children.

That being said, private for-profit day care operators, not-for-profit day cares, and community day cares will all benefit from this increase. Whether day care operators or employees, it is day care service providers who will benefit from it.

[*Original*]

## Nursing Homes

**Mr. Stewart:** Last Sunday in Chatham, Dr. Losier held a meeting and over 1000 people attended. My question today is for the Minister of Social Development. Based on the reality that the minister from the Miramichi and his colleague promised a 300-bed nursing home, I am talking to the Minister of Social Development today to find out when we can expect the official ribbon cutting and, of course, the construction of that piece of infrastructure. Thank you.

**Hon. Mr. Fraser:** I find it a little ironic that the member opposite is talking about nursing home infrastructure in Miramichi, considering the fiasco of the last four years under the former Minister of Social Development and the members on that side. It is a little bit rich coming from him. There is absolutely no credibility on that side of the House in regard to that file. It is a file that I worked on extremely hard with members of the opposition.

(Interjections.)

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. Please address the Chair.



**Hon. Mr. Fraser:** In fact, under the former Liberal government, a new home was scheduled to be built through an independent study by ADI. The member opposite was part of the government that cancelled that home, that allowed the residents of Mount St. Joseph to suffer from having no hot water for months at a time and to suffer in temperatures of 40° and 50° in that home in the summer.

Shame on him. He has no business bringing this up in this House because he did nothing for the people of the Miramichi last time, and he is not going to do it again.

**Mr. Stewart:** Perhaps the Minister of Tourism failed to realize that Chatham is in his riding. When he was getting elected in 2003, it was: We are not going to take it. That was out on the lawn of the Legislature, with all his big vocal cords. He might have forgotten the promise he made in 2005 for a nursing home. Then those members made an official promise in 2009, but there was nothing to show for it.

I will ask the Minister of Social Development again: When can we expect a 300-bed nursing home, as promised by the member for Miramichi, to be constructed in Chatham?

**Hon. Mr. Fraser:** Again, I have to correct the member. I was elected in 2006. I was elected on a promise to look after the people in my community, to work hard for the people of my community, and to advocate for the rights of seniors in my community. I continue to do that day in, day out.

I certainly have no lessons to learn from any member opposite. Shame on every one of them for the turmoil that they put our community through for a period of four years when they were in government.

(Interjections.)

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, members.

**Hon. Mr. Fraser:** Shame on every one of them for the turmoil that they put our community through. They are doing it again by trying to play politics with a very sensitive issue. People in our community who are in those homes are living in less than desirable conditions because of the circumstances that they were put into by the former Minister of Social Development, who is sitting in the front row of the opposition—right where she belongs.

**Mr. Stewart:** My question, again, is for the Minister of Social Development. I will say with honesty that the people working at Mount St. Joseph are not happy right now with the antics of the member for Miramichi. I get their emails, and I get their calls. They are sick and tired of the blame-and-fear game. The minister has prided himself as the seniors' advocate and the health advocate. Well, I want a nursing home for Miramichi. We have a doctor who has great respect. Will the Minister of Social Development get up today and tell the people of New Brunswick and Miramichiers when that home will be constructed?



**Hon. Mr. Fraser:** For a member who had no voice for four years, he seems to have an awful lot to say now.

I have copies of emails for a period of four years about the problems people had because there was no hot water for months at a time. I dealt with those emails every day. I visited the people in that home every day. I even pleaded with the minister of the day for help. There was no response—none. The member for Southwest Miramichi-Bay du Vin did nothing to help the people of Miramichi. He did nothing to help the people of the riding he represents. I have no lessons to take from him or from anybody on that side of the House.

I stand up for the people of my community. I will continue to stand up for them, along with my colleague the new Minister of Social Development, who has a heart and who has been to Miramichi. The Premier has been to Miramichi and toured both homes. The Minister of Health has been to Miramichi, toured the hospital, and toured both homes, along with all my colleagues on this side of the House, including the member for Miramichi Bay-Neguac, who has a big heart and who cares about our community. We are going to get the job done because you did not.

(Interjections.)

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. Order. Order, member.

### **Mactaquac Provincial Park**

**Mr. Urquhart:** The 1966 basin agreement between the people of the Mactaquac area and the government said that the government would provide a provincial park, Kings Landing, a hatchery, and access to the islands and maintain the graveyard. The promise by the Liberal government of the time was for full employment and employment as long as the Mactaquac Dam was in place. The government would maintain these.

The government is maintaining Kings Landing, the hatchery, and the islands, and it is maintaining a lot of the grave sites and so on, as agreed to. But the area that the people are most concerned about and what appears to be in their sights is Mactaquac Park. Mactaquac Park is there to employ our young people and to employ the people as long as the dam is in place. We are hearing rumours that this is changing. Can the minister please tell the people of the riding the government's intentions for Mactaquac Park?

**Hon. Mr. Fraser:** I am pleased to get up and talk about one of our provincial parks, one of the parks that we are very proud of.

We have a great tourism season. I want to let the people of New Brunswick know that our parks are going to open on time because of our great weather. We are putting our employees in place. We are doing some infrastructure upgrades at all our parks across this great province, and I want to let the people of New Brunswick know that our parks are going to be open.





We want to welcome you and your families to come out to enjoy our beautiful parks, including our park at Mactaquac, of which the member opposite is speaking. I have been to that park several times since being appointed minister. It is a beautiful park, and we have great staff who work in that park. Again, I want to encourage the people of New Brunswick to come out and enjoy our beautiful parks. Bring your families. Invite your friends. Invite your relatives. Invite people from outside the province into our province to enjoy our beautiful tourism season this year. Thank you.

**Mr. Urquhart:** My concern is the park. Is the government going to maintain the golf course under the provincial government? Is it going to maintain winter staffing under the government? The Friends of Mactaquac, the people of the park, do not want their park turned over to another agency or another friend of anybody. They want the park to remain as a provincial park under the Department of Tourism, Heritage and Culture. They do not want it turned over to private industry. They want it maintained, as agreed, during the wintertime. They raised thousands upon thousands of dollars for equipment for winter activities. They want to be guaranteed this summer that the fund-raising... They want to be guaranteed that the winter activities at Mactaquac Provincial Park will be maintained.

Will the provincial government give us the assurance that the Mactaquac Golf Course, the campground, and the winter activities at Mactaquac Park are agreed to?

**Hon. Mr. Fraser:** Again, I know that the member is passionate about this park because it is in the riding that he represents. He mentioned the Friends of Mactaquac. When I was at the park shortly before Christmas to meet with some of the staff, they were working very hard to get the park ready. I was very fortunate to see some of the program activities that the Friends of Mactaquac participate in and to see all the volunteering that they do, and I certainly greatly appreciate the work of the Friends of Mactaquac. They do a phenomenal job.

All our parks are under review because of the Strategic Program Review. In fact, every item in my department is under review, just as with all departments in the government, because we have to get our fiscal house in order. We have to find ways to do things more efficiently so that we can fix our fiscal situation and help our families. I am very confident that the outcome of the strategic review is going to enhance what we are already offering. Thank you.

**Mr. Urquhart:** Mactaquac Park has been under a basin agreement with the people there since 1966. The agreement is that the government will maintain it. That is not up for review. That park cannot be thrown in with other provincial parks that the government bought. The review is for parks and foundations. The 1966 basin agreement assured the people that the park would be...

I was displaced by that dam. The government told us that the dam would be there and that the park would be there as long as Mactaquac Park... Unless the government has plans in the next few months to remove the dam prior to their agreement, that park cannot be put under review as can other agreements. The agreement is with the people, with their ancestors, with us, and with me. The agreement is that this park will remain under a provincial agreement. Will the minister



give us the assurance today that Mactaquac Park is not under review and that we do have that right?

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Mr. Gallant:** I find it rather humorous that the opposition members have been rising in the House today and asking us to pay more for certain things, to invest in others, or, of course, to exclude options we might consider to try to increase our revenue and thus get our fiscal house in order.

[*Original*]

It is incredibly ironic to hear the opposition members speak today. For weeks and weeks and weeks, if not for months, if not even since the campaign, the opposition members have been criticizing our plan to invest strategically in our infrastructure. It is pretty ironic that they did not complain when we invested in the Riverview school. It is ironic that they did not complain when we invested in the Woodstock school. It is pretty ironic to hear them say that they support our investment in the infrastructure at the New Brunswick Naval Center in Bas-Caraquet. It is interesting to see that they support the Saint John barge terminal. Now, today, they are pushing us to invest in the infrastructure of the justice building in Sussex, the Moncton metro centre, and the Cherryvale bridge. They need to get themselves straight. We support investing in our infrastructure.

**Mr. Speaker:** Time, Premier.

### **Ambulance Services**

**Ms. Lynch:** The forest industry is coming back to life in my riding thanks to the forest strategy. The mill in Chipman is getting busier, and more people are working because of it. This is industrial activity, and it is going on 24 hours a day. This is not the time to pull an ambulance out of the area.

The mayors have been trying to meet with the Health Minister, but they have been told that they are not a priority for him and that he will not meet with them for several weeks. That will be too late, as the ambulance is scheduled to be cut in June. Will the Deputy Premier commit to arranging a meeting between the mayors and the Health Minister before—not after—our ambulance is cut?

**Hon. Mr. Boudreau:** This is another example of the opposition members' fearmongering. They are trying to make people believe that, all of a sudden, there is no longer any ambulance service in their communities.

In the greater area of Chipman, Minto, Mill Cove, and Jemseg, there are four ambulances, and we are reducing that to three. That area is still going to be very well served. My colleague the Deputy



Premier has met with some of the members of those communities, and he has reassured them that the service is going to continue. Out of the 136 ambulances that we have across the province, we are taking one ambulance system out of that network. I am confident that those communities are going to continue to be very well served by the ambulance system we have in the province.

**Ms. Lynch:** Tomorrow, there will be a rally in Chipman to save the ambulance, and I would personally like to invite the Deputy Premier and the Minister of Health to attend, to explain to the people why the ambulance is being cut.

I would like to read a line from the mandate letter that the Premier sent to all ministers. It says: "We have been entrusted with an important and rare duty. I expect that from day one, we will govern fairly and wisely." Sadly, this government has not been fair or wise since day one, but it is never too late to start.

My question is for the Premier. Will the Premier, in his capacity as the minister responsible for rural New Brunswick, instruct the Minister of Health to meet with the mayors of Chipman and Minto before this ambulance is taken out of the area?

**Hon. Mr. Boudreau:** Once again, the fearmongering that goes on... The Department of Health invests \$2.6 billion in health care in the province. We have over 1 000 paramedics. We have 136 ambulances across the province that work with a dynamic deployment system. It is always the ambulance closest to the call that answers the call. There are still going to be three ambulances stationed in that area, but any other ambulance that happens to be in the neighbourhood will be dispatched if there is a call.

This is just another example of how the opposition members are getting up to criticize each and every little initiative that is brought forward by this government, yet they have not offered one alternative of their own.

## Hospitals

**Mr. Jeff Carr:** It is interesting to see the Premier get up to criticize our side of the House for being skeptical. The people of New Brunswick are skeptical. They are very skeptical, and I will tell you why. It is because, when we are losing money every day and our budgets are going backward, we are taking money from the people of New Brunswick and putting it into a contingency slush fund for the friends of the Liberal Party. That is why they are skeptical. That is why.

The people of the capital region are no different. It was just revealed the other night in estimates that the Minister of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour took 500 SEED weeks and moved them into another region. The Deputy Premier has not done anything about it, just like the Chalmers investments.



Will the Deputy Premier stand up today to protect the people of Fredericton, protect the capital region, go back to Cabinet, and look for that Chalmers investment money?

**Hon. Mr. Gallant:** We are quite skeptical about some things as well. We are skeptical about the priorities of the opposition members. They get up on the floor of the Legislature, and they continuously ask us about our schedules. They ask us about our respective schedules. They ask us about our communication plans. They ask us about our Cabinet schedule. They ask us about our photo-ops. I am very skeptical that they understand the challenges that we have as a province. I am skeptical that they understand how we have to make important decisions now to get our province on the right track for economic prosperity and financial security, all the while providing a strong social fabric.

Luckily, we are still focused on the right things. We are focused on job creation. Although we have seen, in the Maritimes, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island not being able to create jobs in the last two months and we saw job losses in Canada in the last month, I am happy to report that, in New Brunswick during the last month, our economy produced 3 100 full-time jobs.

