

March 31, 2016

[Original]

Job Creation

Mr. Fitch: We still have at least 38 000 people looking for work here in New Brunswick. That is 38 000 of our citizens who are willing and able to work, but there just are not enough jobs for them here in the province. Since the Liberals came into power, there are 6 000 fewer jobs in New Brunswick than when they started. In fact, it really is 11 000 when you consider that there was a promise to create 5 000 jobs.

Back to the 38 000 people here in the province who want jobs, I would say that our province has a severe job shortage. That is why there are 38 000 people out of work in New Brunswick. Today, I would like to ask the Premier whether he agrees with the fact that, since there are 38 000 people out of work in New Brunswick, there is a severe job shortage in the province.

[Translation]

Hon. Mr. Gallant: I agree that the Canadian economy is currently going through a rather difficult period. That is why we are proud to see that the Trudeau government will give priority to initiatives which we believe will help stimulate the economy and create the right conditions for investment and economic growth.

Of course, the current economic situation is also the reason we are working very hard with our partners, the business community, and community leaders to create a suitable climate for investment and economic growth here in New Brunswick. It is also why we will continue to work with our partners, investing in our infrastructure to help build an innovative economy and develop a skilled workforce.

There are challenges across the country, including in New Brunswick, but I remain optimistic because people throughout the province want to contribute and work together. I am convinced that, together, we are going to overcome our challenges.

[Original]

Mr. Fitch: I think that we cleared it up the other day that this government is actually putting hindrances on the climate to create jobs here in the province. Mr. Lund, the head of Opportunities New Brunswick, which is one of the partners that the Premier referenced, has actually been in the media and has said that there really is not a shortage of jobs here in the province. I wonder again if the Premier and Mr. Lund from Opportunities New Brunswick, who said that there was not a shortage of jobs in the province, are on the same page.



I will ask the Premier once again. Does he agree with Mr. Lund that there is not a shortage of jobs here in the province, or does he agree with the 38 000 New Brunswickers who are out of work, because they cannot find work since there is a shortage of jobs? I will give the Premier an opportunity to clarify that. Does he agree with Mr. Lund, or does he agree with the 38 000 New Brunswickers who are out of work?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Mr. Gallant: Of course, as I have already pointed out, we are facing economic and financial challenges here in New Brunswick. More must be done to help families, and that is what our government is doing. We will work with the federal government, which is facing the same challenges, since the economy is stagnant throughout the country.

In the province, it will be important to continue working hard with our partners. When I talk about partners, I am talking, of course, about Opportunities New Brunswick, which is one of them, but I especially want to talk about New Brunswickers, the business community, and community leaders. I had a chance to meet several of these people when I was visiting chambers of commerce, and I remain very optimistic about the New Brunswick economy and the future of our province because of them, and I know they are working hard because they care about their province and their communities. Together, we will overcome our challenges and move our province forward.

[*Original*]

Mr. Fitch: Yes, we have a lot of faith in the business community as well. We know that a lot of good work is being done. It is this government that continues to put hindrances into the business community that prevent it from creating jobs—things like higher taxes, higher personal taxes, moratoriums on natural gas development, and siding with other provinces in trying to block the west-east pipeline.

I wonder again... I am disappointed that the Premier did not conclude, with 38 000 people out of work, that there is a shortage of jobs here in the province. We learned today, again, that the Minister of Economic Development has said that Mr. Lund is watching very closely the proceedings of the Co-op Atlantic bankruptcy. That is \$7.7 million that was guaranteed by the National Bank. That is \$7.7 million of provincial taxpayers' dollars owed to the co-op. Again, when we look at the history here, I am wondering whether the Premier signed that cheque or whether Mr. Lund signed that cheque.

Hon. Mr. Gallant: I have to take issue with what the member opposite said during his preamble. If there is one thing that the people at home who have watched the Legislature day in and day out... If there is one thing that the people of New Brunswick know, it is that we support the Energy East Pipeline project.



I cannot get over the fact that the opposition members just despise working with us so much that they cannot even get beyond themselves and admit that we actually all worked together and passed a joint motion when the Liberals were in opposition for this Legislature to unanimously support the Energy East Pipeline project. They despise cooperating in a nonpartisan way so much that they cannot even admit what they themselves did when they were in government, working with us to support the Energy East Pipeline project. That was years ago. We supported their efforts, when they were in government, to get the Energy East Pipeline project to make its way to Saint John. I would like them to extend the same courtesies, to support us in making sure that pipeline becomes a reality.

Mr. Fitch: I know that history is clear. History is clear that, yes, that motion was put on the floor of the Legislature. That is a matter of fact.

What is also a matter of fact is that, when the Liberal Premiers of Ontario and Quebec said that they wanted more conditions put on the west-east pipeline, the Premier of this province stood up and said: It sounds reasonable. Well, we have now found out that those reasonable conditions have pushed the pipeline further and further into the future and have put the jobs associated with that pipeline further and further away, into the future.

We ask the Premier today, again, whether some of the policy decisions he has made have hurt or become a hindrance here in the province. We asked him at the first of the week to present the draft of the New Brunswick economic growth document. We asked him to put that on the floor of the Legislature so that we could discuss it and improve it. I ask the Premier this question: When is he going to put that draft document on the floor of the Legislature?

Mr. Speaker: Time.

Hon. Mr. Gallant: I have to take issue again with what the member opposite said. I would like him to clarify exactly which of the principles that were laid out by our colleagues and other provinces across the country regarding the Energy East Pipeline project are not reasonable. I would like him to tell us.

Does he want us here in New Brunswick to move forward with projects without consulting communities? Does he want us to move forward with projects without consulting First Nations? I think that the Supreme Court of Canada would have something to say about that. Does he want us to move forward with projects without ensuring that they actually benefit our province? Does he want us to move forward with projects to develop the energy sector without considering the environment or climate change? Does he want us to move forward with energy projects without making sure that they are going to be done safely? I ask the member opposite to get up on his feet and tell us which one of these principles should not be followed, which one is unreasonable.



We think that they are reasonable, and we think that they can be achieved. Energy East Pipeline will make sure that all these principles are followed and that the pipeline will make its way to Saint John.

Mr. Fitch: Again, history speaks for itself. Regulations are in place to move forward on many issues such as the west-east pipeline. Regulations are in place. Look at the moratorium that this government put in place in New Brunswick to prevent the exploration and development of natural gas. The regulations were in place. The consultation was done. There are plans already set to explore and find the real science.

The Premier across the way sidled up to some of his Liberal counterparts. Now, even the Prime Minister of Canada will not come out and say, given once the work is done, that he will support the pipeline. That sends out questions in terms of the economy. That sends questions to the investors. That economic and political uncertainty is what has caused this province to lose jobs. Will the Premier admit that some of the hindrances that he has put up front have actually driven investments and jobs out of the province?

Hon. Mr. Gallant: I have two questions that stem from the statements by the member opposite.

(Interjections.)

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Hon. Mr. Gallant: Number one, again, he said that he does not agree that the principles that Ontario and Quebec have laid out for the Energy East Pipeline project are reasonable. He does not think that they are reasonable. I listed off some of them. I would like him to tell me which ones are unreasonable, and he should obviously understand that, if he says that they are unreasonable, it means that he thinks that we should not be looking for those principles to happen in New Brunswick. His impression would be that we should not consult, that there should be no benefits for New Brunswick, and that it does not really matter. We should not talk to First Nations. We should not consider the environment. We should not care whether it is done safely. I would like him to clarify which principle from Ontario and Quebec he thought was unreasonable.

He also said—this goes for my second question—that everything was set up for hydraulic fracturing. I ask him this: Where was the wastewater going to go? Was it going to Riverview, or would the Leader of the Opposition like to commit for the next leader that the wastewater would make its way to Saint John, New Brunswick? I would like the opposition to clarify where the wastewater was going to go under its watch.

Mr. Speaker: Time, Premier.



Government Funding

Mr. K. MacDonald: I do not want to kill the Premier's buzz on his funding announcement for OrganiGram in Moncton, a company owned by a documented financial supporter of the New Brunswick Liberal Party, by the way. However, I do have a question or two on marijuana-related funding. This company has the much-coveted license for a medical marijuana growing operation, a virtual monopoly position. Can the Premier tell this House whether it is his opinion that, without taxpayer money, the OrganiGram project would not have created the jobs that the Premier scored yesterday?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Mr. Gallant: I think OrganiGram has a lot of potential, since it has 1 of 30 licenses issued by Health Canada for the cultivation of medical marijuana. Without a doubt, I think that it is an asset.

As the member for Fredericton-York knows, when there is job and business growth in this field, we have to compete with other places, so incentives must be provided, but we are doing so in a way that protects taxpayers' money.

[*Original*]

In effect, the payroll rebates that we are using to ensure that we are not only protecting taxpayers' money, but also giving incentives for businesses to invest here in New Brunswick were often used by the opposition when it was in government. It is a bit odd that those members would criticize the same mechanism that they used to use. We are happy that the 113 jobs will be here in New Brunswick, in Moncton, and that 113 New Brunswickers will be able to work right here at home.

Mr. K. MacDonald: Is that the real number? The numbers changed a lot with the Sussex announcement, from 100 down to 89 down to 39.

I am not suggesting that the taxpayers' money is in the same sort of risk category as it was with Atcon, where we wound up with nothing, not even stems or seeds. I am just trying to get the straight dope on whether the Premier truly believes that his funding was absolutely necessary for OrganiGram to create the jobs that he so proudly announced yesterday. My question, again, is this: Does the Premier honestly believe that they would not have created these medical marijuana jobs without taxpayer funding?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Mr. Gallant: As I have already mentioned, it is important to provide businesses with incentives to encourage them to invest here in New Brunswick. Once again, I want to point out that the previous government did the same thing when it was in office. In fact, it used the same



mechanisms we are using now. We agree that it is important to protect taxpayers' money. The incentives are only given to businesses if the jobs are actually created.

[Original]

On the Sussex issue... I have to commend the member opposite on taking the Legislature so seriously with his play on words. It is really fun to hear this morning. I said to the media that there would be close to 100 jobs created in Sussex. We said that there would be approximately just under 90 jobs. We started with a first batch of 39.

I am not sure why the member opposite has to play politics with that, but I would ask him to comment, then, on the wording of Rodney Weston when he committed to the port of Saint John and if he thought that maybe there was somebody there who was trying to lead people in a direction that was not actually the case in the federal government. I would love to hear from the member opposite on that.

Mr. K. MacDonald: From co-op to grow-op—I can tell that the Premier is very proud of this provincial announcement for medical marijuana. I wonder why he is not as equally proud of his funding for an online magazine promoting recreational marijuana. I speak, of course, of the magazine *Civilized*, owned by Derek Riedle, who, of course, is well known in Liberal circles in the province. Did the Premier not give him over \$200 000 to create homegrown jobs at an online pot magazine? Why did the Premier not have a big announcement for this funding of recreational marijuana? Why all the secrecy?

Hon. Mr. Gallant: It is funny how he says that it is secret yet he is aware of it. Obviously, it is not secret. It is very transparent. We are obviously funding businesses when we can, to support their growth here in New Brunswick and to make sure that there are incentives for them to create jobs here when we see that they have a strong business plan to do so.

We are very happy over what has been happening over the last few weeks. There will be 113 jobs with OrganiGram in Moncton. We think that is great. There will be 250 jobs created by IBM in Florenceville, Fredericton, and Saint John. We think that is fantastic. There will be 39 jobs in the Sussex area. I am happy to say that there are going to be hundreds and hundreds more jobs coming out in the next few weeks and months as we work tirelessly to sign deals with reputable businesses that want to grow here in New Brunswick.

I have to say that it is not because of us. It really is not.

(Interjections.)

Mr. Speaker: Order.



Hon. Mr. Gallant: It is because of the people of New Brunswick, the entrepreneurs, the businesses, and the community leaders, who create a climate and a story that we get to tell to these businesses that want to invest in us and invest in New Brunswick.

[*Translation*]

Extra-Mural Program

Ms. Dubé: I want to go back to the Extra-Mural Program, since people throughout the province are extremely concerned about the situation. The Minister of Health signed a memorandum of understanding with a company that sells insurance plans. So, my question for the minister is the following: Is he not concerned that clinical health services in New Brunswick will be managed for the first time by a private business?

Hon. Mr. Boudreau: The member continues to fearmonger. We are in discussions with Medavie EMS regarding the possibility of forming an alliance with the company.

First of all, I must say that we are talking about a private, nonprofit company with its head office in New Brunswick. This company already provides hundreds of jobs across the province. The company is very reputable and specializes in the health care field.

We are in discussions with Medavie EMS about the possibility of combining three existing programs. This company already works with us, since it manages Ambulance New Brunswick, so this is nothing new. We are simply looking at whether we could make it responsible for two more programs to improve integration and coordination in health care. If we can reach an agreement, we will announce it in due course.

Ms. Dubé: It is not the opposition that is fearmongering. The problem is that the minister is in fact in negotiations and discussions to have the private sector manage certain clinical services. That is why people are concerned. The minister says that Ambulance New Brunswick is already managed by Medavie EMS. That is patient transport. The issue here is the delivery of clinical services provided in the province and managed by two authorities, namely Vitalité and Horizon. We are talking about clinical care; this would be a first in New Brunswick.

Since people are concerned, I would ask the minister this: Is he concerned by the proposed change that would have a private company managing our health care in this province?

[*Original*]

Hon. Mr. Boudreau: Again, I have to continue to clarify statements that the member opposite makes because she is not saying it the way that it is. First of all, we are in discussions. There is no formal agreement with Medavie. We signed an MOU to have discussions only. The RHAs are involved. The New Brunswick Medical Society is involved. We have met with the unions as a group, and we have met with the unions privately.



Today, this morning, I have just left a meeting in which we were sitting down together. It was with the Department of Health and representatives from Medavie and from all the professional associations. They are in our office as we speak, going through what Medavie is proposing, line by line, so that we can get their feedback and hear their concerns. We will follow up with individual meetings with the various professional associations as well, if they want to meet. We are being as open and transparent as we possibly can in this process. We do believe that this process can provide results, and we are going to do our best to make it happen.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Dubé: Once again, this is why New Brunswickers are worried, because everyone knows the Extra-Mural Program is a gem and does a great job.

During estimates, when I asked the minister why he was considering transferring the Extra-Mural Program to a private business, he answered that it was because of technology, which is nonsense—nonsense.

The Extra-Mural Program is recognized as a hospital without walls that works with hospitals. So it is an extension of hospital services.

Given what the minister is saying, would he agree to hold discussions to transfer the administration of Dr. Everett Chalmers Hospital to a private business? Are you going to hold discussions to transfer the management of Dr. Georges-L.-Dumont Hospital to a private business? Are you going to hold discussions to have a private business manage Edmundston Regional Hospital? Once again, I want to emphasize that the Extra-Mural Program is a hospital without walls and an extension of our hospitals in New Brunswick.

Once again, I am asking the minister...

[*Original*]

Mr. Speaker: Time, member.

Hon. Mr. Boudreau: Again, the fearmongering is amazing.

(Interjections.)

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Hon. Mr. Boudreau: Nobody here is questioning whether the Extra-Mural Program is a fantastic program. In fact, it was a program that was created by a former Liberal government and that has been held up across the country and around the world as a leading model. We do not want to take away from that. We want to build on that.



With their constant use of the word “private”, the members opposite are trying to put fear into people.

(Interjections.)

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Hon. Mr. Boudreau: Medavie Blue Cross is a not-for-profit organization based in Moncton. It currently manages the ambulance system in the province.

(Interjections.)

Mr. Speaker: Order, member.

Hon. Mr. Boudreau: Every one of our family physicians in the province is a private corporation. They are professional corporations. The Tele-Care 811 program is currently being delivered by the private sector. This is...

Mr. Speaker: Time, minister.

Clean Water Act

Mr. Coon: This government has just wrapped up a series of public meetings with the intention of creating a new water strategy for New Brunswick. However, we have a robust water strategy written right into our *Clean Water Act* and its regulations. The shortfall, really, with our water strategy has been the failure, since 2005, of consecutive Ministers of Environment to actually implement the water classification regulation for our rivers and streams.

To discuss a new water strategy today with the people of this province, we really need to know why minister after minister has not been able to implement the water classification regulation. Repeatedly, ministers, including the current one, have said that they have not been able to move forward because of legal advice they have had. Well, neither have they fixed the problem to address the legal concerns that apparently have been raised.

My question for the Minister of Environment is this: Will he table in this House the legal advice that his department has received on the problems with the existing water classification regulation?

Hon. Mr. Kenny: Water strategy is partly about taking the best water quality we have here in New Brunswick and moving it forward, and it is partly about building a foundation. That is why we are out consulting with New Brunswickers to be able to fix this.

We have had great consultation with many stakeholders throughout the province in the past couple of weeks. I can tell you that the people who were there speaking face to face with us



were saying that they are glad that they can see that the government is going out to do the right thing to protect our water. Not only do we protect our water and our air, but we protect our environment in general. The strategy that we are working on is going to be able to fix this. We will continue to work with our stakeholders, gather the proper information, and make sure that we do the right thing in order for New Brunswick to have a good strategy and to protect our water moving forward into the future.

Mr. Coon: I will take that as a no. Our water classification system is based on a successful model that has been used in Maine for decades without concern and without any problems. For some reason, we have never been able to implement our version here in New Brunswick. As a result, we have this ridiculous situation where the American half of the St. Croix River and the American half of the Saint John River are classified and protected while the New Brunswick sides have no such protection. This is a bilateral concern for these great international rivers, which we share between our country and the United States.

Has the minister met with the International Joint Commission, which regulates these boundary waters, to explain his intention around the future of water classification in New Brunswick?

Hon. Mr. Kenny: Water classification is just one part of our overall strategy. I think we have to let New Brunswickers know that this is one part of the strategy. The strategy is to be able to put a proper plan in place. We are going to build on the foundations that are there now. There is some really good information there. We are going to work with our stakeholders. We are working with a lot of people who have a vested interest in protecting our water for generations to come.

The challenge is that the *Clean Water Act* does not provide sufficient authority to support the classification of surface waters. The water quality standards in the regulations are vague and open to interpretation, and the water quality standards present difficulties in terms of being entrusted with enforcement.

There are a number of things we have to fix, not just one part of the overall water strategy. My job as Minister of Environment and Local Government is to be able to move forward and make sure that we have good water quality for the future.

Mr. Coon: The water classification regulation, which was first adopted in 2002, actually automatically classified all the lakes in the province, and they received an A rating. The minister, once again, is holding up this issue of legal advice as a barrier to moving forward and finally permitting water classification for our rivers and streams.

I will ask the minister again. Will he put before this House the legal advice his department has received concerning the ability of the department to implement the remainder of the water classification regulation system on our lakes, rivers, and streams—unless, of course, our lakes are no longer protected?



Hon. Mr. Kenny: It is our full intention to consult with New Brunswickers on this, in an open and transparent process. We are looking at all water in our province, to make sure that we protect our water moving forward and are able to improve on the regulations and on the information that we received when we met with our stakeholders—nonprofit groups. We have had very inclusive and comprehensive meetings with many people. We have invited many stakeholders throughout the province. I am sure that we can meet with more people.

We are going to gather the information, bring it back, work with our department and stakeholders, and come together to present to New Brunswickers, in an open and transparent way, a true, good water strategy for the province that will protect our water for generations to come.

Hydraulic Fracturing

Mr. Stewart: The commission has completed its task, which was to delay and ultimately end any hope of the natural gas industry developing in New Brunswick. We know that there will be no new investments. However, for the sake of the few companies left, such as Corridor Resources, a company that has operated safely in our province for a decade, will the government be lifting the moratorium so that they can develop their holdings?

Hon. Mr. Arseneault: I thank the opposition, the wannabe leadership candidate. This is a very important issue. It is an issue that we have talked about very extensively over the past couple of years. It is an issue for which the people of New Brunswick have put their faith in the Liberal government in order to really study this issue at heart.

That is why we put forward an independent commission with three distinguished individuals, and it looked at five conditions. Those five conditions are five principles that the Liberal government has and that the people of New Brunswick also were asking our government to look into further. That is what this commission has done. It provided its report to the government a little over a month ago. The report talks about those issues, and there are some great findings in it. Right now, we, as a government, are reviewing that report, and we will be coming out with the direction in which we want to go with this industry.

Mr. Stewart: It seems odd that this government is coming in, a decade after Corridor Resources started operations and has had 10 years of safe operations... This government has the arrogance to tell it: No, you actually do not know how to develop natural gas properly. Here are all the things that you need to do to develop natural gas safely, despite your stellar, decade-old record.

Will the government at least immediately lift the moratorium for existing firms?

Hon. Mr. Arseneault: There are many differences between the Liberals and the Conservatives, but one of the things that really sticks in my mind is that we, on this side of the House, have principles and they, on that side of the House, do not have principles. Those five conditions are



very strong principles that the Liberal government has. These principles mirror exactly what New Brunswickers are worried about.

New Brunswickers are worried about our consultations with First Nations and rebuilding the relationship that had deteriorated under the former government, under the leadership of the Tories. New Brunswickers want to make sure that water protection is front and centre. In fact—the industry would tell you this—because of policies the former government put in place, even if I were to lift the moratorium today, companies could not do any hydraulic fracturing in the province. There is no place to process the wastewater, the fracked water.

I would ask the member opposite this: Would Mel Norton or the city of Saint John take that wastewater? Would the people of Edmundston take that wastewater? That is...

Mr. Speaker: Time, minister.

