

July 5, 2016

[Original]

### Canada Pension

**Mr. Fitch:** Many MLAs received an email last week talking about the CPP tax hike. The first quote was that the writer strongly opposes the CPP tax hike. The next was that “it will impede our business’s growth and plans for expansions throughout the province”. It talks about “an additional \$100 000 in CPP” tax costs. Basically, this was underlining the fact that this email is saying that we are taxing New Brunswick businesses out of business.

I wonder if the Minister of Finance could give us any specific report or document that she based her analysis on, which allowed her to go ahead and sign on to these CPP changes the other week. Was this another example of Justin Trudeau telling the federal Liberal House Leader to tell the Premier, and the Premier said: Where do I sign?

**Hon. Ms. Rogers:** It is my pleasure to get up in the House today to talk about the amazing enhancement to the national Canada Pension Plan that we were able to make by collaborating and cooperating with our federal and provincial counterparts across the country. We now have a plan in which we actually took into consideration, first and foremost, how any changes or enhancements would impact business in New Brunswick. This was the priority for which I went to meet with my colleagues from across the country. It is exactly the reason why we agreed in principle to a plan that was modest, fully funded, and phased in. In fact, we considered the impact on business and the impact on individuals as our highest priority. Now, we have a plan for today’s workers.

**Mr. Speaker:** Time, minister.

**Mr. Fitch:** If the minister had a plan that, she said, took into account the effect on New Brunswick businesses first and foremost, why are New Brunswick businesses saying: You are forcing us out of business because of your plan? There are various options that could have been looked at. The fact of the matter is that the minister is taking, out of the hands of businesses, more money that could have gone toward hiring new employees or buying new equipment, which would also lead to new jobs.

You would think that a government that had a priority for creating jobs and moving the economy forward would have a report that would show that. I am asking the minister: Would she be able to tell us the total cost of the implementation of the new HST increase and the new CPP taxation on the payroll of the businesses in New Brunswick?

**Hon. Ms. Rogers:** What I am able to say is that there will be no rollout of this plan until 2019. It will be phased in slowly, over seven years, or until 2025. This will be a plan that will help today’s



younger workers fund their own pension plan. It has been looked at by many businesses as a great plan. Businesses are not providing the whole in this. They are making half of the contribution, and the employees are making the other half of the contribution.

In fact, this was not something that was done suddenly. This has been well discussed over many years—in fact, quite a lot since 2010. Many businesses are pleased that this is being done. I have spoken to...

**Mr. Speaker:** Time, minister.

**Mr. Fitch:** Once again, the minister is unable to come up with the number that was asked for here in the Legislature. We have asked for New Brunswick-specific results as to how exactly this will affect the businesses in the province. We have an email that has said that this is basically going to tax them out of business.

I wonder if the minister could release any reports or documents that she has received that have New Brunswick-based information going forward that we could look at. She has alluded to it many times here in question period. They have a Chief Economist. What has their Chief Economist been doing, or are they hiding the document behind closed doors? I wonder if the minister could tell us, basically, when it comes to public service pension plans, whether the benefits that are going to be received by CPP in the future will be stacked or offset. How does that compare to the Ontario plan?

**Hon. Ms. Rogers:** I would like to clarify, first of all, that we did not agree in principle to an Ontario plan. We have a national plan, and we are very happy about that.

In enhancing this plan, we took into consideration things like how much earnings people need to replace their earned income when they retire. This enhancement has enabled workers to have one third of their replacement income instead of one quarter. Seventy-five percent of Canadians identified that they would support a CPP enhancement of this kind. Many employers today do not offer a private pension plan. As well, many young workers today work in nonstandard work. They are not able to save for their future. This is a role of government, and we are taking our role seriously.

**Mr. Speaker:** Time, minister.

**Mr. Fitch:** If the minister was taking the role of the government seriously, there should have been a report or some sort of document that she could release so that we could see these numbers that, all of a sudden, she is able to say on the floor of the Legislature. We have real facts here that we are showing from businesses—businesses that have said that this government had no mandate whatsoever to go ahead with this.

The fact of the matter is, the minister did not answer the question on comparing our pension plan in New Brunswick with that of Ontario. When we look at the fact that there were



significant differences between those two pension plans, the minister should be asking the question: Why was Ontario pushing it so much? Ontario was pushing it so much because it has not made some hard decisions with its public service pension plans that were made here in New Brunswick. I wonder: Could the minister release the reports that she has referred to over and over again here in question period today?

**Hon. Mr. Gallant:** Since the same question has been asked several times, I will get up and ask a few questions of my own.

What I do not understand is why the opposition, number one, would not get up today and talk about how fantastic it is that the Trudeau government believes in Atlantic Canada and will allow us 2 000 more immigrants—2 000 more people to Atlantic Canada, with their families, per year, to ensure that we have a growing population and a skilled workforce right here at home.

I also do not understand why the member opposite has not gotten up yet to apologize for the warehouse comment. It seems to me that, if his own colleague is asking him to clarify his comment, he would do so in the Legislature today.

The next question that I have for the member opposite, since he has these questions for the Minister of Finance... I think he should and must clarify this with the people of New Brunswick. Clearly, he is against the CPP enhancement that is going forward under the Trudeau government. Yes or no?

**Mr. Speaker:** Member for Gagetown-Petitcodiac, come to order.

**Mr. Fitch:** The Premier is obviously missing his days in opposition because he likes to ask questions. I can tell him this: Give him two years, and he will be back here asking questions galore.

We are asking how these changes affect the people of New Brunswick. Obviously, this was not a mandate that was given by the people of the province, yet changes have been made over time that reduce the ability of people to save on their own, such as the reduction in the Tax-Free Savings Account.

When it comes to apologizing, again, I think that the Premier has to ask some of his members, such as the former Deputy Premier who was demoted from the Department of Justice because of some inadvertent conversations that he had with judges... Why does the Premier not set the stage today and ask the minister to get up and apologize for things that he said here in the House and then went out later and said: No, that was not the truth at all. I lied.

**Hon. Mr. Gallant:** First, I do not like the conversation about having a mandate because I think that, when you go into an election, there are many discussions about many portfolios. However, if the member opposite wants to ask that question, I think that the Trudeau government that promised an enhancement to the CPP did pretty well in New Brunswick during



the election. I think that, with 10 out of 10 seats, clearly, New Brunswickers are interested in the Trudeau government's focus on growth and, probably as an extension to that, the CPP enhancement.

I ask the member opposite again because he cannot have it both ways. He cannot question the free tuition bill and then say that he is for it. He cannot say that it is the worst thing ever and that we are trying to divide New Brunswickers and then say that he is for it. The opposition members cannot criticize us because we have not yet made an announcement on the port of Saint John when they do not attack Rodney Weston for making a fake announcement. I ask the member opposite to confirm this.

(Interjections.)

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. The member for Oromocto-Lincoln will come to order.

**Hon. Mr. Gallant:** Is the opposition for the CPP enhancement, yes or no?

**Mr. Fitch:** Again, I think that the Premier has shown many, many times in this House that he says one thing and does another. I have asked for the reports, based on the CPP information that I have received from the public that the government is taxing businesses out of business because of the HST increase, the payroll increases, and now the CPP increases. That is the report that I am looking for. The Premier is again trying to distract from those facts.

Maybe we will ask the Minister of Economic Development whether Opportunities New Brunswick has any reports that would show the effects of CPP increases on the businesses of New Brunswick. While you are at it, minister, shuffling through the papers on your desk, could you stand up and tell us why ONB has not released its annual report to date?

**Hon. Mr. Gallant:** Thank you very much for the condescending question. I asked the member opposite again to clarify whether he is for or against the CPP enhancement. I do not know. When I listen to the opposition members—the tone that they are using, the words that they are using, and the quotes from emails that clearly do not support the CPP enhancement—I get the impression that they are against it. Why is it so hard for the opposition members to get up and let the people of New Brunswick know whether they are for or against the CPP enhancement?

The opposition members have a role to play to keep us to account and ask questions—yes, absolutely. They also have a role to play in offering alternatives, ideas, and suggestions. I know that it goes against every bone in their bodies, but that includes saying when they agree with the government. Do the opposition members support a CPP enhancement, yes or no?



## Roads

**Ms. Lynch:** At the risk of insulting the Premier again, I am still looking for an answer to my questions about roads in my riding being damaged by overweight logging trucks on Portobello Drive and McCoy Street.

To review, a special permit was issued for the logging operation to haul on these roads. This permit specifically excluded a cost-for-damages clause. Most extended permits like this one clearly tell the contractor that the minister will come back to it to recover monies to make repairs to damages caused by the hauling operation. In this case, the permit has omitted this requirement. My question remains: Why was this clause excluded?

**Hon. Mr. Gallant:** The member opposite had her question answered last week by the minister. He will get up and answer it again.

However, I would like to point out to her that we still have not received an answer on whether her party supports the CPP enhancement. We have still not received an answer from the member just in front of her, the member for Portland-Simonds, on when he is going to criticize Rodney Weston for a fake announcement of investment in the port of Saint John. We still do not know whether the opposition supports the Trudeau government's plan to give Atlantic Canada more new Canadians to grow our workforce. We still do not know whether the member opposite is going to apologize for his comments about a warehouse for seniors on the Miramichi.

I invite the member opposite, if she would like to get up and lecture us on questions that have already actually been answered, to ask her leader and her party to answer the questions, take positions, and be real leaders for the province of New Brunswick.

**Ms. Lynch:** Well, it is clear that the Premier certainly does not want to answer my questions, but I am sure that everything is fine in his riding of Shediac Bay-Dieppe.

This is clearly damage being done to the streets as a result of this overweight hauling, and that damage must be repaired. Since there is no requirement for the contractor to pay to fix the street, then, of course, it comes out of the pockets of the taxpayers. That does not seem fair, and it does not seem responsible on the part of the government.

My constituents want to know whether there was any political interference in allowing this operation and in the exclusion of a cost-for-damages clause, as has been suggested in the media. Has the minister looked into these allegations of political interference?

**Hon. Mr. Fraser:** I am very pleased to get up and answer the question of the member for Fredericton-Grand Lake...

(Interjection.)



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

Please continue.

**Hon. Mr. Fraser:** This is purely political rhetoric that is coming from the member for Fredericton-Grand Lake. She talks about her riding, but she has not even been on the site. I have been on the site.

(Interjections.)

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

**Hon. Mr. Fraser:** I met with the neighbours on the site. I met with the contractor that is hauling and that has the permit on the site.

Yes, there are such clauses in some of these contracts. In this one, DTI did not put in a clause. The reason that it did not put in a clause was that there is no impact from the axle configuration and the weight configuration in this special permit. It is actually less impact on the road than it would be if they were able to haul on the regular legal limit that they are allowed to haul at any time. The special permit that was issued by DTI allows the company to come and...

(Interjections.)

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. Time, minister.

**Ms. Lynch:** That certainly did not make any sense. However, if it is political for me to stand up and represent my riding, then I will be political any time.

If there was indeed political interference in the granting of an overweight permit and in the exclusion of a clause requiring the contractor to pay for repairs to the road, then the taxpayers have a right to know. What is this minister prepared to do to refute these allegations? What is he prepared to do if these allegations should prove to be true?

Of course, we have filed a right to information request, but that could take months. The people of my riding are entitled to an answer today. What will the minister say to them?

**Hon. Mr. Fraser:** The process for operating and for special permits has been in place for more than a decade, and it is used as a temporary increase to a highway rating for commercial trucking. In this case, a seven-axle, 50 000-kg configuration was approved. It was determined that the impact to roads would be less than the five-axle, 41 500-kg configuration that is actually legal to haul on that road without a permit. Because of that, a special permit was issued because it was considered that there would be fewer trips on that road.



I might add that, if the member for Fredericton-Grand Lake had visited the site, she would know that there is a quarry at the end of the road. There are dump trucks continually hauling on that road. The day that I went to visit that site and met with the neighbours on the roads—they actually told me that there was no concern and that they were fine with it—I saw at least a dozen dump trucks carrying gravel out of the gravel pit that is permanently housed at the end of the road.

**Mr. Speaker:** Time, minister.

**Mr. Urquhart:** It is quite clear. I had hope about what our new Transportation Minister would do for the rural roads in New Brunswick. However, the Premier has made it very clear that speaking about rural roads is a waste of his time. The people in Carleton-York are very concerned.

Again, on the weekend, a lady in Millville lost two tires, had damage to her vehicle, and is still shaken up. She finds that very important. You have increased the HST. You promised \$900 million to infrastructure. Still the roads in Carleton-York have not even been patched, let alone repaired.

Will the Premier commit to increasing the number of patch crews and giving the people of rural New Brunswick the same privilege of good roads as the people of Shediac Bay-Dieppe? If he does, I would gladly talk about the CPP with him. I will take a drive with him out to Pike Hill, through Temperance Vale, and through some of these roads. I will have to use his vehicle because I am certainly not putting my vehicle over those roads.

**Hon. Mr. Gallant:** The level of debate has certainly risen here.

Clearly, the opposition members are for roads in their ridings. Clearly, they are for roads in their ridings. I would like to say that the Conservatives had been in power for—what is it?—11 out of the last 16 years in New Brunswick. If they had issues with the roads, why did they not do something about them then?

(Interjections.)

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, minister.

**Hon. Mr. Gallant:** The members opposite are for roads in their ridings. Are they for the CPP enhancement? Are they for the program that will bring more new Canadians and their families to New Brunswick and Atlantic Canada? Will they finally criticize Rodney Weston to the extent that they have criticized us, based on his fake announcement for the port of Saint John? Will they get up and apologize, as the member opposite from Miramichi asked his colleague to do, based on the comment of calling a nice nursing home that will help seniors on the Miramichi a warehouse?



(Interjections.)

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Urquhart:** That, New Brunswick, is your Premier.

(Interjections.)

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Urquhart:** It is July. Roads should have long since been done. Rural villages, in our belief... There should be at least one good road to every major centre. With all kinds of money now and with no concern for the debt, will the Premier commit to the Rural Road Initiative that will let the rural communities and rural New Brunswick know when the roads are going to be done? With the Rural Road Initiative, the rural residents will at least know when the roads will be done. If a road is not going to be done this year, when will it be done? If it is not on the list for this year, when will it be done? Rural residents need some support. Again, I will take you over our back roads, and we will talk about your little issues.

**Hon. Mr. Fraser:** The member opposite is right. That is our Premier, and we are darned proud of him on this side of the House.

In terms of rural roads, there is a list of work that is being done in each and every one of the ridings of the members opposite. I can say, from being on that side of the House four years ago, that it was the complete opposite. The members opposite politicized roads. We do not. We are going to get the work done where the work needs to be done. I can assure you that, with my predecessor, the former Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure, who had a great program and a significant budget in place, we are going to continue the great work on rural roads in each and every riding, where they need it.

(Interjections.)

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

**Hon. Mr. Fraser:** That is not just in government ridings. We are going to do it wherever it is needed across the province, unlike what the members opposite used to do when they were in the government four years ago. There is \$20.3 million in summer maintenance money allocated in the budget this year to do maintenance on the roads across this wonderful province. We are going to continue to do that work.

**Mr. Urquhart:** What they are saying... What the Premier is telling us is that, in rural New Brunswick, the members opposite have no initiative and no intent to create any initiative. They do not have any kind of plan or any initiative for rural New Brunswick. The roads will continue





to deteriorate. Buses will continue to go off the roads in the wintertime. People will continue to go and get stuck in the middle of the roads in rural New Brunswick.

Mr. Speaker, this crowd is not worth another question. Please move on to the next speaker.

**Hon. Mr. Fraser:** Again, to reiterate the significant investment that we are putting into rural roads and into roads all across this great province in our summer maintenance program, there is \$20.3 million in the budget this year. More than 700 km of roads will be resurfaced, and more than 215 km of asphalt surfaces will be placed this year with our budget.

I am very proud of our Premier and of all the members on this side of the House. We are going to get the job done, the job that the members opposite did not get done for four years. Again, I will remind the member opposite to look at what was happening four years ago. It is a saying: When the Liberals are in power, people are working and roads are getting done. When the Tories are in power, it is tough times for the province and there is no work to be done.

## Health Care System

**Mr. Coon:** We are failing to meet national benchmarks for patient wait times in the emergency departments of our hospitals. Yesterday, the Campbellton Regional Hospital issued a statement asking the public to refrain from using the emergency room whenever possible because it is overwhelmed. In Campbellton, they are overwhelmed. We are not even talking about the Chalmers, the Saint John Regional Hospital, or the Moncton hospitals. There are frequent examples of timely care falling short of our standards and placing the health of New Brunswickers at risk. Will the Minister of Health acknowledge that we have a crisis of access and wait times in our emergency rooms?

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Mr. Boudreau:** It seems the member for Fredericton South did not have time to prepare new questions for this week, since the questions are the same as last week. I answered these questions by saying that we have several ongoing initiatives to address the issue of wait times. However, this is not something we can change overnight.

In fact, people's mentality and habits have to change. Furthermore, we must make sure every health care professional in our system is optimized, and that is why we initiated a project with the New Brunswick Medical Society. I would also like to mention the initiative we are considering with Medavie EMS and the investments in the Home First program.

These are all initiatives to ensure that fewer people go to our emergency rooms. That way, people who really need urgent care will have quicker access to it.



[Original]

**Mr. Coon:** It is interesting that, in the *Telegraph-Journal* today, it was reported that Dr. Melanson, the chief of staff at the Moncton Hospital, was saying how stressed that emergency room is. Patients are waiting hours to see a physician, so the hospital put in a pilot project to divert patients from the emergency room by booking them appointments at local clinics.

However, the point Dr. Melanson makes is that the Medicare allocation formula that our hospitals are forced to use right now has been described as antiquated. This has led to underfunding and short-staffing in emergency departments. A modest adjustment to the formula the minister's department provides to our hospitals could reduce emergency room wait times. The minister, by modestly adjusting the Medicare formula, could help address the wait times in emergency departments. Will he do so?

[Translation]

**Hon. Mr. Boudreau:** Once again, the member for Fredericton South thinks there are silver bullets to address the situation we are facing. However, there is no silver bullet, and we must establish several initiatives with different health care partners to reduce wait times in emergency rooms.

The member for Fredericton South mentioned the pilot project that was announced by the Moncton Hospital, and I think that is fantastic. In fact, it is wonderful to see a hospital take such a step. The goal was actually to try to do a better job at triage and to take the time to explain to people who go to the emergency room that there are other options and other places where they can go to get the primary care they need, and that it is not always necessary to go to the emergency room. So, I applaud the Moncton Hospital for implementing this initiative.

[Original]

**Mr. Coon:** The other thing the Moncton Hospital did was to incorporate two nurse practitioners into its emergency department in 2009. That has made some difference in the emergency room workload. Their experience could be used to develop a mentor program to expand use of this model across the province to all hospitals, including Campbellton, which has just warned people to stay away unless it is a real emergency. Last week, I suggested this exact same thing to the minister, asking that it be implemented throughout our hospital system. Is the minister willing to apply the lessons learned at the Moncton Hospital to reduce emergency room wait times for all New Brunswickers?

**Hon. Mr. Boudreau:** The member knows very well that is what a pilot project is all about. The Moncton City Hospital announced that it was going to do a better job—not do a better job, but approach triaging in a different way to try to make it so that the people who are Levels 3, 4, and 5 are given other options to access primary treatment. I learned of this late on Friday. It was



announced yesterday. I think this is a good initiative, but it is a pilot project. We will follow the results of this pilot project to see how it goes and whether other hospitals can adopt a similar approach.

It comes back to the point that there are many initiatives that we, as a government, are trying to bring forward. I just wish that the opposition would be collaborative and participate in these initiatives as opposed to constantly getting up in the House and criticizing them.

## Roads

**Mr. B. Macdonald:** We have a new Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure. I just want to bring him up to speed on the Hanwell Road project. We all recall that the Hanwell Road was found to be one of the worst roads in Canada. Back in 2013, more than \$2 million was allocated to a project to completely widen and rebuild the Hanwell Road. There were three phases. In 2014, the land was purchased, the land was cleared, the land was prepared, and the utilities were moved. In 2015, the upper portion of Hanwell Road was paved. In 2016, we were due to complete the rest of the paving and finish the job. It is 2016, and it has not been done. I am wondering if the minister could just tell us when they are going to finish the job and pave the rest of Hanwell Road.

*[Translation]*

**Hon. Mr. Gallant:** First of all, I want to ask the member opposite what he and the opposition members did when their government was in office. We have made very significant investments in roads, and the minister was very happy to talk to the member opposite about it. Once again, this question shows that opposition members are focusing on the condition of the roads in their ridings instead of the condition of them throughout New Brunswick.

So, I once again ask the member opposite, who is running for the leadership of the Conservative Party, if he will tell us what his position is on this. Maybe the member for Quispamsis will tell us what his position is. Maybe the member for Southwest Miramichi-Bay du Vin will tell us what his position is on the CPP enhancement. I do not understand how opposition members can rise and ask questions to criticize the program without telling us if they are for it or against it.

Indeed, New Brunswickers deserve better.

*[Original]*

**Mr. Speaker:** The time for question period has expired.

There were a few comments made during question period. In the seventh question by the Leader of the Official Opposition, the word “lied” was used. I will be checking Hansard to see





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the context in which that was used. I believe that I will be having to ask you to retract that remark. That is it, for consideration.

