

Legislative Assembly of New Brunswick

Oral Questions



December 18, 2019

CONTENTS

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

Mr. D. Landry

Hon. Mr. Higgs

Mr. D. Landry

Hon. Mr. Higgs

Mr. D. Landry

Hon. Mr. Higgs

Mr. D. Landry

Hon. Mr. Higgs

HOSPITALS

Mr. D'Amours

Hon. Mr. Flemming

Mr. D'Amours

Hon. Mr. Flemming

Mr. D'Amours

Hon. Mr. Flemming

VAPING

Ms. Thériault

Hon. Mr. Flemming

Ms. Thériault

Hon. Mr. Flemming

Legislative Assembly of New Brunswick

Oral Questions

GOVERNMENT AGENDA

Mr. Austin

Hon. Mr. Higgs

Mr. Austin

Hon. Mr. Higgs

PAY EQUITY

Mr. K. Arseneau

Hon. Mr. Higgs

TAXATION

Mr. K. Arseneau

Hon. Mr. Higgs

COURTHOUSES

Mr. Horsman

Hon. Mr. Oliver

SMALL MODULAR REACTORS

Mr. Bourque

Hon. Mr. Higgs

Mr. Bourque

Hon. Mr. Higgs

[*Translation*]

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

Mr. D. Landry (Bathurst East—Nepisiguit—Saint-Isidore, Interim Opposition Leader, L): Mr. Speaker, these are dark days for New Brunswick workers. The Conservatives and their accomplices from the People's Alliance of New Brunswick are passing a bill that deprives workers of their right to negotiate a fair contract. This bill essentially tells the government that it can sit at the bargaining table and say it will not pay what it does not want to pay. This is not bargaining. This might be how employers acted in the 1800s or 1900s, but it is not how things are done today.

Of course, the die already seems to be cast for workers who are trying to get fair contracts, but we will never give up fighting for them. Even though the die already seems to be cast, we will introduce an amendment calling for an end to these brutal tactics.

My question is for the Premier: Will the government take a step back and at least adopt this amendment to ensure that workers are treated fairly at the bargaining table?

[*Original*]

Hon. Mr. Higgs (Quispamsis, Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, PC): Thank you for the question. Mr. Speaker, I think that in light of what we had been talking about earlier, the equalization payments and the position the province is in, and in light of the economy of the province—it has been stagnant for many years now—there must be a uniform recognition that just paying more taxes to fund more of doing the same is not the solution. We have asked... During negotiations, we wanted to talk about all the issues, but, no, the only issue to discuss, Mr. Speaker, was wages. Going back and shaking your fists at seniors and shaking your fists in nursing homes... Do you think that is a way to get a solution in our province? Do you think that is a way to have a province that is going to move forward in a way that we collaboratively find a solution?

Mr. Speaker, the question was this: Would I accept an amendment to the bill that is being proposed? No, absolutely not. I will not accept an amendment that takes out the conditions required to have a successful view on the state of our payment, the state of our equity with other provinces, and our ability, as a province, to pay, because it is important that all the factors are considered in any negotiation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Legislative Assembly of New Brunswick

Oral Questions

[*Translation*]

Mr. D. Landry (Bathurst East—Nepisiguit—Saint-Isidore, Interim Opposition Leader, L): Mr. Speaker, we have tried again and again, but the Premier seems unable to give a precise definition of the ability to pay.

Given that there is \$9 million more in the total budget for the province, when negotiating, we cannot let people on one side of the table say: Here is our offer; take it or leave it.

I think that, if we designate someone as an essential worker, that person must have the right to be treated fairly in contract negotiations. This bill violates that right. Why does the Premier not treat the men and women who work so hard in our nursing homes fairly?

[*Original*]

Hon. Mr. Higgs (Quispamsis, Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, PC): Mr. Speaker, as we have often said in this House, it is rich in the sense of where the opposition members are coming from because they went through this very same thing with all the other unions. They stood firm until they switched to across the floor, and this is exactly what we have as a problem in our province. We have this hypocrisy from one side of the floor to the other, where attitudes completely change—completely change, from one side to the other.

Mr. Speaker, we are following through with the conditions that were set by the previous government in relation to what the province could do and could afford, and that is what we would expect from people who want to see the right outcome for our province at the end of the day, who want to see workers treated fairly, and who want to work with the workers on issues that affect the workplace so that every day they want to come to work because it is a great place to work, in any aspect of the civil service.

We have huge challenges. We have huge challenges in every sector. We, as a government, are going to face them because we must and because they have been put and kicked down the road for only too long, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

[*Translation*]

Mr. D. Landry (Bathurst East—Nepisiguit—Saint-Isidore, Interim Opposition Leader, L): Mr. Speaker, how can the Premier say the process did not work? We settled 25 out of 26 collective agreements. It was a Liberal government that balanced the budget in this province, after the former Conservative government had been in office.

I will repeat what has already been said: The Premier did not even get close to a balanced budget when he was Minister of Finance. He did not manage to reach a single contract agreement with workers, either. It took a Liberal government to balance public finances



Legislative Assembly of New Brunswick

Oral Questions

and reach fair and just agreements with the workers of this province. The Premier did not manage to do any of these things. Our negotiations were not always easy, but we sat down at the table and negotiated fairly. Will this be the Premier's approach with nursing home workers and other workers who will be negotiating with this government in the days and weeks to come?

[*Original*]

Hon. Mr. Higgs (Quispamsis, Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, PC): Mr. Speaker, this makes it even more ironic. You know, we never walked away from the table. But the very same offer that the Leader of the Opposition is saying they negotiated and had success with 25 different unions—the very same offer, Mr. Speaker—is what we presented and what we were negotiating with as well. It is identical, Mr. Speaker, and yet the Leader of the Opposition thinks that it was a different formula that we provided. We did not, but all of a sudden, it was not accepted by CUPE. All of a sudden, CUPE wanted to go from 4% to 20%. So, those are the differences.

Now, I would expect that the Leader of the Opposition would say: Why would they not continue to have the same program that they had with all our 25 unions before? But, no, it was a new day because they wanted to break a mandate and they wanted to set a new precedent going into an election and hope that a government would fold in the process. Well, Mr. Speaker, we are not folding. We are here to fix the province, and we are here to work with every employee to do that. And it is not the CUPE of the old days. It is not the CUPE of the sixties. It has to be a CUPE that has the very same interest to fix this province that we do. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[*Translation*]

Mr. D. Landry (Bathurst East—Nepisiguit—Saint-Isidore, Interim Opposition Leader, L): Mr. Premier, at this time, I will tell you that, when you were Minister of Finance, no contracts—none—were signed with anybody. None. Mr. Speaker, now that he is Premier, why does he persevere with the same attitude when it did not work the first time? Will it take another Liberal government to sign contracts with the people of this province? The answer to this question is yes.

Now, here is what I am asking the Premier through you, Mr. Speaker. How do you plan to make people want to work for the government? If we look at the facts, we see that, in the past, the government was one of the top places well-educated people wanted to work. That is no longer the case today. How does he plan to attract people to the Department of Health? There are the people who work in nursing homes, but other government departments are also affected. How does the Premier plan to attract people to these positions when he uses these tactics against the unions?

Legislative Assembly of New Brunswick

Oral Questions

[Original]

Hon. Mr. Higgs (Quispamsis, Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, PC): Mr. Speaker, if we want to go back to the days of the Alward government, we introduced a major pension reform that has been accepted as one of the top five in North America, one that saves pensions for employees, one that puts government outside of the process so that the employees can be guaranteed that their pensions will be there and be managed by the pension holders. So we did not negotiate a big deal. We negotiated a huge deal, a deal that fixed pensions.

Now, when we talk about this situation, we are saying that it is not about the wages. At the end of the day, a wage is a short-term high. It is about the working conditions. It is about the lost time and the people who are not able to come to work because of reasons that we need to fix. It is about the hours of care. It is about finding a better way for 53 000 employees who work for the taxpayers of this province to deliver more and to make it a possibility for our taxpayers to pay less. That is the goal.

Government cannot do it alone. We cannot sit here in this House and pretend that we have all the answers, but we can work with people who do. That is our focus, Mr. Speaker.

HOSPITALS

Mr. D'Amours (Edmundston-Madawaska Centre, L): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, we asked the Minister of Health whether services in our rural hospitals will be impacted under the secret health reforms that the Conservatives are planning for the new year. He skated around the question and tried to make it sound as though nothing was to change, but if you listened closely to what he said, you could expect big changes in hospitals in this coming year. Yes, he will keep the buildings standing, and he might keep the H on the side of the buildings, but these hospitals will no longer offer the same services that our rural hospitals offer now.

To the minister, is that a pretty good summary of what you said yesterday? Can we expect big cuts from you next year?

Hon. Mr. Flemming (Rothesay, Minister of Health, PC): No and no. It is not an accurate representation of what I said, and, no, there are not going to be a whole bunch of cuts. I mean, did you look at the capital budget? It is an increase. Our operating budget last year was an increase. Health care is growing. The demands are being met, but you have to be realistic. Are you unaware of the 21 service interruptions? Are you unaware that the system is cracking? Are you unaware that we need a sustainable, accessible, and quality health care system?

Legislative Assembly of New Brunswick

Oral Questions

You fearmonger. You suggest that somebody is going to ransack health care. New Brunswickers should not fear improvements to health care. They should demand them, they should expect them, and they should embrace them. And that is exactly what is going to happen.

[*Translation*]

Mr. D'Amours (Edmundston-Madawaska Centre, L): Mr. Speaker, after ensuring that nurses in New Brunswick could no longer work, after ensuring that the NCLEX exam could be a problem for training Francophone nurses, after a major misstep with respect to immigrant nurses, this government is now making sure services are cut here in New Brunswick. This government created the shortage and is now using it as an excuse to cut services in the regions. The minister comes to us with fine rhetoric: He wants to make sure the buildings remain. The letter H will probably remain on the buildings, but, in terms of services, the minister came along and said: Everything is on the table.

Mr. Speaker, the minister says everything is on the table, so what services will this government cut over the next year? What is this government's secret plan for all of rural New Brunswick?

[*Original*]

Hon. Mr. Flemming (Rothesay, Minister of Health, PC): You know, he gives me a nice card with a nice smile, and then he gets so grumpy at Christmastime—my goodness, Mr. Speaker. I look at this. I came to my desk this morning, and I said: My gosh, what a nice smile he has. Then he gets up, and he has to go and ruin it all. He is like the Grinch.

In any event, all humour aside, there is not any secret plan. This is a democracy. Budgets are brought in. They are brought before the House, they are debated, and they are discussed. I mean, this constant suggestion that there is some backroom, seedy operation that is suggesting something... New Brunswickers need services in health care. We are not taking these services away from them. It is inconceivable that, as Progressive Conservatives, we would do that. We want to make sure that their health care is sustainable, quality, and accessible and that it meets the needs of the population, not political pandering. It is too important.

[*Translation*]

Mr. D'Amours (Edmundston-Madawaska Centre, L): Mr. Speaker, with my big smile, I am still going to say that the minister's answers are pathetic every single day.

You know, Mr. Speaker, looking at hospital services, I ask myself: Which surgeries will be cancelled? What emergency service hours will be cut? How many fewer beds will there be for patients? What will happen to the hospital in St. Stephen? What is happening to the

Legislative Assembly of New Brunswick

Oral Questions

hospitals in Saint-Quentin, Sackville, and Sainte-Anne-de-Kent or the Hopital St. Joseph de Dalhousie? Which services will this minister cut over the next year? The minister can make a big fuss and use a lot of rhetoric, but, at the end of the day, what New Brunswickers want to know today is this: In 2020 and subsequent years, which services will this Conservative government cut to penalize the people of the province? These are services that people deserve to have in our regions. Which services will be cut?

[*Original*]

Hon. Mr. Flemming (Rothesay, Minister of Health, PC): I told you, Mr. Speaker, that we are not cutting any services. You suggest that if somebody needs a gallbladder operation, we are going to stand here and say: No, you are not going to get one. That type of fearmongering is nonsensical—the idea that somebody is going to have a need for medical care and the government is going to say: No, we are refusing it, and we are not going to give you any medical care. To suggest this kind of stuff is beyond even political. It makes no sense. It is insulting to me and to the government that we would think that to someone in need of health care, this government would say: No, you are not getting any health care. That is not the case whatsoever.

But we want health care to be there for them down the road. They are taking the position that everything is fine. After looking at 21 service interruptions, closures for staffing, closures for HR, and closures for reasons like that, we have to deal with that. New Brunswickers...

Mr. Speaker (Hon. Mr. Guitard): Time, minister.

[*Translation*]

VAPING

Ms. Thériault (Caraquet, L): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last week, in the House, the official opposition introduced a motion asking the government to take measures against vaping. We think it has become a serious risk to public health, especially for young people. One of the recommendations in the motion is to ban flavoured juices used for vaping.

A previous government banned flavoured tobacco products in this province, in part because these flavours are particularly attractive to young people. Nova Scotia has banned these flavoured vaping products, so would the minister consider doing the same thing here?

Legislative Assembly of New Brunswick

Oral Questions

[Original]

Hon. Mr. Flemming (Rothesay, Minister of Health, PC): It is kind of ironic, Mr. Speaker, that somebody gets so emotional about vaping when the whole essence of the previous government was to legalize marijuana. I find it a little ironic. The health problems with marijuana...

Vaping among our youth is serious, and you are correct. We are going to look at that. I have met with Dr. Russell, head of Public Health, and I told her that the government is concerned about this, particularly with young people. I have instructed her and the government has instructed her to look at other provinces and at the situation here in New Brunswick. I expect to be hearing from her very, very shortly and expect that something will be forthcoming in due course. I hope it is sooner, not later. Thank you.

[Translation]

Ms. Thériault (Caraquet, L): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The minister says I am being emotional. I am sure this government, if it had a heart, would like to be emotional, but it is incapable of any emotion whatsoever.

Another problem is that the same restrictions do not apply to signage and advertising for vaping products.

[Original]

This may be a question for a different minister. I am not sure.

[Translation]

Would the government agree with the official opposition that we must impose more restrictions on advertising and signage for these products?

[Original]

Hon. Mr. Flemming (Rothesay, Minister of Health, PC): Mr. Speaker, I am not suggesting that the honourable member opposite is emotional or anything. I just find it ironic that someone who is... A benchmark of the opposition's raison d'être is legalizing marijuana. It has a leader who says that Cannabis NB is a home run. I do not know what kind of inside baseball this guy has been watching, but it is not what I watch.

But the member opposite is correct on the vaping issue. It is an issue, and I am not suggesting otherwise. I have met with Dr. Russell, and I have told her the government's concern on this issue. I have asked her to look into it, particularly in other provinces. She has attended and has been dealing with her colleagues in Public Health from coast to coast.

Legislative Assembly of New Brunswick

Oral Questions

It is a situation with the government. Public Health has been instructed to deal with that, and it will be doing so in due course. There is not much else to say on the subject, Mr. Speaker.

GOVERNMENT AGENDA

Mr. Austin (Fredericton-Grand Lake, Leader, PA): Mr. Speaker, I have just a very basic question. As I said earlier, New Brunswick is now the poorest province in Canada, which essentially means that our equalization payments are going to be increased. My question is for the Premier. With the recent windfall from Ottawa, is the Premier willing to share with this Assembly any plans that he has with regard to what he plans to do with the additional funding?

Hon. Mr. Higgs (Quispamsis, Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, PC): Thank you for the question. You are right. It is recent. Is it a windfall? Well, against a \$9.6-billion budget, I am not sure I would categorize it as a windfall. But it is good news in the sense of an increase.

The demands that we talk about here in this House—I mean, they are real in terms of every aspect, whether it be the vaping issue just discussed or the mental health issues that we have talked about. The wave that is going through our province in terms of demographics... We are leading Canada in that regard, though we are very close with Newfoundland and Nova Scotia. The idea expressed to the Prime Minister on numerous occasions and with my colleagues was exactly that. New Brunswick is facing a wave before any other province. Some provinces will never get there because their demographics are much different.

The point is that this is a component toward addressing some of the challenges that we have, but it is just a component because the challenges are so much bigger. We have asked for significant funding for a period of 10 to 15 years because that is what we are going through with this bubble. This is just one aspect, and we will use it accordingly to meet our challenges. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Austin (Fredericton-Grand Lake, Leader, PA): I thank the Premier for that response. When we look at New Brunswick as a whole, we do indeed have an aging demographic. We have a lot of issues around health care, education, infrastructure—I mean, the list goes on and on. The extra \$219 million in funds for New Brunswick would sure be a boost, but regardless, what New Brunswick needs more than anything else is private-sector investment. Until we have a growing economy, this problem is not going to go away, so I guess my question is again for the Premier. With the additional money that is coming in from Ottawa, will the Premier commit to serious private economic investment in relation to reducing taxes and fees so that businesses and citizens can have a fighting chance of growing the economy here at home?

Legislative Assembly of New Brunswick

Oral Questions

Hon. Mr. Higgs (Quispamsis, Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, PC): Thank you for the question. Certainly, the short answer is, yes, absolutely. I believe, as well, that the key to success in our province is, once again, to reinvigorate the private sector to look at New Brunswick as a place of investment. That is why we are certainly looking at the SMR technology. It is a major opportunity for our province to be a worldwide exporter of clean, nonemitting fuel and energy. The idea is that—you know, some just dismiss it at all—we do not have the capability worldwide to meet the energy consumption issues that exist.

We may also look at other areas of growth in our province. It is saying: stabilize our own expenditures, have a way where people look at us, work with companies to be a rapid response to their needs, and develop ONB and change its mandate, which will come out in the new year, regarding how it responds to people who are looking at New Brunswick. It is even so much as talking about the Atlantic salmon. We were a showcase to the world. There were people coming here and fishing for Atlantic salmon and seeing what New Brunswick has to offer. We want to once again be a showcase for the world and a place to invest.

[*Translation*]

PAY EQUITY

Mr. K. Arseneau (Kent North, G): Mr. Speaker, the Premier thinks that, as part of binding arbitration, a comparison should be made with the private sector. Needless to say, there are inequalities in the private sector. The role of the government is to ensure that everyone in the province is treated fairly, especially when it comes to a fundamental right. By not legislating where it should, the government is encouraging a race to the bottom, which is contrary to human rights.

Pay equity means equal pay for work of equal or equivalent value. It is about recognizing the value of jobs traditionally or predominantly held by women. Mr. Speaker, my question to the Premier is this: Will his government commit to passing pay equity legislation for the private sector in New Brunswick by spring?

[*Original*]

Hon. Mr. Higgs (Quispamsis, Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, PC): Mr. Speaker, I think we were very clear in the beginning that our focus was on home-care and day-care workers in terms of the compensation packages that were certainly way out of whack. It is a sector primarily dominated by females as opposed to males, and it is certainly looked at as being a needed growth area. It is needed for home care and for our demographic. That is our focus. We certainly have stated that over and over again. Everyone in this House believes in gender equality, and we accept nothing less. That is certainly our focus.



Legislative Assembly of New Brunswick

Oral Questions

But today, we are focused on the fact that our home-care and day-care workers, in terms of raising salaries and raising wages to make them effective, make it a career choice, make it a path for a health care career. That is our goal: People see the future in New Brunswick so that they do not go into a discipline such as home care and want to get out as soon as they can. They see it as not only a compassionate need that our province has but also a career path that moves them through the health care field to whatever level they choose to thrive in. That is our goal. We will focus to get results. Thank you.

TAXATION

Mr. K. Arseneau (Kent North, G): So I will take that as a no.

Mr. Speaker, while the ownership of publicly traded companies is public knowledge, there is no such requirement for private companies to disclose their beneficial owners. This allows New Brunswick's largest corporations to conceal their true owners through trusts and shell companies. A beneficial owner is someone who enjoys the benefits of ownership without being on the record. In 2018, CBC reported that Service New Brunswick and the Department of Finance were working to include beneficial owners in their corporate registry to increase transparency in light of offshore tax havens. Can the Minister of Finance give me an update on when he will table legislation to ensure that beneficial owners are required to be included in a company's disclosure in the Service New Brunswick Corporate Registry?

Hon. Mr. Higgs (Quispamsis, Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, PC): Mr. Speaker, I cannot answer specifically on a timeframe or answer that directly, so I will have to take that under advisement and come back with a specific answer. But, certainly, in looking at the laws of the country, the laws of the land, in relation to whether they are federal or provincial, I think that many of these aspects that the member is talking about are under federal jurisdiction. I recall a number of issues that came up in relation to the current federal Finance Minister that were related to offshore kinds of holdings. The purpose, I get it, and I understand that we have to stay within the laws of the country. I do not want to see these tax havens promoted any more than he does. I will get a direct answer to his question and take that under advisement at this point. Thank you.

[*Translation*]

COURTHOUSES

Mr. Horsman (Fredericton North, L): Thank you, Mr. Speaker.



Oral Questions

[Original]

Mr. Speaker, we understand that the long-delayed announcement of the Centennial Building is coming today. My question is for the Attorney General and the Minister of Public Safety. What about the courthouse? Is that part of the proposal?

The courthouse we have now is not safe for the people who are working there. This Minister of Justice has stated in this House that they are looking at solutions. This minister promised solutions. Mr. Speaker, I would not be harping about this project so much if I did not think how important it is to the people in the capital area. This government has four or five ministers sitting in government right now. Are they not concerned for the people of their constituencies? Mr. Speaker, through you, what are the solutions?

Hon. Mr. Oliver (Kings Centre, Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure, PC): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the member opposite, certainly, we are very much aware of the needs of the judiciary in the building, and we have taken under advisement many of the issues that they have brought forward to us. It is very important to us, as a government, to make sure that we have a safe property for our judiciary to be housed in and for the people who use the system. We are looking at all the options that we have.

We are presently working at the building that is being used and making sure that the safety of individuals is being taken into consideration. As we go forward, we will be making other announcements and looking at what we can do to accommodate that industry. Thank you.

SMALL MODULAR REACTORS

Mr. Bourque (Kent South, L): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Earlier this week, the Premier went to Ottawa and raised a number of things with the Prime Minister. He even managed to raise the tough plight of the very wealthy New Brunswickers who are concerned about the lack of salmon in the private pools. That is something that the average New Brunswicker will never be able to do—fish in these private pools. One thing that we did not hear that he mentioned during these conversations is small modular reactors. We on this side of the House believe that this is a great opportunity for New Brunswick, but the feds also need to come to the table to help support this. I just want a confirmation that the Premier raised this issue with Prime Minister Trudeau. If not, why not?

Hon. Mr. Higgs (Quispamsis, Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, PC): Yes, indeed, Mr. Speaker. I spoke at great length about the SMRs and the potential they have for revolutionizing the energy industry. The Prime Minister was very interested in the technology and realized that what was being proposed in our agreement with the other provinces in terms of Ontario and Saskatchewan was a pan-Canadian approach and one that could be supported, like back in the days of the CANDU reactor. But it is so much more

Legislative Assembly of New Brunswick

Oral Questions

advanced, Mr. Speaker, in the state of nuclear industry. It is a non-emitting, carbon-free resource that is available to Canadians and available worldwide, and we can be a leader. The Prime Minister agreed and understood that, because he understood that we were once a leader in energy and that we can once again be a leader in energy supply. It was very much a major topic of discussion, and it will require major support from the government in order to make it a success here in New Brunswick and here in Canada. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Bourque (Kent South, L): Well, I guess we say better late than never, because, way before this meeting, there had been not too much campaigning for this current federal government from this provincial government, Mr. Speaker. I am happy to hear that the Premier did raise it. It is understandable that the Prime Minister would support this, and we agree with that. We cannot help but think that... And the Prime Minister will not get involved with this agreement with Ontario and Saskatchewan. We, on the other hand, have major concerns about...

[Translation]

This is what we call evading the issue. Ontario could take charge of everything that is happening.

[Original]

There is a major component of research in this item, and we are afraid that Ontario will take a lot of it. What does the Premier have to say? What will he do to protect New Brunswick jobs and to keep New Brunswick on the edge with this technology so that we can be at the forefront and not be taken over by Ontario and Saskatchewan?

Hon. Mr. Higgs (Quispamsis, Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, PC): Mr. Speaker, to turn back a little, I think that the Minister of Energy has been constantly on this file and has been very vocal about it right from day one. I also want to say that the activities among our respective utilities, Saskatchewan, Ontario, and New Brunswick—NB Power—have been ongoing for over three years. This connection in technology advancement is one that has been promoted by the three provinces working together for an energy solution for Canada.

In this scenario, where we are looking at a worldwide solution, we can pretend to be in a vacuum, or we can promote exactly what we have right here, which is the only permitted site for a nuclear expansion. It is right here at Point Lepreau, right here in New Brunswick. We are ahead of the game. We have an officer here who is second to none in the nuclear energy field and who is driving and working with our counterparts in other provinces. Mr. Speaker, we will lead. We will be a part of it because we can and we have the capability. I am grateful to see that the opposition supports this moving forward.

Mr. Speaker (Hon. Mr. Guitard): Question period is over.

