

# Legislative Assembly of New Brunswick

## Oral Questions



**March 30, 2022**

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[Original]

### REMUNERATION

**Mr. Melanson** (Dieppe, Interim Opposition Leader, L): Mr. Speaker, we learned today, this morning, actually, that the Premier is giving himself a 15% pay increase—a 15% pay increase—and giving his Cabinet ministers a 10% pay increase. This is in a context where he has just finished negotiating different collective agreements through which these employees—the nurses and the government employees—will get 15% over five years.

He is giving himself 15% right away, on April 1. Premier, are you having a hard time paying for the cost of living? Is that what it is? Is that what it is? Because many New Brunswickers are, and they are not getting a 15% pay increase from day one, April 1. Can you please justify that for us?

**Hon. Mr. Higgs** (Quispamsis, Premier, Minister responsible for Intergovernmental Affairs, PC): Mr. Speaker, this would be the height of deception from the Leader of the Opposition—the height of deception. But I know that he is a master in that because the facts do not really relate to what usually comes out of his mouth.

Mr. Speaker, this was something that was put in place back in 2016, when the salaries of the Cabinet ministers and the Premier's Office were reduced by 10% and 15%. It was an effort by Premier Gallant to show that he was doing something to manage the finances of the province. It expires on March 31.

Do you know what, Mr. Speaker? We put out the release. We did not wait for anything just to happen and for the opposition to say that we are trying to hide it. We put out the release and said: This expires on March 31, and we are going to go back to where it was in 2016.

If you want to do a comparison, compare it with the rest of the provinces, because we have done it with everybody else. We compared it with the Atlantic Region and said: Okay, where do we fit?

Mr. Speaker, let's just tell the truth. That is all we can ask of the Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr. Speaker** (Hon. Mr. Oliver): Time.

**Mr. Melanson** (Dieppe, Interim Opposition Leader, L): Mr. Speaker, it is funny that the Premier agrees with what we did because it is now convenient for him. It is now convenient for him. He could have—he could have—and he should have made a change to that legislation. It potentially would have been increased over five years as it does for regular employees and nurses. Or, push it further out, because we have significant challenges, with there being 20 000 more people using food banks in the province. We have people hurting in this province. They cannot pay the price at the pump. It seems that the Premier also cannot pay the price at the pump—he gave himself a 15% increase.

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Why do you agree with what we did? Because is it for your convenience? Because you are getting a pay increase, a pay raise, of 15% on April 1? Explain that to New Brunswickers, because you are totally disconnected.

**Hon. Mr. Higgs** (Quispamsis, Premier, Minister responsible for Intergovernmental Affairs, PC): Mr. Speaker, the drama continues. The Leader of the Opposition knows full well, so I can repeat what I just said. But he knows exactly what this is.

In the element of transparency, we put the release out so that everyone would know that this is ending and that it will be back to where it was in 2016. And then what has been the change in that rate since then? Zero. There has been no adjustment to any of this since—well, I guess, it goes back to the MLAs in 2008—and there still is not.

The Leader of the Opposition should be truthful. He really should be truthful rather than trying to spin this into something that it is not, because he knows full well that it is not. But he thinks: Oh, I can make a political gain here. I can make this into something that it is not because that is what I do best.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, he does have a knack for that. But the facts speak for themselves. I know that LAC, with its own members, will go through a review. But I would say to look at the comparators and ask: What have we really done? We have gone back to 2016 levels.

**Mr. Speaker** (Hon. Mr. Oliver): Time.

*[Translation]*

**Mr. Melanson** (Dieppe, Interim Opposition Leader, L): Mr. Speaker, there are so many issues we must discuss because they make life more difficult for New Brunswickers. Today, because it is to his advantage to increase his salary by 15% on April 1, the Premier agrees with the bill we tabled in 2016. Mr. Speaker, when the bill was tabled in 2016, nobody anticipated, first, a pandemic, and, second, the difficulties stemming from the pandemic and the rising cost of living that New Brunswickers are facing.

Mr. Speaker, will the Premier increase the salaries of all his civil servants by 15% on April 1? Will he increase income assistance by 15% on April 1? Will he provide financial assistance of 15% to those who cannot afford the price at the pump so they can absorb the increase? He will be able to absorb it, because, on April 1, he is giving himself a raise. Explain that to New Brunswickers.

*[Original]*

**Mr. Speaker** (Hon. Mr. Oliver): Time.

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**Hon. Mr. Higgs** (Quispamsis, Premier, Minister responsible for Intergovernmental Affairs, PC): I remember, Mr. Speaker, back in the previous Liberal administration, the discussion around this when it was done. There was talk about a 15% or 10% reduction in the Cabinet ministers' and the Premier's salaries. It is not the salary either. I know that was how Premier Gallant spread it at the time, but it is not that. It is actually the portion of the Cabinet adjustment or the Premier's adjustment, so it is not the entire salary. I am sure that the Leader of the Opposition knows that, but I am sure that he omits it on purpose, because so did the previous Premier, Mr. Gallant. But the previous Premier omitted a lot of things on purpose. We are well aware of all of that.

I wonder why that government put it in place for five years? That is what those members did. They put it in place for five years, and it expires on March 31. We said: Oh well, what do we do with this? We will let it expire because we are going back to 2016 levels. There has been no adjustment to that. There has been no adjustment for the MLAs. That is what LAC will do. It will review it. So it is not a political decision. It was a decision in 2016 to make it political and to make it look like something it was not.

**Mr. Speaker** (Hon. Mr. Oliver): Time, Mr. Premier.

[*Translation*]

### HOUSING

**Mr. Melanson** (Dieppe, Interim Opposition Leader, L): Mr. Speaker, I imagine we will continue to have a number of discussions on what we have just talked about, but I want to move on to a file that hits very, very close to home for New Brunswickers.

The Premier manages all government files, so I would like him to explain something to us. In May 2019, the government announced a plan to improve the affordable housing situation. It was a three-year plan. The provincial government, along with the federal government, was going to invest \$63 million over three years. The third year will end in May 2022. So, we are very close to the deadline. I would like the Premier to tell us how many affordable housing units have been created in three years. How much has the government invested? What was the situation at the time? How has it improved in the past three years?

[*Original*]

**Hon. Mrs. Shephard** (Saint John Lancaster, Minister of Health, PC): Mr. Speaker, I know that the opposition likes to point, and do you know what? It is the opposition's job to keep us accountable.

We have certainly been progressing with our housing units that we have with the Department of Social Development. And with subsidized housing, the rent subsidies, and all

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kinds of programs, we are building on, building on, and building on all these building blocks to ensure that we have as many affordable units as we can have. In my days as Minister of Social Development, I knew that we were not very far off from the number of housing units that Nova Scotia had. For the difference in population, I think that we are trying to do our share. We do need to do more, and I know that the Minister of Social Development is working diligently to get those housing units up and to do it nicely. We have had many, many individuals in the private sector come to the table to help with this as well.

We will get those numbers for the member opposite, Mr. Speaker. We will take this under advisement and get him those exact numbers as soon as we can. Thank you.

**Mr. Melanson** (Dieppe, Interim Opposition Leader, L): Well, Mr. Speaker, there is a lot of fluff there, to be quite honest. Actually, I was really happy that the Minister of Health got up because she, as the former Minister of Social Development, was the one who announced this in 2019, this three-year plan.

I want to remind the government and the Premier that when that was announced, the government was supposed to create 151 new units of affordable housing over three years with \$6.8 million. It was supposed to be renovating and repairing 5 100 rental units, with \$26 million invested. I think it is critical, based on what we know now of the crisis in affordable housing and rent, that we know whether those numbers were actually achieved. The money was budgeted for this. I would like to get a clear indication from the Premier that we will get these numbers accurately and ASAP.

**Mr. Speaker** (Hon. Mr. Oliver): Time, member.

**Hon. Mrs. Shephard** (Saint John Lancaster, Minister of Health, PC): Well, it is nice to see the Leader of the Opposition in a demanding mood today. Do you know what? We are going to get those numbers ASAP. We would not want to disappoint him, Mr. Speaker.

It is serious. We have people who need housing. We understand that, and we wish that it could happen overnight. But there was a plan submitted with the federal government, and the federal government, of course, as we all know, puts the majority of units to the back end, for later years. But we have made commitments, and we are doing everything that we can to live up to those commitments.

I will ensure that we get those numbers to the Leader of the Opposition ASAP because we like to be transparent, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

## RENTS

**Mr. Melanson** (Dieppe, Interim Opposition Leader, L): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the commitment from the minister to provide the information, but I will ask her to define what

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“transparency” really means because I do not think that this is a very transparent government.

We in this province have, as we know, a rent crisis. We know that there are a few factors contributing to the rent crisis that we are going through. First, this government has done nothing, if anything, to try to ease the pain of the rent being out of control. Second, the property tax assessment on these buildings went up by 42% on average last year. Investors are buying properties here, and they want to get as much of their money back as quickly as possible.

I guess my question is this: Is the government really serious about investing in affordable housing to address this issue?

**Hon. Mr. Steeves** (Moncton Northwest, Minister of Finance and Treasury Board, PC): Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member opposite for the question. Yes, we have brought a rent cap into play to protect all New Brunswickers who need protection, obviously. Rent can only be increased once per 12-month period. You have to give six months’ notice for a rent increase. *The Residential Tenancies Act* is in place. Actually, do you know what? If you want to, I can give you the number for that one, for tenancies. You can call 1 888 762-8600, or you can go online to <irent@snb.ca>.

But the fact of the matter is that we did put a rent cap in place, and we tied it in with the CPI from last year, which was 3.8%. We thought that was reasonable, and we thought that would be a help. I think it is a help. It is going to stop renovictions. We brought in legislation as well, or we are bringing it in, to stop renovictions—period. Do you know what? If you are going to be evicted, then you have to be evicted with cause. There are a number of steps that this government has taken to protect New Brunswickers. That is what we are about, Mr. Speaker. We are about protecting New Brunswickers.

**Mr. Speaker** (Hon. Mr. Oliver): Time, minister.

**Mr. Melanson** (Dieppe, Interim Opposition Leader, L): Well, Mr. Speaker, they have created a mess with this rent cap. I think it was something decided at the last minute before the budget was tabled, because they had an internal report saying that there was no problem and there were no issues around rent control. And, all of a sudden, they bring up this idea about rent control, which should have been done two years ago. And then when this rent control scheme comes in, the Premier does not know what he is talking about and cannot explain how it is going to work. He gets his minister to try to explain how it is going to work.

It will only take effect, now that we have the bill, on June 1, so for the first six months, it is a voluntary rent control. If people paid rent over the cap for those six months, it will be a nightmare for the renters trying to recuperate that money. This government has made a real mess of rent control. Please explain how this is going to work.

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**Hon. Mr. Higgs** (Quispamsis, Premier, Minister responsible for Intergovernmental Affairs, PC): Mr. Speaker, it is pretty straightforward, really. You have a 3.8% cap that comes into play on January 1—it is retroactive to January 1. There is a nuance to how it is administered and to the details around it, but the point is that it is retroactive to January 1.

But there is a news flash here for the Leader of the Opposition, and the news flash is that the economy of the province is growing faster than it has ever grown in the last number of generations. We have more interest in this province than we have had for years, and we are going back 10, 20, 30, or 40 years.

The Leader of the Opposition just does not know how to handle it because he cannot believe that under this administration and through a pandemic, we have seen such great fortunes within our province. We have seen people coming in and investing here like never before. We have seen people moving here like never before. We have seen building like never before, and the Leader of the Opposition just does not know how to handle it. Well, we are proud to be New Brunswickers, and we are proud that New Brunswick is on the move. Let's see whether he can just keep up, Mr. Speaker.

*[Translation]*

**Mr. Melanson** (Dieppe, Interim Opposition Leader, L): You know, Mr. Speaker, I look at the government members applauding the Premier and I tell myself that they are about the only people in the whole province who applaud this Premier.

We want more economic growth. We want to see more investment. However, we also want to see everyone derive some benefit in New Brunswick. Mr. Speaker, that includes people who cannot afford to pay their rent because it has risen by \$300, \$400, \$500, \$600, \$700, or \$800 a month.

This is the case for a significant number of people, because, first of all, this government did not deal with this file for three years. Then, suddenly, the government comes up with a rent-control mechanism that it cannot even explain. Rent control is being established in the middle of the calendar year. The government has not invested in affordable housing. People are struggling, and the Premier is singing the same old song; he says that everything is fine. People are struggling, and the government must help them. Are you going to help them, Mr. Premier?

*[Original]*

**Mr. Speaker** (Hon. Mr. Oliver): Time.

**Hon. Mr. Higgs** (Quispamsis, Premier, Minister responsible for Intergovernmental Affairs, PC): Mr. Speaker, I think the Leader of the Opposition read the budget. It is the largest budget that the province has had on record. It is the most progressive budget that we have



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seen on record. We have dealt with issues, and we will continue to deal with issues, I would say, like reacting to some of the pricing in things such as home care and raising the compensation for mileage so that our home care and extra-mural workers can afford to deal with patients in remote areas. We have reduced taxes. We have changed the rules around Social Development, raising the cap in terms of what you can earn while on social assistance and not have it be clawed back. There are numerous areas where we have helped and will continue to help.

But keeping up with this housing boom... Wow. This is a new thing for New Brunswick. It is exciting, and it is challenging. We will meet the challenges and continue to work with the builders. Mr. Speaker, one of the things they have said is that if they were not paying so much in taxes, they would build more. Guess what! We are dealing with that.

### LOCAL GOVERNMENT

**Mr. K. Chiasson** (Tracadie-Sheila, L): Mr. Speaker, when the Minister of Local Government is pushed into a corner, he reverts to accusing others of conspiracy theories. Now, there is a guy in the United States who used to do that, and we know how that ended.

Mr. Speaker, the Irving properties are privately owned. They belong to Entity 44. It was always in the original plan to have them be part of Entity 40. When the minister was asked by the media, he said that Crown lands should be part of rural districts. He said that he did not have any details about the properties. He even threw his own civil servants under the bus, saying that it was the mapping division that actually did it.

What I want to know, minister, is who authorized this decision. Who made the final decision to remove these properties from Entity 44 and put them in a rural district?

**Hon. Mr. Allain** (Moncton East, Minister of Local Government and Local Governance Reform, PC): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the white paper, a number of the lands in question were put into rural districts. When doing the property work, the principle was to keep rural, rural. It is a foreign concept for the MLA from Tracadie because he obviously believes that everything should be in an entity or a municipality.

There is nothing more rural than Crown lands and large, vacant tracts of land. We looked at whether there were buildings or whether voters would be cut off from the entity. If so, they were kept in. This was the province-wide approach.

(Interjections.)

**Mr. Speaker** (Hon. Mr. Oliver): Order.

**Hon. Mr. Allain** (Moncton East, Minister of Local Government and Local Governance Reform, PC): The transition committee made the decisions and made the requests. The

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opposition is throwing big numbers around, but they have to be taken in context. It is one eight hundredths of the tax base. That is what he is talking about.

Mr. Speaker, local governance reform is moving forward for the next generation.

**Mr. Speaker** (Hon. Mr. Oliver): Time, minister.

**Mr. K. Chiasson** (Tracadie-Sheila, L): Mr. Speaker, he is wrong. The transition committee did not make this decision. The Mayor of Sackville and the committee had no idea that the property was actually removed from Entity 44 and put into the rural district. This makes no sense whatsoever.

I think this is just to avoid actually paying taxes in Entity 40. The minister or the government presented 15 new bills yesterday, but not one is to help municipalities financially with this reform. The tax money that is supposed to be paid by these properties would have helped Entity 44, and now it is going into government coffers. It wants the property.

(Interjections.)

**Mr. Speaker** (Hon. Mr. Oliver): Order.

**Mr. K. Chiasson** (Tracadie-Sheila, L): Will the minister commit today to returning these properties to Entity 40?

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Mr. Allain** (Moncton East, Minister of Local Government and Local Governance Reform, PC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal Party... Finally, we see... Unfortunately, there are no party leadership candidates here today.

We have a reform plan. Cartographers are working on this file. Mr. Speaker, let us look at the local governance file. We want to reduce overlap; we want to be efficient. When we are doing transfers and deciding on borders, we give that to the transition committees. They have certainly worked on this file.

What the member for Tracadie-Sheila is telling us today makes no sense. What we may read in the media is not always the truth. You asked the question, and I gave you an answer. The transition committees are the ones that made the decisions, in coordination with the cartographers, Mr. Speaker. That is why the transition committee members have a say. That is the difference between the opposition and us: We are working with the communities. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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**Mr. K. Arseneau** (Kent North, G): Mr. Speaker, local governance reform is supposed to be a way to give our communities greater independence. Now, I am puzzled by the minister's attitude and the way he has been improvising on this issue since December. Arbitrary deadlines, arbitrary decisions, dumb answers to legitimate questions, and improvisation—all this is a sign that the minister has lost control of the file. Cooperation and decency seem to have made way for a hostile defensiveness and selective listening.

Although the concept of reform was well received, the way it is being carried out is endangering these efforts throughout the province, even among people who are convinced about it. Several entities are asking for deadlines to be extended so that they can continue constructive discussions for the betterment of their communities. Will the minister be listening? My question for the minister is this: Who is leading this reform? If it is still the minister, why has there been a change in terms of attitude and openness?

[Original]

**Mr. Speaker** (Hon. Mr. Oliver): Time.

[Translation]

**Hon. Mr. Allain** (Moncton East, Minister of Local Government and Local Governance Reform, PC): Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The member opposite is asking a very good question. I can tell you that we are working with our communities. We are not doing any improvising. As you know, we have an aggressive schedule. Over the past year, we have consulted people and set up transition committees.

Is it easy to carry out change? No, it is not. We saw that yesterday, with the question about Lac Baker from the member for Madawaska Les Lacs-Edmundston. Is it easy? Is it easy to make concessions then switch and work with another entity? It is not easy. These are big decisions, but what we are doing now is showing leadership. We have shown leadership. The deadlines we set up are indeed tight. Certain people are asking for time. If we allow more time, it can also be a disadvantage. That is why we are going ahead. We are deciding for tomorrow's generation, not today's. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

[Original]

**Mr. Speaker** (Hon. Mr. Oliver): Time, minister.

[Translation]

**Mr. K. Arseneau** (Kent North, G): However, sometimes it takes time to make sure things are done properly. We have to allow that time. I trust our community leaders. They will work in the right direction if we let them work at a sustainable pace, Mr. Speaker.

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The other area where the government is improvising involves setting boundaries and removing most of the land with resources from within the municipal boundaries of the proposed entities. This reform must have as its ultimate goal more resilient, sustainable, and democratic communities. Now, communities with no resources and no decision-making power cannot flourish as they should and will be condemned to an administrative management role with no self-determination and no truly participatory democracy. Community pasture and forestry, collaboration with Indigenous communities, regional development, and fighting climate change all depend on self-determination in terms of local resources.

Is this reform still aimed at ensuring that our communities are resilient and sustainable? If so, the minister...

[Original]

**Mr. Speaker** (Hon. Mr. Oliver): Time, member. Time, member. Time, member.

[Translation]

**Hon. Mr. Allain** (Moncton East, Minister of Local Government and Local Governance Reform, PC): Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

[Original]

As we know, Mr. Speaker, we are moving forward on reform. Why? It is because we have been living with the same reform for the last 60 years. We have been talking about reform for the last 25 years. Is it easy to move forward? It is not. However, I have total confidence in New Brunswickers that we are going to make it through this consultation, these changes, and this evolution of the partnership between the provincial government and the municipal governments.

Mr. Speaker, there was a democratic deficit. Thirty percent of New Brunswickers who live in rural New Brunswick did not have access to voting. Today, they will. On November 28, 2022, there will be a special election. They will be able to vote, and they will finally have a say on their quality of life. That is the reason. The Premier wanted to move forward. We are moving forward. New Brunswickers want to move forward because they know that this is the right thing to do.

**Mr. Speaker** (Hon. Mr. Oliver): Time.

## CORONAVIRUS

**Mr. D'Amours** (Edmundston-Madawaska Centre, L): Mr. Speaker, when the budget is being prepared, each section of a department submits its requests to be included in the budget.

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When presenting the budget, the Conservative government included no money related to COVID-19, despite the fact that we are still in the midst of a pandemic and we see what is happening elsewhere. Can the Minister of Health confirm whether it was she, the Minister of Finance, or the Premier who demanded that no sums for COVID-19 be included in the budget, following the recommendations of the Department of Health?

**Hon. Mr. Steeves** (Moncton Northwest, Minister of Finance and Treasury Board, PC): Well, do you know what? Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member opposite for the question. As a matter of fact, there is COVID-19 money in there. There is \$20 million for immunization. I do not know when \$20 million became no money, but \$20 million, to me, is a heck of a lot of money. Now, if you are a Liberal, that is a drop in the bucket because, you know, you just tax more. But do you know what? We do not. We are committed here to lowering taxes, to making the lives of people in New Brunswick better, and we are also doing that while protecting them from COVID-19. Twenty million dollars for immunization is not chump change. That is actual, real money.

(Interjections.)

**Mr. Speaker** (Hon. Mr. Oliver): Order.

**Hon. Mr. Steeves** (Moncton Northwest, Minister of Finance and Treasury Board, PC): And do you know what? It is just part of what we do here when we on this side of the House do the work for the people of New Brunswick.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. D'Amours** (Edmundston-Madawaska Centre, L): Mr. Speaker, vaccination is one thing, but it is certainly not the help people need in times of crisis.

In 2019, the Conservative government introduced its nursing recruitment strategy. Since that announcement, the government has failed to deliver. In 2019, the Conservative government eliminated the physician billing number system and replaced it with another one. Since that announcement, the government has failed to deliver.

These two examples predate the pandemic, Mr. Speaker. Can the minister explain to us what the budget contains that will change what she has not yet been able to do? Alternatively, Mr. Speaker, with the salary increase that the Premier just gave her, will she end up doing a better job?

[*Original*]

**Hon. Mrs. Shephard** (Saint John Lancaster, Minister of Health, PC): You know, Mr. Speaker, I have broad shoulders, and I am okay.

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The member opposite can book an appointment with me, and we can go over this whole list of accomplishments that we have made throughout our COVID-19 experience. The department has never stopped working on behalf of New Brunswickers—on behalf of them, Mr. Speaker—because we do not quit. We keep going. Our budget is a good budget. My goodness, COVID-19 is now a part of our reality. It is a part of what we will be servicing through the Department of Health, through our regional health authorities, and through EM/ANB. We will continue serving the people of New Brunswick through the Department of Health every single day of every single year. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. D'Amours** (Edmundston-Madawaska Centre, L): Mr. Speaker, in 2021, the Minister of Health decided she would manage physician recruitment in the province. There is a shortage of more than 35 family physicians, and that is just in northern New Brunswick. The minister has again failed to deliver.

In 2021, the Minister of Health promised that all New Brunswickers would have a family physician. Between 50 000 and 90 000 New Brunswickers still do not have a family physician. The minister has again failed to deliver.

What will be different this time, with the new budget? What will differ from the failure of the health plan the minister could not carry out? Alternatively, will she do as she did with the last annual report from her department and not spend \$168 million on programs New Brunswickers need?

[*Original*]

**Hon. Mrs. Shephard** (Saint John Lancaster, Minister of Health, PC): Mr. Speaker, we have been improving our services to the people of New Brunswick. You know, we have more to do. The member opposite knows that. We have people in New Brunswick who are looking for primary care access, and we have been working on that to deliver transformation to the health care services in this province. We are going to succeed in that.

I am very proud of this department because all through COVID-19, all through the lockdowns, all through the orange phases, yellow phases, and green phases, we have never stopped working for the people of New Brunswick. This budget is going to deliver. The primary health care network—primary care—is a pivotal part of the public health plan. I am very proud. When this comes to fruition—right now, we are working on the IT—and we deliver this to the people of New Brunswick, every single person will have access to primary health care, and that is going to strengthen the foundation of our population's health. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker** (Hon. Mr. Oliver): Members, during question period... All honourable members certainly know that there is a list of words that we should not be using. I think



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that at some point during the answers to some questions, the Premier may have misspoken. I want to suggest that words such as “deception” or “telling the truth” will not be tolerated. I would suggest that we watch our words very carefully. Certain words will not be tolerated here on the floor of the House.

### HOUSING

**Hon. Mrs. Shephard** (Saint John Lancaster, Minister of Health, PC): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. During question period, the Leader of the Opposition asked about 151 units targeted for housing from Social Development. I am pleased to say that since April 2019, 172 new affordable housing units have been achieved, representing \$3.5 million in onetime capital grant funding and over \$1 million in annual operating grants. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Melanson** (Dieppe, Interim Opposition Leader, L): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you to the minister. We will get that validated by a third party, to be sure. As the minister is finally getting some information for us, we want to see the breakdown of where these units were built. Or were these affordable units done through subsidized housing? In which community? When was it done? We need details. If there is one thing that we want to make sure of, it is that the numbers are accurate. We want to know exactly where the units went and who paid for them. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker** (Hon. Mr. Oliver): Minister of Health, would you like to respond?

**Hon. Mrs. Shephard** (Saint John Lancaster, Minister of Health, PC): Mr. Speaker, all I can say is that we will be happy to get that information to the member opposite.