

Legislative Assembly of New Brunswick

Oral Questions



December 8, 2023

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GOVERNMENT SERVICES

Ms. Holt (Bathurst East—Nepisiguit—Saint-Isidore, Leader of the Official Opposition, L): Mr. Speaker, New Brunswickers are experiencing a shortage of care. Parents all over this province are waiting for a childcare space. Seniors are filling our hospitals while waiting for long-term care beds because of a shortage of nurses and care workers. Kids in schools are waiting for mental health care because of a shortage of school psychologists. Cancer patients are being made to wait for cancer care because of a shortage of radiation therapists. This week, it was made clear that New Brunswickers are experiencing a crisis in care that stems from a government that just does not care.

Our team has proposed to make long-term care safer with clean air, and this government voted it down. We proposed equal pay for workers in nursing homes, in home care, and in youth care, and this government voted it down. We proposed support for seniors to get preventive health care such as the RSV vaccine, and this government voted it down. Mr. Premier, what are you doing to care for the people who care for New Brunswickers?

Hon. Mr. Higgs (Quispamsis, Premier, Minister responsible for Intergovernmental Affairs, PC): Mr. Speaker, we are experiencing something in New Brunswick, across Canada in fact, that has not happened in decades. When you look at what is happening with population growth, with the demands in the health care system, and with the demands in the housing system, you can see that it is a unique time here in New Brunswick and a unique time in Canada. Look at the inflation that we are seeing. It is a unique time in Canada.

There are costs incurring from federal policies, and this team across the aisle would support the Trudeau programs that are putting our country at risk of becoming financially bankrupt in every sector along the way. So we are trying to manage through this—manage through this—at a time when the Opposition Leader would support a federal government that is bankrupting our country.

We are managing our health care. We are managing through this housing crisis. We are trying to come out on the other side with the best solution for everyone. Do you know what members on the opposite side of the House do not do? They never think about tomorrow. They only think about an election, Mr. Speaker.

HEALTH

Ms. Holt (Bathurst East—Nepisiguit—Saint-Isidore, Leader of the Official Opposition, L): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is interesting to hear the member opposite say two things: that they are managing health care, and that they care about tomorrow. Let's take the example of the Fredericton clinic on the Northside that this government just described. It was first promised in 2022, a year ago. It was brought up again this year, and when asked what is

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happening with the promised Fredericton clinic, the Minister of Health said: We are working on it. We have a spot in Brookside. It is going to come in a few months.

We hear today that it is not coming in 2023. It is not coming in 2024, as the people on the Northside expected. We now hear that it is coming in 2025. You are thinking about the future by pushing everything out. What is taking so long? Where is the care about the crisis?

(Interjections.)

Ms. Holt (Bathurst East—Nepisiguit—Saint-Isidore, Leader of the Official Opposition, L): Oh, take it easy minister. I am going to go.

We have a crisis in primary care that is not being addressed with urgency nor for an eye for the future. Minister, will you please explain why the Northside clinic that was going to happen in 2024 is now not going to happen until 2025?

Hon. Mr. Fitch (Riverview, Minister of Health, PC): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am sorry for jumping the gun, but there were a few things that the Leader of the Opposition forgot to mention. She forgot to mention that there were 74 000 people waiting for a doctor here in New Brunswick. Today, there are only 16 000 people on that list.

(Interjections.)

Hon. Mr. Fitch (Riverview, Minister of Health, PC): Yes. Yes.

Also, Mr. Speaker, the member across the way forgot to mention that we now have 11 newly opened Health Link clinics here in the province, and they are providing care for people who need help.

Mr. Speaker, there is not only that. We have allowed pharmacists to expand their scope of practice so that they can now treat a number of the ailments that people have on a day-to-day basis. You know how many pharmacists there are across the province, so this is improving the access to care substantially. The member across the way fails to—

Mr. Speaker (Hon. Bill Oliver): Thank you, minister.

Ms. Holt (Bathurst East—Nepisiguit—Saint-Isidore, Leader of the Official Opposition, L): Mr. Speaker, I would ask that the member opposite show some care for the people of Fredericton's Northside who have been promised a clinic, who have been waiting for a year, and who were given hope that they might only have to wait another few months, but who now have learned that they are going to have to wait another year. What is delaying the Fredericton clinic?

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Hon. Mr. Fitch (Riverview, Minister of Health, PC): Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The member across the way forgot to mention that we just cut the ribbon on an urgent care clinic in the Brookside Mall on the Northside. The opposition was saying: Oh, it is an empty clinic. We went over there. I went with the local MLA to the opening, and by noon, 60 people had been addressed. Their urgent needs had been addressed. That is on the Northside, in the same location that the collaborative clinic is going to open in early 2025. We continue to recruit doctors. We continue to recruit nurses. We continue to have specialists, such as the physician assistants up in the Fredericton hospital that were made permanent.

Anyway, the member opposite just fails to see the care that is being given to the people. She is fixated on trying to make a negative statement out of the positive things we have done.

EDUCATION

Ms. Holt (Bathurst East—Nepisiguit—Saint-Isidore, Leader of the Official Opposition, L): Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It is clear that this government does not want to take accountability for promises it has made that it has not delivered on. Meanwhile, the people of New Brunswick hang in the balance waiting for primary care.

The other people who are hanging in the balance and are waiting to see some care from this government are teachers. It has been made exceptionally clear to the teachers of New Brunswick that this government does not care about them. We have asked to see a retention plan, but nothing is coming. Teachers have asked for more resources, but we do not see an increase there. Kids are lacking school psychologists, but we see no progress on this file because the government is distracted by things that are not a priority to New Brunswick parents.

I appreciate that the member opposite has been filling in and answering questions about education. I am hoping that she can answer questions specifically about the childcare agreement. This House agreed that the government would go and negotiate with Ottawa by December 1. Now we are at the 12th. We are waiting. Can the minister who is standing in for the Minister of Education tell us the status of the negotiations with Ottawa—

Mr. Speaker (Hon. Bill Oliver): Thank you.

Hon. Ms. Johnson (Carleton-Victoria, Minister of Agriculture, Aquaculture and Fisheries, PC): I do not believe that we refer to each other as fill-ins, but that is all right. We will move along. There was a lot to unpack in that because we went from psychologists to early childcare. I have a whole bunch of things that . . . I am going to start with the psychologist part. The recruitment and retention of school psychologists are challenges. However, other professionals had the ability all along to help out with the mental health of our students. For example, school counselors in the Anglophone sector are focused on the foundations of providing responsive, productive, and proactive mental health care, social and emotional

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health care, and academic and life planning for students. We also ensure that students have access to social workers.

Is there an increased need for support services? Yes. Can we use more bodies to deal with the growing need? Yes. Are we working day in and day out to address those needs? Yes. The bottom line is that psychologists are primarily used as diagnosticians to evaluate the challenges, and in the interim, the amazing support staff that we have in place will continue to—

Mr. Speaker (Hon. Bill Oliver): Thank you, minister.

Ms. Holt (Bathurst East—Nepisiguit—Saint-Isidore, Leader of the Official Opposition, L): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Parents want to see a government that cares about education. Teachers want to know that their government cares about education. When we see the test results that are coming out of New Brunswick's schools, parents and teachers are concerned. Our team cares deeply about the literacy and numeracy results of New Brunswick students because that is critical to New Brunswick's future. Can the minister tell us what the government is doing to specifically address the terrible results, the 23% drop, that New Brunswick students have seen in their numeracy scores?

Hon. Ms. Johnson (Carleton-Victoria, Minister of Agriculture, Aquaculture and Fisheries, PC): Well, to allude that we do not care about the children of our province is very disappointing, and frankly, I object to it. The decline seen in the 2022 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) result is not unique to New Brunswick or Canada and has been observed in most other participating countries.

The decline in the 2022 PISA assessment result is not unique to New Brunswick or Canada. It has been observed in most other participating countries. After having my son and being out of the school system, I was invited to come to Fredericton for a PISA evaluation at that time, which was 25 years ago. I came fresh out of school, and I just had a new baby. I wanted to see what was going on.

At that time, we were ranked among the lowest. Alberta was being applauded as being one of the best places in the country and in the world. That province was recognized globally for its test evaluations. Do you know what the difference was between Alberta and New Brunswick at that time? Those teachers were working with a curriculum that they had a handle on for 15 to 20 years. As we talked about in this House a long time ago, we had 35 changes made to our curriculum in 33 years.

Mr. Speaker (Hon. Bill Oliver): Thank you, minister.

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[Translation]

HOMELESSNESS

Mr. Gauvin (Shediac Bay-Dieppe, L): Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Again, I rise to ask about a topic that nobody likes to address, no matter which side of the House we sit on.

With everything that has happened this week with regard to homelessness, the news is never good, especially with Christmas approaching, and, clearly, some people are luckier than others in society.

So, I would like to ask the minister this: Given that there are growing needs everywhere in the province, especially in the southeastern part of the province and specifically in Moncton, can she tell us what strategy will be implemented right now to address the homelessness problem there during the cold weather period that is coming? Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

[Original]

Hon. Ms. Green (Fredericton North, Minister of Social Development; Minister responsible for the Economic and Social Inclusion Corporation; Minister responsible for the New Brunswick Housing Corporation, PC): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do not really understand. I assume that the member opposite is asking me a question about homelessness, but I am not sure.

I am going to answer a question about homelessness in Moncton. In Moncton, the city has clearly been struggling with issues related to homelessness for a number of years. Last year, the minister responsible went in and moved mountains to make some changes to begin addressing the homeless situation in Moncton. The minister did a fabulous job.

This year, we are building on that success from last year. We have permanent shelters and beds in the permanent shelters. We have extra out-of-the-cold beds that we can put in place, if required, on cold nights. We also have our homelessness hub that has recently opened. It is a 24-7 hub where homeless people can go in, get services, get cleaned up, take a shower, do some laundry, and get services. They can get mental health help. They can work with counselors, and we can begin building relationships with them in the Moncton area.

Mr. Speaker (Hon. Bill Oliver): Thank you.

Mr. Gauvin (Shediac Bay-Dieppe, L): Well, you answered the question. It was about the strategy that you had, so you answered the question.

My next question is: Did you speak or engage with stakeholders in the southeastern region before taking those measures? Can you tell us—as much as you can, and I know that this is

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a difficult answer to give—how many people you think that you will be able to accommodate in Moncton so that as few people as possible spend their nights outside? Thank you very much.

Hon. Ms. Green (Fredericton North, Minister of Social Development; Minister responsible for the Economic and Social Inclusion Corporation; Minister responsible for the New Brunswick Housing Corporation, PC): Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. We absolutely engaged with the community. The engagement started not this year but last year. It was maybe even the year before when the engagement began. In fact, we had a meeting, I think that it was in September or early October, when we brought all the stakeholders together to begin discussing the homeless hub that we were standing up in December. We discussed what services needed to be provided there and what the timing of the hub needed to be so that we could make it a made-in-Moncton solution.

I believe that you were asking about the number of beds. In Moncton, our permanent shelter capacity is 174, but we can increase that by 120 at a moment's notice. Those are our out-of-the-cold extra beds. That is an extra 120 beds. Our total capacity in Moncton is 294 beds on any one night.

I have to say, Mr. Speaker, that the city is on board, the partners are on board, and they are all working together. They are making changes and shifting as fast as they possibly can. If something changes in Moncton—

Mr. Speaker (Hon. Bill Oliver): Thank you, minister.

[Translation]

Mr. Gauvin (Shediac Bay-Dieppe, L): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the minister for her answer. Now, if I am not mistaken, there are not many homeless shelters in Moncton that offer bilingual services—there is one, I believe. Can the minister tell us whether the House of Nazareth is part of the government's short-, medium-, and long-term plans? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[Original]

Hon. Ms. Green (Fredericton North, Minister of Social Development; Minister responsible for the Economic and Social Inclusion Corporation; Minister responsible for the New Brunswick Housing Corporation, PC): Mr. Speaker, there are a number of stakeholders in Moncton. I can tell you that in our homeless hub meeting that we had earlier this fall, it was certainly a bilingual meeting. We were using both languages in that meeting.

All the service providers are providing a wonderful service to the homeless population. I want to talk specifically about the John Howard Society, which has been the service provider at the Housing Hub. Its people have done a wonderful job. They have been out and

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about in the community, meeting with the homeowners and the businesses around the homeless hub. They have been building support in the community to assist the individuals who are homeless, knowing that the service that they provide there is 24-7.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think that Moncton is doing such an awesome job. Every community could look to see what Moncton is doing because it is a step above the rest right now. It is about a year ahead. We are working with the other communities. Everybody is stepping up.

[Translation]

HEALTH CARE

Mr. D'Amours (Edmundston-Madawaska Centre, L): Mr. Speaker, many people in the Madawaska region do not have a family doctor and have been waiting too long to get one. We all know that annual checkups cannot be done with the virtual model the government is advocating. For thousands of people, the only option is to go to the emergency room, which does not make any sense. Checkups are not done in the emergency room anyway, Mr. Speaker. When will the Minister of Health do the right thing—ultimately, the only thing to do—by ensuring that hiring family doctors is a priority for his government, and when will we see concrete results in the Madawaska region?

[Original]

Hon. Mr. Fitch (Riverview, Minister of Health, PC): Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity to talk about this and some of the concrete issues that we are taking care of directly, head-on. When it comes to recruiting doctors, we have seen an increase in doctors this year. I am going from memory here, but I think that we have hired over 118, for a net increase of almost 45. We have incentives for some of those doctors to practice in some of the remote areas of New Brunswick, in rural areas. That, again, is something that we can look to as a concrete example of what we are doing to make sure that primary care is available for folks.

We have also given scholarships to some of the medical students here in New Brunswick, with a return-of-service commitment for those. We have also increased the number of seats for people studying medicine here in New Brunswick, and we have also increased the number of residency seats here in New Brunswick. That is going to lead to more doctors providing more care, more primary care, here in New Brunswick.

[Translation]

Mr. D'Amours (Edmundston-Madawaska Centre, L): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Rural regions in New Brunswick also deserve doctors, Mr. Speaker. The Minister of Health should perhaps, at some point, make a distinction between doctors in urban areas and doctors in rural areas.

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Our system has to move forward faster, Mr. Speaker. The health and lives of our people depend on it. The Edmundston region has been needing an integrated health model to be implemented for months. These delays are not acceptable when people need health care. Will the minister guarantee that the integrated clinic will be implemented by January 1, 2024, at the latest? If the minister cannot guarantee that the clinic will be open by January 1, 2024, when exactly will the integrated clinic be open, operational, and able to provide primary care to thousands of people without a family doctor in the Madawaska region?

[Original]

Hon. Mr. Fitch (Riverview, Minister of Health, PC): Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I know that Vitalité has been working with a number of doctors up in the Edmundston region, and I know that I have talked to a number of doctors up there who are working together to come up with that collaborative clinic model. For some of the specific timelines, I will defer to Vitalité.

Again, when we talk about the successes that we have had here in New Brunswick with respect to recruitment, and when you look at whichever category it is, whether it is doctors, LPNs, or RNs . . . I met with a number of the people who are moving here to New Brunswick from the Philippines. They are on the floor, working, right now. I am going to meet with another group at the Shannex complex this afternoon. They are providing care and service in order to open beds in long-term care. This will get folks out of the hospitals.

To the specific clinic that the member opposite is talking about, again, that is ongoing. It is continuing to evolve.

NATURAL GAS

Mr. Legacy (Bathurst West-Beresford, L): Mr. Speaker, last week, the Minister of Natural Resources and Energy Development got a chance to go across the pond to the beautiful city of Paris. I would imagine that, between indulging in baguettes, croissants, and millefeuilles, he quietly found some time to sign an MOU with the Czech Republic on nothing other than the development of natural gas.

I wonder if the minister could tell us what exact understanding we have with the Czech Republic on this subject.

Hon. Mr. Holland (Albert, Minister of Natural Resources and Energy Development, PC): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise and answer a question. I will be discussing the trip to Paris in a minister's statement a little bit later.

I would like to talk a little bit about the opposition party's record as it relates to natural gas and some of the confusion, as it stands as a clear story. We talk a lot about natural gas. We have been talking about it consistently as a message since 2018, and then we get criticized

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about this from the opposition's perspective. That is confusing to me, because, in August of 2014, the Leader of the Opposition, in her former role in the Business Council, said that uncertainty would slow business preparedness. Then, a month later, when her mentor, Brian Gallant, was assuming office, she said that we could go slowly but that we must move forward with the development of natural gas. I would like to know a little more about the perspective that the opposition has.

Our position has been clear. We are committed to the—

Mr. Speaker (Hon. Bill Oliver): Thank you, minister.

Mr. Legacy (Bathurst West-Beresford, L): Speaking of clear positions, I wonder how the Czechs reacted when the minister brought up the subject of the moratorium, when the minister told them that he was going to sign this memorandum of understanding on this development with absolutely no mandate from the people who elected him to do this development. I wonder how the Czechs reacted to that and how he broached this subject on the moratorium and the fact that this government has no mandate to get this done.

Hon. Mr. Holland (Albert, Minister of Natural Resources and Energy Development, PC): Mr. Speaker, to the member opposite, again, the confusion is more on the opposition side, where the Leader of the Opposition does not know where her position is. Or maybe she knows where it is now but did not know where it was then. But it was clear in the past, in a statement in September 2014, when she said: Although we must go cautiously, we must develop our natural resources here in the province of New Brunswick. I guess the question could be: What changed over there?

I mean, over the last week, we saw the opposition discussing Bill 17, on which the same mentor who brought in the Leader of the Opposition today said that the first thing he was going to do was to reverse the shared-risk pensions. None of that happened. I mean, what we have seen consistently is cross-threading, confused messaging, and flip-flopping on issues. Well, flip-flops are great for a day at the beach, but there is no place for them on the sixth floor of Chancery.

Mr. Legacy (Bathurst West-Beresford, L): Mr. Speaker, I had a chance to talk to a stakeholder about natural gas earlier this week. Sometimes, you get tidbits of information that are always interesting. He told me that, right now, one of the things about natural gas in Canada is the solid supply that we have. Actually, he said: We have over 200 years of supply available in this country. Yet the Premier and this minister would have us believe that we are going to save the world by developing this resource that nobody in this province wants to touch. I wonder, based on this, again, in talking about the past, past consequences, and past technologies: Can the minister finally tell his Premier that it is not 2010 anymore and to get on with it already?

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Hon. Mr. Holland (Albert, Minister of Natural Resources and Energy Development, PC): Mr. Speaker, the member opposite might be aware or might not be aware of this, but we are standing on larger reserves of natural gas than the Marcellus Shale field in Pennsylvania. And profiting from a resource that we have in a responsible fashion is something that we have campaigned on since 2018, through two election cycles. Now, it is important to realize that the province of New Brunswick does not extract natural gas. But the province of New Brunswick has to make sure that the message is clear, and the Leader of the Opposition should know from her experience with the Business Council that it is a province's responsibility to say: In a responsible, reasonable fashion, we are open for business.

What I hear from the other side is that there is no opportunity even to have a discussion about that. We have regulations in place. Actually, we have the moratorium mechanism in place so that in the event that proponents come forward, we can move forward with discussions and the development of this resource. If you are going to shut it off, then there is no opportunity for growth, and that is not—

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

MENTAL HEALTH

Ms. Mitton (Memramcook-Tantramar, G): Mr. Speaker, the needs of New Brunswickers who are struggling with mental illness and substance use disorder are not being met. I have worked to help people access addictions treatment, and I have seen the roadblocks that they keep hitting.

People are waiting up to six months for rehab treatment in this province. In committee earlier this fall, we learned from the Department of Health that, as of January 2023, 140 people were waiting for outpatient treatment for substance use, while another 300 were waiting for inpatient treatment. This is in addition to the 221 people waiting for detox beds.

Earlier this week, the Minister of Public Safety told us that the Minister responsible for Addictions and Mental Health Services is working on a 50-bed treatment centre. So, Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister responsible for Addictions and Mental Health Services. When will we see these desperately needed beds? When will they be ready? And will these beds be in Grand Bay? If not, where?

Hon. S. Wilson (Moncton Southwest, Minister responsible for Women's Equality; Minister responsible for Addictions and Mental Health Services, PC): Well, thank you for that question, through the chair to the member opposite. Yes, there is a lot of work to do, and she knows that we have promised a 50-bed facility. That is where the need is. We have already done a lot of work. There had been a lot of work done even before I took this position. There was the strategy and action plan that was developed in February 2021—the Inter-Departmental Addiction and Mental Health Action Plan. A lot of those initiatives that

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were set out to be done have been completed. There is the Provincial Health Plan, *Stabilizing Health Care*.

So, in terms of some of the things that we have been doing, 26.5 FTEs have now been added to the Child and Youth team to deliver this service. The wait list for the Child and Youth team services has been reduced by more than 60%. The mental health counseling one-at-a-time therapy for youth is being offered, at a minimum wait of five days. The educator sector has been trained to provide one-at-a-time therapy, and between September—

Mr. Speaker (Hon. Bill Oliver): Thank you, minister.

Ms. Mitton (Memramcook-Tantramar, G): Well, Mr. Speaker, that did not answer my question at all. I want to know when and where. We must ensure access to high-quality, public treatment services for addictions.

I am also concerned that there is no regulation of the private rehab centres. While some may follow best practices, hire qualified professionals, and provide appropriate support, they are not required to do so. Therefore, there is no consistency in the quality at different rehab centres. I have heard stories of some rehab centres in the province that raise alarms for me. Some require you to participate in a certain religion. Others do not have qualified workers or lack good programming. It is unacceptable that some New Brunswickers are made to pay or receive lower quality treatment. The status quo cannot continue. In addition to urgently creating more public beds, we need to set standards for privately run rehab centres. To protect the health and safety of New Brunswickers, will the Minister responsible for Addictions and Mental Health Services bring in legislation to regulate addictions treatment centres that are not in the public sector?

Hon. S. Wilson (Moncton Southwest, Minister responsible for Women's Equality; Minister responsible for Addictions and Mental Health Services, PC): The member opposite talks about what is acceptable. Everything that we try to do is unacceptable. I will tell you what is unacceptable. The other day, when I made a statement with regard to the nation's mourning the 1989 massacre of 14 women and she got up and got political about it, that was unacceptable.

I am telling you now that there is a lot of good work being done. We have a lot of people that have stepped up to the plate to deal with mental illnesses, to deal with people on the street. There are a number—a number—who have done exceptional work to help them, and they have been successful. So, for her to complain about what is not getting done . . . There are regulations for different facilities. They follow those regulations, and they are helping people. There is a lot of good work being done, but she would continue to be negative about everything that we are trying to do and condemn some of the good work that is being done. That is unacceptable too, Mr. Speaker.

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ROADS

Mr. Bourque (Kent South, L): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There has been good news in Kent County, actually, because it has been announced and it has been in the media that some Mennonites will be establishing in Kent County, in Kent North, the riding of my colleague, in the Acadieville area. But what is less known is that they were also looking in my area, in the middle of the riding. They were also heavily considering that area because it has very good arable land, very good agricultural land. The problem is that that part of the riding is not chipsealed. It has dirt roads, whereas the Acadieville area was chipsealed. So, my question to the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure is this: In order to have more Mennonite families establishing in my area, would the minister consider having those roads chipsealed? Thank you so much.

Hon. Mr. Ames (Carleton-York, Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure, PC): Thank you very much for the question. Actually, my executive assistant traveled over and took a look at the property, as did the executive assistant of the Minister of Agriculture.

My question was: How many horses and buggies travel on chipseal? I could not get an answer. So, again, we have The Road Ahead, a three-year plan, and we are certainly taking a look at all the necessary roads that need to be looked after. We do the work, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Bourque (Kent South, L): Wow, okay. Well, that was a fantastic answer. Let me see if I can get an even more fantastic answer. It is known that when a Mennonite community establishes, each family brings an estimated \$350 000 in investments in a home, a barn, and a work shed. They do their own education. They have a specific agreement when it comes to health care. They are bringing a lot, and they are not asking for much in return. What they do ask for is a decent road. Yes, horse and buggy . . . There are certain times of the year when a dirt road just does not cut it. Trust me. I get the calls, whether they are about cars or horses and buggies.

My question is this: With the great investment that they will bring so that we will finally see proper agriculture coming back to Kent County, which has been lost for far too long, will the minister please be more serious and have those roads chipsealed? Thank you.

Hon. Ms. Johnson (Carleton-Victoria, Minister of Agriculture, Aquaculture and Fisheries, PC): The microphone is my friend. Mr. Speaker, I want to explain to the member for Kent North that this is a file that I have been working on for three years. The simple fact is that this is wonderful, arable land, and we want to get it back into production—back into agriculture. We have met with people who are the developers of that land. The fact of the matter is that there are not a lot of residences on this road. They are not busy, traveled roads, and we cannot put infrastructure in place unless we are guaranteed that there are going to be residences and that there will be higher traffic on those roads. Once that has been established, then we are going to entertain upgrading those roads and making them

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better for agricultural purposes and for the new residents coming. But you cannot put the cart before the horse.

Mr. Speaker (Hon. Bill Oliver): Question period is over.