

# Legislative Assembly of New Brunswick

## Oral Questions



**June 6, 2024**

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### GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS

**Ms. Holt** (Bathurst East—Nepisiguit—Saint-Isidore, Leader of the Official Opposition, L): Mr. Speaker, over the past 48 hours, I've received a bunch of questions from New Brunswickers who are trying to make sense of the Auditor General's report and the government's reaction to it. A lot of money has gone unaccounted for, without the kinds of checks and balances that many New Brunswickers use for their own businesses and their own work.

There's been a lot of talk about Vitalité, with the Premier and the minister deflecting blame and responsibility onto the health authorities. However, I'd like to start with the very first contract signed with Canadian Health Labs (CHL), back in February 2022 with the Department of Social Development, by the current Minister of Health. I'd like to know why no vendor-selection process or criteria were in place for this contract award.

Why did we award it to a vendor with rates that were 3.6 times higher than the others?

**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. I answered a lot of questions about this at main estimates. I can reiterate some of the information that I provided there.

At the time, at Social Development, we had 400 positive COVID-19 test results in our long-term care system. We were in crisis at Social Development, and taking care of our seniors and our most vulnerable was our highest priority. Now, Mr. Speaker, the team met with several providers of travel nursing services. They discussed the services that they were able to provide and whether they would be able to come in and help us with this situation. After understanding what the different service providers could do for us, the team selected two for contracts. Those contracts totalled approximately \$2.9 million and lasted very few months. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Ms. Holt** (Bathurst East—Nepisiguit—Saint-Isidore, Leader of the Official Opposition, L): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I appreciate the Minister of Social Development answering for her colleague who was responsible at the time. It is the department that she oversees now.

The Auditor General confirmed that these contracts were rushed, that they weren't reviewed, and that they weren't awarded competitively. The contracts also didn't match with the needs of the long-term care facilities around the province. If we look at those 400 COVID-19 cases that the minister is talking about, we see that this doesn't match with how the travel nurses were assigned. The Auditor General talked about the lack of data and the lack of any tracking by Social Development to determine the needs in the long-term care system. He referenced verbal conversations as the way that travel nurses were assigned.

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Then we saw that Social Development bought and paid for travel nurse services that it didn't need or use.

Can the minister tell us how the department determined which travel nurses were sent to which facilities? For example, why were no resources sent to Villa Providence while \$200 000 worth of services were sent to the Kenneth E. Spencer Memorial Home and Carleton Manor?

**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 worked with the two service providers. We asked them what services they could provide to us. We shared the needs that we had and then worked collaboratively with them on where the services would be deployed.

Mr. Speaker, we had 400 positive COVID-19 cases within the long-term care system. It was important that we moved quickly and protected our seniors and most vulnerable New Brunswickers who were in care. We worked collaboratively with the two companies to ensure that the nursing services were provided where they were needed the most.

Mr. Speaker, I've answered this question. Again, we appreciate the work that the Auditor General has done for us. Information was provided to us on the areas where we need to make improvements, and we will do that. That's the role of the Auditor General, and it's important for us to listen to the recommendations and make—

**Ms. Holt** (Bathurst East—Nepisiguit—Saint-Isidore, Leader of the Official Opposition, L): Mr. Speaker, the Department of Social Development is responsible for keeping some of New Brunswick's most vulnerable people safe. In this case, we're talking about our loved ones who are in long-term care homes across the province. That's why it was really disturbing to see that the department did not require vulnerable sector checks, criminal record checks, or their Social Development checks to be completed by the contractors under these contracts. The department moved so fast that it let all due diligence go out the window. How can you explain the lack of checks for people serving the province's seniors and residents in our care homes?

**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. There were 400 positive cases. We were in a crisis situation at Social Development, and we immediately made moves to protect our most vulnerable in New Brunswick. I don't make an apology for that. It was important to do so in order to protect our seniors and protect our vulnerable people.

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Now, do we have things to learn from how those contracts were put in place and the checks around those contracts? Absolutely, Mr. Speaker. That's why we invited the Auditor General in to review the contracts, to review how they were administered, and to give us lessons learned so that we can improve what we do in the future. We're making those changes now. Even though we haven't fully reviewed the report, those changes are occurring now. I do thank the member opposite for bringing this to our attention and talking about it—

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

**Ms. Holt** (Bathurst East—Nepisiguit—Saint-Isidore, Leader of the Official Opposition, L): So, can the current minister or the minister who was in place at the time confirm that they signed off on waiving the need for vulnerable sector checks for these workers?

**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. I will take what was signed on the contracts under advisement since I was not the signatory on those. I will follow up with that tomorrow, I guess. I thank you very much for the question.

Mr. Speaker, the team did the very best that it could to protect the most vulnerable in New Brunswick. These individuals could not be exposed to COVID-19. We had to protect the people in our special care homes and in our nursing homes.

In Social Development, our contracts were very short-term. They filled a very immediate need, and then the contracts were done. We took care of the seniors and the most vulnerable in our system in the best way that we could. I am pleased that the team rallied and found a way to fill these vacancies—400 vacancies, Mr. Speaker—all at once. It was important to protect New Brunswickers. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

**Ms. Holt** (Bathurst East—Nepisiguit—Saint-Isidore, Leader of the Official Opposition, L): Mr. Speaker, it seems as though the minister got lucky because we're standing here today without having experienced an incident that could have gone very badly. Six different employees of one of the contractors were not allowed to deliver services because they couldn't pass vulnerable background checks. So, today, we are thinking that we were lucky that the people we brought in to work with our most vulnerable people didn't create situations that could have been a lot worse.

[*Translation*]

In this case, the government of New Brunswick hired CHL without doing a legal review, even though the minister says she is working closely with the Attorney General. This contract didn't meet standards or conform to any kind of model. In addition, it didn't have a deadline or limit on spending.

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[Original]

The contract didn't line up with GNB spending, and we see what happened. The domino was tipped, and then it fell all across the rest of the health care system. Why was there no legal review done? In the urgency of all of this, we left the door wide open to risk.

**Hon. Mr. Flemming, K.C.** (Rothesay, Minister of Justice, Attorney General, PC): As I pointed out yesterday, the Auditor General found that contracts signed by Social Development and Vitalité were not submitted to the Office of Attorney General for review. That is correct, so I have nothing more to say about those.

It is interesting, though. I said that I would take this under review and look further, which I have done. The Auditor General found that some Horizon contracts had been reviewed by the Office of the Attorney General. This was an initial surprise to me because, as I said yesterday, as a general rule, the Attorney General's Office supplies legal services to government departments and not Crown corporations. I did find an exception to that, however. The labour and employment group does provide advice and representation on labour and employment law because the regional health authority employees are actually employees of Treasury Board. In that regard, these contracts were submitted to the Office of the Attorney General and reviewed by a labour lawyer who provided advice limited to employment and labour law—

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

[Translation]

### GOVERNMENT SPENDING

**Mr. D'Amours** (Edmundston-Madawaska Centre, L): Mr. Speaker, the Premier keeps telling anyone who will listen that he is an extraordinarily good manager—yes, Mr. Speaker, extraordinarily—even though he has no idea what is going on with contracts worth \$173 million. That's nothing new, whether it's thousands or hundreds of millions of dollars; to heck with checks and balances.

We have the Minister of Tourism, Heritage and Culture and her deputy minister wandering around Europe and visiting the Château de Versailles and Windsor Castle. This is my question, Mr. Speaker: Did the minister and deputy minister stand in front of Windsor Castle and Versailles handing out brochures to people visiting these places and telling them to come to New Brunswick?

How can the Premier accept such spending when the majority of New Brunswickers can only dream of visiting these sites? Mr. Speaker, the expenses incurred by the Minister of Tourism, Heritage and Culture and her deputy minister were paid by New Brunswick taxpayers. Where is the accountability here? Is the Premier going to take responsibility for these actions at the end of the day, because he's not even able to...

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[Original]

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

**Hon. Mr. Higgs** (Quispamsis, Premier, Minister responsible for Intergovernmental Affairs, PC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question. I know, as it has been, the Minister of Tourism certainly has to travel around in order to promote our province. We've seen that all over the province. Like never before, we've seen tourists coming here, spending money here, and staying here. We're now the drive-to province, not the drive-through province.

I know that a lot of ground was covered in terms of meetings and looking at other facilities to see what the best practices are and where we can do better. I think that is what is required everywhere, and we've seen that in other projects here. We've seen that when we've had world events. All of a sudden, that leads to more events, more people interested, and more people coming. We're kind of in a role where people are asking this: What is going on in New Brunswick?

I think that this trip to Paris might have been the icing on the cake. This is the first time that the Minister of Tourism has travelled abroad, gone to different countries, gone to different places, and it is also the first time that the president of that country comes to New Brunswick. Mr. Speaker, that's pretty impressive.

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

[Translation]

**Mr. D'Amours** (Edmundston-Madawaska Centre, L): Mr. Speaker, there was a trade mission to North Carolina and another one to Tennessee. Hotel rooms were reserved, and they cost \$715 and \$816. There were excursions and a vehicle rental that cost \$1 291. The government is calling this a trade mission and saying it is in keeping with best practices.

How is attending the Banff film festival, for \$8 700, explained? Three days at Larry's Gulch Lodge, including food, cost thousands of dollars. It takes nerve, Mr. Speaker, to ask for reimbursement for meals for those three days. These meals at Larry's Gulch Lodge were already paid for, but a claim was made anyway. Mr. Speaker, that's called double-dipping. It has come to the point that debt-planning meetings must be held to pay for the expenses.

The deputy minister is responsible for running and managing the department, and her spending is out of control. There's no limit on the spending. When the Premier hired his friend, Mr. Speaker, did he give her a blank cheque to travel all over the world at taxpayers' expense?

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[Original]

**Hon. Mr. Higgs** (Quispamsis, Premier, Minister responsible for Intergovernmental Affairs, PC): Mr. Speaker, it's kind of interesting how the Leader of the Opposition can nitpick on every item. Yes, you can look at some of the expenses and say, you know: Is that right? Did it follow the protocol? We've talked about this before. We're looking at the protocol. Should it be changed? An important part is that, yes, it may have followed the protocol, but maybe that needs to be changed. We're looking at that, and we said that weeks ago.

But I think it's important to go back to the reality of what's happening in our province. And I know that it's totally missed... Maybe it is not missed, but the opposition just don't want to talk about it. We've had record attendance now with the tourism strategy. If you look across the province at the events that are happening everywhere, the accommodations filling up in record time, the provincial parks filling up in record time, and now a PGA tournament here in New Brunswick for the first time, I mean, you see a lot of firsts. For the first time, tourism is being treated as an economic booster for our province, and it is really, really exciting as people come and witness our province—

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

**Mr. McKee** (Moncton Centre, L): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Much has been made of this government's inappropriate use of taxpayer funds, and none has been worse than allowing exorbitant contracts to fall through the cracks. We know that the Minister of Tourism and her deputy have made exorbitant claims for touring Europe and taking other trips, but the Premier doesn't want to answer questions about that today.

I'll ask him anyway about a trip that he and his wife hosted at Larry's Gulch with a number of health care executives. They hosted political staffers D'Astous, Price, and Carlin, the Minister of Health, his EA, the minister responsible for mental health, the Clerk of the Executive Council, Vitalité board chair Soucy, consultant Gérald Richard, and CEOs Desrosiers and Melanson, along with some Horizon board members. While the government is wasting hundreds of millions of dollars on bad contracts, while hundreds of thousands of people are waiting without a family doctor, and while a minister is touring Europe and taking other trips, what was the purpose of this lavish trip to Larry's Gulch with health care executives?

**Hon. Mr. Higgs** (Quispamsis, Premier, Minister responsible for Intergovernmental Affairs, PC): Oh, Mr. Speaker, wouldn't you think the Liberals would get a new script? Here they go: Oh, election time—tick, tick, tick, tick. Here are the boxes for things that we are going to roll out once again. There is nothing new on that side of the House. Nothing is new except a province that is excelling like never before, but we can't talk about that, Mr. Speaker.

They talk about a meeting I had with the health executives as we planned a health strategy for the province, one in which the health networks work together. I would like to hear the



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opposition's take on that, Mr. Speaker, and know whether they think that the two health authorities should work together. Because in this meeting, they were together, and they were talking about how good we could be in complementing each other. That is where we had a major discussion with the leaders in our health care system.

And yes, my wife did accompany me to that event. She stayed in the same place I did. Do you know what? She sacrifices a lot, and I'm glad to be able to take her. When I travel around this country, I pay for her expenses, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. McKee** (Moncton Centre, L): Mr. Speaker, the cost is \$4 200 for two people for a two-day fishing excursion. That's close to \$35 000. You add in a security detail and travel expenses, and we're looking at \$40 000. Surely, to have a meeting to discuss health care strategy, there would be a boardroom available in a government-owned building right here in Fredericton. In the face of the health crisis, with New Brunswickers begging for access to health care, they take a retreat to the tune of almost \$40 000. Is this a responsible use of taxpayers' funds?

**Hon. Mr. Higgs** (Quispamsis, Premier, Minister responsible for Intergovernmental Affairs, PC): Mr. Speaker, I know the member opposite may not be accustomed to this sort of process, but a lot of bonds are made in social settings, where you actually have an opportunity to speak in a conversational style about the challenges facing the province, in health care or in any aspect. Over my career, there were lots of social events in order to have a meaningful conversation, establish relationships, and build a future. In this case, it's a bigger issue—building a future for health care in our province. Good discussions were held there. There were really solid discussions, and a path was laid out for the future. That was how the boards were going to work together.

There are still challenges, I must admit. We saw that in this recent AG report. We want to have all the cards on the table, both health authorities, and then we can work to get better. I think there is a real opportunity to do that, and that's why these discussions happen. This is always a football for any party to talk about.

But one thing I'd like to clarify: My wife did not fish, Mr. Speaker.

## SCHOOL BUSES

**Mr. C. Chiasson** (Victoria-La Vallée, L): Mr. Speaker, a school bus is a school bus is a school bus until it becomes unsafe to transport children. Then it becomes a potential nightmare or tragedy. Every school day in New Brunswick, some 84 000 children take the bus to school, and parents put their children on buses believing it to be safe to do so. To find out that this might not be the case is more than concerning; it is alarming.

There are 63 buses that are past due for inspection. Some are way over one year past. They're supposed to be inspected every six months. There are 35 instances of faulty

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braking systems and 20 instances of emergency exits not functioning properly. In case of emergency, how would those children escape the school bus? A hole in the floor? These are not little issues. Can the minister please tell me when he became aware of this situation and what steps his department is taking to address it?

**Hon. Mr. Hogan** (Carleton, Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development, PC): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the member opposite for the question. This thing about a school bus is a school bus is a school bus until it isn't—I don't understand.

I thank the Auditor General for bringing forth what he brought forth because there were a lot of learnings for us. When we're talking about maintenance and care for school buses and about the transportation of children, they are extremely important issues. We work with the school districts that hire the drivers and ensure that the buses are on schedule to go to DTI for inspections. Clearly, after the Auditor General's report, we have a lot of work to do. We're looking into it now. We didn't wait. We have already started trying to find out where the issue was, and we're going to fix it.

While I'm on my feet, I'd really like to know why the Leader of the Opposition, when she was in Woodstock just a little over one week ago, didn't defend teachers when they were called homophobic.

**Mr. C. Chiasson** (Victoria-La Vallée, L): I suppose he still wants to know what those two schools are as well.

Mr. Speaker, the minister didn't understand the question, because it wasn't for him. There are parallels that can be drawn between this issue and the nursing issue. What it boils down to is recruitment and retention. There are too many buses and not enough people to fix them, so we end up sending vehicles to private shops and paying them four times the hourly rate of our own mechanics.

The Department of Transportation and Infrastructure pays our truck and trailer mechanics just shy of \$30 per hour to work in less-than-ideal conditions, when they can easily get upward of \$40 per hour in the private sector. But we have no problem paying a private shop \$115 or more per hour. I've heard that one DTI shop has only one mechanic to look after 52 school buses. No wonder we're having a hard time retaining them. What steps will the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure take to ensure we have adequate human resources in all DTI shops to maintain our vehicles to at least an acceptable standard?

**Hon. Mr. Hogan** (Carleton, Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development, PC): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, that's another important question. We look at the Auditor General's report, and we take it extremely seriously. Safely transporting children back and forth from home to school is of utmost importance.

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I'm not going to make excuses for what the Auditor General found. We recognize what he found and reported, and we're taking steps to make sure that we can find out how these things happened in order to correct them and move forward so they don't happen again. First, we're going to identify what districts we're talking about. We're going to identify why you can't do a six-month inspection list and do that.

Now, I have a few seconds left, but I'm not going to ask about the two schools because I don't think they exist. However, I would like to know what the Leader of the Opposition meant when she was in Ontario. She called—

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

[*Translation*]

### PESTICIDES

**Ms. Mitton** (Memramcook-Tantramar, G): Mr. Speaker, the use of glyphosate and other herbicides continues to have a negative impact on our environment, our biodiversity, and our economy. Successive Liberal and Conservative governments have paid large forest businesses millions of dollars each year to spray glyphosate on our public forests. Who benefits from it, Mr. Speaker? It certainly isn't ordinary New Brunswickers, who pay the bill.

The Minister of Environment and Climate Change is responsible for administering and enforcing the New Brunswick *Pesticides Control Act*. Large forest businesses can only spray glyphosate if the Minister of Environment and Climate Change issues them a permit under this Act. Did the minister sign spraying permits for glyphosate this year, yes or no?

[*Original*]

**Hon. Mr. Holland** (Albert, Minister of Natural Resources and Energy Development; Minister of Indigenous Affairs, PC): Mr. Speaker, thank you very much for the question, to the member opposite. The Department of Environment signs a variety of different permits for pesticides, herbicides, etc. It assigns those permits according to the regulations from the government bodies that have determined that they are acceptable for use in the concentration levels at which they are applied.

To give the member opposite an example of that, when we appeal to the Department of Environment for a permit, we are well within the guidelines. That's why the Department of Environment has the ability to sign off on that. To give you an example, the risk of adverse human health effects is certainly there with the misuse of a herbicide. With the glyphosate situation, that would be about 8.5 kg per hectare of application use. To give the member opposite some context, we apply 1.7 kg of glyphosate per hectare on a once-every-30-year rotation. The Department of Environment is able to do that because it's well within the guidelines associated with the permitting requirement.

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**Ms. Mitton** (Memramcook-Tantramar, G): The Minister of Environment was such an ardent defender of glyphosate that I'm surprised he didn't want to get up today. It seemed as though he worked for Monsanto and not the government of New Brunswick. But I'll take that as a yes.

We have seen time and time again that pesticides are considered safe until they aren't. The government points to other pesticides, but there's another way. Quebec banned spraying glyphosate-based herbicides in 2001 and has successfully managed its forests without the use of herbicides for the past two decades. Its system creates more jobs and is better for the environment.

The Minister of Public Safety was elected in 2018 on a promise to ban glyphosate spraying. It leads me to wonder whether he has abandoned those views in pursuit of a Cabinet post. Is the Minister of Public Safety still opposed to spraying glyphosate on Crown lands, or does he agree with the Environment Minister that glyphosate is environmentally benign?

**Hon. G. Savoie** (Saint John East, Minister of Local Government; Minister of Environment and Climate Change; Minister responsible for La Francophonie, PC): Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. You know, there's a lot to unpack there. The member of the Green Party basically accused me of being in bed with big business. I think that crosses a parliamentary line.

As Minister of Environment, my job is to actually rely on the scientists and the science of herbicides. Glyphosate is approved by Health Canada as one of the most benign and effective herbicides that there is on the market today.

I do have to point out, though, that more glyphosate is used on the food that we eat every single day than in our forests. But all the members of the Green Party want to talk about is this kind of stuff. It's all about a witch hunt. It's all about a bogeyman. It's all about science that they do not agree with. They try to pick out facts and do little things such as this to try to scare people, Mr. Speaker.

At the end of the day, our responsibility is to make sure that the people of New Brunswick are safe. The Minister of Natural Resources talked about how much—

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

## SCHOOL BUSES

**Ms. Holt** (Bathurst East—Nepisiguit—Saint-Isidore, Leader of the Official Opposition, L): Mr. Speaker, keeping kids safe is one of the most important jobs that the provincial government has, and parents want to know that their kids are safe when they send them off to school. This school bus driver shortage is having a huge impact on families, on kids, and on our province's finances. We have drivers being paid a per diem each and every day,

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every week, to travel from the east of the province to the west of the province in order to fill in these vacancies. That is a cost to the taxpayer.

We are missing a strategy to address the critical shortage, and it is creating problems for New Brunswick families. The Auditor General said that it was due to the department having other priorities. Well, we know that it is not a priority on clean air. We know that it is not a priority on literacy. It makes me wonder if the priority was changing French immersion or an obsession with pronouns. How long has the minister known about the school bus driver shortage, and why does the department not have a strategy in place to address it?

**Hon. Mr. Hogan** (Carleton, Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development, PC): Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The districts have a plan to recruit drivers. We don't currently have a shortage of regular day drivers. We have a shortage of replacement drivers. As pointed out in the Auditor General's report, the districts didn't have a target. So, we are going to work with the districts so that they establish a target. I am going to explain this slowly, so the Leader of the Opposition doesn't look confused. The districts are going to establish a target so that they will know when they reach it.

I have a couple of other questions for the leader, and I know that she doesn't like to answer them. I come from rural New Brunswick, and I want to know if she feels about the people in my riding the way she feels about the people in Bathurst East—Nepisiguit—Saint-Isidore whom she called the totally opposite of highly educated. She has already admitted to laughing at the Health Minister when he spoke in French. I don't think we have anything to learn from—

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

## SOCIAL PROGRAMS

**Ms. Holt** (Bathurst East—Nepisiguit—Saint-Isidore, Leader of the Official Opposition, L): It appears that the minister is practicing for his future at a time when we have more people than ever waiting for primary care in New Brunswick. There will be 160 000 people by the end of this year. We have more people than ever living in our hospitals. More than 1 000 families are impacted by the wait for long-term care. We have more people experiencing homelessness in New Brunswick than ever before. We have more people waiting for public housing than ever before. New Brunswickers are stretched, strained, stressed out, more stressed than ever. And we have this government going on \$40 000 fishing retreats with a bunch of political staffers—more political staffers than health care professionals. We have them sleeping in \$800 hotel rooms. We have them driving \$82 000 Teslas that weren't bought here and can't be serviced here.

(Interjections.)

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



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**Ms. Holt** (Bathurst East—Nepisiguit—Saint-Isidore, Leader of the Official Opposition, L): We have New Brunswickers who need to have their struggles recognized. They are trying to pay their property taxes. They are trying to pay rent. Will this government extend the deadline for the \$300 benefit?

**Hon. Mr. Fitch** (Riverview, Minister of Health, PC): Thanks. I am relieved to get one question today, Mr. Speaker. Again, I have to hold the member opposite, the leader, accountable for what she says here in the Legislature. She said this today, and her critic said it the other day: We know that there are an estimated 160 000 patients in the province who don't have a permanent medical home.

Those members need to tell us what their source is and prove to us that there are 160 000 people. Mr. Speaker, we have the numbers. We have the numbers. We know that, in NB Health Link, there are about 58 000 people who have access to primary care and another 30 000 people who have... If there are another 70 000 people who don't have a doctor, they need to register for Health Link. There are 11 facilities across the province—11 facilities across the province—that can provide that primary care. The member opposite also said that there are only 3 000 who have a permanent home. No. I have the right figure. I have the accurate figure. There are 7 000.

Mr. Speaker, I am reminded by the members opposite of the *Seinfeld* show when George Costanza said: If you believe it—

(Interjections.)

**Mr. Speaker** (Hon. Bill Oliver): Thank you, members. Order, members. Question period is over.

(Interjections.)

**Mr. Speaker** (Hon. Bill Oliver): Do we have an extension?

(Interjections.)