

Legislative Assembly of New Brunswick

Oral Questions



March 26, 2026

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Mr. Savoie (Saint John East, Leader of the Official Opposition, PC): Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

[*Original*]

There is one very big question that I have today, and it is this: Why? Why is this Premier so bound and determined to make sure that our taxpayer dollars are going to prop up a company that is staggeringly close to being insolvent? What is it about Foundever that has become so appealing to this Premier? Is it that she only wishes to do business with companies that make worse financial decisions than she does so she can look better by comparison? Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Hon. Mr. Dornan (Saint John Portland-Simonds, Minister of Health, L): Thank you. Madam Speaker, I'm very pleased that we have a very stringent RFP process that looks into the history of companies here in New Brunswick and around the world. There are a number of other measures that we look at, including the ability for that information to interact with our clinical information system and with Tele-Care 811 in a way that's secure and safe for the province. We've made these decisions. We stand by them. We're proud of the companies that we pick through this process. This is not the time or place to share all the intricacies of an RFP process. We look forward to Foundever taking over virtual care this summer. We expect the transition to be smooth. To the members, in four months' time, New Brunswickers will have access to primary care, virtual care, Tele-Care 811, and all the other services that we provide. Thank you.

Mr. Savoie (Saint John East, Leader of the Official Opposition, PC): Madam Speaker, those talking points stand in stark opposition to the reality of this situation. Again, I ask myself: Why? Why are taxpayer dollars going to an American-headquartered, Brussels-based company that is on the verge of bankruptcy? Over the past 18 months, the Premier has proven that she has no respect whatsoever for the taxpayers of this province. Even for her, this is remarkable unless, of course, she is trying to bail this company out on New Brunswick's dime. Why would that be? Does the Premier or any member of her Cabinet have a relationship with anyone associated with Foundever?

Hon. Mr. Dornan (Saint John Portland-Simonds, Minister of Health, L): Madam Speaker, I'm very pleased that members on this side of the House have very high integrity. We are not in a conflict of interest. We look forward to working with the company, which is at arm's length. We have a process through SNB and the Department of Health that picks the best company that gives the best proposal, and we evaluate those quite carefully. I am confident that, on April 2, July 2, and August 2, we will have access to virtual care. It will be

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seamless. The care will be good, and it will be integrated with the rest of our health care system. Thank you.

Mr. Savoie (Saint John East, Leader of the Official Opposition, PC): Well, Madam Speaker, this minister promised April 1, and now it's July. We can really take stock of how much that's worth.

Is there no one at all, Madam Speaker? Is there no one who has business that is associated with both Foundever and someone this Premier is trying to conduct business with? Is the Premier not aware of the connection between Foundever and Prime Minister Carney via Brookfield? Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Hon. Mr. Dornan (Saint John Portland-Simonds, Minister of Health, L): Madam Speaker, I can speak on behalf of the members on this side of the House. There is no loss of integrity here. We all declared what we have involvement with. I cannot speak for the rest of the world. I'm quite proud of this company.

We will have good virtual care on any day of the week that you want to pick, on April 1, July 1, or December 1.

I'm quite proud of that. It will be seamless. We are thankful that eVisitNB has helped us to bridge that gap, as per contractual agreements. New Brunswickers can rest assured that we are going to provide virtual care. We are going to provide collaborative care. We are going to provide primary care to the people of New Brunswick. Thank you.

Mr. Savoie (Saint John East, Leader of the Official Opposition, PC): Wow, Madam Speaker. It is a company that is based in America, that has a majority family ownership that supports Russia in its war with Ukraine, and that is on the verge of going bankrupt. This government should have known all those details before it climbed into this contract with that company. It's unconscionable. Has the Premier ever discussed Foundever with the Prime Minister or any member of his government?

Hon. Mr. Dornan (Saint John Portland-Simonds, Minister of Health, L): Madam Speaker, I have a lot of respect for Prime Minister Carney. I'm pretty confident that he has integrity and that he will not become involved in businesses in which he has a personal interest. In fact, I strongly suspect that he has a separate group that would look after that. I am more than confident in the Premier, and I am more than confident that the people of our Department of Health and Service New Brunswick enter into arrangements that are above board. We have no conflict, and I am glad we work with companies that also have no conflict with us. We can continue to provide excellent virtual care in this province. Thank you.

Mr. Savoie (Saint John East, Leader of the Official Opposition, PC): Well, that is the same Prime Minister who took Brookfield from Canadian headquarters and moved it down to

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New York. Does the Premier really mean to tell this House that, during all her jet-setting with the Prime Minister and all their negotiations, there was never, not once, a conversation that included Foundever? Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Hon. Ms. Holt (Fredericton South-Silverwood, Premier; Minister responsible for Official Languages, L): Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I am pleased to talk about the kind of work that our team and I have been doing, fighting for New Brunswick on the national stage and attracting investment from the federal government and the Prime Minister in the things that matter to New Brunswickers, like the best housing deal we have ever seen, better than other provinces. There is \$300 million of investment in housing, thanks to \$150 million from Prime Minister Carney and his government. Just today, Prime Minister Carney announced a \$1-billion investment in Base Gagetown.

When I have the opportunity to spend time with the Prime Minister, I tell him about our beautiful province. I tell him about the opportunities we have in this province to grow our mineral industry, though the de facto leader on the other side has expressed himself to be anti-mining. I tell the Prime Minister about the importance of our softwood lumber industry and how we need to fight to reduce the tariffs on our softwood. The de facto leader on the other side is apparently anti-forestry. I tell him about the—

Mr. Savoie (Saint John East, Leader of the Official Opposition, PC): I seem to remember that, after that whole HST boondoggle, this government guaranteed it would get that money back. Dominic LeBlanc told the government: You'll take what we give you. That's exactly what the government did.

Madam Speaker, I think we deserve to know this: Did the Prime Minister ever suggest, hint, or imply that the Premier should give up on the made-in-New Brunswick success story that is eVisitNB in favour of the Brookfield-associated Foundever that is teetering on the bank of financial ruin? Thank you.

Hon. Ms. Holt (Fredericton South-Silverwood, Premier; Minister responsible for Official Languages, L): Madam Speaker, no.

Mr. Savoie (Saint John East, Leader of the Official Opposition, PC): That is the first actual answer today, and, considering the Premier's track record of going O-fer with this Prime Minister, I don't think she has too much to brag about.

Let's take a look at the timeline of events here, Madam Speaker. The Prime Minister takes office. He makes a commitment to get nation-building projects underway across the country. The Premier attends a First Ministers' Conference and comes away with nothing. Fast-forward a couple of months, and now Sisson mine is on the list of nation-building projects. Between the get-nothing First Ministers' Conference and the Sisson mine being on the list, did the Premier have any conversations at all, with either the Prime Minister or any

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of his ministers, regarding Foundever and giving it a contract for our e-health services?
Thank you, Madam Speaker.

[Translation]

Hon. Ms. Holt (Fredericton South-Silverwood, Premier; Minister responsible for Official Languages, L): Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I am certainly working with the Prime Minister to meet New Brunswickers' needs. That's why I am very pleased that we have received \$60 million from the federal government to invest in our health care system and the computer system that supports it. We have never talked about Foundever. We talk about important issues for New Brunswickers: the economy, the opportunity to create good jobs, and the threat of Donald Trump, who wants to eliminate the New Brunswick forestry economy.

We also talk about the way we can help the forestry sector, which needs over 20 000 employees here in New Brunswick. A man on the other side of the border is trying to eliminate our economy. I'm working with the Prime Minister, Mark Carney, to grow our economy with regard to the mining sector, the defence sector, and issues that matter to New Brunswickers.

[Original]

Mr. Savoie (Saint John East, Leader of the Official Opposition, PC): Madam Speaker, all we have to do is go back to Hansard to hear this government's protestations that it was going to get every penny of that HST money back, and it didn't. Now it has had to take a deal because that's what Dominic LeBlanc told the government to do.

Are the taxpayers of this province propping up a company that the Prime Minister has a vested interest in when it's on the brink of collapse? The Premier has just said there have been absolutely no conversations, so this must be completely her boondoggle. Is she going to back away from this and do right by a New Brunswick company that has done an excellent job providing services in needed health care to New Brunswickers? Will she back away, yes or no?

Hon. Ms. Holt (Fredericton South-Silverwood, Premier; Minister responsible for Official Languages, L): Madam Speaker, I think there's one thing we, on both sides of the aisle, agree on, and that's that New Brunswickers deserve better health care. They've gone too long without access to primary care. They need virtual supports. They need supports in their community. They need supports for when they age and they want access to a long-term care facility in their community. That is why our government has set out to improve health care services by making the biggest investment this province has ever seen in the kinds of tools that are going to give New Brunswickers anywhere in this province, rural or otherwise, access to a connected solution, whether it's their call to Tele-Care 811 or whether it's the connection to virtual care, then the connection to extra-mural, and then the

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connection to our primary care system. All of those are going to be integrated into a better solution for virtual care with a company New Brunswick has been working with for 28 years and that employs New Brunswickers in Moncton who have done exceptional work for the people of New Brunswick. The nurses from this province who work for this company—

Mr. Savoie (Saint John East, Leader of the Official Opposition, PC): Madam Speaker, you can tell when this government is in hot water. The last question period was about invoking the Trump protocol. In this one, it's about just doing the regular talking points. Let's steer this conversation to another connection that Foundever has. Before our members told her in their members' statements this morning, was the Premier aware of the support of Foundever's majority owners, the Mulliez family, for Russia's war against Ukraine? Yes or no? Did she know or not? Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Hon. Mr. Dornan (Saint John Portland-Simonds, Minister of Health, L): Madam Speaker, I don't look into the investment opportunities of any of the companies that do business with us. As long as they are above board, as long as they are legal, and as long as they provide the services New Brunswickers need at a very moral, high-integrity level, we will continue to work with people.

You know, what has not been shared here today is the score card we used when looking at RFPs. We clearly picked the very best results on this rubric. It's the way we do business. We are not political in our nature. I'm very proud to be the author of the agreement with Foundever, and it will continue to provide good services for us, as it has in the past, with a very high reputation. Thank you.

Mr. Savoie (Saint John East, Leader of the Official Opposition, PC): Did the Minister of Health just admit that the government did no fiduciary or financial background checks with a company it is going to do business with? That's certainly what it sounded like. Now that the Premier is certifiably aware of the support that Foundever's majority owner family has for Russia's war against Ukraine, will she do the right thing and cancel her plans to give the e-contract for our health services to this company, Madam Speaker? She has a choice to make. It is often said that you either make a choice, or the choice makes you. Which will it be? Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Hon. Ms. Holt (Fredericton South-Silverwood, Premier; Minister responsible for Official Languages, L): It seems to me that this is a question, Madam Speaker, that the member opposite should have asked his former boss. Information about the connection between this family and the Russians came out in 2023, when the previous government was already in business with Foundever. What did it do about it? It did nothing, because this is a company that has people in New Brunswick delivering excellent health care services to the people of New Brunswick. We have protections in place for our province, for our people, and for our data. The previous government didn't choose to act on this information then.

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We have protections in place in the contracts that we are negotiating now to make sure that New Brunswickers get the health care they deserve, something that the members opposite have not seemed to prioritize. Our government has prioritized care for people in every community of this province to get access virtually and in person from family doctors and nurse practitioners in their communities and collaborative care clinics, of which we've opened 14 across the province. Now, with new nursing homes, they're getting the care they need from the—

Mr. Savoie (Saint John East, Leader of the Official Opposition, PC): There's the terrible trifecta, Madam Speaker. She just invoked the Higgs protocol. You know, we never gave a contract to an American company over a New Brunswick company. We didn't kill a New Brunswick company to give it to an American company.

Madam Speaker, New Brunswickers are people with integrity, morals, and a true sense of what is right and wrong in this world, and some things do not get any simpler than being against invading another nation's sovereignty, murdering its people, and attempting for years to overthrow its democratically elected government and occupy its territory. New Brunswickers do not want to see their money go toward a company whose owners support the terroristic actions of the Russian state against the people of Ukraine. Will the Premier do the only right thing she can do in this situation and cancel this deal with Foundever?

Hon. Mr. Kennedy (Quispamsis, Minister of Local Government; Minister responsible for Service New Brunswick, L): Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I'm actually rising in my position as Minister responsible for Service New Brunswick. I can assure you, this House, and New Brunswickers that Service New Brunswick, in collaboration with the Department of Health, did all the necessary due diligence. We have a plan and are moving forward with a company that is already providing health care in New Brunswick. That health care is going to continue, as the Minister of Health has said, into the future.

Last week, in the first question period of this session, the former minister, the interim Leader of the Opposition, regaled us with some synonyms. I think it is important on the last day of this session and this question period to mention some synonyms people used to talk about the former government during its time in office. How about words like "tone deaf", "condescending", "divisive", "appalling", "cruel", and "heartless"? Those are words New Brunswickers used to describe the former government. Under the interim Leader of the Opposition, those words still seem to apply today, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Savoie (Saint John East, Leader of the Official Opposition, PC): You know you're making an impact, Madam Speaker, when they use your stuff. Right? You know you're making an impact.

This is about this government taking away business from a New Brunswick company and giving it to an American company that has ties to the Russian war in Ukraine. This is

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something... If they've known it for so long, they had a choice in their RFP process to turn away from this. My question is this: If they're no longer going to do business with Foundever—because they really don't know or because they won't tell us, at least here—whom are they going to do business with, and how much more will it cost? Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Hon. Mr. Dornan (Saint John Portland-Simonds, Minister of Health, L): Madam Speaker, I'm interested in the amount of time in question period this issue is taking. We have been clear: We have used an RFP process. We've picked the best provider, and we're going to work with that best provider. The transition will be clear.

There are lots of other things we could be talking about today, such as support for collaborative care clinics. That's huge. That's the story of the day. We continue to announce new clinics every day. As I mentioned yesterday, people are waiting for our clinics. Some people don't even know that the clinics already exist in their communities. Collaborative care is way beyond the few clinics we have announced. We're looking forward to attaching all New Brunswickers. Vitalité and Horizon are well on their way, and that's the story of the day, Madam Speaker, not eVisitNB.

Mr. Hogan (Woodstock-Hartland, PC): Madam Speaker, the first rule in a crisis is to establish a chronology, a timeline. In the Foundever boondoggle, the timeline over 24 hours this week, between Tuesday and Wednesday, actually reeks. I didn't know a time could stink, but the Holt government has managed to make that happen. On Tuesday, the Health Minister advised the media that no contract had been signed. On Tuesday evening, the *River Valley Sun* story broke. Yesterday, the Health Minister would not speak or was not allowed to speak to the media. The Holt government comms revealed that they had signed the contract. As the expression goes, that's too cute by half. My first question for the Premier, and only the Premier, is this: Is the Premier's signature on this hastily signed contract?

Hon. Mr. Kennedy (Quispamsis, Minister of Local Government; Minister responsible for Service New Brunswick, L): Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Yesterday, we were bombarded with questions about the long-term care plan, which is an extension of health care in New Brunswick. The members opposite asked: Where's the plan? Well, today, this incomparable minister, this Premier, and this government unveiled an amazing long-term care strategy for New Brunswick.

I'm not sure whether any members of the opposition were in the room. The room was so full that maybe they were there and I missed them. Partners and stakeholders in the long-term care system in New Brunswick were there to celebrate this morning. I can tell you that the deputy mayor and a councillor from the town of Quispamsis were there to celebrate the addition of a 60-bed nursing home for Quispamsis.

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[*Translation*]

I was an Executive Assistant nearly 20 years ago. I was Executive Assistant to the minister responsible for seniors when Shannex came to Quispamsis for the first time. I was proud to be there for the construction, and I will be so proud when the business returns to Quispamsis for the addition of 60 new beds to the nursing home in the community.

[*Original*]

Mr. Hogan (Woodstock-Hartland, PC): Oh, Madam Speaker, I was almost caught by that ricochet. I'll make the Premier a deal. I promise to post my question on my Facebook page tonight if she'll creep my page and answer my question.

Here is another question. This Foundever boondoggle conjures up visions of a contract rushed from one place to another for signatures in the dead of night. In other words, it's your typical garden-variety Liberal government boondoggle.

Let's take stock. The company headquarters and all top officers are in Miami, Florida, U.S.A. The company has origins in Luxembourg and has owners who support Russia in the war against the people of Ukraine. The company is on the brink of collapse. International agreements mean that New Brunswick data can leave the country for the U.S.A. and other parts unknown. It's usually three strikes and you're out, but the Premier, with unknown motives, has excused four huge strikes. Will the Premier tell us exactly who signed this contract?

Hon. Mr. Dornan (Saint John Portland-Simonds, Minister of Health, L): Madam Speaker, I am glad to speak about timelines. Things don't happen all in one day. Sometimes a party signs a contract and within 24 hours or 48 hours another party will sign it. This is an instance where our deputy signed on our behalf. We're very proud of the agreement that he signed with our full support and knowledge. The agreement is in place.

We will transition to Foundever, a very credible company. We will continue to advance all aspects of care. We will continue to work with companies that interact with our clinical information system. That wasn't always the case. We want there to be one record, one place for New Brunswickers to shop, and one place for them to see their whole record. We want to know that a physician up in Edmundston or a nurse practitioner in Caraquet can look at the same data, whether it be a Foundever call, a virtual call, or a collaborative care clinic call. We're quite proud that we're building a network of connected one-record opportunities—

Mr. Hogan (Woodstock-Hartland, PC): Thank you, Madam Speaker. We clearly need a new 2026 dictionary particular to the Premier with new definitions of the words we thought we knew, like "transparent". The Premier talks a pretty good game, but her actions betray her. She preaches transparency and practices secrecy. She preaches fiscal responsibility and



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practices debt and deficits. She preaches New Brunswick first and practices New Brunswick last, or in the case of eVisitNB, never.

I noticed the Premier stayed away from the media scrum this week. I'd like to invite her to join me in the rotunda after question period is done so that she can answer one question out there: On what day and at what exact time of day was this contract signed?

Hon. Ms. Holt (Fredericton South-Silverwood, Premier; Minister responsible for Official Languages, L): Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Perhaps it's been some time since the member opposite was a minister and he's forgotten how contract signing works in government.

I do appreciate that he refers to the kinds of things that I like to preach because I believe that we should spend our time in this House focused on the priorities of New Brunswickers. New Brunswickers have told us very clearly what they want. They want access to health care.

They want a virtual health care system that works for them. They don't want travel nurses, like those in the kinds of contracts that were signed by the folks on the other side. They want health care delivered by New Brunswickers who are living in New Brunswick and are there to care for them. That's what we've put in place with this contract, Madam Speaker. We have a team of people delivering care to New Brunswickers at this moment. They have been doing excellent work with our 811 system and are going to integrate that work with our virtual care system. Then we pair that with what we did today for seniors' care. We announced 624 new long-term care beds and a \$993-million investment in—

POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

Mr. Coon (Fredericton Lincoln, Leader, G): Madam Speaker, maybe we can keep calm, and I'll carry on. One of the most inexplicable cuts in this budget is defunding the Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission. It has a legislated mandate to ensure that our public university programs of study are of the very best quality and that our teaching quality is the very best. This requires collecting data to ensure that our universities are serving their students well.

This independent accreditation and oversight of our public universities costs the province a mere \$656 000. That's not a huge savings, so why axe it? Well, we know that for-profit university lobbyists, such as Chad Peters and Don Arseneault, have been meeting with the ministers of PETL and economic development. We hear that this government has been distributing a disproportionate share of the seats for international students that are provided by the federal government to private universities. Is the Premier onside with cancelling the independent accreditation of our public universities in support of profit-making ones?



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[*Translation*]

Hon. Mr. D'Amours (Edmundston—Vallée-des-Rivières, Minister of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour; Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs; Minister responsible for Immigration; Minister responsible for Military Affairs; Minister responsible for the Research and Productivity Council, L): Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I want to thank the member opposite for his question. We have taken the time to discuss several options with our universities during the prebudget process.

I'm sure the member opposite and I will agree that the public universities in New Brunswick have been saying for many years that they are the best institutions to provide these services in our province. In that respect, I have full confidence in the public universities in New Brunswick.

So, by deciding to eliminate the process for establishing new programs, which was often very long, we're telling the public universities in New Brunswick that they will be able to establish new programs faster. That will mean young and not-so-young New Brunswickers will have access to quality post-secondary education.

Mr. Coon (Fredericton Lincoln, Leader, G): Madam Speaker, this government seems determined to privatize services, institutions, and public assets. It wants to eliminate public veterinary services and hand them over to private veterinarians and laboratories. It wants to sell provincial parks.

Make no mistake: the objective of non-religious private universities is to make profits for their shareholders. For example, Yorkville University belongs to Birch Hill Equity Partners. The University of Fredericton belongs to Oakley Capital, a large European private equity firm. For-profit education is very profitable.

Since this government intends to withdraw from the Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission, what other measures will enable private for-profit universities to multiply and start up in New Brunswick to the detriment of—

Hon. Mr. D'Amours (Edmundston—Vallée-des-Rivières, Minister of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour; Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs; Minister responsible for Immigration; Minister responsible for Military Affairs; Minister responsible for the Research and Productivity Council, L): Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Thanks again to the member opposite. It's a little hard to tell where he was going and to whom he was asking his questions. However, listen, I'm going to answer the last part, the last few seconds, of his question.

You know, Madam Speaker, with respect to the Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission and the decisions that were made, as I have already mentioned, we're



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certainly placing our confidence in our public universities. Therefore, we're allowing them to establish new programs faster to meet the essential needs of the labour market.

However, a longer perspective has to be taken, Madam Speaker. I hope the member opposite will also mention this. We know that our professional associations in some fields also have a say regarding the establishment of certain programs in our public universities.

So, the process has not been eliminated. It will take its course. Until the end of the process, Madam Speaker, we will continue to place our confidence in our public post-secondary institutions. We want to make sure they provide quality education. We want them to give our young people the opportunity to study here.

[Original]

BUDGET

Mr. Monahan (Arcadia-Butternut Valley-Maple Hills, PC): Thank you. Yesterday, I asked a question, but I clearly did not get an answer. Even my constituents said there was no answer, so I'm going to ask it again. Hopefully, I won't get a smoke-and-mirrors answer.

This budget reveals a troubling shift in priorities that should concern every New Brunswicker. While overall government spending is increasing by 5.1%, the cost of servicing the public debt is rising to almost 16%. This is not a minor imbalance. It is a clear warning sign of a government losing control of its fiscal direction. Instead, more and more taxpayer dollars are being directed to interest payments, effectively paying for past decisions rather than building a promising future. This government is trying to justify its budget while debt costs are accelerating at such an alarming pace and critical services are lagging behind. What assurance can the Minister of Finance provide that this pattern will not continue and further erode the province's ability to invest in the very services and opportunities that New Brunswickers will depend on for generations to come?

Hon. Mr. Legacy (Bathurst, Deputy Premier; Minister of Finance and Treasury Board; Minister of Energy; Minister responsible for the *Right to Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, L): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I get one chance to finally answer a question.

I want to use this opportunity to congratulate one member, though. I want to congratulate the member for Fredericton-Grand Lake on his budget answer speech. He's always been a very eloquent speaker. I just didn't know he was that funny. I'm referencing this line. He said: I am a fiscal conservative, and I have a hard time with large Liberal governments.

His timing was impeccable. It was one week after I released the workforce report, which showed that 6 000 employees were added to the payroll between 2020 and 2024, during the PC members' time. If you dig even deeper, there was a 344% increase in non-bargaining

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Part II employees. A 344% increase doesn't happen by accident. It happens when nobody's looking. It happened right under his fiscally responsible nose. That is hilarious.

Madam Speaker (Hon. Ms. Landry): Question period has expired.

