

Legislative Assembly of New Brunswick

Oral Questions



May 19, 2022

CONTENTS

COST OF LIVING

Mr. Melanson
Hon. Mr. Higgs
Mr. Melanson
Mr. Melanson
Hon. Mr. Higgs
Mr. Melanson
Mr. Melanson
Hon. Mr. Higgs
Mr. Melanson
Hon. Mr. Higgs

Legislative Assembly of New Brunswick

Oral Questions

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Mr. K. Chiasson

Hon. Mr. Allain

Mr. K. Chiasson

Hon. Mr. Allain

Mr. K. Chiasson

Hon. Mr. Allain

Mrs. Landry

Mrs. Landry

Hon. Mr. Allain

Mrs. Landry

Hon. Mr. Allain

Mr. Mallet

Hon. Mr. Allain

HEALTH CARE

Ms. Mitton

Hon. Mrs. Shephard

ORGAN DONATION

Ms. Mitton

Hon. Mrs. Shephard

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Mr. Mallet

Hon. Mr. Allain

HEALTH CARE

Mr. D'Amours

Hon. Mrs. Shephard

Mr. D'Amours

Hon. Mrs. Shephard

Legislative Assembly of New Brunswick

Oral Questions

[*Translation*]

COST OF LIVING

Mr. Melanson (Dieppe, Interim Opposition Leader, L): Mr. Speaker, we have reached a point where the arguments have to stop. Expressing different positions that will not help people immediately has to stop. Alternatively, we might agree on measures that will immediately help people. They involve reducing the price at the pump and putting the money back into the pockets of the most vulnerable. Mr. Speaker, we can agree to work together to try and resolve the situation.

People who have been listening to us for two weeks are wondering: What is happening in Fredericton? Meanwhile, the price at the pump is rising. It is \$2.12 per litre this morning. So I am asking the Premier to ensure unanimous consent is given to debate our two motions so that we can come to a resolution.

[*Original*]

Hon. Mr. Higgs (Quispamsis, Premier, Minister responsible for Intergovernmental Affairs, PC): Well, Mr. Speaker, it seems as though, at the last minute, the Leader of the Opposition spent the night trying to come up with a tactic to divert from the real issue. The real issue is the price at the pump. Everybody knows that. Everybody knows that is where we need to address the problem, and everybody knows that this is all part of the federal initiative to raise prices—to raise prices to a point where people cannot afford to drive, where we cannot afford commodities, and where we cannot afford to live our lives the way we are used to. And it is only exacerbated by what is going on in Europe.

So, Mr. Speaker, we have a motion on the table, and it is coming this morning. Judging by the comments we have heard from the Leader of the Opposition this week, we are excited about the potential that the opposition members will say, Good, let's do this. Let's jointly request that the federal government alleviate the carbon tax for the next four months to have an immediate relief of 11¢ per litre off the price at the pump. It would happen overnight, so we are looking forward to that cooperation that the Leader of the Opposition has referenced. Let's just see whether the money will be where the mouth is. Thanks very much.

Mr. Melanson (Dieppe, Interim Opposition Leader, L): Mr. Speaker, let's put politics aside.

(Interjections.)

Mr. Speaker (Hon. Mr. Oliver): Order, members.

Mr. Melanson (Dieppe, Interim Opposition Leader, L): Let's put politics aside. New Brunswickers, for at least four and a half months already, have been paying way too much.

Legislative Assembly of New Brunswick

Oral Questions

At the end of the day, it is the responsibility of all of us in the House but, most importantly, the government members, who decide on and make public policies and fiscal policies. They have full authority to take action now, actually, without even having a discussion in the House.

What we are proposing, to be quite frank, is something that the Premier has full control over and can decide on through his Cabinet. Tomorrow night at midnight, reduce the provincial portion of the gasoline tax and cut cheques of \$500 for people making less than \$25 000 per year. He does not have to ask anybody else. Without even getting my permission, you can do it, Premier. Premier, will you consider doing that?

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

Hon. Mr. Higgs (Quispamsis, Premier, Minister responsible for Intergovernmental Affairs, PC): Mr. Speaker, you know, in typical Liberal fashion, they say, okay, we will cut the carbon tax and send out cheques as well. There has never been any real analysis of what happens tomorrow, where we will go tomorrow, where we will go the next day, how we can keep prices low, or how we can keep taxes low so that people will continue to thrive and survive in our province.

So what we have proposed here is a solution: immediate tax relief from the foundational problem of what is happening today. We have a federal program that is putting a carbon tax on people, but more importantly, it is putting up the cost of everything that is happening in our province. Whether that is in relation to emissions or the Clean Fuel Standard or whatever it is, it is all for a noble outlook, but it is one that is basically putting our province and our country into bankruptcy. That is basically where it is going. The situation in Europe makes it even worse. We have a motion that works. Let's stick to the program and stop the deviation.

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

Mr. Melanson (Dieppe, Interim Opposition Leader, L): Mr. Speaker, this morning, New Brunswickers are paying \$2.12 per litre at the pump. There will be many New Brunswickers going to gas up their vehicles today who will, for the first time, have to pay over \$100 to fill their tanks. Today, a loaf of bread costs 12.2% more. A plate of spaghetti, for God's sake, costs almost 20% more.

(Interjections.)

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

Mr. Melanson (Dieppe, Interim Opposition Leader, L): It is almost 20% more. Historically, the Premier has not been known to depend on others to make decisions. He has never done that. And for the first time, he is trying to say that it is somebody else's responsibility. Why



Legislative Assembly of New Brunswick

Oral Questions

do you not follow your record, stop depending on others, and decide what you can do right now? Reduce the provincial tax on gasoline. Cut cheques of \$500 for people making less than \$25 000 per year.

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

Hon. Mr. Higgs (Quispamsis, Premier, Minister responsible for Intergovernmental Affairs, PC): Mr. Speaker, one of the long-term weaknesses of the Liberal Party is never to look beyond tomorrow, never to look beyond the next day, and never to look beyond the next year. It is just: What do I make that looks good today, and how do I promote that?

So I think that inadvertently, the Leader of the Opposition said: You know, I think that we could make something work here. That was a few days ago, when he was talking to the media. He said that we could actually have a motion here that we could put forward and that we would have the control to do that. But the piece that was missing is that I do not have control of that.

The federal government imposed the gas tax on us. It imposed the fact that we have to collect it. Yes, we are refunding it throughout the province today, but if we were able to deal with this fundamental issue of what is causing high prices and what is going to continue to cause high prices... This is the tip of the iceberg, Mr. Speaker. The public needs to know that this is the tip of the iceberg and that it is purely a result—exacerbated by what is going on in Europe—of the federal Liberal government.

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

[*Translation*]

Mr. Melanson (Dieppe, Interim Opposition Leader, L): Mr. Premier, when you raise your voice like that, I think it is to try to convince yourself. However, I am going to ask you a very, very simple question: Mr. Premier, will you and your caucus give unanimous consent to have our motion debated today? If so, we will give our unanimous consent to have your motion debated today. Yes or no?

[*Original*]

Hon. Mr. Higgs (Quispamsis, Premier, Minister responsible for Intergovernmental Affairs, PC): So, Mr. Speaker, too little, too late. Monkey see, monkey do. This sounds like a playback. Yesterday, did we not basically put that forward? Did we not put that forward here in the House yesterday, unanimous consent to... Is this not a little too late, or is this just retro thinking? We had already put this forward, and we had already planned to put the motion forward. We had already said this yesterday. I do not know. They stayed up late last night, fell down in the night, hit their heads, and said, Oh, we have a new idea.

Legislative Assembly of New Brunswick

Oral Questions

It is not a new idea. We put this on the table yesterday, following the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition. Mr. Speaker, we have a plan. We are putting it forward so the opposition can decide whether to deal with the root cause and have an immediate impact at the pump or to ignore the obvious and let this roll along and let the people of this province continue to have high costs of living thrust upon them more and more and more each and every day.

[*Translation*]

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Mr. K. Chiasson (Tracadie-Sheila, L): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Local Government and Local Governance Reform published a job posting to hire the 12 CEOs who will manage the RSCs in the province. The document approved by the minister clearly indicates that the mandate of these new leaders is the same in the 12 regions. However, the salary, as well as the necessary requirements and competencies, differ from one RSC to another. Same job, but different hiring criteria. If you apply for the position in RSC 7, you are asked for a master's degree and 11 years of experience, and you are paid \$151 000 a year. If you apply for the position in RSC 2 or RSC 6, you are asked for a bachelor's degree and 8 years of experience, and you are paid \$100 000 a year. Mr. Minister, can you explain why this totally unfair approach is being taken?

Hon. Mr. Allain (Moncton East, Minister of Local Government and Local Governance Reform, PC): Mr. Speaker, in fact, we have an ambitious plan to move local governance forward. As for the RSCs and human resources, the commissions are represented by elected officials who will work and hire people. So, Mr. Speaker, the job descriptions are there. The job descriptions are there. These people will work with the RSCs to make sure that we have the best people working for New Brunswickers. Mr. Speaker, we are implementing a local governance plan. That is what matters. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. K. Chiasson (Tracadie-Sheila, L): Mr. Speaker, how many times has the minister risen in the House to tell us that the principles of the Equal Opportunity program are at the core of his approach and that he will ensure personally that all regions are treated equally and that no community is left behind? It is important to bear in mind, Mr. Speaker, that the mayors and municipal councillors are not the ones who asked for CEOs to manage their RSCs. That was imposed on them, and they are the ones who will have to pay the price in the end.

In addition, you imposed new responsibilities on them, such as economic development, without any road map or funding. What message are you sending by placing more value on some people's work and not on everyone's? What message are you sending to the rural areas of the province? Is the message that the work in big centres is more important and it must be the priority? Mr. Minister, being from a rural area myself, I am asking you whether you are prepared to change course and make sure that all areas of the province are on a level playing field from the start.

Legislative Assembly of New Brunswick

Oral Questions

Hon. Mr. Allain (Moncton East, Minister of Local Government and Local Governance Reform, PC): Mr. Speaker, today, we are seeing politics pure and simple from the member for Tracadie-Sheila—pure and simple. Once again, the Liberal Party is creating division, between the North, the South, the East, and the West. That is what we are seeing today. It is politics pure and simple.

Mr. Speaker, we have implemented a reform for all of New Brunswick. We wanted to reduce the number of entities. There were 340 entities, and there will now be 77, as well as 12 rural districts. That is why this is going to strengthen our regions. That is the opportunity we have. Mr. Speaker, I would like to receive requests under the *Right to Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

[Original]

People should send me right to information requests. Do you know the number of right to information requests and e-mails that I get from that side of this House? Do you know how many, Mr. Speaker? It is zero—zero, zero.

[Translation]

So, Mr. Speaker, I have no lessons to learn from the Member for Tracadie-Sheila.

[Original]

Mr. K. Chiasson (Tracadie-Sheila, L): Mr. Speaker, this is an important time for the province. The minister has asked all communities, such as Lac Baker, to come together and work hard for the betterment of their region and the province. But the message that he is sending with his job posting is one of inequality. Minister, are you telling me that economic development or tourism promotion is not as important or is easier to do in the Madawaska or Sussex regions? The mandate of these CEOs is the same no matter where they work, but the salary and job requirements differ from one region to another. How are the CEOs, mayors, and councillors supposed to feel when they come to Fredericton for meetings and are sitting around the table knowing that the province gives importance to only a handful of regions?

Mr. Speaker, I do not know how many times this minister has to drop the ball before people realize that he cannot play a simple game of catch. It was a stupid decision. I ask him to go back to the drawing board and make this right.

[Translation]

Hon. Mr. Allain (Moncton East, Minister of Local Government and Local Governance Reform, PC): Mr. Speaker, it is not very pretty on the other side of the House. It is not pretty. It is not pretty.

Legislative Assembly of New Brunswick

Oral Questions

There are 12 regions with different populations, so there will be large RSCs and small RSCs. RSCs have existed for 12 years, so I am not sure where the member is getting his information. RSCs have existed for 12 years, and it was the member for Riverview who started this reform 12 years ago.

So, Mr. Speaker, the job descriptions are available. We have provided a framework. There are pretty specific timelines in our ambitious plan. The goal is to find the best people available. The mandates have been defined. There are five new mandates, including economic development, tourism, community planning, and public transit. That is the goal, Mr. Speaker.

[*Original*]

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

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Landry (Madawaska Les Lacs-Edmundston, L): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As we have said many times and as my colleague has just proven, this government has established a double standard when it comes to making decisions on municipal reform.

[*Original*]

(Interjections.)

Mr. Speaker (Hon. Mr. Oliver): Minister.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Landry (Madawaska Les Lacs-Edmundston, L): From our point of view, it seems as though, if you live in a riding held by the government, you were consulted and listened to. That is the case for Fredericton Junction and Tracy. However, if you live in a riding held by a member of the opposition, that was not the case. That is what we see with Lac Baker.

The minister has not answered the question I recently asked. Can you explain why the exemption request for Stilesville, in the Minister of Finance's riding, was accepted, while an exemption for Lac Baker was refused? I would ask the minister to clearly outline the criteria used to assess these two requests.

Hon. Mr. Allain (Moncton East, Minister of Local Government and Local Governance Reform, PC): Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The decision has always been to continue working with Entity 1, because that would make a stronger long-term entity than letting Upper Madawaska and Lac Baker be separate local governments. The community of interest includes the entire zone and the entire region. This entity will be stronger in the

Legislative Assembly of New Brunswick

Oral Questions

long term. Entities come together. This is about the future, not just the present. It is about long-term viability.

Mr. Speaker, we have had excellent meetings with the municipal council of Lac Baker. We have met six times so far—six times. We are going to meet these people again this afternoon. I can assure you, Mr. Speaker, that we will have good discussions. If we can improve the situation a community is in, that would be the goal.

I know that the member for Tracadie-Sheila is not going to like what I am saying, but, once again, I have to remind everyone that a reform like this is not easy to do. We are moving forward. It is an ambitious plan, and we will move forward for New Brunswickers.

[Original]

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

[Translation]

Mrs. Landry (Madawaska Les Lacs-Edmundston, L): Mr. Speaker, Lac Baker is one of the most beautiful villages in New Brunswick. It is an idyllic, peaceful, and financially self-sufficient area. Right now, the village deeply values its natural beauty, the exceptional quality of its lakes, and the tranquillity there.

Mr. Minister, you said that you were going to prove that this reform would strengthen the regions. I am asking you today to prove, with numbers, how this reform will strengthen our region, which includes Lac Baker and Upper Madawaska. So far, though, the proposed budget shows a 20¢ increase in property taxes for people in Lac Baker just to continue providing the same services. That does not include increases due to the RSC and the increase in its spending. I would ask you, Mr. Minister, to explain to us...

[Original]

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

(Interjections.)

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

Hon. Mr. Allain (Moncton East, Minister of Local Government and Local Governance Reform, PC): Fearmongering—that is what we are seeing from the opposition today, Mr. Speaker. It is fearmongering, fearmongering, and fearmongering. I know for a fact that if we do not move forward on local governance modernization and reform, people will lose services and people will lose economic opportunities. That is why we have to move forward on local governance reform. In December, all 49 members voted for reform. It

Legislative Assembly of New Brunswick

Oral Questions

surprises me today that they are grandstanding like this. It is grandstanding. Unbelievable. As the Premier indicated, please give your good ideas. But there are no good ideas today. It is fearmongering.

[Translation]

I can guarantee to you that, on the other side of the House, it is not pretty, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Mallet (Shippagan-Lamèque-Miscou, L): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Local Government and Local Governance Reform. Mr. Minister, I talked to you about how the reform affects the Chiasson-Savoy LSD. This LSD is being transferred from Entity 16 to Entity 15. At that time, you had told me that I had not stepped up or asked questions regarding this change.

In our research, my constituency assistant and I came across an email from one of your officials dated February 28. I even have the time, which was 9:52 a.m. Here is the content of that email. It was about a call from a citizen regarding recent changes to the Chiasson-Savoy LSD. According to this person, representatives from the LSD told people in the community that the town of Shippagan did not want them anymore and that was why they were looking to the Lamèque region.

Now, can you confirm this information, please? Also, the citizen was asking how the committee could have made this decision. Mr. Minister, I would like to get an answer.

[Original]

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

[Translation]

Hon. Mr. Allain (Moncton East, Minister of Local Government and Local Governance Reform, PC): Mr. Speaker, in fact, we had discussions with people in the Chiasson-Savoy LSD. I met with them several times. I met with them in the Greater Moncton region last month. We had discussions, I believe, on April 19 or 20.

The first call I received from the member for Shippagan-Lamèque-Miscou on the local governance reform was on April 21—April 21, Mr. Speaker. That was the first question from the member on the reform. It is probably one of the biggest reforms of the last 60 years in the province. The member called me on April 21.

Mr. Speaker, I continue to work with people from this community. I met with Ms. Comeau and Ms. Duguay, as well as Mr. Godin. They are good people. We are trying to work with the transition team to move forward. Once again, I would point out that I am always prepared to meet with groups. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Legislative Assembly of New Brunswick

Oral Questions

[Original]

HEALTH CARE

Ms. Mitton (Memramcook-Tantramar, G): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We are coming up to a year since the Sackville Memorial Hospital started closing the ER on weekend nights and up to six months since it started closing it every day between 4 p.m. and 8 a.m. Many members of my community feel the daily stress of not knowing whether the hospital will be open when they need it. Some first responders have had to risk their lives taking ambulances to Moncton during blizzards because the ER in Sackville was closed. Wait times are long. I know people who have shown up at 8 a.m., when the ER opened, to be then sent home at night, when it closed, without even receiving care.

Those working within the system have been strained, and our health care system has been mismanaged for years. Patients are suffering. The communities I represent need and deserve timely access to emergency care. My community deserves answers. When will we get full service again at the Sackville Memorial Hospital?

Hon. Mrs. Shephard (Saint John Lancaster, Minister of Health, PC): Well, Mr. Speaker, I understand the frustration that communities feel when this happens, and it has happened in several areas of the province because of human health resources. It is unfortunate, but we cannot run an emergency room if we do not have a safe number of staff.

I will tell you that I believe that the Horizon Health Network is working toward getting emergency services back there. Ambulance New Brunswick has been tremendous in offering to have an additional rapid response vehicle at the Sackville hospital to ensure that we have good coverage.

It is not ideal, Mr. Speaker. I know that communities want to have the services that we are used to having. Temporary can be lengthy. I am not saying that it is not frustrating, but I will not make a commitment until Horizon is able to get the appropriate staff levels that it needs in order to operate safe emergency rooms.

ORGAN DONATION

Ms. Mitton (Memramcook-Tantramar, G): I am glad that they listened to my suggestion to have another rapid response vehicle, but my community had to force Horizon to start recruiting properly. But, Mr. Speaker, I am terrified that, in the meantime, someone is going to die due to lack of service.

Another thing we need answers on is *Avery's Law*, which will create presumed consent for organ donation. The minister has said that it has immense value. However, after it was debated in the law amendments committee in October, it has been stuck there and has not come back to the Legislature. This legislation would save lives. Avery's family deserves



Legislative Assembly of New Brunswick

Oral Questions

answers and action. I want specifics on this, Mr. Speaker. An answer saying that the government will take the time to do it right is insufficient, considering the time that it has already had and the silence on this bill.

My question to the Minister of Health is this. Can you commit to a date to have this bill come back before the Legislature so that we can get *Avery's Law* moving?

Hon. Mrs. Shephard (Saint John Lancaster, Minister of Health, PC): I sort of reject the implication that we are not working on this because the department has not stopped working on this. The fact of the matter is that we know that *Avery's Law* is important. We know that people are watching this. Whenever there is a name attached to it, it becomes very personal and very emotional. This is something that Nova Scotia passed legislation on two years ago and then took almost two years to proclaim. The people there are still working out the bugs.

As you know, this bill has gone to committee. We cannot put through empty legislation, Mr. Speaker. It is very important that, as we do this, we do it right. If the member wants us to come up short, if the member is looking for a headline, then I cannot change that. What I can do is commit that my job will be done appropriately and that we are working on this diligently to try to move it forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[Translation]

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Mr. Mallet (Shippagan-Lamèque-Miscou, L): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is once again for the Minister of Local Government and Local Governance Reform. Mr. Minister, on February 28, we sent a message to your officials. That message was transferred four times. That means it went from one official to another, to another, to another, and, in the end, I did not receive a response on February 28. You talk about April. Yes, I stepped in in April. I was quite surprised that it occurred.

Now, if the message was passed between officials four times, why is it that I received no response? It probably would have greatly changed the outcome for these LSDs. You said that, with your reform, you try to unify communities. You have divided them. Thank you.

Hon. Mr. Allain (Moncton East, Minister of Local Government and Local Governance Reform, PC): Mr. Speaker, my email is: daniel.allain@gnb.ca. The member could have picked up his phone and called me. He could have sent me an email before his message was transferred from one official to another. My goodness, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, it is very much about the Equal Opportunity program and the white paper. Now, our province and our municipalities are going through a reassessment and readjustment period. When readjustments and reforms like this are done, do not be afraid



Oral Questions

to call me or send me an email so that, at the end of the day, if you have not received a response on February 28, you do not have to wait until May 18, in the House, to ask the question.

Mr. Speaker, a member has waited until two and a half months after the decisions and the deadlines...

[*Original*]

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

[*Translation*]

HEALTH CARE

Mr. D'Amours (Edmundston-Madawaska Centre, L): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In addition to the serious shortage of nurses and physicians in our hospitals, there is also a serious shortage of other health professionals. People are waiting to be treated and, in some cases, have been for over a year. They are told that it is not possible because of the lack of professionals available to provide the services. Since the minister is doing nothing to recruit professionals in our hospitals, can she explain to all these people who are waiting for treatment what their options are?

[*Original*]

Hon. Mrs. Shephard (Saint John Lancaster, Minister of Health, PC): Well, Mr. Speaker, I reject that premise that we are not doing anything. Almost on a daily basis—almost on a daily basis—we have been stating in this House what we have been doing to help with our recruitment strategies and to help our partners in the RHAs.

We understand that the COVID-19 pandemic has created strains on our system that have slowed surgeries and slowed some tests. We understand that, and we know that we have many different professions within our health networks that need to be filled. It has never been a secret. We have never not acknowledged it.

So, Mr. Speaker, I can only say that I am happy to fully brief the member opposite at any time. I am sure that my colleague at the Department of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour would be happy to help. Thank you.

[*Translation*]

Mr. D'Amours (Edmundston-Madawaska Centre, L): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to hear the minister is still interested in my questions. However, questions and information sessions are one thing. What the people of this province need is to be able to get the medical

Legislative Assembly of New Brunswick

Oral Questions

services they need when they need them. The minister can say that there are recruitment and retention problems. She is the one who must solve them. For some time, we have seen that absolutely nothing is happening.

Last week, the Minister of Health indicated it was normal that people had to travel to another region to have access to services. The fact the minister is doing nothing to retain and recruit health professionals is indicative of an alarming situation. I wonder, Mr. Speaker, whether this minister and this government are not just purposefully not finding enough health professionals for our hospitals simply to be able to cut other services in the future. That will be their health care plan.

[Original]

Hon. Mrs. Shephard (Saint John Lancaster, Minister of Health, PC): Well, I would like to ask the opposition to take a look at the Provincial Health Plan. We cannot fix this problem overnight, but we have a plan and not just for recruitment. We have actually reimplemented the surgical advisory committee, which is frontline, and during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, that committee was able to decrease the long wait-list for surgeries by almost 50%.

If we work with our medical professionals, we can get this done, and we are going to continue that. The Primary Care Network is going to contribute to being able to access services in a timely fashion. By putting together a surgical list where patients might be able to choose to go elsewhere if some other physician and specialist has a shorter wait-list, we can then utilize that and work together as a real network of excellence, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker (Hon. Mr. Oliver): The time for question period has expired.