

# Legislative Assembly of New Brunswick

## Oral Questions



**May 16, 2023**

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### GOVERNMENT

**Ms. Holt** (Bathurst East—Nepisiguit—Saint-Isidore, Leader of the Official Opposition, L): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today, I would like to start off with questions about leadership. Critical leadership skills include relationship building, respect, and mobilizing people through alignment of vision and then empowering them to act. Last week reinforced the fact that relationship building and respect are not core elements of this government's leadership. So, let's dig into the important elements of aligning the team and getting results through others.

[Translation]

We have found a number of conflicts between your statements and actions and those of your Cabinet.

[Original]

Specifically, on First Nations consultations and whether it is time to move on; on energy development, with your minister at home while you attempt sales in Europe; and on education, with lots of confusion over the review of Policy 713, sex education changes, and more, could the Premier please reassure New Brunswickers? How is he leading, empowering, and getting the best from his team?

**Hon. Mr. Higgs** (Quispamsis, Premier, Minister responsible for Intergovernmental Affairs, PC): Mr. Speaker, I want to welcome the Leader of the Opposition here. It is great to be back on Canadian soil. While diverse opportunities bring each one of us the chance to do our part, I was in Europe to do our part, representing industry. Other ministers are doing their part here at home or traveling to other parts of Canada in order to make things happen.

So, Mr. Speaker, I expect the question will be kind of nebulous in nature, in relation to, well, what about some abstracts? But, Mr. Speaker, if we want to talk about the reality of what it takes in order to drive things forward, it takes having real discussions. It takes having real discussions on what our energy policy needs to be in order to help Europe, the people who are being attacked by Russia. It takes real discussions on policies in order to help parents so that their kids feel safe going to school. It takes real discussions, not just moving away and not talking about it. And, Mr. Speaker, we want to work with First Nations. We want to have a policy that goes forward. We see an urgency, and we are hoping that they will work with us to achieve success.

**Ms. Holt** (Bathurst East—Nepisiguit—Saint-Isidore, Leader of the Official Opposition, L): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the point about real discussions, so I will raise two examples.

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The Premier can maybe elaborate on how those real discussions are happening, particularly with First Nations when it comes to the development of energy in the province. There is confusion on whether consultation is continuing, on when it will be time to move on, and on whether those real discussions are happening or not, so I hope that the Premier can confirm. Then I would like to point to real discussions on education where we had more than 2 800 New Brunswickers come forward and participate in real discussions on the governance of the education system, with no report produced and none of those recommendations showing up in the model that landed on this floor.

Maybe you could clarify for us what real discussions actually mean to you and when the comments and conversations of First Nations and of parents interested in their children's education are perhaps not real?

**Hon. Mr. Higgs** (Quispamsis, Premier, Minister responsible for Intergovernmental Affairs, PC): Mr. Speaker, I guess that I will have to pick and choose which questions to answer, and maybe we can narrow it down to certain items. But let's talk about education, Mr. Speaker.

I have been talking about education for some time in relation to the ability of our English education system to achieve better results, particularly in speaking both languages. We have a situation here of 70-30, where after 50 years, only 30% of people speak both official languages, and the Minister of Education is digging into all those files to understand the reason that we cannot do a better job.

When I was in the Netherlands, people spoke four languages. When I have been in any part of Europe, people have spoken multiple languages. We cannot even master two here. So the point for us is that it is time to improve the system—not to talk about it or just think about it but to actually act upon it. Anyone who looks at the stats will see that we have a road to walk here in order to make it happen, and I am proud that these discussions are happening and that changes are being made to do just that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Ms. Holt** (Bathurst East—Nepisiguit—Saint-Isidore, Leader of the Official Opposition, L): I think that it is interesting that questions on First Nations consultation and education resulted in comments on language. Maybe we will move away from leadership and into something that is more comfortable for the Premier, such as management.

On the management track record, we have a person who cites that running government like a business is his preferred approach. But a major contract was awarded without the competitive RFP process that businesses would normally undertake—a contract that the Premier promised to try to get out of. I think that his exact quote was, "Let's stop this thing". In terms of budget management, we have a Housing Strategy for which we are told that the funds will materialize, but they were not in the budget. We have a Health Minister who last week said that there is more than one pot of money for doctors, but that does not show up in the budget either. Then, in terms of legislative management, we have an *Education Act* that is coming to the floor of this House, and before we have even started to

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debate it, we are being told that amendments are coming because the bill was not ready in time.

Can the Premier tell New Brunswickers what management improvements he will be making to address the procurement, budgetary, and legislative mistakes?

**Hon. Mr. Higgs** (Quispamsis, Premier, Minister responsible for Intergovernmental Affairs, PC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that it is only the second week for the Leader of the Opposition. At some point, she will learn how to ask a real question and not just give an oratory on a bunch of issues.

If you want to talk about management of the budget, well, I think that speaks for itself with our government. There has never been—it is unprecedented... We are number one in the country, Mr. Speaker, when we look at how we manage funds for the province in terms of the tax reduction system and getting more done with the taxpayer dollars that are being spent. So that is happening.

That is being done, Mr. Speaker, in a province that is exceeding all expectations for growth. Everybody is looking and asking, What is happening to New Brunswick? Over 30 000 people have come here in this year alone. Why do we have a housing crisis? We have unprecedented growth in our province. Now, it is a tough problem to have, but it is a nice problem to have. We have never experienced it before, and the Minister responsible for Housing is looking at this and will produce a report in June about the details of what we can do. We will make our best effort to make a difference for people looking for work. It is a great problem to have—a problem that we have not had here for generations.

### COST OF LIVING

**Ms. Holt** (Bathurst East—Nepisiguit—Saint-Isidore, Leader of the Official Opposition, L): Mr. Speaker, I find it curious that the Premier described the housing crisis as a nice problem to have. I think that the people of New Brunswick who are struggling to find affordable housing or to even have a roof over their heads right now might find that a bit uncomfortable.

We learned yesterday that we have the second-highest level of food insecurity in the country, and we know that we have some of the highest levels of rental rate increases. Our team has proposed an expansion to the Fuel and Food Benefit so that it reaches more New Brunswick families who are living paycheque to paycheque. We have proposed removing the PST from energy bills. We have proposed a rent cap to provide relief to the many New Brunswickers struggling with the housing crisis that the Premier just referenced.

We know that the Premier had said no to a rent cap but now says that a rent cap is back on the table. We know that the industry needs certainty in order to move forward. Could the

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Premier tell New Brunswickers what urgent actions he is considering in order to provide relief to people who are struggling to make ends meet?

**Hon. Mr. Higgs** (Quispamsis, Premier, Minister responsible for Intergovernmental Affairs, PC): Well, Mr. Speaker, thinking about the relationship of what is happening here in the province and the problem of having a housing crisis that we are working through because of the explosion of jobs and of people actually coming here to the province... I think that the Leader of the Opposition was in charge of the Jobs Board several years ago. Maybe we can look at the stats for that and see how that worked out. I do not think that there is a lot to talk about. There is a lot to complain about with others, and that, of course, is the role of the opposition. That is what we are seeing here today: Let's just attack everything and hope that something sticks. That has been the philosophy.

In terms of what is sticking in this province, people are finding that they want to be in New Brunswick. They want to come here and invest, they want to see the growth, and they want to live in this environment because they see it as a benefit. That is really coming to light. What we are seeing in our departments, Mr. Speaker, is that ministers are taking responsibility for their work. I mentioned the Minister responsible for Housing because a report will come out in June. We talk about the Minister of Education taking on the big files and making a difference. That is happening in every ministry in the...

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

## SCHOOLS

**Ms. Holt** (Bathurst East—Nepisiguit—Saint-Isidore, Leader of the Official Opposition, L): Mr. Speaker, we have been hearing from many, many New Brunswickers about your government's decision to review Policy 713. These are parents, grandparents, teachers, and students, and they are deeply concerned. Actually, I would say that they are more than concerned. They are scared. They are scared about an unexpected review of a policy that saves kids' lives.

The advocate released a report that I encourage every single person in this room to read in its entirety as there is much to be learned from the events of the past few weeks. The Child and Youth Advocate has stated that in his professional opinion, the department has a broken and incoherent process underway. He recommends a suspension of the review. Will the Premier today confirm for all the parents, teachers, students, and New Brunswickers who are scared that he will immediately suspend the review of Policy 713?

(Interjections.)

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

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**Hon. Mr. Higgs** (Quispamsis, Premier, Minister responsible for Intergovernmental Affairs, PC): Mr. Speaker, this is what I will confirm. Protecting human rights is fundamental, and we will always protect our most vulnerable and ensure that they have a safe and inclusive educational environment.

Mr. Speaker, there is a provision for students who are under 16 years of age to change their preferred first name and pronoun without any communication whatsoever to the parent. We need to understand that policy and why the parents do not play any role. We believe that it is important for parents to know what their children are doing.

Second, I think that we need to have a discussion with parents, with teachers, and with our citizens about the process of selection and participation in team sports. It is about having discussions on real issues that are affecting the lives of real students, and that means all students.

We are also looking at the age appropriateness of what is being taught in classrooms when it comes to sexual education.

Mr. Speaker, it is time that all voices are heard. That is part of this. Any parent will want to understand what their kids are...

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

**Ms. Holt** (Bathurst East—Nepisiguit—Saint-Isidore, Leader of the Official Opposition, L): Mr. Speaker, the Premier references a goal of protecting the most vulnerable, but that is not happening today. As the Child and Youth Advocate pointed out, the department has undertaken a review without the care and seriousness that it requires. Last week, the minister referenced hundreds of complaints. The department and the Child and Youth Advocate have identified three complaints, none of which specify the information that the Premier just laid out about sports and other things.

If we were having real discussions and listening to New Brunswickers, then we would be hearing them tell us that their children have been put at risk by the actions of this government to undertake an uncalled-for review. The Child and Youth Advocate urges you to suspend that review immediately in the interest of the safety of the children of New Brunswick—the real students, all of them. They need you, Mr. Premier, to act today and to suspend the review of this policy. Will you do it?

**Hon. Mr. Hogan** (Carleton, Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development, PC): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Through you, Mr. Speaker, I would ask the Leader of the Opposition whether or not she has actually read Policy 713.

I have received hundreds and hundreds of emails regarding Policy 713 and regarding the sexual education of our children, and I know that those are two different things. I would

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like to point out that we have not changed Policy 713. Contrary to the fearmongering that has been happening on the other side, we are reviewing the policy. We will continue to protect the rights of our most vulnerable in our education system, in particular, the members of the LGBTQIA+ community because we need to ensure that those rights are there. They are enshrined in the Canadian Constitution.

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

### RENTS

**Mr. Bourque** (Kent South, L): Last week the Minister responsible for Housing brought out three additional bills. While some things seemingly look as though they will help tenants, such as prior approval by the Residential Tenancies Tribunal (RTT) for renovation evictions and more restrictive clauses regarding evicting people for bringing in family members, the official opposition still feels that more could be done to address the imbalance of power that remains between the owners and the tenants.

I feel that the most glaring example of this is the fact that the onus still remains on the tenant to complain to the Residential Tenancies Tribunal if he or she feels there is injustice. Therefore, it allows owners to try to bring forward important increases, hoping that the tenants will not notice or not do anything about them. Even if they do notice, the neighbours who do not notice will feel the brunt of it, while the neighbours who complained will not, so there is an imbalance there. Will the minister act on this? Thank you.

**Hon. Ms. Green** (Fredericton North, Minister of Service New Brunswick, Minister responsible for Housing, PC): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There has been a lot happening in the Housing portfolio over the past three or four months. We had a housing summit and a virtual housing summit, where we invited leaders in the housing spectrum to join us to begin discussing what is happening in the housing sector and to start thinking about innovative ideas on how we can make improvements there. We had a second in-person housing summit just a couple of weeks ago, where we had over 200 individuals from New Brunswick who care about housing and the future of New Brunswick come together to share their ideas on what we could implement here in New Brunswick to make the housing situation better for all New Brunswickers. We have taken all the information that was provided in that, and it is under consideration right now. All of that will be rolled out when we come out with our housing strategy in June. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Bourque** (Kent South, L): Mr. Speaker, one of the tools that has proven most effective in countering hefty rent increases and protecting tenants is the rent cap. This mechanism has been in use for a long time in Ontario. It is being used in Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island since the pandemic. New Brunswick even set a cap in 2022. However, since then, this



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government's messaging has been a mixture of firmness and indecision. Again last week, the Premier said himself that a rent cap was still on the table.

However, Mr. Speaker, it is now mid-May, and it is getting late for a retroactive cap for 2023. Fortunately, it is not too late though. Will this government finally reach a decision on the rent cap and whether one will be imposed? I think that should be stated well before the publication of the report in June. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

[*Original*]

**Hon. Ms. Green** (Fredericton North, Minister of Service New Brunswick, Minister responsible for Housing, PC): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you to the member opposite for the question. The Premier and I have both said that the rent cap is still under consideration. Everything related to the housing strategy is still on the table. It would not be a genuine consultation if one piece was taken off the table. It is still on the table, as is every other item that was brought forward by stakeholders.

There are some really innovative individuals in New Brunswick who are helping us to consider how we need to build this strategy. We need to think about workforce housing. We need to think about student housing. Affordability is a huge issue, which the opposition has touched on many times. But I still say that it is not a genuine consultation if we do not have every single item on the table. All will be part of the consideration for the housing strategy, and we will bring it forward in June.

**Mr. Bourque** (Kent South, L): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, again, I want to reiterate how important and effective the rent cap strategy has been working in places such as Ontario. It has been working there for a very long time, for decades, and we are now seeing it under these particular circumstances here in the Maritimes. It works very well in Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island. That is why they have replicated it again this year. Why have we not done it here?

[*Translation*]

This is a proven strategy.

[*Original*]

It has demonstrated results in terms of controlling higher costs and high increases in rents. The issue that I have with the minister's response... I agree that they are working hard on a lot of things, and I applaud that. We are bringing forward motions, as we know, from the opposition side. But it is the fact that we are already in mid-May, and mid-May is late to retroactively bring forward a rent cap. Again, they should do it right now. Will they do it, yes or no? Thank you.

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**Hon. Ms. Green** (Fredericton North, Minister of Service New Brunswick, Minister responsible for Housing, PC): Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I think that it is interesting that you bring up our sister jurisdictions. For example, Nova Scotia has a rent cap in place, and now that province is scrambling because landlords have found loopholes to work around the rent cap. An example of that is with fixed-term tenancies. That is what we understood Nova Scotia was having issues with. We have proposed legislation to fix that loophole within our own legislation so that landlords cannot use it.

Prince Edward Island is now negotiating with developers because they are unable to raise rents at all on their units. We are also looking at our other sister jurisdictions across Canada. Many of those that have rent caps in place have had rent increases much higher than in New Brunswick, where we have no rent cap. We need to look at the bigger picture when we are looking at this and understand what is working in other jurisdictions and what is not.

**Mr. Legacy** (Bathurst West-Beresford, L): Last month we spent four weeks in budget estimates. Some interesting conversations came out of those meetings. On the first day, with the Minister responsible for Housing, we discussed the whole \$100-million funding for affordable or public housing units. Doing the math, we found that it was going to take \$265 000 per unit. These are well-built units, but they are still fairly simple, basic units. They can be well built, but \$265 000 sounds excessive. We were wondering about the good stewardship of the provincial budget and how government was looking into this \$265 000. The minister has had a couple of summits, and she has had a month to discuss with her staff. Does she still stand by this number, or are we going to get a few more units with that \$100 million?

**Hon. Ms. Green** (Fredericton North, Minister of Service New Brunswick, Minister responsible for Housing, PC): Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Actually, when we were having the discussion in the House around main estimates, my critic from the opposite side said he believed that the units could be built for \$60 000 or \$70 000. I think he said \$65 000. I wanted to know where we could find the builders to build them for \$60 000 or \$65 000. I have yet to receive that information from my critic on the opposite side.

We are at an interesting time, Mr. Speaker. My vision around this is enhanced because of the position that I used to hold. Understanding construction costs, understanding issues around skilled labour, getting the materials that we need—we are analyzing everything related to this \$100 million, and we will get as many units as we possibly can with that money. Thank you very much.

**Mr. Legacy** (Bathurst West-Beresford, L): Mr. Speaker, we are trying to get to that conversation. I believe that the minister brought up \$80 000 per unit for a project in her riding. She could not really answer how that could be done for \$80 000, so on both sides, we could not get back.

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Let's go back to the \$265 000. Right now, developers are getting \$60 000 per unit to build affordable housing. That still leaves them with \$205 000 to build a unit. With the limited rent they can charge, I cannot see how the math works on this or how anybody is going to take that up. We are talking about 380 units for \$100 million. If we had matched the \$60 000, it would be 1 700 units that we could get out there. Why would the minister not use this money as leverage as opposed to trying to build these units at a price that is way too costly?

**Hon. Ms. Green** (Fredericton North, Minister of Service New Brunswick, Minister responsible for Housing, PC): It is kind of fun to go back and forth a little bit. We are working with \$100 million to build, at a minimum, 380 units. There are a number of different projects that we are evaluating, and there are some really innovative construction techniques associated with building housing. There are off-site construction techniques, where you can build units and then piece them together, like LEGO, into buildings. We are analyzing all of that, Mr. Speaker. That is part of the reason that we are working with our stakeholders around all issues related to housing.

The member opposite also discussed the \$60 000 or \$70 000 that the province contributes per door for affordable housing units. Mr. Speaker, I have said that everything associated with housing is currently on the table. That is also something that we are analyzing. Is that the correct amount to be contributing to these units to keep them as affordable units? Everything is on the table, and I continue to evaluate it all.

[Translation]

### **OFFICIAL LANGUAGES ACT**

**Mr. K. Arseneau** (Kent North, G): Mr. Speaker, the Premier tabled Bill 37, *An Act Respecting the Official Languages Act*, in the House. We remember that, in the past, amendments to the *Official Languages Act* were passed unanimously. We remember that, in 2002, the Lord government proposed amendments to the *Official Languages Act*. We also remember that, in 2013, the Alward government proposed amendments to the *Official Languages Act*.

Well, the opposition parties have made it clear that Bill 37 will not be passed unanimously in its current form, because we are talking about a step back here. However, we hear rumours that there may be amendments even though no consultations were ever held with the opposition parties.

Can the Premier share his intentions with the House? Will amendments to Bill 37 really be proposed?

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[*Original*]

**Hon. Mr. Higgs** (Quispamsis, Premier, Minister responsible for Intergovernmental Affairs, PC): Thank you for the question. Mr. Speaker, we will be debating this bill further at the end of the week. I think that what we need to stay focused on is the role of the secretariat and what that is going to mean for the relationships, for our long-term ability to improve our working relationship and our ability to serve people in both languages all over this province. I think that the nuance that needs to be focused on is what that actually means so that it is not something that is periodically reviewed but something that is done as a routine part of everyday business and every year's business.

Mr. Speaker, there is something that has certainly been a goal for me from the very beginning, and it is how we can create better harmony in our province, how we can understand each other's issues, and how we can deal with issues up front, fairly, honestly, and directly. I know that sometimes causes a lot of grief because there is a lot of talk around the issues. Sometimes, we just have to talk through the issues and then find the best path forward. That is how the role of the secretariat will make a difference.

**Mr. K. Arseneau** (Kent North, G): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am all for talking, but you have to talk the talk. The Premier has not consulted any opposition party on this. It has been the tradition of this House to adopt any modification to this law in a unanimous fashion. So, with respect to talking, maybe the Premier should start by looking at himself and at the way that he is dealing with his stuff.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, two other strong recommendations were to review the Act every five years and establish a standing committee on official languages of the Legislative Assembly. My question for the Premier is this: Will he propose an amendment to his initial bill to ensure the Act is reviewed every five years? Also, will the Premier allow a free vote by government members on the creation of a standing committee on official languages of the Legislative Assembly of New Brunswick?

[*Original*]

**Hon. Mr. Higgs** (Quispamsis, Premier, Minister responsible for Intergovernmental Affairs, PC): Mr. Speaker, as I said, we are bringing this back for debate and second reading later in the week. I think that the member opposite does not reflect at all the importance of the secretariat and what that will mean on a go-forward basis. It is not a case of debating it here in the House and making it an issue that gets all kinds of discussion and controversy without solutions.

The role of the secretariat is to work with the communities, the individuals, and the represented members to find the solutions—real solutions—that are meaningful for each



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community and that follow the *Official Languages Act* without creating friction, one to another. That is how we will move our province forward together, that is how we will continue to grow as a province, and, because we are all part of it, that is how each and every one of us can be proud of being the only bilingual province in the country. That is what is going to change how our province can continue to outpace other provinces—by being in harmony and by growing together. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

### SCHOOLS

**Ms. Holt** (Bathurst East—Nepisiguit—Saint-Isidore, Leader of the Official Opposition, L): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am sitting over here struggling to process the Premier's words about his efforts to create better harmony in our province at a time when we see that the relationship between this government and the First Nations community has never been worse. It has never been less harmonious. Certainly, the relationship between this government and the Francophone community has never been less harmonious because of the lack of action by this government when it comes to the *Official Languages Act*. Now, we wait to see a strengthening of the Act that will not produce itself.

In the past week and again today, we have been seeing a lack of respect for the 2SLGBTQIA+ community. The Premier refuses to acknowledge the recommendations of the Child and Youth Advocate that uphold the policy that protects these children. I am struggling to find the commitment to harmony. Can the Premier acknowledge that he will act on the Child and Youth Advocate's recommendations?

**Hon. Mr. Higgs** (Quispamsis, Premier, Minister responsible for Intergovernmental Affairs, PC): Mr. Speaker, I can appreciate the Leader of the Opposition's struggles. I can appreciate that the typical process that would come from a Leader of the Opposition is to fearmonger among us all, creating an issue. Issues can be resolved, but rather than do that and be part of the solution, they make a meal out of it. From someone who has spent a lot of time talking about doing politics differently, we see the same old tune. It is the same old tune: How do we promote division, how do we continue to fearmonger, and how do we make it difficult to come up with any real solutions?

How do we have a discussion on real, factual issues? Well, Mr. Speaker, when we talk about Policy 713 and the role of parents, that is a real issue. That is a real concern to parents. When we talk about what children are being taught and at what age they are being taught, that is a real and genuine concern for parents. I would expect that any parent in this room—and I would expect the Leader of the Opposition as well—would recognize that concern and be willing not to wholesale put a blanket on it but to say, Let's fix the issues that need to be fixed.

**Ms. Holt** (Bathurst East—Nepisiguit—Saint-Isidore, Leader of the Official Opposition, L): Mr. Speaker, I think that the minister opposite is missing the real fears that are being felt by

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New Brunswick parents today. Those have been made exceptionally clear to the members of our team.

There is a petition that has the signatures of 4 000 New Brunswickers who are expressing their fear, which has been created by the ill-advised, unnecessary, and completely unprompted review of Policy 713 by this government. I would like to see the Premier take responsibility for that action, because as the review of the Child and Youth Advocate has proven, the review of that policy is unfounded and incoherent and does not meet the minimum threshold. There were three complaints that do not reflect any of the comments just made. The complaints issued were not with regard to the aspects of the policy that the Premier is confusing with curriculum. It is critical that the Premier reassure the New Brunswick parents who are today actually afraid for their kids that he will suspend the review of Policy 713.

**Hon. Mr. Higgs** (Quispamsis, Premier, Minister responsible for Intergovernmental Affairs, PC): Mr. Speaker, I think I have been very clear here, as the minister has, that fundamentally protecting the human rights of the most vulnerable is of the utmost importance. There is no debate on providing a safe and inclusive environment for all students, whether or not it is in the education field. There is no debate on that, and our commitment is solid.

Mr. Speaker, I would encourage the Leader of the Opposition to read Policy 713 and to really understand what it means to parents. Parents want to say: What are my kids being taught? Parents want to know what Policy 713 means in terms of how the selection process for team sports will work. I think that the point of understanding what it really means is that parents want to know what their kids are doing in school. A parent wants to know, Mr. Speaker, and to have a policy that suggests that is optional... I would think that the Leader of the Opposition would have trouble explaining that or agreeing with that. So, let's not blow it all up, Mr. Speaker. Let's just deal with the issues that are of concern to parents.

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