

# Legislative Assembly of New Brunswick

## Oral Questions



**November 3, 2021**

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### COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

**Mr. Melanson** (Dieppe, Interim Opposition Leader, L): Mr. Speaker, I have to say that yesterday was kind of an emotional day. It was a very difficult day to absorb, discussing and talking to all those 4 000 workers who wanted to be at work. There is no society that wants to see this.

There should not be any employer who wants to punish and not respect its workers. Collective bargaining is a right, but doing it in good faith is even more important. Yesterday, the Premier said to all of us and through the media... Well, he said a few things. It is pretty confusing, but he did say that he wants to go back to the negotiating table. What has happened since yesterday to bring people back to the negotiating table? Did the Premier make that call?

**Hon. Mr. Higgs** (Quispamsis, Premier, Minister responsible for Intergovernmental Affairs, PC): Mr. Speaker, this is an unfortunate situation, without question. Bargaining is part of a process that requires both parties to be willing participants. We all have to recognize that each one of us has limitations in how we manage, in the case here, taxpayer dollars and in how the union leadership works with its membership. None of us wants a strike in a pandemic. It is really unfortunate, in a pandemic, to see impacts on our health care system.

Yes, it is true, we have gone through the major portion of this pandemic. However, we are coming out of the fourth wave, which was our worst experience, I guess. But in that process, we looked after people throughout the pandemic as well. For many people who certainly did not have jobs, we ensured that they did have a paycheque, and we did that throughout the entire province. To indicate that we did not recognize and support our workers... We did indeed.

Yes, we are talking about a date and a meeting this week.

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

**Mr. Melanson** (Dieppe, Interim Opposition Leader, L): This morning, I am listening to the Premier try to show that he has empathy, which has not really been his trademark since he has been the Premier, for sure. He is now always using the pretext of this pandemic. Yes, we are still in the pandemic. The fourth wave has been really, really difficult. However, it has been three years—it has been three years, Mr. Speaker—that he has been the Premier of the province, and he could have had these collective agreement issues resolved. He had budgeted \$554 million for collective bargaining over the past three years. He did not use that. He chose to push it away. He tried to get his way and did not get this resolved. Yes, we are in a pandemic, but the issue is still not resolved.

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The question is this: Did you call the president of CUPE last night to get a date set?

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

**Hon. Mr. Higgs** (Quispamsis, Premier, Minister responsible for Intergovernmental Affairs, PC): Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition knows full well the budgeting process, and he knows that there is a wage mandate that is put into it. He knows how all of that works. It is basically based on what settlement would appear.

Yesterday, I went through the issues around what the pandemic did for us in this sense. While there was lots of hype from the federal government about money coming to the province from the federal government that was not being spent, that is absolutely false. Every dime that the federal government gave us and more went out to the population of this entire province. The \$2.3 billion totally went out to the municipalities, individuals, companies, and wherever else—every dime. In addition to that, Mr. Speaker, an additional \$330 million was spent by the province. The federal government had given us \$280 million of that, so we spent more on the province than the federal government actually gave us. We heard all the hype, and we heard all the jumping on that. There is a mandate...

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

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Melanson** (Dieppe, Interim Opposition Leader, L): Mr. Speaker, the Premier is trying to avoid answering questions. He does not want to talk about the real issues and the problem of labour relations with civil servants. As for the federal budget and transfers, we will have that discussion another day.

These employees do not want to be on strike; they want to be working. They are asking for an annual increase of 3% over four years. The increase in property assessments is an average of 7.7%, which will increase the tax base by \$5.2 billion. You have budgeted \$454 million over the last three years for collective agreements. You already had a \$408-million surplus last year, and you are projecting a \$160-million surplus for the second quarter. Economists say it could be \$500 million, which would represent \$1 billion in surplus over the last two years. These employees do not have good working conditions. Their wages are insufficient. When are you going to meet with them and resolve this situation?

[*Original*]

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

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**Hon. Mr. Higgs** (Quispamsis, Premier, Minister responsible for Intergovernmental Affairs, PC): Mr. Speaker, once again, we see the Leader of the Opposition espouse a whole lot of numbers. Only a few, if any, have any factual basis.

In relation to the assessment increases, we do the assessments and the average increase in the province is over 10%. That is the average. However, Mr. Speaker, you will notice that the municipalities are changing their tax rates because the revenue... That is where the change that will affect the citizens will be made. It is in the municipalities' rates, which they are now changing. This is not a windfall that all comes to the province. A lot of this extra money goes to the municipalities, and the Leader of the Opposition knows that.

With the issue around the forecast of what is coming forward, I do not know where that number is coming from. We expect that in the second quarter, with the rebate received from the HST, there likely will be a surplus of a couple hundred million dollars—somewhere in that range of \$200 million to \$300 million maybe. But, Mr. Speaker, you look out over the next while and you say 3%. Do you think that 3% was ever budgeted in the budget?

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

**Mr. Melanson** (Dieppe, Interim Opposition Leader, L): You know, the Premier said that only a few of these numbers are factual. That means that all of what the government is putting out is not factual. Are all of the numbers not factual? I took these numbers from the budget. Now, the Premier is saying that the second quarter numbers may have a \$200-million surplus. Last week, he said that it was \$160 million. It changes as he goes.

Impulsive, reacting—he is so confused. He is so confused that it is getting confusing, to be quite frank. We do not hear anything from the Finance Minister because the Premier is the Finance Minister. Then he said that only a few of the numbers that I just laid out were factual. They all come from government documents—his numbers.

Can you resolve this labour dispute, please? They need it. New Brunswickers need it. We deserve it.

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

**Hon. Mr. Higgs** (Quispamsis, Premier, Minister responsible for Intergovernmental Affairs, PC): Mr. Speaker, there is one thing that we could all agree on: It is not difficult to confuse Liberals with a number, because it is the furthest thing from their minds.

The Leader of the Opposition knows full well that there would never be a 3% wage increase in a budget. He knows full well that in a negotiation that is demanding 3%... It took two to three years to get 2% off the 5%. Now, it is 3%. To say that we have not been working on this... We finally got from 5% to 3%. We have three other unions that have accepted less

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than that. We have two that are pending, and their big issue is in relation to how to improve the workplace.

While we can talk about whether there have been changes, the Leader of the Opposition also knows how the refunds from the HST come from the federal government, because he was in Finance. He knows that we do not have a handle on that until it shows up and it is a year away. He knows that. He can espouse all this stuff, but he knows that.

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

### GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES

**Mr. Melanson** (Dieppe, Interim Opposition Leader, L): I know that all the numbers I gave you this morning come from your official government documents. If they are not true, please correct them. Please correct them.

I want to ask you a question. Over the weekend, you locked out people who are in the education system. The Labour and Employment Board ruled that it was illegal. When you, as a government—all of you—decided to do that, did you have legal advice to do what you did?

**Hon. Mr. Higgs** (Quispamsis, Premier, Minister responsible for Intergovernmental Affairs, PC): I will clarify what the ruling was and what it was not. There are designated workers in the system. The ruling was based on the fact that we did not have the legal right to lock out designated workers. In the situation of the other locked-out members, we do not have a facility that is operating. We do not have schools operating. Saying that we are going to bring in designated workers who do not have a place to work was the debate. Yes, it was ruled that we have to bring them in anyway during the strike. Well, we have to pay them anyway during the strike.

(Interjections.)

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

**Hon. Mr. Higgs** (Quispamsis, Premier, Minister responsible for Intergovernmental Affairs, PC): But what I think is relevant here is that we have probably 3 000 people who are not working and do not have pay because of the strike. That is the part we would like to correct, but we would like to correct that with stability. You have heard the minister say repeatedly that if there is going to be a random hit on every school in the province at any point in time, there would be no stability, and that is the issue here. We are hoping that it can be worked out so that we can get schools back up.

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

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**Mr. Melanson** (Dieppe, Interim Opposition Leader, L): Basically, you are saying that you had really bad judgment, really bad judgment, when you made that decision. When there were lockdowns during the pandemic, you did not lock those people out. They were still on the payroll. Why did you do it now? It was all orchestrated. You decided to go with online learning, and the next day, you locked them out. Punishment—you are trying to punish these people. By the way, nobody listens to the minister anymore. You lacked judgment, Mr. Premier, on that decision, and it was illegal, based on the ruling of the board.

Tell me, did you have legal advice prior to making that decision? I think that it is important to know whether you made that decision on the fly while not having solid legal advice to do it.

**Hon. Mr. Higgs** (Quispamsis, Premier, Minister responsible for Intergovernmental Affairs, PC): Well, I think that it is important to know that the ruling was based on the designated workers and not on the other workers who were locked out. That is important to know.

Did we have legal advice on whether we could do it in its entirety? Yes. But was there a question about the designated workers and whether that would be challenged? Yes. We thought it would be challenged, and it was. Why did we do it? Because we are in a strike. News flash—we have a strike situation here. So what does it mean? The employees—our employees, the folks who are on strike right now—are impacting schools and, in a pandemic, the health system throughout our province, which is most unfortunate. I am saying that it is shocking and surprising that this would be something that would be considered in a strike.

In any case, when it comes to the situation about locking others out, that is because we do not have a job for them. We are not operating. The schools are shut down, so that would be a logical next step, Mr. Speaker.

[*Translation*]

## HEALTH CARE

**Mr. D'Amours** (Edmundston-Madawaska Centre, L): Mr. Speaker, there have been 6 deaths and 48 suspected cases, as well as a syndrome that is under investigation. As more time passes, the scope of the mysterious syndrome issue grows. After hiding all summer, the Minister of Health has decided to try to save face, but the more she interferes, the more she complicates the situation and the more worried people become. It has come to the point where the minister is speaking for the Chief Medical Officer of Health and interfering everywhere. People are dying, people are sick, and families are at their wit's end. When is the Minister of Health going to stop interfering and politicizing this file? When is she going to let the real medical experts do their job?

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[Original]

**Hon. Mrs. Shephard** (Saint John Lancaster, Minister of Health, PC): Thank you. I appreciate the question.

Mr. Speaker, we are absolutely letting the experts do their job. In June, we proposed a two-component investigation. One component is a very lengthy epidemiological survey, a tool to help give the clinical advisory committee what it needs to finish its work. Six neurologists are providing oversight on all the cases. They are going to determine whether we need to do more investigation or whether there are other diagnoses that have not happened. It is very important for the families and the patients who are affected by this illness that they be given absolute certainty with regard to what we are dealing with. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[Translation]

**Mr. D'Amours** (Edmundston-Madawaska Centre, L): Mr. Speaker, it is not up to the Minister of Health, in a press conference, to answer specific questions; it is indeed the Chief Medical Officer of Health who should do so. The minister cannot just decide that she is the Chief Medical Officer. She has to let the professionals answer the questions. Instead of throwing up a smokescreen in front of the media, the Minister of Health should let the Chief Medical Officer of Health, as I mentioned, and medical experts do their job.

Did she bother contacting the 48 families who are affected and the 6 families in mourning? People are waiting for answers, Mr. Speaker. The minister should focus a bit more on people and less on her party's image and her political career. When will the minister be calling the families? That is the question, Mr. Speaker.

[Original]

**Hon. Mrs. Shephard** (Saint John Lancaster, Minister of Health, PC): Mr. Speaker, in the member's first question, he said I was not a medical expert, and he is now asking me to intervene. My goodness.

Contact with the families is done by a medical provider. That is the way it has always been done, and that is the way it will be. We have provided an oversight committee of six specialists, six neurological experts, and we are ensuring that this process is driven by the medical community. At the press conference, I had an epidemiologist and I also had two VPs, both physicians, from Vitalité and Horizon. So this is being clinically led. This is not being driven by any political agenda, and I am always going to defer to the experts.

[Translation]

**Mr. D'Amours** (Edmundston-Madawaska Centre, L): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Health has created so many difficulties in the system that families cannot even meet with a health



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professional, because it is impossible to get an appointment. This is the kind of job the Minister of Health has done.

[*Original*]

(Interjections.)

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

**Mr. D'Amours** (Edmundston-Madawaska Centre, L): Mr. Speaker, *W5*, the *Fifth Estate*, *Maclean's*, and the *Walrus*, all nationally recognized media, are raising questions about the government's handling of this whole situation. New Brunswickers are demanding answers and are beginning to wonder whether there is some sort of cover-up. What is the minister hiding from New Brunswickers? Can she tell us, or will we have to wait for the *Fifth Estate* on Thursday night to know more?

**Hon. Mrs. Shephard** (Saint John Lancaster, Minister of Health, PC): Mr. Speaker, the one thing that we have been is open and transparent throughout this process. While we cannot control what media outlets put out and we cannot control what other organizations do, the province of New Brunswick, the Department of Health, and Public Health have been very methodical in their approach to this illness, because it is incumbent on us to provide patients and families with real answers, not to give them assumptions. They need real answers, and that is what we have done.

The epidemiological survey is complete. That tool is now in the hands of the clinical experts as they review each and every case. They are going to come back with a final report in January. If we need to do more, we will do more. We have used our national experts. We have used all kinds of tools with our local people to ensure that this is done properly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

## COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

**Mr. Melanson** (Dieppe, Interim Opposition Leader, L): Mr. Speaker, we know that the Premier has said that to end the strike, he may bring in back-to-work legislation, which would include a wage mandate. My question is for the Minister of Justice and Public Safety and Attorney General. We know that in 2015 the Supreme Court ruled on this. It ruled in terms of the right to strike and governments unilaterally coming in and deciding to take that away from bargaining groups. The court said this: "The right to strike is an essential part of a meaningful collective bargaining process in our system of labour relations." It said that this is "an indispensable component of that right". Do you believe you have the legal authority, based on this ruling, to come forward with that type of legislation here in New Brunswick?

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**Hon. Mr. Flemming** (Rothesay, Minister of Justice and Public Safety, Attorney General, PC): Thank you for the question. It is indeed a complex question. There are assorted variations of jurisprudence on the matter. But I can assure you of one thing: So long as I am the Attorney General and this government is here, we would not do anything that we did not feel and that we were not advised was justified in law. And, as the Attorney General, we have the honour of the Crown to uphold, and if one is advised as to the law of the land on a particular subject, we are obligated to conduct ourselves in accordance with that law. I can assure you that picking a quote out of a legal case, which sort of states the obvious, as opposed to whether legislation or back to work or constitutionality or anything else like that... But I can assure you that if it is not justified in law, we will not do it.

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

[*Translation*]

## CLIMATE CHANGE

**Mr. K. Arseneau** (Kent North, G): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference has been going on since Sunday, in Glasgow. This is presumably the last chance for the political class to show how serious it is about fighting the climate emergency instead of serving up the same old blah-blah-blah to which we have become dangerously accustomed. The world is emerging from the fossil fuel era, and it is time for New Brunswick to join the movement. If it does not, the province risks being left behind.

My question is for the Premier: What message did New Brunswick send to COP26 and what are the provincial priorities for dealing with the biggest issue of our time, the climate emergency?

[*Original*]

**Hon. Mr. Crossman** (Hampton, Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Minister responsible for the Regional Development Corporation, PC): Thank you for the question, Mr. Speaker. It is a shame that we cannot be in Glasgow, Scotland, this year because of our circuit breakers and things going on here. We were looking forward to that trip and to getting an update.

The New Brunswick government is certainly committed to being part of the solution to climate change. We watch the COP26 daily for updates, and we see that our Prime Minister is making some headway there. We are looking forward to working with the new minister as well. We are leading the country, as you know, in greenhouse gas emission reductions of 38%, and we are looking forward to making more changes as we move ahead. Thank you.



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[*Translation*]

**Mr. K. Arseneau** (Kent North, G): I think the members were clapping for something pretty insignificant. The Premier likes to repeat ad nauseam that he is taking action for the future of the people in this province. Yet, he refuses to adequately address the climate emergency. He does not even acknowledge the risks associated with this emergency. There was no priority mentioned in what the minister just said. There is no priority. He just says: I do not know; we are doing this, so please clap and make me look good.

It is worth wondering, Mr. Speaker, if the Premier really believes in climate change. My question, therefore, is again for the Premier: Who is part of the New Brunswick delegation to COP26? If nobody is, why does he think New Brunswick will be spared the natural catastrophes to come?

[*Original*]

**Hon. Mr. Higgs** (Quispamsis, Premier, Minister responsible for Intergovernmental Affairs, PC): Mr. Speaker, I think that in relation to what is being done here in the province as we transition from one economy to another, we have advocated with the Atlantic region for the Atlantic Loop, which is an upgraded transmission system to take hydro power from Quebec and Muskrat Falls. That will allow us to meet the 2030 requirements, and it would mean shutting down our only coal plant or finding an alternate use for it with clean fuel. Nova Scotia is doing the same thing.

I think that, with the focus that we have... Today, I listened to the member talk about the focus on the research for small modular reactors. But, Mr. Speaker, we have to balance out what we spend on how we manage and work to do the best for the people of the province with how we create an economic future for the province. I think that there seems to be a disconnect here in how you actually provide the resources to help people to get better and to have a better life in our province. The investment in SMRs is just that—clean energy, transportable clean energy, used anywhere in the world and an economic future for our province.

## POLICE

**Mr. Austin** (Fredericton-Grand Lake, Leader, PA): Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to thank former RCMP Assistant Commissioner Larry Tremblay for his years of service to this province. I had the opportunity to meet Mr. Tremblay over the summer to discuss issues related to policing in rural New Brunswick. At the conclusion of that meeting, there was no doubt in my mind that budget constraints as well as the current model of policing are issues that need to be resolved.

Mr. Speaker, while the Minister of Justice is convinced that the removal of the former commissioner was necessary, I am hopeful that the minister does not view Mr. Tremblay's



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removal as some sort of fix to the larger issues of policing in rural New Brunswick. The structural problems of policing are much deeper than that. My question is for the Minister of Justice. Can the minister tell us what his plans are for reforming the current policing model? Would they include a provincial police force?

**Hon. Mr. Flemming** (Rothesay, Minister of Justice and Public Safety, Attorney General, PC): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, to the member opposite for the question. It is interesting to note that when my colleague the minister responsible for municipal reform was touring the province, one of the messages that he got over and over again was on the issue of policing in rural New Brunswick. The member's question is timely. It is something that the government has been very, very focused on and working toward.

The Provincial Police Service Agreement is an agreement with the RCMP. However, it is the province that sets the objectives, priorities, and goals. We realize that there is significant room for improvement. We realize that there has to be more collaboration with municipalities, and, yes, we realize that there needs to be more funding. There is more to say on that, I am sure, than what 60 seconds provides.

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

## GOVERNMENT

**Mr. Melanson** (Dieppe, Interim Opposition Leader, L): Mr. Speaker, this could be the last question today. I do not know. I have been observing and listening to the Premier over the past three years but also through the past few months. I want to tell him that I know that being the Premier can be overwhelming. There is a lot of stuff happening. There is a lot of stuff on the plate. When you are a micromanager, it is even worse—it is even worse. Actually, by wanting to control everything and being a micromanager, the wheel can fall off and things can get really messy. We have a few messes around the province, to be quite honest. I look around the Premier, and there is a whole team there. There is a whole team of ministers and MLAs, and we still do not know what they believe about this strike situation. But I want to ask the Premier this: What is his team actually doing to help him out?

**Hon. Mr. Higgs** (Quispamsis, Premier, Minister responsible for Intergovernmental Affairs, PC): Mr. Speaker, that is a question that I guess every leader could ask another leader, and I am sure that I could ask it of every one of the Leader of the Opposition's... In opposition, of course, they would all be rah-rah and there would not be any issues other than the complaints. One of the things that was a strength during the pandemic was that we did set that aside and we did work to make decisions in the best interest of the province.

I think it is quite evident throughout my caucus—and I have been, probably more than most, open to discussion in relation to differences of opinions and views—that, yes, we do not all share the same opinions. At the end of the day, the Premier does what he believes is



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right with the collection of information that he receives from his caucus. We cannot move the province forward without a caucus that works together and drives results. I guess the difference between me and the Leader of the Opposition is that, to me, facts matter and, to me, results are more than a statement that I did something without any proof of it.

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

*[Translation]*

**Mr. Melanson** (Dieppe, Interim Opposition Leader, L): Mr. Speaker, it is interesting to hear what the Premier is revealing this morning in his answer to this question. You know, the Premier is known to be a boss and not a leader. He is a boss who wants to control everything and make all the decisions. He certainly wants to do things his own way.

What I am asking the Premier is what role the members of his caucus actually play in making a number of decisions. I know a number of government members, and I know they have the people and the province at heart. I am convinced, too, that the different problematic situations now... I want to believe that they would not exist if the Premier at least listened more closely to his team.

So, Mr. Premier, explain to everyone what role ministers and members play in the decision-making process. Well, is it the Premier who makes all the decisions?

*[Original]*

**Hon. Mr. Higgs** (Quispamsis, Premier, Minister responsible for Intergovernmental Affairs, PC): Mr. Speaker, one of the things that I do not have to do is explain to the Leader of the Opposition how we work together as a caucus. He knows the process, and he knows how it works.

I think one of the things that is very important is that we are dealing with issues that the former government pushed aside. If you go back to the Gallant government, if you go back to the Liberals, if you go back to... Particularly, I am surprised that we have not had any questions on the First Nations file. I am surprised that there has not been a discussion on the tax exemption file and the tax refund. I am really surprised that the Liberals have not touched that. There is a lot of information under the hood. For some reason, the Leader of the Opposition does not want to talk about it.

But we are addressing all the issues in the province. At the end of the day, our province is going to be stronger and more united, but there is a rough path because when you talk about facts instead of just symbolic gestures, you get down to the truth and you get down to making a real difference. And that is our goal, Mr. Speaker.

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

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### COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

**Hon. Mr. Higgs** (Quispamsis, Premier, Minister responsible for Intergovernmental Affairs, PC): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am just responding to a question from the Leader of the People's Alliance yesterday in relation to the number of CUPE employees who are not in the shared risk program. Combined, there are 2 468 active members in the two plans that would be converted to shared risk. There are 1 856 members in Local 1253 and 612 members in Local 2745. Once converted to shared risk, part-time workers would be eligible to be plan members, which they currently are not.

There are currently over 5 000 part-time workers, with the vast majority being EAs who could join the plan. These part-time workers currently have access to GNB's defined contribution plan for part-time workers. Participation in the plan is voluntary, and only 40%—around 2 000 people—have opted to participate in it. Upon conversion, they could join the more favourable shared risk plan along with the 3 000 part-time workers who do not participate in any plan at all. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker** (Hon. Mr. Oliver): The member for Fredericton-Grand Lake and leader of his party for one question.

**Mr. Austin** (Fredericton-Grand Lake, Leader, PA): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Premier, for that information. It is my understanding that 2 468... I believe that is the number that you gave referring to the conversion from the defined benefit pension to the shared risk pension. I guess the question that I have as a follow-up to that transition is this: How much does it cost on an annual basis in relation to government to top up that defined benefit pension plan as opposed to the shared risk pension plan? Has government in the past been funding that plan appropriately for what its contributions should be?

**Hon. Mr. Higgs** (Quispamsis, Premier, Minister responsible for Intergovernmental Affairs, PC): It is the same situation as the other defined benefit programs that were converted several years ago. Approximately \$7 million per year is spent on these two plans in order to keep them afloat. That is over and above anything to do with the normal contribution of employee and employer. It is \$7 million per year that is required to keep its funding at a respectable level and secure. What we are suggesting and saying is that if we convert that plan to a shared risk plan, we will take that money and put it toward those 3 000 people who do not have a pension plan and pay the portion of the pension plan to allow them, too, to have a plan. Regardless of the hours they work, they will all participate in having a pension.

Mr. Speaker, we think that is the right thing to do. That is one of the stalemates in the CUPE discussion. Why would you not want all your members to have a pension plan? It is one of those issues that needs to be addressed in this discussion. I think that it is the right thing to do, and I think that everyone would agree with me on that, Mr. Speaker.



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

