

Legislative Assembly of New Brunswick

Oral Questions



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ENERGY

Mr. Melanson (Dieppe, Interim Opposition Leader, L): Mr. Speaker, we know that, historically, wars are very difficult to see and accept because they are very brutal, but they have driven many different changes around the world. Wars actually change how we live, they change how the economy goes, and they affect supply chains.

With this Ukrainian war, we have realized how we are too dependent on foreign energy sources. We have this Premier who tries to take advantage of a war to force old ways and old solutions. Different countries are moving away from fossil fuel and fracturing. They are going toward renewable energies and clean energies. Can the Premier explain how he sees this moving forward?

Hon. Mr. Higgs (Quispamsis, Premier, Minister responsible for Intergovernmental Affairs, PC): Mr. Speaker, I wish I had a crystal ball or insight on how this is all going to move forward because it was a difficult situation in Moncton yesterday when these young families got off the plane. In one family, a woman had not seen her mother for 10 years. She had talked to her but had not seen her. With what they left behind in their homeland and what they are faced with now in coming here to a new land, they are so excited and so relieved in many ways. Do I know what is next in terms of the Ukrainian crisis? I do not.

But what I do know is that there are a lot of countries that are interested in investing in Canada and in investing in New Brunswick to help solve an energy crisis that is immediate—right today. The idea is: What do we know, and what do we hope to know? What we know is that we have the ability to have some major impacts on the world energy supply. It is good to hear the Leader of the Opposition talk about the fact that we do have a shortage. I think the next step is: How do we manage that shortage and deal with it, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Melanson (Dieppe, Interim Opposition Leader, L): Mr. Speaker, I would remind the Premier, if he does not know yet, that not only different countries... Actually, 19 of 27 member states in Europe are moving away from traditional energy sources. They are going more toward renewable energies. The auto industry has significantly shifted over to electric vehicles. Many different industries and societies are doing so. They are not going forward with the old solutions of fracking and fossil fuel. We know that we need to move forward with these renewable energies in the context of global warming and climate change. We need to go forward with that. Wind and solar are much more competitive now than they were. Why can the Premier not start talking about how we can move forward with renewable energies that are clean?

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

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Hon. Mr. Higgs (Quispamsis, Premier, Minister responsible for Intergovernmental Affairs, PC): Mr. Speaker, I think we can have a novel approach to this. We all agree that we are heading toward a greener and cleaner environment. No one is in dispute of that. It is just the transition and the timing to get there.

During the COVID-19 crisis, we had a COVID-19 Cabinet committee that made decisions based on the factual information of the day and on how to best deal with the safety of our residents. Right now, we have a similar situation. We have a situation here in our country, but we also have a situation in Europe, a situation that is not going to be solved by wind and solar. You could do all the analyses that you want, and you will realize that they are not going to solve the situation. Why are they in their situation today? They shut down nuclear, and they went totally onto a gas and oil supply from a rogue country that then put them at ransom.

In the reality that we do not have a clean energy solution today, how do we build an energy solution that transitions to that? And that is the need right now. I would welcome an opportunity for an all-party review of just where we are today, what is practical, and how we get to tomorrow.

[Translation]

Mr. Melanson (Dieppe, Interim Opposition Leader, L): Mr. Speaker, I would remind the Premier that he is no longer working in the oil industry. He is the Premier of New Brunswick. He governs a society.

Yes, there are renewable solutions, Mr. Premier. Go do your homework. The wind and solar energy sectors are more competitive these days. Why would we not seize this opportunity right now? Unfortunately, the war in Ukraine is making us realize that we rely too heavily on traditional energy sources.

We must stop finding solutions from the past, like fracking and fossil fuels—gasoline. New Brunswickers want to get moving and go ahead. The automobile industry is already doing this, with electric cars. However, we have a Premier who does not want to recognize these sectors. Mr. Premier, please do your homework and start talking about renewable energy.

[Original]

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

Hon. Mr. Higgs (Quispamsis, Premier, Minister responsible for Intergovernmental Affairs, PC): Mr. Speaker, as Premier of the province, I recognize the reality of the situation. And the investors I talk about, do you know where they are coming from? Europe. Do you know why? It is because they typically had supply from Russia and they want to get out of that. The transition that they are looking for is about saying: Wow, you have gas supplies in New



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Brunswick and you are not utilizing them? That could take us to the next phase of, let's say, an LNG export for gas and then an export of liquid hydrogen, which, in terms of its conversion, could be partially powered by wind.

But the reality is that wind and solar will not meet the energy demands of not only Canada but also the world. They will not meet them. They do not meet the needs, so you get to the transition. And in terms of the nuclear that we have right now, the small modular reactors can be a game changer with clean, non-carbon-emitting solutions. Mr. Speaker, the reality is that we can talk about wind and solar and all this stuff, but they will not meet the needs.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Melanson (Dieppe, Interim Opposition Leader, L): Mr. Speaker, when we listen to the Premier, we realize that he is living in the past. He does not even want to recognize... He has already given up on a strategy for renewable energy production and consumption. He has already given up because he is living in the past with its old solutions. Solar energy, wind energy, and biomass, to give just three examples, all exist, and at prices that are far more competitive than those in the oil sector.

Mr. Premier, New Brunswick has a lot of capacity. We could not only provide our own supply, but also offer this energy source elsewhere, in Europe. European countries are already making the shift. With renewable energy, they want to minimize the geopolitical conflicts that are affecting them and us.

Mr. Premier, will you take action with a renewable energy strategy for our province?

[*Original*]

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

Hon. Mr. Higgs (Quispamsis, Premier, Minister responsible for Intergovernmental Affairs, PC): Mr. Speaker, you could pick elements of reality from the Leader of the Opposition's comments in relation to how New Brunswick can be a solution—Canada can be a solution. But then the other part is: What is Europe trying to do? Europeans have realized that they are now ransom to Russia. They are now being held hostage to a country that has military action on their doorstep. So we know that they are looking for options, and they have options right now that New Brunswick and Canada are well suited for. They are looking at a friendly country that can help them through this transition period.

So I will go back to what I said yesterday about an energy summit—an all-party energy summit—with not a lot of talk but a lot of facts about what the situation really is. How much can wind and solar actually do? What are the other options on the table, and how do we progress? We can talk around it here without the facts and pretend that we know

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something, or we can put the facts on the table and really know something, Mr. Speaker. I am open to the latter.

Mr. Melanson (Dieppe, Interim Opposition Leader, L): Mr. Speaker, if the Premier wants to have an energy summit and talk about facts, it cannot be only his facts. It has to be the real facts. When he talks about hydraulic fracturing, we know that, since the moratorium was put in place, there have been different studies saying that it is still not safe, it is still a huge risk for public health, and it is still a huge risk for our water supply. But we have not seen any studies that have said the opposite—that it is safe and that we can go forward. We still do not have a social license to do this.

All of a sudden, there is a war in Ukraine and the Premier says, Let's frack. Let's frack. Nobody talks about it other than him. And if he is talking to whomever he is talking to in Ottawa or around the world... Please tell us whom you are talking to, because there are many different experts who know that we need to go toward renewable energies. The only person in this room who does not talk about it is you, Premier.

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

Hon. Mr. Higgs (Quispamsis, Premier, Minister responsible for Intergovernmental Affairs, PC): Mr. Speaker, we could talk about hype, or we could talk about facts. And I do talk about wind and solar because I believe that they do play an important part in our future—no question about it. But the point I want to raise is that they are not the full solution. They cannot handle the energy demands that we have in Canada or globally or even in New Brunswick with the Atlantic Loop and the talk of buying more hydropower from Quebec. Yes, we want to do that, but it still will not meet all the needs that we have here. You get to the point of saying this: Okay, here we are. We have this gap. How do we fill this gap?

As far as the information and rhetoric that is used by the Liberal Party—going back to the days of discussing natural gas—there is a lot of new information. You know, I learned something recently from people who know the business, know the opportunity, and know how safe it is. It is that we have the cleanest gas of anywhere in the world—the cleanest of anywhere in the world. If you want to get clean and you want to get green, then you move in a progressive way, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Melanson (Dieppe, Interim Opposition Leader, L): Mr. Speaker, we all know, if we pay attention to this, that there needs to be a transition. But the Premier is not telling us whom he is talking to. Is it Jason Kenney? Jason Kenney would not talk about renewable energy and clean energy, right? Is it Doug Ford? He would not even know what it is.

The Premier of New Brunswick obviously talked about it for about three or four seconds. He mentioned it today, but he has never, ever committed to it. We need to commit to renewable energy sources that are now way more competitive compared to fossil fuels than they were in the past. Many different sectors and countries are moving toward it. They

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are investing significantly toward it in the auto industry, in different countries around the world, and even in Canada. But in New Brunswick, with this Premier, we are so shy. Premier, when are you going to come up with a renewable energy strategy?

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

Hon. Mr. Holland (Albert, Minister of Natural Resources and Energy Development, PC): Mr. Speaker, it is time to get up and talk about a bit of a balance here. It is a little spicy, coming from the opposition. Maybe Donald Arseneault is writing the Opposition Leader's questions and giving him a bit of an edge here today.

Let's talk about the transition. The myopic focus on one component is not accurate. We are dealing with a transition. We are dealing with the Atlantic Loop. That conversation is ongoing. There are discussions about hydrogen, ammonia, and a green energy hub in a variety of different locations in the province. There are embedded energy programs that we have embarked upon, and there are solar pilot projects in New Brunswick. If you have been anywhere in the province, you have seen windmills turning, and there is a desire to continue with the embedded energy programs. SMRs are on the horizon—SMRs which have the ability to consume spent fuel in addition to using their own.

Let's talk about the fact that we have reduced emissions in the province of New Brunswick by 38% since 2005 and the fact that 80% of the electricity that we generate comes from nonemitting means. We are heading toward the last 20%—join us.

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

Mr. Melanson (Dieppe, Interim Opposition Leader, L): Well, the Premier needs enforcement every single day when it comes to asking the tough questions and trying to get some answers. Every single day...

(Interjections.)

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

Mr. Melanson (Dieppe, Interim Opposition Leader, L): He, as Premier of this province, does not know his files. He is not committed to renewable energy. The windmills that we see happened when we were there and when other governments were there. This government is not focused on renewable energy. We know that. It is clear.

If you want to have an energy summit, I am game. I am game for it. I am game, yes. We should. But the facts cannot be only yours, Premier. You cannot...

(Interjections.)

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Mr. Melanson (Dieppe, Interim Opposition Leader, L): No, we are talking about a summit, not a closed-door committee meeting.

(Interjections.)

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

Mr. Melanson (Dieppe, Interim Opposition Leader, L): We are talking about a public summit that people can participate in and listen to—not something held behind closed doors, as you always have had, to make your own decisions. Premier, tell us this: When are you going to commit to this energy summit? When is it going to be? Where is it going to be? Is it going to be public?

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

Hon. Mr. Higgs (Quispamsis, Premier, Minister responsible for Intergovernmental Affairs, PC): So Mr. Speaker, that is progress, do you not think? We have covered a few things today. You know, we agree that there is an energy crisis, so that is progress. We have agreed that there has to be a plan going forward on how we get greener, so that is progress. We agree that there needs to be an energy summit to detail all the facts so that they are all on the table, with no bias on one side or the other but just the reality. That is progress, Mr. Speaker.

So we will organize this fact process and understand how this is going to work and how we can get credible information. We can decide on how we will do that. How do we make it all public? We can decide how we do that. Then we can work on a transition plan, Mr. Speaker. It is not about having people subjected to gas at \$2.10 per litre all at once because of an ill-fated problem and an ill-fated solution coming out of Ottawa. It is about a transition for our country, not a crisis for every citizen that lives in our province and in our country, Mr. Speaker.

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

HEALTH CARE

Mr. Melanson (Dieppe, Interim Opposition Leader, L): Mr. Speaker, it is too bad that the Premier, who has been in office for three years, has to have, unfortunately, a Ukrainian war to make him think about an energy summit and about trying to find a solution for the long term regarding renewable energies.

I am now going to shift over, because yesterday I asked very important questions and did not get any answers from the Minister of Health. She said that she would provide us with a whole list of vacant positions in terms of health care providers in the public sector of the

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province. I have given you 24 hours. Maybe yesterday was short notice. Maybe it caught you off guard. Minister, could you provide that list to us today, please?

Hon. Mrs. Shephard (Saint John Lancaster, Minister of Health, PC): Mr. Speaker, the member opposite, the Leader of the Opposition, is very focused on numbers. Do you know what? What we are going to say here today is that those numbers are available. But what is most important, Mr. Speaker, is that we work toward getting them filled. He knows the numbers. He knows what the numbers are.

Let me just add some information to the table. Back in October 2014, Hon. Victor Boudreau had a mandate letter from his Premier. Do you know what the mandate letter said? It said that the department was to develop “a network of community health centres to give New Brunswick better access to health professionals in non-emergency situations”. Guess what, Mr. Speaker! We are doing that today. It said to improve “access to primary care by maximizing the use of health professionals such as: nurse practitioners; advanced care paramedics; pharmacists; and midwives”. Guess what, Mr. Speaker! We are doing that today. It said to form “a front-line medical advisory committee made up of health professionals”. Mr. Speaker, we are doing that today. It said to give “all New Brunswickers access to a family doctor, by adding 50 net new general practitioners by 2018”. Mr. Speaker, they did not do it.

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

Mr. Melanson (Dieppe, Interim Opposition Leader, L): Well, the Minister of Health finally got a mandate letter—the mandate letter from 2014.

It may be that the unwritten mandate letter that you did not get from your Premier says to close the ER, to have major problems at the Sackville ER, to have major problems at the ER at the Dr. Georges.-L.-Dumont UHC, to close the Upper River Valley Hospital’s labour and birth unit—close it, or to close maybe the pediatric unit in the Miramichi—close it. No, it has to be Campbellton. It has to be the Campbellton birth unit that is gone. Maybe the Premier wrote to you on a napkin that the Campbellton ophthalmology unit should be gone, and it is already gone because they closed it. What about the ER at the Stella-Maris-de-Kent Hospital? Was that in your unwritten mandate letter from the Premier along with the problems that the Moncton Hospital ER has had? The Premier should have written you a mandate letter that said to hire more professional workers in New Brunswick.

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

Hon. Mrs. Shephard (Saint John Lancaster, Minister of Health, PC): You know, Mr. Speaker, we accept the challenges that are before us today, and we are working on every single one of them.

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Let me also refer to a September 5, 2017, mandate letter to the honourable member for Kent South that referred to having “increased the focus of the health care system on community-based preventative care”. Mr. Speaker, we are doing that now, delivering on it and working on expanding it. It referred to developing “a network of community health centres to give New Brunswick better access to health professionals in non-emergency situations”. I think that we just heard that from the other mandate letter. Mr. Speaker, we are doing that. It referred to using “community support orders to help those suffering from mental illness”. Mr. Speaker, let me refer to the fact that our mental health services have improved so much that we have decreased the wait-list for those suffering from mental illness by 60% in this province. In many communities, we have eliminated that wait-list. We are doing the work.

(Interjections.)

Mr. Speaker (Hon. Mr. Oliver): Members, order.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Melanson (Dieppe, Interim Opposition Leader, L): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the minister promised us that she would provide a list of all vacant positions for health care professionals in New Brunswick. She promised us that yesterday, and we gave her 24 hours to get prepared. She said that the information was already available, so I do not understand why she is unable to table it here. She could at least list a few bits of data in the minute she will have to answer us, instead of dishing up partisan answers. Can the minister please table the list of all vacant positions for health care professionals in the New Brunswick public sector?

[*Original*]

Hon. Mrs. Shephard (Saint John Lancaster, Minister of Health, PC): Well, Mr. Speaker, if that is all he has, it is no wonder that the mandate letters from 2017 and 2018 were not fulfilled because that is the approach they are taking.

(Interjections.)

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

Hon. Mrs. Shephard (Saint John Lancaster, Minister of Health, PC): Mr. Speaker, we are taking action every single day. Do you know what? I had just started talking about lowering the mental health wait-list. It is something that I am particularly proud of. And we cannot stop. We are the ones who gave advanced care paramedics the ability to be advanced care paramedics every single hour that they are on the job, and we have expanded the scope of practice for pharmacists so that they can not only refill prescriptions as needed but also provide service and assessments for UTI infections and prescribe. They can do it for

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shingles and prescribe, and they can also now prescribe and assess for contraceptives. We are progressing—progressing—our health care system.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Ms. Mitton (Memramcook-Tantramar, G): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Environment and Climate Change. We cannot afford any new oil, gas, or coal development if the world is to avoid a global temperature increase of 1.5°C. Everything that we have learned and seen since 2014 has shown us that the ban on fracking was the right move. Just look at how our climate is changing. There are small things, such as people having trouble building rinks in their backyards in the winter, but there has been heat wave after heat wave. Last year alone, hundreds of people died in British Columbia from the heat, and that is just the tip of the melting iceberg.

To meet our 2030 carbon emissions goals, we need to be reducing our reliance on fossil fuels, not increasing it, Mr. Speaker. Does the Minister of Climate Change support increased fracking, and if he does, how does this square with his Climate Change Action Plan and the climate science?

Hon. Mr. Crossman (Hampton, Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Minister responsible for the Regional Development Corporation, PC): Thank you very much, through you, Mr. Speaker, to the member opposite for the question. The Climate Change Plan renewal is coming very soon. It is coming before the summer, and most of your answers are involved with it. It has been well documented, with all the departments working together to come up with the solutions to moving ahead. What were 118 items to be looked at have now been cut to about one third of that, with more measurable goals. Some of those may answer your questions in a timely manner, as the renewal plan is coming in the very near future. You will see it before the summer if everything goes right with its translation and other things on the docket.

We do need renewable energy. We do need new ways of doing it. We understand that solar and wind power cannot do it alone. But it is a slow transition. It is slow, in fact, with trying to get EV cars ordered now to have them in place and with even running homes with the energy needed, especially in the cold winter months. I am looking forward to providing most of your answers with the upcoming renewal plan. Thank you.

Ms. Mitton (Memramcook-Tantramar, G): Mr. Speaker, we need to act now, and we need to act with urgency. We do not need a slow transition. We need to speed up because that is the only way that we will ensure a livable future for our children and the only way to keep global temperatures from increasing past 1.5°C.

This requires a collective effort. It requires our moving out of the last century and looking to the future. I did not hear whether the minister supports fracking, but I want to ask this. In April, Quebec became the first jurisdiction in the world to explicitly ban oil and gas



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development. This will not only end petroleum exploration and production in Quebec but also ban the public financing of it. As part of his Climate Change Action Plan, and based on the science, will the Minister of Climate Change follow Quebec's lead and ban any new oil and gas development in New Brunswick?

Hon. Mr. Crossman (Hampton, Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Minister responsible for the Regional Development Corporation, PC): Thank you very much again for the question from across the way. We will certainly be looking at everything. There will be no decisions made today or in the very near future. Discussions do continue. All departments are involved, as One Team One GNB, and it is with the Department of Energy and Resource Development, the Department of Environment, the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure, and others as well. That is one team. No decisions will be made today, but moving ahead, we will be looking at all these decisions. I am aware of what is happening in Quebec through our Climate Change Secretariat and the meetings that we have had. Thank you.

Ms. Mitton (Memramcook-Tantramar, G): Mr. Speaker, it feels as though they are tweaking around the edges when looking at the climate plan. We still have not even seen a climate plan while the world burns.

(Interjections.)

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

Ms. Mitton (Memramcook-Tantramar, G): Mr. Speaker, the minister has repeatedly said that the new Climate Change Action Plan will be coming this June. We are waiting to see it, but I still have not heard whether the minister supports fracking. The International Energy Agency has said that there can be no new oil and gas development and no new fossil fuel infrastructure built if we want to ensure that we can have even a chance of meeting our carbon emission targets and to ensure our plans for a livable future. It seems that the minister does not understand the science and does not understand what is happening. Mr. Speaker, will the minister answer whether he supports fracking? And when will we finally see the plan?

Hon. Mr. Higgs (Quispamsis, Premier, Minister responsible for Intergovernmental Affairs, PC): Mr. Speaker, I do not think that anyone—anyone—in this Chamber or elsewhere would deny climate change and what we are seeing around us. We know that there is a need for urgency. But we also know that there is a balance in how we manage that so that people can live and work here in our respective provinces and countries. We also know that we have an energy threat right now in terms of Russia's invasion.

Mr. Speaker, I think that what we are all trying to say here is that there is a transition. You know, I appreciate the arguments that say, oh well, we do not want to have any more fossil fuels. I get it. We are all trying to get there. But we need to think about how we are going to



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keep the lights on, how we are going to keep people in food, and how we are going to have transportation continue. I had a little analogy sent to me: When we transitioned from horses to cars, we did not shoot all the horses when we had 100 cars on the road. That will tell you that there is a process, and that is what we cannot seem to figure out. But I think that we can figure it out. We can actually have a process where we transition from one fuel source to the next fuel source to the next fuel source, and they all get cleaner and greener along the way, Mr. Speaker.

[*Translation*]

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Mr. LePage (Restigouche West, L): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my turn to blame the federal government for its actions. I blame the federal government for, among other things, investing over \$43 million in New Brunswick in order to connect over 10 000 households around the province. I also blame the Minister of Rural Economic Development and the MP for Madawaska—Restigouche for announcing, on June 3, an extra \$55 million in funding for Rogers and Xplornet to bring high-speed Internet to nearly 11 000 households in several rural, remote, and Indigenous communities across New Brunswick. I blame the federal government for caring about rural regions in New Brunswick. But where is the New Brunswick Premier, Mr. Speaker?

[*Original*]

(Interjections.)

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

[*Translation*]

Mr. LePage (Restigouche West, L): Mr. Speaker, can the Premier explain why the provincial government is refusing to fund projects aimed at connecting rural households to high-speed Internet?

[*Original*]

(Interjections.)

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

Hon. Mr. Higgs (Quispamsis, Premier, Minister responsible for Intergovernmental Affairs, PC): Mr. Speaker, there have been federal programs available for some time, and it is good to see this one come through. We have made recent announcements with the federal

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government, and we will continue to do that on the infrastructure that is needed in the province. That is the model.

You saw a recent article where we talked about improvement in the highways through our communities in rural New Brunswick. That is because we are focused on asset management. And we have seen federal government cooperation in that regard when it said that maybe the rules can be changed a little bit so that we can actually build what we need in the province. That has been the argument.

But the member opposite may have missed the energy crisis and the discussion leading up to this, Mr. Speaker. That is what we are talking about—the energy crisis and the fact that people are having difficulty affording to live. So, news flash: Energy is the issue right now, Mr. Speaker. There is an energy crisis in the world right now, and in many ways, we have a solution here in New Brunswick to help world situations. Yes, we are asking the federal government to be part of it because it is the federal government policies that have caused an energy crisis. Obviously, it is exacerbated by what is happening in Europe, but the federal government's policies have gotten us right exactly where it wanted us.

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

[*Translation*]

Mr. LePage (Restigouche West, L): Mr. Speaker, last April, at a meeting of the Standing Committee on Estimates and Fiscal Policy, the Minister responsible for the Regional Development Corporation confirmed that he was aiming to connect 63 000 homes. Last Friday, the federal Minister of Rural Economic Development reached out to the Premier to do more for New Brunswick in this regard.

Mr. Speaker, will the Premier call the federal government and inject funds in order to bring high-speed Internet to more households in rural New Brunswick?

[*Original*]

Hon. Mr. Higgs (Quispamsis, Premier, Minister responsible for Intergovernmental Affairs, PC): Yes, we will continue to work with the federal government on projects, Mr. Speaker. There is no question about that. You know, there are a lot of options on the table. You can talk about Rogers, and you can talk about Aliant, EastLink, and Starlink. There are many, many options. Is FibreOP the answer? Maybe it is for some communities. But we are committed to having rural Internet access everywhere in our province. There is no question about that—no question about that.

You know, the solution that we see from across the way is, oh well, we will just go out. We do not know whether it will work or not; but we will make a headline, and we will put money into it because we believe that headlines pay for themselves because they help us.



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What we want to do is make investments that help the people in New Brunswick, and we are already seeing that we are certainly putting forward elements of that in our programs around housing, our programs around social assistance, and our programs around helping those that need it the most in relation to this high energy cost. There are a whole lot of solutions, and they are not all about how we can just throw money at a situation. It is about how we get the results. Mr. Speaker, measuring results is what we are all about.

Mr. Speaker (Hon. Mr. Oliver): Thank you, member. The time for question period has expired.

