

Speaking Notes
Hon. Shawn Graham
28th Annual Canadian Nuclear Society Conference
June 6, 2007

Thank you. Good afternoon everyone and a special welcome to New Brunswick to our friends from out of province.

I want to extend a special hello to several people who are with us today, including my colleague, Jack Keir, our Minister of Energy.

It is a great pleasure for me to be with you at your 28th annual conference.

Sans doute vos discussions ont été très informatives et productives.

Je félicite les nombreuses personnes qui ont travaillé très fort pour organiser le congrès.

Your theme – “Embracing the Future: Canada’s Nuclear Renewable and Growth” - is especially interesting to us as we see the energy sector, and in particular the nuclear sector, as a key to moving our province forward and bringing us towards self sufficiency by 2026.

Lorsque nous avons été élus l’automne dernier, nous avons promis de former un gouvernement d’action, résolu à favoriser les transformations dans notre province. Nous avons pris notre élan sans tarder dans différents secteurs – peut-être plus encore dans le domaine de l’énergie.

The changes that are underway – transformational changes in the energy sector in our province – are truly remarkable.

And it goes without saying that on the nuclear side of the ledger, there is some very interesting potential in our area ... there could be developments in this sector which will again put New Brunswick on the world map, and I will speak to this a bit more later.

We are very pleased with the advances already made in the energy sector and the commitments which we have kept from the Charter for Change, our platform in the provincial election.

Energy was one of the Three Es of our election platform – the others being education and economic development. These Three Es are the foundation on which we will build a self-sufficient New Brunswick.

We are confident that the energy sector will bring unprecedented growth to our province if harnessed properly. There are a number of strategic projects that are setting new record investments today and in the years ahead – many of them right here in the Saint John region.

There is currently in excess of \$10 billion in projects on the drawing boards for possible development – this would mean record investment in Atlantic Canada.

Notre but est de faire du Nouveau-Brunswick un meneur dans la production, un meneur dans l'adoption de nouvelles technologies afin de trouver d'autres formes d'énergie renouvelable, et un meneur au chapitre de l'efficacité.

Nous estimons que ces objectifs ne doivent pas être absolument exclusifs.

Clean power will be very important in our province in the years ahead, and as such, the possibility of a second nuclear unit at Point Lepreau is very interesting to us, and will be closely examined.

I should point out that even while in Opposition we were 100 % in favour of the current refurbishment of the Candu-6 unit at Point Lepreau.

There is a great deal to be proud of here in New Brunswick when it comes to our record with nuclear energy.

Not only was the world's first Candu-6 constructed here at Point Lepreau, the first refurbishment of a Candu-6 – underway right now – was also done here.

And we are very pleased at the progress being made on the refurbishment – on time and on budget – and the spin-offs already associated with the project shows that we were on the mark on our assessment of the positive side benefits this project would create. And this has to be tapped into and nurtured even more.

Case in point: A few months ago it was my pleasure to join officials of A.E.C.L and NB Power to announce that engineers from Argentina would be trained in the refurbishment at Lepreau.

This will allow them to bring that knowledge back with them for their own Candu-6 – which will need to be refurbished shortly.

And only a few weeks into my new job, I took part in the announcement of a \$10 million contract awarded to a small company called Precision Nuclear in Mactaquac near Fredericton, which will fabricate parts, such as end fittings, for the refurbishment.

I understand that this small company has recently landed contracts in Korea as a result of its work at Lepreau, and that is a magnificent example of the type of spin-offs we want to create for our own companies on projects of this scope.

But we want to go even further. Because while New Brunswick was the first in adopting Candu-6 technology in the world, the first to undertake a refurbishment in the world, and therefore gaining world-class expertise, it is our view that New Brunswick can hone its knowledge and export it world-wide.

We are bullish about the performance of our Canadian technology and we want to capitalize on this knowledge and expertise around the world.

It is also why we are keenly aware of the merits in an idea brought forward by the Self Sufficiency Task Force – namely creating a centre of excellence in Nuclear energy right here in Saint John. A Centre of Excellence which could serve not only New Brunswick and Canada, but indeed the world, through innovation and extensive research and development activities.

It is something that we are exploring very closely. The nuclear renaissance is happening all over the world and Canada, and New Brunswick must maintain and enhance its international competitiveness in this sector.

New Brunswick is prepared to play a key role in making this happen. This will be part of our agenda when we do feasibility on a second reactor at Lepreau.

On that front, there have been a number of discussions already taking place with various nuclear energy producers and buyers of clean energy as we look at the parameters of the feasibility study ... and no stone will be left unturned ... everything from the business model, the economic benefits, the technology, and the market potential for electricity ... it's all on the table.

We will be bringing to Cabinet in a few weeks a proposal for consideration by our energy minister, which will trigger a process for the feasibility for this 3rd generation nuclear reactor.

New Brunswickers have been very well served by our Lepreau facility, its safety record and our operation of the facility by the men and women of NB Power – their expertise is second to none.

Our geographic proximity to the U.S. Eastern Seaboard – a huge energy market – and an approved nuclear site, is an asset which we clearly recognize for its economic value.

And we have already made some inroads with our friends in the U.S.

You will have noticed that in the eight months we have held office – we are big on creating new partnerships and improving existing partnerships.

Just last week I was in New York and I had the opportunity to meet energy stakeholders and I can tell you, this market is hungry for energy and, I believe, we in New Brunswick have a tremendous opportunity to satisfy that appetite for energy. We realize there are some transmission challenges to over-come but we won't back down from any challenges.

In fact next week I will be leading a trade mission to France which includes having discussions with French officials on their experiences with nuclear energy and other types of generation.

We have signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Maine to improve our inter-connectivity; and we will be exploring greater export potential to the New England States.

Newfoundland has had discussion with our System Operator about the possibility of moving 750 megawatts of clean hydro power from Churchill Falls on our transmission system.

We are also in discussions with other Atlantic Provinces and New England States on a number of other projects, including regional approaches to renewable energy.

Just a few weeks ago, NB Power issued a Request for Proposals for an additional 300 megawatts of wind energy to put onto our system, having already announced 100 megawatts of wind power in the past six months.

L'énergie éolienne contribuera à diminuer notre dépendance au pétrole étranger et à favoriser davantage l'énergie propre au Nouveau-Brunswick. Elle permettra de mettre notre province au premier plan de l'énergie verte renouvelable au Canada atlantique.

But we all know that even though we as a government are focused on making New Brunswick a leader in generation, we are also fully conscious of the rising cost of energy on consumers and industry.

Efficiency must rival generation as a priority and that's why we are very proud that we were able to usher in the best suite of energy efficiency programs for homes in all of Canada through Efficiency New Brunswick, the crown agency responsible for delivery of efficiency programs in our province.

These programs cover low-income homes, existing homes, new construction and apartments with up to 20 units ... the latter is a first in Canada.

And recently we rounded out those efficiency incentives with new programs for small and medium-size business, as well as energy –intensive industry.

Donc, le moins qu'on puisse dire est que le secteur de l'énergie au Nouveau-Brunswick bourdonne d'activité.

We are confident that our province is quickly taking its place as the energy hub for all of Atlantic Canada and the Eastern Seaboard. Take note of our progress as we are open for business and we will capitalize on our geographic proximity to the U.S. Eastern Seaboard and Eastern Canada in the years ahead. And we are pleased that nuclear will play a key role in this new hub reality.

Bio-energy, nuclear, hydro, tidal, traditional generation ... it will all be part of our new focus on energy in the months and years ahead.

Pour atteindre nos objectifs, nous offrirons notre collaboration à d'autres gouvernements et à des groupes comme la Société nucléaire canadienne.

Our doors are always open and we look forward to hearing from many groups and energy experts as we carve a new path towards a vibrant energy sector, on our way to self-sufficiency by 2026.

It is an honour and a pleasure for me as Premier to be able to oversee some of the work that Jack Keir, our very capable energy minister, and his team are advancing on behalf of the people that we are privileged to represent.

And I want to thank you for allowing me to share some of our enthusiasm with you today. In closing, I want to thank you once again for your kind invitation and thank you for choosing Saint John, and New Brunswick as host for your event.

We hope to see you all again very soon.

Thank you. Merci.