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Opposition Leader Unimpressed With Bid to Renegotiate Upper Churchill Contract



Opposition Leader Yvonne Jones sees nothing of substance in the province's bid to re-open negotiations on the Upper Churchill power contract. Nalcor's CEO has written Hydro Quebec on the matter. Jones says it isn't the first time for similar efforts. Premier Danny Williams says they sought the opinion of some of the top legal minds in Quebec. Nalcor says legal opinions suggest a 1994 amendment to the Quebec civil code gives the obligation for both parties to act in good faith during the life of the contract. Nalcor CEO Ed Martin says if Hydro Quebec declines, they'll cross that bridge. NDP Leader Lorraine Michael believes the attempt to get redress on the Upper Churchill will be an uphill battle. Nalcor has asked for a response from Hydro Quebec by January 15th.

Opposition House Leader Kelvin Parsons wonders why Newfoundland and Labrador is spending \$250,000 a year to have a representative in Ottawa. John Fitzgerald holds the position in the nation's capital, but Parsons says the government owned Nalcor has spent over \$960-thousand on lobbying fees to gain access to federal officials and the PMO to talk about the Lower Churchill. Parsons raised the matter in the House of Assembly. Premier Danny Williams says Dr.Fitzgerald is doing an outstanding job, and points to his efforts on the seal hunt issue in particular. Williams says Fitzgerald provided invaluable information on that matter. Parsons says he's concerned Nalcor is exempt from access to information laws, the Auditor General and the Public Tendering Act.He says the people have the right to know how much is being spent on lobbyists. He says it was only because of federal legislation governing lobbyists that they were able to get the information on a federal website.