

Kennedy disputes Lower Churchill letter

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Says province willing to negotiate, but not 'on Upper Churchill terms'

A Letter to the Editor in today's edition of The Telegram, from former premier Roger Grimes, has riled provincial Minister of Natural Resources Jerome Kennedy.

He offered comment on the letter at a press conference called at the House of Assembly at 12:30 p.m.

"I would say it's with utter amazement that I read a letter from from a former premier saying that Quebec is not putting roadblocks in our way to development of the Lower Churchill. To make comments like that is to deny our history or try to change the course of our history," the minister said.

Kennedy walked through past and continuing court actions on the part of the provincial government in relation to the Upper Churchill deal, as well as an ongoing regulatory challenge over access to transmission of Churchill power through Quebec.

Grimes has accused the current provincial leadership of playing politics with the neighbouring province, of avoiding reasonable discussion with Quebec on Churchill power development, because it plays well with the public in Newfoundland and Labrador.

As for the question of whether or not to approve the Muskrat Falls development plan, the former premier has endorsed converting the oil-burning Holyrood power station to natural gas and relying on that station until the Upper Churchill power comes back into play in 2041.

Kennedy, meanwhile, said Grimes was, while in power, ready to sign on to what he alleges amounted to no more than a giveaway of Churchill power to the Quebec government.

"Certainly if Quebec is open to discussions (now) so are we. But it won't be on the Grimes terms. It won't be on the Upper Churchill terms, it will have to be on terms that are fair to all of us," Kennedy said.

More statements from both Grimes and Kennedy can be read within, "Don't believe lies about Quebec: Grimes," featured on p.A1 of today's Telegram.