

Daily sitting 2

Wednesday, December 2, 2015

10 o'clock a.m.

Prayers.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Chris Collins, introduced the new pages for the session: Katie Avery, Fredericton; Amy Baldwin, Regina, Saskatchewan; Samantha Bizimungu, Fredericton; Lauren Colter, Fredericton; Gopi Krishna Adhikari, Fredericton; Conor Munroe, Truro, Nova Scotia; Andrea Robertson, Caracas, Venezuela; Brandan Seagrave, Moncton; Clara Simpson, Fredericton; Nathaniel Wallace, Fredericton; Tyler Williams, Quispamsis.

The returning pages are: Ben Graham, Jacksonville; Phoebe Marmura Brown, Fredericton; Corben Parker, Fredericton; Alex Robichaud, Laval, Québec.

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It was agreed by unanimous consent to extend the time allotted for Oral Questions by fifteen minutes.

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Hon. Mr. Boudreau laid upon the table of the House a document entitled *Choices to Move New Brunswick Forward, Strategic Program Review*.

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Hon. Mr. Horsman laid upon the table of the House documents entitled *Report of the 2012 New Brunswick Judicial Remuneration Commission, June 4, 2015*; and *Government's Response to the Report of the 2012 New Brunswick Judicial Remuneration Commission, Department of Justice, December 2, 2015*.

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The following Bills were introduced and read a first time:

By Hon. Mr. Arseneault,

Bill 2, *An Act to Amend the Official Languages Act*.

By Hon. Mr. Doherty,

Bill 3, *An Act to Amend the Service New Brunswick Act*.

Bill 4, *An Act to Amend the Assessment Act*.

By Mr. Coon,

Bill 5, *Green Jobs Act*.

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Mr. Steeves gave Notice of Motion 1 that on Thursday, December 10, 2015, he would move the following resolution, seconded by Ms. Shephard:

WHEREAS the current government did not campaign on taking seniors' assets from them;

WHEREAS the Premier is reported to have promised in a pre-election meeting of the Coalition for Seniors and Nursing Home Residents' Rights that he would not take seniors' assets away from them;

WHEREAS the current government did bring forward a policy to take away seniors' assets this past Spring;

WHEREAS the Premier has since then hit the "reset button" and has only said his government was taking the policy off the table for the time being;

WHEREAS the Minister of Social Development has stated that the decision to take away seniors' assets was a fair policy that was poorly communicated;

WHEREAS the Premier still has not unequivocally committed to remove seniors' assets from the consideration of financial need;

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED THAT this Assembly urges the current government to place a moratorium on the policy of taking seniors' assets for the rest of their mandate; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT this Assembly urges the current government to work with all seniors groups and associations in reviewing policies that affect senior care.

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Mr. Higgs gave Notice of Motion 2 that on Thursday, December 10, 2015, he would move the following resolution, seconded by Mr. Jeff Carr:

WHEREAS the proposed federal government income tax changes, combined with the most recent provincial government income tax increases, will result in New Brunswick having the highest income tax rates in Canada;

WHEREAS the provincial government is considering increasing the HST in New Brunswick to 15%, making it equivalent to the highest sales tax rate in Canada;

WHEREAS the provincial government has already increased the fees for a multitude of licenses, services and registrations;

WHEREAS the combined effect of Canada's highest income tax rates, highest sales tax rates, and increased fees, will make New Brunswick uncompetitive in attracting professionals such as doctors and entrepreneurs;

WHEREAS the previous provincial government had already corrected revenue gaps to diminish the deficit and was addressing the real problem of controlling expenditures;

WHEREAS the recent Strategic Program Review options are heavily weighted toward increasing taxes instead of eliminating government waste;

WHEREAS the Minister of Finance has stated he is contemplating reducing the recently increased provincial income tax rates in an attempt to restore competitiveness;

BE IT RESOLVED THAT this Assembly urges the federal government that income tax abatement be implemented on the proposed federal income tax rate for those with incomes over \$200,000 in order to maintain the federal income taxation rate for these individuals at 29%;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT this Assembly urges the Government of New Brunswick to reject any further increases in provincial tax rates or fees and that the Government of New Brunswick focus its revenue generation efforts on increased private sector economic activity in the province.

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Mr. Urquhart gave Notice of Motion 3 that on Thursday, December 10, 2015, he would move the following resolution, seconded by Mr. Macdonald:

WHEREAS the Mactaquac Dam and power station are expected to end their useful life in 2030;

WHEREAS NB Power is asking the public to provide input into three potential options addressing the future of this vital facility, namely a dam with a new power station, a dam with no power station, or no dam options;

WHEREAS the second and third options involving the removal of the power station or the free running of the St. John River provide no ongoing economic benefits for the province;

WHEREAS the first option maintains a dam and power station that will allow the continued enjoyment of the headpond as well as creating economic opportunity and jobs through the generation of power for use or sale by New Brunswickers;

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED THAT this Assembly supports the first option proposed by NB Power, to maintain the dam and to install a new power station at or near the current location in Mactaquac.

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Ms. Dubé gave Notice of Motion 4 that on Thursday, December 10, 2015, she would move the following resolution, seconded by Ms. Wilson:

WHEREAS the government has been conducting an endless attack on rural New Brunswick by reducing and eliminating services to regions which are already disadvantaged by distance, opportunity for employment, and access to government;

WHEREAS these rural attacks include closures of schools, Service New Brunswick offices, library services, and court houses;

WHEREAS a Health Authority has also announced plans to reduce the number of hospital beds in their network by nearly 20%;

WHEREAS a Health Authority has also suggested that rural hospitals could be repurposed to become senior care centers;

WHEREAS the former Progressive Conservative government was implementing a plan to find efficiencies in the health care system without any reduction in the number of hospital beds;

WHEREAS the government has provided no evidence to prove that these reduction in service points are necessary or that they will improve services for New Brunswickers;

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED THAT this Assembly not support the plan to reduce the number of hospital beds;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the government be urged to conduct public consultations with the communities that will be affected by the proposed service point closures in an effort to find efficiencies without reducing services, especially in rural regions.

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It was agreed by unanimous consent to revert to Introduction of Guests.

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Hon. Mr. Fraser gave notice that on Friday, December 4, 2015, Bills 2, 3 and 4 would be called for second reading.

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With leave of the House, Hon. Mr. Fraser moved, seconded by Ms. Dubé: (Motion 5)

THAT notwithstanding Standing Rule 29(1), the time for the daily meeting and adjournment of the sitting of the Assembly on Fridays shall be as follows:

Friday 9.00 a.m. to 2.00 p.m.

THAT this Special Order shall remain in effect during the remainder of the Second Session of the Fifty-eighth Legislative Assembly.

And the question being put, it was resolved in the affirmative.

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Mr. LePage offered condolences to the family of the late Joseph Alfred Roussel, former Liberal MLA for Restigouche County (1970-1974) and Restigouche West (1974-1982).

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And then, 11.52 a.m., the House adjourned.