

Daily sitting 11

Thursday, December 17, 2015

10 o'clock a.m.

Prayers.

Mr. Fitch welcomed to the House Mr. Mike Olscamp, former Progressive Conservative MLA for Tantramar (2006-2014); and Ms. Carolle de Ste. Croix, former Liberal MLA for Dalhousie-Restigouche East (1995-1999).

During Statements by Members, Mr. Speaker called Mr. Fairgrieve to order for alleging the Premier “misled” New Brunswickers.

Ms. Shephard, Member for Saint John Lancaster, laid upon the table of the House a petition in support of the redemption centre owners’ request for an increase in handling fees. (Petition 7)

Mr. Coon, Member for Fredericton South, laid upon the table of the House a petition in support of a ban on herbicide spraying of forests within the boundaries of Kedgwick. (Petition 8)

The following Bills were introduced and read a first time:

By Hon. Mr. Gallant,

Bill 15, *Regulatory Accountability and Reporting Act*.

By Hon. Mr. Horsman,

Bill 16, *An Act to Amend the Motor Vehicle Act*.

Hon. Mr. Melanson, Minister of Finance, delivered to Mr. Speaker a Message from Her Honour the Lieutenant-Governor, and the said Message was read by Mr. Speaker, all the Members standing, and is as follows:

Fredericton, New Brunswick.

December 17, 2015.

Her Honour the Lieutenant-Governor transmits the *Capital Estimates* for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2017, and the *Supplementary Estimates 2014-2015, Volume I*, required for the services of the province, not otherwise provided for, and in accordance with the provisions of the *Constitution Act, 1867*, recommends these estimates to the House.

(Sgd. :) Jocelyne Roy Vienneau.
Lieutenant-Governor.

Pursuant to Notice of Motion 8, Hon. Mr. Melanson moved, seconded by the Honourable the Premier:

THAT this House approves in general the capital budgetary policy of the government.

And the question being put, Hon. Mr. Melanson proceeded to deliver the 2016-2017 capital budget speech.

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

Mr. Albert, Government House Leader, announced that it was the intention of government that the House resolve itself into a Committee of Supply to be granted to Her Majesty forthwith.

The House, according to Order, resolved itself into a Committee of Supply with Ms. Harris in the chair.

And after some time, Mr. Speaker resumed the chair and Ms. Harris, the Chair, after requesting that Mr. Speaker revert to Presentations of Committee Reports, reported that the Committee proceeding in the matter under consideration, had passed the following resolution:

RESOLVED, that Supply be granted to Her Majesty.

And she was directed to ask leave to sit again.

Ms. Harris moved, seconded by the Honourable the Premier:

THAT the House does concur with the Committee of Supply in its report and agrees in its resolution that Supply be granted to Her Majesty.

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

Mr. Albert, after requesting that Mr. Speaker revert to Government Motions for the Ordering of the Business of the House, moved, seconded by the Honourable the Premier:

THAT consideration of estimates in Committee of Supply be added to the Orders of the Day until such time as they are dispatched.

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

Mr. Albert gave notice that on Friday, December 18, 2015, Bills 15 and 16 would be called for second reading.

Mr. Albert, Government House Leader, announced that following third reading, it was the intention of government that the House recess until 2.30 p.m.; following which Opposition Members' Business would be considered.

The following Bills were read a third time:

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

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

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

Bill 6, *An Act to Amend the Financial and Consumer Services Commission Act.*

Bill 7, *An Act to Amend An Act Respecting Payday Loans.*

Bill 8, *An Act to Amend the Marshland Infrastructure Maintenance Act.*

Ordered that the said Bills do pass.

At 11.50 a.m., Mr. Speaker declared a recess and left the chair.

2.30 p.m.

Mr. Speaker resumed the chair.

Debate resumed on Motion 2, moved by Mr. Higgs, seconded by Mr. Jeff Carr, as follows:

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.

And the debate being ended, and the question being put, Motion 2 was resolved in the negative.

Pursuant to Notice of Motion 3, Mr. Urquhart moved, 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.

And the question being put, a debate ensued.

And after some time, due to the unavoidable absence of Mr. Speaker, Mr. Bernard LeBlanc, the Deputy Speaker, took the chair as Acting Speaker.

And after some further time, Ms. Harris took the chair.

And the debate being ended, and the question being put, Motion 3 was resolved in the negative.

Pursuant to Notice of Motion 4, Ms. Dubé moved, 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.

And the question being put, a debate ensued.

And after some time, Mr. Speaker resumed the chair.

And after some further time, Mr. Speaker interrupted proceedings and announced that the hour of daily adjournment had arrived.

And then, 6.10 p.m., the House adjourned.