

Daily sitting 19

Thursday, February 11, 2016

10 o'clock a.m.

Prayers.

The following Bills were introduced and read a first time:

By Hon. Mr. Doucet,

Bill 22, *Seafood Industry Improvement Fund Act*.

By Hon. Mr. Melanson,

Bill 23, *An Act to Amend the Tobacco Tax Act*.

Mr. Albert gave notice that in April, 2016, Bills 22 and 23 would be called for second reading.

Mr. Albert, Government House Leader, announced that following Royal Assent, it was the intention of government that the House resume the adjourned debate on the Budget; following which Opposition Members' Business would be considered.

Mr. Albert moved, seconded by the Honourable the Premier:

THAT when the Assembly adjourns on Friday, February 12, 2016, it stand adjourned until Tuesday, March 29, 2016, at 1 o'clock p.m., provided always that if it appears to the satisfaction of Mr. Speaker, after consultation with the Government, that the public interest requires that the House should meet at an earlier time during the adjournment, Mr. Speaker may give notice that he is so satisfied and in such notice shall state a time at which the House shall meet, and thereupon the House shall meet at the time so stated and shall transact its business as if it has been duly adjourned to that time, and

THAT in the event of Mr. Speaker being unable to act owing to illness or other cause, either of the Deputy Speakers shall act in his stead for the purpose of this order.

And the question being put, a debate ensued.

And after some time, Mr. Fitch, seconded by Ms. Dubé, moved in amendment:

AMENDMENT

THAT the motion be amended by striking out "March 29" and substituting "February 16".

Mr. Speaker put the question on the proposed amendment and a debate ensued.

And after some time, Mr. Albert moved the previous question pursuant to Standing Rule 69 as follows: “That this question be now put”.

Ms. Dubé rose on a point of order and submitted that moving the previous question was an infringement of the rights of the minority.

Mr. Speaker advised that the original motion before the House, which would adjourn the House to a date certain, was a standard adjournment motion, which had been previously moved countless times in the House. The motion was very specific and debate on such an adjournment motion should be very narrow in scope and limited strictly to the arguments for and against the suggested sitting date.

Mr. Speaker noted that representatives of the Official Opposition, as well as the Leader of the Third Party, had already participated in the debate on the merits of the adjournment motion and had expressed their views.

Mr. Speaker ruled that the previous question may be in order in these circumstances, as it was not an abuse of the Standing Rules, or an infringement on the rights of the minority. However, having determined that no further debate was necessary on a motion of such limited scope, Mr. Speaker did not put the previous question to the House, but instead put the question on the amendment.

And the question being put on the amendment, it was defeated on the following recorded division:

YEAS - 17

Mr. Fitch	Mr. Macdonald	Mr. Crossman
Ms. Dubé	Mr. Stewart	Mr. Keirstead
Mr. MacDonald	Ms. Wilson	Mr. Steeves
Mr. Higgs	Mr. Flemming	Mr. Jeff Carr
Mr. Coon	Mr. Fairgrieve	Mr. Urquhart
Ms. Lynch	Mr. Wetmore	

NAYS - 25

Hon. Mr. Boudreau	Hon. Ms. Rogers	Mr. Bourque
Hon. Mr. Melanson	Hon. Mr. Fraser	Mr. Harvey
Hon. Mr. Gallant	Hon. Ms. Landry	Mr. Guitard
Mr. Albert	Hon. Mr. Kenny	Mr. Roussel
Hon. Mr. Horsman	Hon. Mr. Rousselle	Mr. Ames
Hon. Mr. Arseneault	Mr. Bertrand LeBlanc	Ms. Harris
Hon. Mr. Doucet	Mr. Chiasson	Mr. LePage
Hon. Mr. Doherty	Ms. LeBlanc	
Hon. Mr. Landry	Mr. Bernard LeBlanc	

And the question being put on the motion, it was resolved in the affirmative on the following recorded division:

YEAS - 25

Hon. Mr. Boudreau	Hon. Ms. Rogers	Mr. Bourque
Hon. Mr. Melanson	Hon. Mr. Fraser	Mr. Harvey
Hon. Mr. Gallant	Hon. Ms. Landry	Mr. Guitard
Mr. Albert	Hon. Mr. Kenny	Mr. Roussel
Hon. Mr. Horsman	Hon. Mr. Rousselle	Mr. Ames
Hon. Mr. Arseneault	Mr. Bertrand LeBlanc	Ms. Harris
Hon. Mr. Doucet	Mr. Chiasson	Mr. LePage
Hon. Mr. Doherty	Ms. LeBlanc	
Hon. Mr. Landry	Mr. Bernard LeBlanc	

NAYS - 17

Mr. Fitch	Mr. Macdonald	Mr. Crossman
Ms. Dubé	Mr. Stewart	Mr. Keirstead
Mr. MacDonald	Ms. Wilson	Mr. Steeves
Mr. Higgs	Mr. Flemming	Mr. Jeff Carr
Mr. Coon	Mr. Fairgrieve	Mr. Urquhart
Ms. Lynch	Mr. Wetmore	

Her Honour, the Lieutenant-Governor, was announced, and having been bidden to enter, took her seat in the chair upon the Throne.

Mr. Speaker addressed Her Honour as follows:

May It Please Your Honour:

The Legislative Assembly of the Province of New Brunswick has passed several Bills at the present sittings of the Legislature to which, in the name and on behalf of the said Legislative Assembly, I respectfully request Your Honour's assent.

The Clerk Assistant then read the titles of the Bills as follows:

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.*

Bill 11, *An Act to Amend the Personal Health Information Privacy and Access Act.*

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

Her Honour signified Her Assent as follows:

It is the Queen's wish. La reine le veut.

To these Bills, Her Honour's assent was announced by the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly in the following words:

In Her Majesty's name, Her Honour the Lieutenant-Governor assents to these Bills, enacting the same and ordering them to be enrolled.

Her Honour then retired and Mr. Speaker resumed the chair.

At 12.20 p.m., Mr. Speaker left the chair to resume again at 1.20 p.m.

1.20 p.m.

Mr. Speaker resumed the chair.

The Order of the Day for resuming the adjourned debate on the motion (Motion 9),

That this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government, having been read,

The debate was resumed.

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, Mr. Speaker resumed the chair.

And the debate continuing, after some time, it was on motion of Mr. Albert, on behalf of the Honourable the Premier, adjourned over.

Debate resumed on Motion 4, moved by Ms. Dubé, seconded by Ms. Wilson, as follows:

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 after some time, Ms. Harris took the chair.

And the debate being ended, and the question being put, Motion 4 was resolved in the negative.

Pursuant to Notice of Motion 10, Mr. Fitch moved, seconded by Mr. Higgs:

WHEREAS in order to address their on-going fiscal deficit problems the government has created a grocery list of options that will cripple public services as well as the economy of the province; and

WHEREAS the government has continually called upon the Official Opposition to please provide them with more ideas and efficiencies to help balance their financial books; and

WHEREAS a significant portion of the current deficit problem has been created by unnecessary election promises; and

WHEREAS the current administration keeps digging the hole deeper with ill-advised policy decisions such as making tax room for the federal government and chasing away potential investors in the natural resources development field;

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the complete list of options, including the delay of unnecessary spending promises and implementing fair taxation policies, be considered by the government to eliminate the deficit for the upcoming provincial budget.

And the question being put, a debate ensued.

And the debate being ended, and the question being put, Motion 10 was resolved in the negative.

Pursuant to Notice of Motion 11, Ms. Wilson moved, on behalf of Ms. Dubé:

WHEREAS all New Brunswick governments since the nineties have established programs and initiatives to help with job creation and support economic development in northern and rural regions of our province;

WHEREAS the current New Brunswick government made a commitment during the 2014 election to give priority to economic development and job creation in northern and rural regions of the province;

WHEREAS, since the Gallant government was elected, it has initiated or put forward very few initiatives for economic development or job creation projects for northern and rural regions of the province;

WHEREAS the average unemployment rate in northern New Brunswick is currently twice the provincial rate;

WHEREAS northern and rural regions of New Brunswick hold enormous economic development and job creation potential for our province;

WHEREAS, after leading the province of New Brunswick for more than 16 months, the Gallant government seems to have neither a plan nor a vision for economic development in northern and rural regions of our province;

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly urge the government, in collaboration with the various stakeholders in the economic and political communities, to establish a real job creation and economic development action plan for northern and rural regions of our province for the spring of 2016.

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.