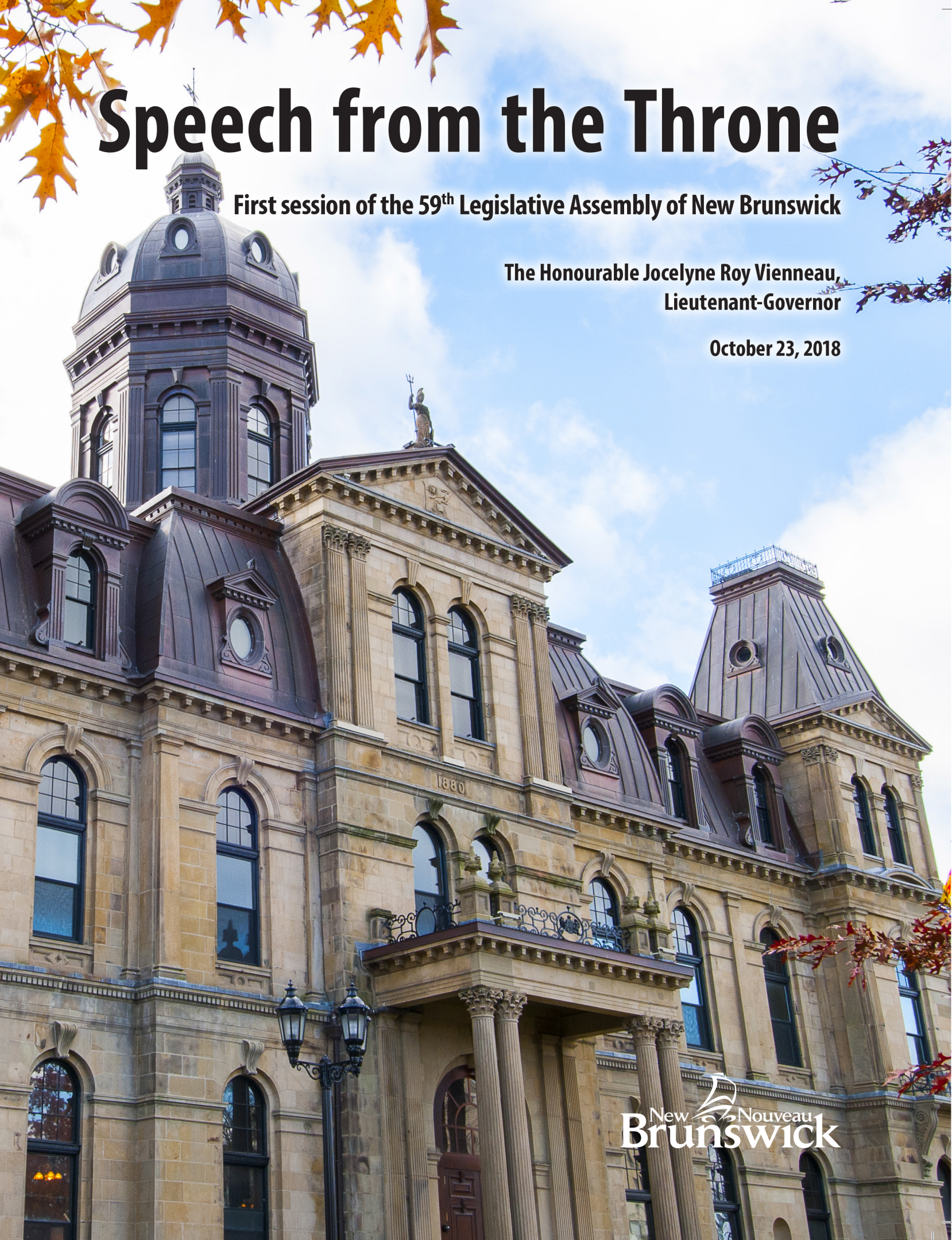


Speech from the Throne

First session of the 59th Legislative Assembly of New Brunswick

The Honourable Jocelyne Roy Vienneau,
Lieutenant-Governor

October 23, 2018



New  Nouveau
Brunswick

Speech from the Throne 2018

Honourable Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly, invited guests, and all New Brunswickers:

It is my honour and privilege to welcome you to the First Session of the 59th Legislative Assembly of the Province of New Brunswick.

I would like to begin by acknowledging that the land on which we gather is the traditional unceded territory of the Wolastoqey Mi'kmaq and Peskotomuhkati Peoples.

Congratulations / Recognition

A number of New Brunswickers have had noteworthy achievements since our last session of the legislature.

We thank and congratulate the candidates who put their names forward for the recent provincial election. Of them, 38.6 per cent were women, which is an increase from the 32.2 per cent who ran in 2014. Congratulations and welcome to New Brunswick's new MLAs.

Eleven New Brunswickers were named to the Order of New Brunswick, including Judy Astle, Charles Bernard, Roberta Dugas, Louise Imbeault, Gaetan Lanteigne, Walter Learning, James Lockyer, Rebecca Schofield (posthumous), F. Eileen Wallace, and Ed and Eke van Oorschot.

Five New Brunswickers became Members of the Order of Canada, including Claude Snow of Caraquet; Christl Verduyn of Sackville; W. Dale Dauphinee of Montreal and St. Andrews; Patricia "Patsy" Gallant of Campbellton; and Jean-Claude Savoie of Saint-Quentin.

Many talented and caring New Brunswickers have also been recognised this past year for their contributions and achievements.

Four New Brunswick educators were among 40 honoured by the Learning Partnership as Canada's Outstanding Principals. They were Bonnie Hierlihy from Fairvale Elementary School in Rothesay, Julie Michaud from Saint Mary's Academy in Edmundston, Heidi Ryder from James M. Hill Memorial High School in Miramichi and Shane Thomas from Fredericton High School.

The winners of the 2018 Disability Awareness Week Awards were Le groupe de support émotionnel - Eugène LeBlanc of Moncton; and Chrissy Montgomery of Fredericton. In addition, Alana Gullison was named the first recipient of the Randy Dickinson Scholarship.

Six new members were inducted into the New Brunswick Sports Hall of Fame, including The Université de Moncton Aigles Bleus hockey team, 1989-90, Al Charuk, Master Chung, Bob Deap, Bill Phillips (1857-1900), and Rob Stevenson.

The Fredericton Marathon, the Maritime provinces longest running marathon, marked its 40th anniversary.

The Foshay International Equestrian Event brought top level horses and riders from Canada and the US to the province.

Saint John hosted the 2018 Canada 55+ Games, while Fredericton hosted the 2018 Basketball Canada U15 and U17 Girls National Championships.

The University of New Brunswick Varsity Reds won the 2018 Atlantic University Sport Championship in both hockey and basketball.

The Acadie-Bathurst Titan won the 100th Memorial Cup. They are the first Quebec Major Junior Hockey League team to capture the Canadian major junior championship since 2013.

Fredericton's own Willie O'Ree, the first black player in the National Hockey League, was inducted into the Hockey Hall of Fame.

At the 2018 Youth World Championships, Charlie Cavanagh marked Canadian boxing history by becoming the first ever female Youth World Champion.

The Council of the Federation met in Saint Andrews, bringing all 13 provincial and territorial premiers to our province.

Growing the New Brunswick economy continues to be a priority, and our province is home to many leaders in the business community.

The winners of the 2018 New Brunswick Export Awards were IntelliSys Aviation Systems, Masitek Instruments, Thermtest Inc., Remsoft Inc., Bouctouche Bay Industries and Bulletproof, with the Impact Award for Investment going to ExxonMobil Business Support Centre Canada.

The winners of the 2018 KIRA Awards included BioNB, SomaDetect, Blue Roof Distillers and the Government of New Brunswick.

The 2018 Start-Up Awards winners were The Ville Cooperative, Boss Gibson Oyster Company, ProcedureFlow, PLATO Testing, Cameron Ritchie, founder of HomeWurk Odd Jobs and Services Inc., and Lisa Williams, CEO of Unicare Home Health Care Inc.

The New Brunswick College of Craft and Design held its 20th annual fashion show, spotlighting the work of students and alumni.

As the East Coast Music Awards celebrated its 30th anniversary, New Brunswick artists received 35 nominations. Les Païens, Measha Brueggergosman and City Natives, which has members from both New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, all took home awards.

Eight musicians with the New Brunswick Youth Orchestra and Sistema travelled to Mexico City, joining 800 musicians at a Pan-American workshop conference.

Also in music, the Backstays won the 2018 Stingray Rising Stars Competition at the Harvest Jazz and Blues Festival.

Condolences

We also pause to remember those we have lost in the past year.

We remember J. Robert Howie, who represented constituents in the old federal riding of York-Sunbury in the House of Commons for close to two decades.

We celebrate the life of Rebecca Schofield as she continues to inspire us with her campaign of kindness, #BeccaToldMeTo.

We honour Ray Frenette, a former Member of the Legislative Assembly, cabinet minister and premier.

As well, we remember former provincial and federal Cabinet Minister Keith Ashfield.

We honour Dr. Dennis Furlong, a former Member of the Legislative Assembly and cabinet minister, as well as an educator, physician, inventor and author.

We remember the four victims of the Fredericton shooting, Const. Lawrence Robert “Robb” Costello, Const. Sara Mae Helen Burns, Donald Adam “Donnie” Robichaud, and Bobbie Lee Wright.

Introduction

For the first time in nearly one hundred years, New Brunswickers have elected a legislature where no party holds a majority of seats.

By giving four parties a voice in the legislature, many New Brunswickers have sent a clear message that all parties will play an important role in moving New Brunswick forward. The minority government situation we are presently in is novel to most New Brunswickers; however, it represents a historic opportunity to do things differently; to do things better; to do things by working together.

It will be important that all four parties find common ground so that we can advance the interests of New Brunswickers.

We are proud to be New Brunswickers because of the people with whom we share this beautiful province. New Brunswickers are kind and resilient. New Brunswickers have differences, and these differences are a source of strength.

This legislature must draw on the many strengths that bind us as New Brunswickers as you move forward in representing your constituencies in this House.

Collaboration

The message from New Brunswickers was clear. No party platform had earned the support of a majority of constituencies and therefore no party should have a monopoly on power. Collaboration must be the mission for the members of this Assembly.

To that end, your government is proposing an agenda that first builds a framework for greater collaboration among all members, and secondly, brings forward policies generally supported by two or more political parties. The essence is compromise; however, your government believes New Brunswickers share common principles that must be upheld. Your government will not implement policies counter to these principles.

How you go about accomplishing all of these things is what needs to be discussed, debated, and decided. By embracing the current minority government situation, you have an opportunity to find common ground with more perspectives represented in the legislature. New Brunswickers have called on you to collaborate more than ever before and by doing so you will be better positioned to strengthen our province. If we do not, we risk dividing our province more so than ever before.

Your government also recognizes that we will better collaborate if we have a better mutual understanding among all New Brunswickers. We must seek to unite rural and urban, north and south, English, French, First Nations, and new Canadians, workers in both the public sector and the private sector, and all other New Brunswickers who have different lived experiences.

Diversity and official bilingualism enhance both our economy and social fabric. Your government will undertake to facilitate a process that seeks to champion and celebrate social cohesion throughout our province through understanding, respect, and harmony among all New Brunswickers.

To help enable a framework of collaboration, your government will undertake the following measures to improve processes within the Legislative Assembly:

- Introduce a motion to provide recognized party status to all four political parties;
- Introduce a motion to mandate the Standing Committee on Procedure, Privileges and Legislative Officers to undertake a complete review of the Standing Rules to ensure that they will work in a minority legislature and look for opportunities to enhance the role of the legislature through measures including, but not limited to, a fixed legislative calendar, a more collaborative seating arrangement, free votes, the ability to call witnesses to testify during committee review of bills, clearer mandates for committees, and a clearer role for legislative review and response to reports and recommendations from legislative officers; and
- Implement a new, more open and transparent budget process. Rather than the traditional approach where departmental budget submissions are reviewed at a cabinet committee behind closed doors, the process will be undertaken during public meetings of an all-party legislative committee.

All parties have identified the importance of returning to balanced books, while they differ on the timelines to do so. It should be a priority to do so in a way that does not have negative impacts on the economy or important social programs. Through the collaborative budget process described earlier, your government will seek to balance the budget by 2020-2021.

Job Creation and Economic Growth

Many New Brunswickers agree that an improved standard of living is created through new jobs and economic growth. From arts and culture to IT and cyber security – multi-sector growth is

critical. This is why growing the economy is key to our success and needs to be a priority of government. And to grow the economy, we must also focus on labour force development and keeping our young people here.

Different political parties have different ideas on how best to achieve that priority. However, there is consensus between two or more political parties on the following initiatives:

- Work with small- and medium-sized business owners to eliminate red tape that is a barrier to economic success;
- Work with the Coalition for Pay Equity, labour, business, and relevant stakeholders to extend pay equity legislation to the private sector;
- Increase the minimum wage to \$12 on April 1, 2019 and work with other parties to determine a schedule for future increases;
- Include the protection and promotion of covered bridges in efforts to grow the tourism sector;
- Introduce a motion to direct a legislative committee to review resource royalty rates to ensure that they better protect the balance between economic growth and getting value from our resources while protecting private woodlot owners;
- Launch, in partnership with credit unions, a small business loan program for small businesses and entrepreneurs;
- Work with farmers and local producers to enhance the local food and beverage strategy with targets for increasing the ratio of local food production to food imports and for increasing organic production; and
- Introduce a motion to direct a legislative committee to study whether the form and amount of financial assistance to industry to help attract investment and create jobs is appropriate, and report back to the legislature with recommendations.

Investing in Education, Health Care, and Senior Care

For the 2018-2019 fiscal year, 57 per cent of the provincial budget is invested in education, health, and senior care. These are the services that are at the core of what government is expected by citizens to deliver.

Different political parties have different ideas on how best to achieve these priorities. However, there is consensus between multiple political parties on the following initiatives to improve educational outcomes, opportunities for students, reduce wait times in health care and provide for our seniors and retirees:

- Work with teachers and school administrators to restore trades to every high school;
- Eliminate interest on provincial student loans;
- Work with our universities and community colleges to provide free second-language training to any interested New Brunswick adult;
- Introduce a motion to direct a legislative committee to review the billing number system while protecting rural health care and enabling the hiring of more doctors;
- Work with our nurses, and their representatives, our universities and colleges, and health-care administrators to develop a nurse recruitment, retention, and training strategy, and hire more nurse practitioners and more nurses;

- Work with professional associations and labour unions to expand the role of nurse practitioners, midwives and other health professionals to improve access to health care;
- Work with mental health experts to continue and expand investments in mental health services across the province;
- Work with regional health authorities, doctors, and nurses to create more health centres to reduce emergency room wait times;
- Introduce a motion to direct a legislative committee to consult experts, the paramedic association, the paramedic union and other stakeholders to complete a public review of the ambulance system by December 15, 2018 with a particular focus on paramedic shortages and to implement the recommendations of this review;
- Ensure women and their doctors receive breast density information following mammograms;
- Support a federally-funded national pharmacare program;
- Further advance the Home First program to help seniors live independently; and
- By collaborating with those working in the nursing home sector, and focusing on recruitment, training, and retention, increase the hours of care for nursing home residents and hire more nurses, LPNs, and resident attendants to support our seniors.

Protecting the Environment

Climate change is one of the greatest challenges facing humanity. Any government must make concrete actions to tackle climate change and make protecting the environment a priority.

Different political parties have different ideas on how best to achieve that priority. However, there is consensus between two or more political parties on the following initiatives:

- Fully implement the report of the 2016 select committee on climate change and the follow-up plan *Transitioning to a Low-Carbon Economy*;
- Expand land and water protection including rivers, streams, lakes and bays through conservation areas, natural protected areas and buffer zones;
- Expand the use of renewable and non-emitting energy in New Brunswick, including through the exploration of onshore and offshore renewable energy resources;
- Increase funding for energy efficiency measures for both homes and businesses; and
- Introduce a motion to direct a legislative committee to consider recommending a phased-in ban of the use of herbicides, such as glyphosate, with the scope of the ban to be based on objective evidence.

Fairer Society and Good Governance

Making sure our society is fair for all and eliminating structural barriers, including poverty, that exclude certain citizens from playing the part they wish to play in society should be a priority for everyone.

Different political parties have different ideas on how best to achieve that priority. However, there is consensus between multiple political parties on the following initiatives:

- Ensure New Brunswick's indigenous people are treated with respect and fairness through implementation of the calls to action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission;
- Introduce a motion to direct a legislative committee to consider whether to recommend to the legislature a potential question, or questions, relating to proportional representation, preferential balloting and the voting age that could be posed to New Brunswickers at the 2020 municipal elections as well as potential amendments to the *Referendum Act* to ensure a fair process;
- Introduce a motion to direct a legislative committee to review and make recommendations relating to municipal governance, and modernizing the municipal taxation system including examining the possibility of reducing or eliminating the so-called double tax, and of eliminating industrial assessment exemptions including machinery and equipment;
- Increase the budget of the auditor general and work to implement her recommendations that will result in more efficient public spending; and
- Provide for multi-year vehicle registrations and a single licence plate.

Your government will seek to implement these initiatives.

Supporting All New Brunswickers

The Liberal Party platform presented many items which it believed would move the province forward. Your government believes that because no party and no platform earned the majority of seats, no platform should be fully implemented. While all other initiatives outlined are drawn from two or more platforms, your government intends to implement the following initiatives which are believed to have the support from other members of the Legislative Assembly based on their spirit and intent:

- Working with entrepreneurs and business people to create economic opportunity by doubling investments in the Youth Employment Fund;
- Renew economic development and innovation funds for Northern New Brunswick and the Miramichi region;
- Dedicate funds recently committed by the federal government for the "black hole", to the creation of a provincial program that pairs workers with organizations requiring labour, enabling workers to qualify for Employment Insurance benefits;
- Working with early childhood educators to give our children the best start at learning by rolling out the new child care program provincewide by 2019;
- Supporting doctors, nurses and other health professionals, and our communities by protecting health care through ensuring that no rural or regional hospitals are closed;
- Creating a full government department focused on promoting Women's Equality while working with women's equality advocates to expand its mandate;
- Eliminate the use of coal for electricity in New Brunswick no later than 2030; and
- Continuing collaboration on building a fairer society and promoting respect for public servants through the work of the labour-government steering committee.

Conclusion

It is clear that all members of this Legislative Assembly understand the importance of job creation, strong social services including education and healthcare, protecting the environment for future generations, and ensuring that all New Brunswickers have a fair chance. All while maintaining strong fiscal health.

Over the course of this session, ministers will provide details regarding the initiatives contained in this Speech from the Throne.

Amendments to a variety of Acts of the Legislative Assembly will be introduced and debated to ensure your government continues to improve services offered to the public.

New Brunswickers expect a stable government. They have put their faith in you to deliver on important issues, and that will only be possible through cooperation and collaboration. Minority governments are positioned to do just that. I will remind you that it was a minority government with collaboration across party lines at the federal level that resulted in Medicare and the Canada Pension Plan.

This is a unique time and a unique opportunity for all of you. Now you have the chance to prove to New Brunswickers that you heard their message and that you are prepared to work together. This is a historic moment in New Brunswick. And we, as New Brunswickers, have far more that unites us than divides us.

Thank you for your public service now and into the future.