

Daily sitting 31

Friday, May 21, 2021

9 o'clock a.m.

Prayers.

Pursuant to Motion 60, certain Members participated in House proceedings by virtual means.

Following Oral Questions, Mr. Arseneault rose on a point of order and submitted that Hon. Ms. Shephard used unparliamentary language when she used the term “screw up”. Mr. Speaker asked Members to raise the level of debate.

Mr. McKee, Member for Moncton Centre, laid upon the table of the House a petition urging government not to combine the services provided by the Dr. Georges-L.-Dumont Regional Hospital and the Moncton City Hospital. (Petition 11)

Mr. D’Amours gave Notice of Motion 73 that on Thursday, May 27, 2021, he would move the following resolution, seconded by Mr. Arseneault:

WHEREAS, according to the Nurses Association of New Brunswick, the Nurses’ Union, and the CEOs of the health authorities, there is a severe shortage of nurses in the province with serious implications for our health system if the shortage is not addressed;

WHEREAS the health authorities told a Legislative committee that the province has a shortage of 520 nurses per year;

WHEREAS the shortage is estimated to be upwards of 5,000 nurses in the next five years;

WHEREAS, in a move that boggles the mind, the Higgs government cut \$9 million from funding for nurse training;

WHEREAS, despite evidence that shows that NB nurses are amongst the lowest paid in Canada and statistics that show that New Brunswick is losing nurses and nursing graduates to other provinces with better compensation, contracts for nurses and licensed practical nurses have not been finalized and the Premier seems determined to avoid paying nurses a competitive salary;

WHEREAS, while other jurisdictions are offering incentives to nurses and nursing graduates, there is no comprehensive plan, to our knowledge, to attract and retain nurses in New Brunswick;

WHEREAS the shortage of nurses has resulted in hospital services having to be reduced or temporarily shut down in hospitals throughout the province;

WHEREAS examples of these hospital service reductions due to nursing shortages include the diversion of ambulances to the Moncton Hospital from the Dr. Georges-L.-Dumont Hospital, the shutdown of psychiatric services at the Campbellton hospital to divert nurses elsewhere, the shutdown of pediatric services at the Miramichi hospital to divert nursing resources, the temporary shutdown of obstetrical services at the Bathurst hospital due to nursing shortages, the shutdown of obstetrical services at the Campbellton hospital for a period of 14 months, bed closures at the Saint John Regional Hospital due to nurse shortages and others;

WHEREAS, despite that there is a crisis caused by the nursing shortage, the government has not done anything to address it, leading to speculation that the Premier plans to permanently reduce or shutdown services at hospitals throughout the province and will use the nursing shortage as an excuse for doing so;

WHEREAS the Premier said to nursing home workers who were asking for a better salary “if you want that kind of wage, then Alberta’s where to get it”;

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly urge the Premier to immediately address the nursing shortage by initiatives such as providing nurses and licensed practical nurses with competitive salaries, investing in more nursing seats, and providing a comprehensive incentive program to attract and retain nurses;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly urge the Premier to abandon any plans to reduce hospital services throughout the province by attempting to justify them based on a nursing shortage crisis that his government has not been willing to resolve.

Hon. Mr. Savoie, Government House Leader, announced that it was the intention of government that the House consider an adjournment motion; following which third reading would take place; following which Bills 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 35 and 36 would be called for second reading.

On motion of Hon. Mr. Savoie, seconded by the Honourable the Premier:

RESOLVED, that when the Assembly adjourns at the end of this sitting day, it stand adjourned until Tuesday, June 1, 2021, 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 or that the adjournment should continue beyond Tuesday, June 1, 2021, Mr. Speaker may give notice that he is so satisfied and in such notice may 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, or in such notice may state that the adjournment shall continue until further notice is given by the Speaker, 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.

The following Bill was read a third time:

Bill 40, *An Act to Amend the Opportunities New Brunswick Act*.

Ordered that the said Bill does pass.

Debate resumed on the adjourned debate on the motion that Bill 51, *An Act Respecting Image-capturing Enforcement Systems*, be now read a second time.

And the debate being ended, and the question being put that Bill 51 be now read a second time, it was resolved in the affirmative.

Accordingly, Bill 51, *An Act Respecting Image-capturing Enforcement Systems*, was read a second time and ordered referred to the Standing Committee on Economic Policy, as designated by the Government House Leader.

The Order being read for second reading of Bill 52, *An Act to Amend the Provincial Offences Procedure Act*, a debate arose thereon.

And the debate being ended, and the question being put that Bill 52 be now read a second time, it was resolved in the affirmative.

Accordingly, Bill 52, *An Act to Amend the Provincial Offences Procedure Act*, was read a second time and ordered referred to the Standing Committee on Economic Policy, as designated by the Government House Leader.

The Order being read for second reading of Bill 53, *An Act Respecting the Police Act*, a debate arose thereon.

And the debate being ended, and the question being put that Bill 53 be now read a second time, it was resolved in the affirmative.

Accordingly, Bill 53, *An Act Respecting the Police Act*, was read a second time and ordered referred to the Standing Committee on Economic Policy, as designated by the Government House Leader.

The Order being read for second reading of Bill 54, *An Act Respecting the Operation of the Order Relating to COVID-19 under the Emergency Measures Act*, a debate arose thereon.

And the debate being ended, and the question being put that Bill 54 be now read a second time, it was resolved in the affirmative.

Accordingly, Bill 54, *An Act Respecting the Operation of the Order Relating to COVID-19 under the Emergency Measures Act*, was read a second time and ordered referred to the Standing Committee on Economic Policy, as designated by the Government House Leader.

The Order being read for second reading of Bill 55, *An Act to Amend the Tobacco and Electronic Cigarette Sales Act*, a debate arose thereon.

And the debate being ended, and the question being put that Bill 55 be now read a second time, it was resolved in the affirmative.

Accordingly, Bill 55, *An Act to Amend the Tobacco and Electronic Cigarette Sales Act*, was read a second time and ordered referred to the Standing Committee on Economic Policy, as designated by the Government House Leader.

The Order being read for second reading of Bill 56, *An Act to Amend the Medical Consent of Minors Act*, a debate arose thereon.

And the debate being ended, and the question being put that Bill 56 be now read a second time, it was resolved in the affirmative.

Accordingly, Bill 56, *An Act to Amend the Medical Consent of Minors Act*, was read a second time and ordered referred to the Standing Committee on Economic Policy, as designated by the Government House Leader.

The Order being read for second reading of Bill 57, *An Act to Amend the Regulatory Accountability and Reporting Act*, a debate arose thereon.

And the debate being ended, and the question being put that Bill 57 be now read a second time, it was resolved in the affirmative.

Accordingly, Bill 57, *An Act to Amend the Regulatory Accountability and Reporting Act*, was read a second time and ordered referred to the Standing Committee on Economic Policy, as designated by the Government House Leader.

The Order being read for second reading of Bill 58, *Bee Act*, a debate arose thereon.

And the debate being ended, and the question being put that Bill 58 be now read a second time, it was resolved in the affirmative.

Accordingly, Bill 58, *Bee Act*, was read a second time and ordered referred to the Standing Committee on Economic Policy, as designated by the Government House Leader.

And then, 1.25 p.m., the House adjourned.