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JOURNALS
OF THE
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF THE
PROVINCE OF NEW BRUNSWICK
SECOND SESSION OF THE FIFTY-THIRD
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY, 1996-1997
THE HON. MARGARET NORRIE McCAIN
LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR

Fredericton, N.B.

Tuesday, November 26, 1996.

PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS I have proclaimed that the first session of the fifty-third Legislative Assembly of this Province be prorogued on the twenty-sixth day of November, 1996 at 9.30 o'clock in the forenoon;

AND WHEREAS I have thought fit to call the Second Session of the Fifty-third Legislative Assembly of this Province into session, I hereby issue a Proclamation that the same be called to meet on the twenty-sixth day of November, 1996, at 3 o'clock in the afternoon.

Given under my hand and the Great Seal of the Province at Fredericton this seventeenth day of October, 1996, in the forty-fifth year of Her Majesty's Reign.

BY COMMAND OF THE
LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR

Paul Duffie, Q.C.

Attorney General

Margaret Norrie McCain

Lieutenant-Governor

This being the day appointed for the Opening of the Second Session of the Fifty-third Legislative Assembly of the Province of New Brunswick for the dispatch of business, and the Members being present:

Her Honour the Lieutenant-Governor was announced and having been bidden to enter, took her seat in the chair upon the Throne and was pleased to open the session with the following speech from the Throne:

Mr. Speaker, and Honourable Members of the Legislative Assembly:

On behalf of Her Majesty the Queen, I am pleased to have the honour of welcoming you to the Second Session of the 53rd Legislative Assembly of the Province of New Brunswick.

At this time I would like to take the opportunity to speak on behalf of the Members of the Legislative Assembly in paying tribute to those athletes who represented New Brunswick at the 1996 Olympics and Paralympics in Atlanta this past summer. These outstanding young people, led by Olympic silver

medallist Marianne Limpert and Paralympic bronze medallist Hal Merrill, will provide the inspiration for those athletes who will be representing New Brunswick at the Canada Summer Games in Manitoba and the Jeux de la Francophonie in Madagascar in 1997.

My Government looks forward to hosting the 1997 Annual Premiers' Conference in the Town of Saint Andrews. The new year will also mark the 150th anniversary of the first substantial migration of the Irish to New Brunswick.

This Session is unprecedented in New Brunswick in that the traditional spring Opening of the Legislature has been advanced to allow for earlier and more timely consideration of the Government's business.

This Throne Speech marks a watershed for the Province of New Brunswick. As a result of years of sustained, prudent fiscal management, the Province is rapidly turning the corner towards a more optimistic future.

The people of New Brunswick will start to see numerous dividends from their exemplary restraint. This year My Government will be able to launch a major rural job creation program; meet its balanced budget obligations; make a third consecutive payment on the debt; introduce an earned income supplement for low income working families, and at the same time provide lower taxes to our citizens.

This Legislative Session will see concrete action on the important issue of child poverty.

My Government has decided to expand its commitment to a rebate on the Harmonized Sales Tax for low income New Brunswick families by creating a much more comprehensive income support program to combat child poverty.

This measure will be supplemented by the general tax reduction and earned income supplement program.

Of equal importance, with the full implementation of last year's and this year's budget changes, My Government will be in a position to bring stability to the health care system for the foreseeable future. The Government will be able to demonstrate during this Session of the Legislative Assembly an unprecedented degree of security for our citizens through:

improved employment prospects, particularly in rural New Brunswick;

security of our public finances;

greater job stability for our public servants;

security of public sector pensions;

sustainability of our forests and rivers.

As always, job creation is at the very centre of this Government's agenda. Continued emphasis on job creation is critical to ensuring that the social and economic health of our Province is sustained. My Government remains committed to its goal of achieving 25,000 new jobs during the life of its mandate. And for the first time, this Government will add the expanded objective of achieving a single digit level of unemployment by the end of this decade.

Many residents of rural areas are currently facing a tight labour market. My Government will strengthen its policies and programs to ensure that rural New Brunswick is an equal partner in economic development. In 1997 the Government will be announcing major new rural initiatives to create thousands of new jobs in rural areas, and to help expand the employment period of seasonal workers. We look forward to a federal partnership in this important initiative.

Opportunities will be created to help ensure that people in rural areas participate in the information highway and the knowledge-based economy. Government policies will continue to reflect the important role of the resource sectors in job creation, and particular attention will be given to the promotion and development of more value-added activity in rural communities.

The forest economy is vital, particularly for our rural communities. My Department of Natural Resources and Energy will support the efforts of wood producers to make New Brunswick the first province to have forest lands certified for sustainable management. The policy of forest sustainability will be strengthened, and silviculture programs on public land will be expanded to enhance the supply of timber.

The Government is committed to getting more value and more jobs from every tree harvested. The objective is to achieve a 10% increase in the amount of wood going to value-added processing by the year 2000, resulting in the creation of about 1800 additional jobs. Specific value-added job announcements will also be made during this Session.

More jobs will be created in the mining sector through the reopening of some mines, increased exploration activity, and the promotion of value-added mineral products.

My Government will increase its efforts to create additional jobs in the agri-food industry. Initiatives will be undertaken to help achieve feed grain self-sufficiency, to increase New Brunswick's share of Canadian food exports, to increase the production of potatoes and blueberries, to identify innovative ways to bring new land into agricultural production, and to more effectively promote the products of rural entrepreneurs. A Strategic Partnership Development Fund will assist in implementing these initiatives.

My Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture will work with fishermen, processors and plant workers in rural communities to develop specific solutions to employment difficulties in the fisheries sector, and to plan for the long-term stability of the sector. It will be the intention of the Government to complete its consultation on the Crab Fishery Discussion Paper, and table a response that will result in more stability and job security in this vital sector of our economy. The cooperation of the federal government and the industry will be essential in attaining this objective.

My Government supports the Sable Off-Shore Energy Project, and will work closely with the off-shore and pipeline proponents to make natural gas available in New Brunswick at competitive prices, and to maximize economic benefits and jobs for our people.

The results of a review of the Public Utilities Board will be tabled during this Session. You will be asked to consider amendments to the *Public Utilities Act* and the *Insurance Act*.

Considerable progress will be made towards the completion of a four-lane highway between Fredericton and Moncton. In the coming year the Government will proceed with this section using a private/public partnership approach. Thousands of jobs will be created in construction, and incalculable savings in human lives and economic efficiencies will result.

Capital infrastructure projects in 1997 will include improvements to schools, hospitals, and other municipal infrastructure projects. The private/public partnership approach will continue as an alternative for appropriate capital construction projects. In the coming months this approach will be applied to an expanded Energy Efficiency Retrofit Program for schools, community colleges, and other provincial buildings throughout the Province. Renovations to Old Government House will be undertaken in partnership with the City of Fredericton and the federal government. These initiatives are expected to result in hundreds of construction jobs throughout New Brunswick.

Tourism industry initiatives for 1997 will include eco-tourism development in the rural areas surrounding the Bay of Fundy, a new Open Skies initiative to market off-season air travel and fly/drive packages, and the development of a number of other private/public tourism partnerships to promote and develop new tourism products.

The development of small and medium-sized businesses will remain a priority of this Government. Assistance will be directed to all regions of the Province to encourage small business start-ups, as well as those businesses interested in producing distinctly new products or services, especially for export markets. The highly successful Small Entrepreneur Capital Assistance Program will see its criteria change to maximize job creation potential.

As part of the new Federal-Provincial Regional Economic Development Agreement, a number of new job-creating initiatives will be undertaken in trade expansion, investment promotion, marketing, strategic infrastructure, tourism, and aquaculture. The Action North economic renewal initiative is being extended for three more years and will cover the Acadian Peninsula, as well as the Restigouche and Chaleur regions.

My Government will proceed with additional measures to establish a knowledge-based economy in both rural and urban regions of the Province. Two hundred Community Access Centres will be put in place throughout New Brunswick over the next three years. A project has also been launched to establish Digitization Centres in rural locations, providing training opportunities in multimedia skills for unemployed people.

In an effort to fulfill a demand for employees with high technology and computer skills, My Government is launching an Information Technology Job-Ready Work Force Program. Efforts will be made to ensure that as many New Brunswickers as possible have the training and skills necessary to fill these jobs, and priority will be given to recruiting New Brunswick university students who have graduated over the past ten years. The initial objective is to fill 1000 of these highly skilled jobs with New Brunswickers, and increase it to a total of 5000 over the next few years.

As part of the new Job Experience for Tomorrow Co-op Program, job placement opportunities will be created in the public sector for students enrolled in cooperative education programs at the secondary level.

Negotiations are underway with the federal government to conclude an agreement to streamline the delivery of employment and training programs. This will result in a one-stop service for both governments' clients and lead to administrative savings for taxpayers.

Throughout the years, labour-management relations in New Brunswick have been generally good. Certain reforms and improvements to the labour relations process will provide an even better balance in this area. Accordingly you will be asked to consider amendments to the *Employment Standards Act*, the *Industrial Relations Act*, and the *Public Service Labour Relations Act*.

Legislation to help accomplish My Government's economic initiatives will include amendments to the:

Real Property Tax Act;

Loan and Trust Companies Act;

Direct Sellers Act;

Security Frauds Prevention Act;

Income Tax Act;

Teachers' Pension Act; and the

Trade Schools Act.

Security, stability and affordability will remain central factors in the Government's economic and social services agenda.

My Government will build on the success of its debt reduction efforts. During this Session, a plan will be tabled to reduce the net debt in a planned and orderly fashion. The 1997-98 budget will detail plans for the second year of the requirement to balance the total budget over a four-year period.

My Government stands firm in its conviction that the Harmonized Sales Tax will benefit both consumers and businesses. Business costs will be reduced, the tax reporting system will be simplified, and additional economic activity and more jobs are expected to result. As part of harmonization, a rebate on the provincial portion of the harmonized tax will be provided to municipalities, charities, non-profit organizations, and foreign tourists. A full point-of-sale rebate will be implemented for the purchase of books.

Fiscal policy legislation to be presented for your consideration will include amendments to the:

Tobacco Tax Act;

Pari-Mutual Tax Act;

Gasoline Tax Act;

Admission and Amusement Tax Act;

Social Services and Education Tax Act; and the

Assessment Act.

My Government recognizes that the preservation and strengthening of the social safety net is a deep and abiding concern of all New Brunswickers.

While health care reform has brought about significant changes in New Brunswick, these changes have positioned us well for the future. My Government is committed to maintenance of a publicly-funded, stable health care system.

This Session of the Legislative Assembly will see a major emphasis on keeping New Brunswickers healthy. My Department of Health and Community Services will enhance health outcomes through better control of communicable diseases, a renewed emphasis on immunization and appropriate prevention initiatives. The use of tobacco constitutes a major health hazard and a comprehensive Tobacco Reduction Strategy will be announced during the Session. Parenting workshops will continue in 1997 and initiatives on nutrition education and teen pregnancy will be introduced. The Minister of State for Family and Community Services will continue to focus on issues that affect youth and children.

The child support system will be improved through the implementation of federal child support guidelines, and will result in new and varied child support orders through federal and provincial legislative changes.

Part of the Government's health promotion and illness prevention strategy includes programs to reduce the number of fatalities and injuries on our highways. My departments of Transportation and the Solicitor General will be introducing new measures to raise public awareness, to develop partnerships with trucking and other organizations, and to increase enforcement activity. New Brunswick will also become a partner in the national program "Road Safety Vision 2001".

You will be asked to consider amendments to the *Family Services Act*, the *Change of Name Act*, and the *Marriage Act*. A new *Mental Health Services Act* will also be introduced.

New Brunswick's public schools are critical to the future of our children and our province. The renewed education system and a number of other reforms will be reflected in a new *Education Act* to be introduced during this Session. These reforms will move New Brunswick closer to an enhanced learning structure and a new system of parental involvement.

School reading programs and other literacy initiatives will be developed and promoted through partnerships with the private and volunteer sectors. The Community Academic Services Program will be expanded to meet the literacy needs of adult learners throughout the Province.

New programs and additional seats will be added to community colleges in 1997. The establishment of a Computer Service Centre of Excellence at Bathurst will be completed, and it will play a key role in a number of emerging information technology initiatives serving "la Francophonie".

My Government will continue to honour its commitment to work with aboriginal leaders and educators to improve the performance of aboriginal students in provincial schools. Work will also continue with aboriginal representatives and federal agencies to strengthen aboriginal economic development by placing special emphasis on employment enhancement and joint ventures.

My Department of Human Resources Development will move forward with the transformation of its service delivery to provide Enhanced Case Management Services to people on income assistance. A comprehensive provincial strategy will be designed and put in place to intensify efforts to assist income assistance clients to access the education and training services necessary to upgrade their literacy and basic education.

Individualized case plans will identify client needs in terms of education, training and work experience. Job-ready clients will be given more aggressive assistance in finding employment.

My Government will be introducing a new approach to social housing for the coming year. The devolution of the remaining federal social housing programs to the Province will be completed, and housing services to clients will be delivered using a single entry point.

Action will be taken by My Minister of Justice to simplify access to the justice system. The small claims procedure will also be redesigned for better service.

A Regional Judicial Council will be created to review allegations of misconduct, neglect of duties, or inability to perform duties of provincially appointed members of the judiciary.

My Government will put in place new policing standards to ensure that the public receives high quality, cost-effective policing services throughout the Province.

Legislation to be introduced that will lead to improvements in our justice system will include amendments to the:

Provincial Offences Procedure Act;

Judicature Act;

Probate Court Act;

Expropriation Act;

Property Act;

Wills Act;

Police Act; and

The Residential Tenancies Act.

My Government's ongoing concern for the environment will be highlighted in 1997 with an emphasis on the Province's water resources. Public consultation on phase II of the Watershed Protection Program will be carried out in the coming months, with a primary focus on the protection of drinking water sources. My Department of the Environment will be working with local communities to define long-term

water quality and well field protection standards, and the nomination process for designating outstanding lakes and rivers will be completed.

My Government will provide its response to the 1996 study on options to operate the gates at the Petitcodiac River Causeway.

The final infrastructure components of the Solid Waste Program will move towards completion, and further emphasis will be placed on waste diversion, reduction, and recycling.

Clean air legislation will be brought forward for consideration, emphasizing broad public involvement in standard setting and industrial approvals.

My Government will continue to act on the recommendations of the Commission on Land Use and the Rural Environment. New policies for settlement patterns, development and building approvals, flood plains, watershed protection, and coastal land use will be introduced this coming year.

Additional measures will be undertaken to improve the visual attractiveness of New Brunswick's highways and rural landscapes. The focus for 1997 will be on closing former dump sites, removing unsightly buildings and derelict vehicles, and supporting community efforts to enhance the visual appeal of our living environment.

A proposal to establish a Provincial Wildlife Council will be brought forward during this Session. The public will be encouraged to become more involved in the direct management of wildlife resources for both active and passive use.

The *Fish and Wildlife Act* and the *Society for the Prevention of Cruelty Act* will be presented for amendments.

My Government wants to see more citizens from both rural and urban areas involved in the arts and culture sector. A conference will be convened in the coming year to bring together communities and cultural organizations to further integrate arts and culture into the everyday life of the Province.

My Government is working towards greater stability for the library system. Legislation will be introduced, allowing for the formation of a New Brunswick Public Libraries Foundation, and a strengthened structure for managing library services.

Sports are important to New Brunswickers, and My Government will be cooperating fully with interested municipalities to prepare a bid for the Canada Winter Games for the year 2003.

The mandate of the New Brunswick Geographic Information Corporation will be expanded to include a major customer service function. Legislation will be introduced to change the name of the New Brunswick Geographic Information Corporation to the Service New Brunswick Corporation, reflecting its expanded mandate.

My Government will expand one-stop services to citizens throughout the Province. New ways will be introduced, including electronic delivery, to provide services from the Government at times and places more convenient to the users. More Service New Brunswick centres will be added as part of an effort to complete the network over the next two years.

A new Provincial Call Centre to be located in Dalhousie will be launched in 1997. This will take many government services directly into homes and businesses, and make it more convenient for citizens.

More business service packages will be developed for small businesses. These packages will consolidate government licences and permits, and should eliminate much of the frustration, duplication, and inconvenience that many small businesses currently experience.

My Department of Finance will proceed with process simplification and deregulation initiatives in order to simplify licensing and reporting procedures for tobacco, gasoline, and pari-mutuel tax collection. Liquor licensing procedures will be further simplified. More electronic commerce systems will also be established to improve services to citizens and businesses.

A new municipal unconditional grant formula will be put in place in the coming year. My Government will continue with studies to investigate municipal restructuring aimed at strengthening urban-centred regions.

The *Municipalities Act* will be brought forward for consideration of a number of legislative amendments, including the orderly transition of amalgamations, municipal empowerment, and to give local service districts authority to contribute to regional service facilities that are located outside their boundaries.

My Government remains dedicated to supporting all constructive efforts to rebalance and modernize the Canadian Federation. Work of this nature will be complemented by efforts to build a consensus for the constitutional recognition of Quebec's unique place within Canada.

My Government deeply appreciates the support and cooperation of the citizens of New Brunswick, the Members of the Legislative Assembly, and the public service, in helping to move us closer to our vision of self-sufficiency.

Further details of the Government's 1997 agenda and 1997-98 spending estimates will be outlined by My Ministers over the course of this Session.

You will be asked to review and approve the Statement of Estimated Revenues and Expenses, and Capital Account appropriations, required to operate the Government for the coming fiscal year.

I would now like to wish the Honourable Members of this Assembly success throughout this new Session. May Divine Providence guide you in your deliberations.

Her Honour then retired.

Mr. Speaker resumed the Chair.

Pro Forma Bill

Ordered that Hon. Mr. McKenna, Premier, have leave to introduce a Bill entitled "*An Act to Perpetuate a Certain Ancient Right.*" (Bill 1)

He accordingly presented the said Bill to the House and the same was received and read the first time.

The Speaker then informed the House that in order to prevent mistakes he had obtained a copy of Her Honour's speech, which he offered to read. (Reading dispensed with.)

On motion of Mr. Flynn, seconded by Mr. A. Landry,

RESOLVED, that the speech of Her Honour the Lieutenant-Governor be forthwith taken into consideration.

Address

Mr. Flynn, a Member for the electoral district of York, proposed an Address to Her Honour the Lieutenant-Governor in answer to the speech, which he read in his place, and being seconded by Mr. A. Landry, a Member for the electoral district of Nepisiguit, it was handed to the Chair where it was again read and is as follows:

Fredericton, N.B.

November 26, 1996.

To Her Honour,

The Honourable Margaret Norrie McCain,

Lieutenant-Governor of the Province of New Brunswick.

May It Please Your Honour:

We, Her Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects of the Legislative Assembly of the Province of New Brunswick, now in session, beg leave to extend our humble thanks to Your Honour for the gracious speech which Your Honour has addressed to us, and we assure Your Honour that all matters which may be submitted to us during the session will receive our most careful attention and consideration.

And a debate arising thereon, it was on motion of Hon. Mr. Valcourt, a Member for the electoral district of Edmundston, adjourned over.

And then, 4.15 o'clock p.m., the House adjourned.

The following documents, having been deposited with the Clerk of the House since the last sitting of the House, were deemed laid upon the table of the House pursuant to Standing Rule 39.

ANNUAL REPORT FILED

Lotteries Commission of New Brunswick 1994-1995 - May 3, 1996

Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission Annual Report 1994-1995 - May 6, 1996

Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons - May 6, 1996

Council of Maritime Premiers Annual Report 1994-1995 - May 8, 1996

A Privacy Act for New Brunswick - A Discussion Paper - Department of Justice - July 1996 - July 10, 1996

Annual Report of the Supervisor of Political Financing Under *The Political Process Financing Act* for the period April 1, 1994 to March 31, 1995 - July 16, 1996

Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission - Responding to Financial Challenges 1996-97 - April 1996 - July 24, 1996

RCMP "J" Division 1995 Annual Report - August 28, 1996

New Brunswick Liquor Annual Report 1996 - August 29, 1996

1995 Annual Report of the New Brunswick credit unions and caisses populaires - September 17, 1996

Health and Community Services Vital Statistics - Annual Statistical Report 1995 - September 20, 1996

1995 Annual Report of New Brunswick Cooperative Associations - October 2, 1996

1995-1996 NB Power Annual Report - October 3, 1996

Public Accounts - Volume 1 - Financial Statements of the Province of New Brunswick for the fiscal year ended 31 March 1996 - October 8, 1996

Geographic Information Corporation Annual Report 1995-1996 - October 15, 1996

Department of Finance Annual Report 1995-1996 - October 15, 1996

Department of Justice Annual Report 1995-1996 - October 30, 1996

Department of Transportation Annual Report 1995-1996 - October 30, 1996

Legal Aid New Brunswick - Twenty-Fifth Annual Report 1995-1996 - October 30, 1996

Labour and Employment Board Annual Report 1994-1996 - October 30, 1996

Office of the Comptroller Annual Report 1995-1996 - October 30, 1996

A Report by the Minister of Finance on Members' Expenses, pursuant to section 30(3) of the *Legislative Assembly Act* - October 31, 1996

Department of Human Resources Development-NB Annual Report 1995-1996 - October 31, 1996

Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture Annual Report 1995-1996 - November 1, 1996

Department of Natural Resources and Energy 1995-96 Annual Report - November 5, 1996

Department of Supply and Services 1995-1996 - November 21, 1996

Regional Development Corporation 1995-1996 - November 22, 1996

Public Accounts - Volume 2 - Financial Statements of the Province of New Brunswick for the fiscal year ended 31 March 1996 - November 22, 1996