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Daily Sitting 39

Tuesday, May 2, 2000.

11 o'clock a.m.

Prayers.

Hon. Mr. Mockler recognized the contribution to New Brunswick provincial politics of the Hon. Brenda Robertson, P.C., Progressive Conservative Member for Albert County (1967-1974) and Riverview (1974-1984), and recipient of the first annual Hon. Richard B. Hatfield Award. Hon. Mrs. Robertson was the first woman elected to the Legislative Assembly of New Brunswick, the first woman Cabinet Minister, and she was called to the Senate of Canada in 1984.

Hon. Mr. Green advised that it was his government's intention to give its consent to vary the order of Private Members' Motions by first considering Motion 126, followed by Motion 35, and that following Private Members' Motions, the House would resolve itself into a Committee of Supply to consider the estimates of the Department of Finance, followed by those of the Departments of Transportation and Justice, and that, time permitting, the House would resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider Bill 34.

Mrs. Mersereau gave Notice of Motion 137 that on Tuesday, May 9, 2000, she would move the following resolution, seconded by Mr. Blanchard:

That an address be presented to Her Honour the Lieutenant-Governor praying that she cause to be laid upon the table of the House a complete listing of the government agencies, boards and commissions subject to this government's six month review announced on October 21, 1999, including the names of members on each agency, board and commission, their per diems and the expiration of their terms.

Ms. Weir gave Notice of Motion 138 that on Tuesday, May 9, 2000, she would move the following resolution, seconded by Mr. Richard:

That an address be presented to Her Honour the Lieutenant-Governor, praying that she cause to be laid upon the table of the House copies of any actuarial reports, analyses, assessments, or any other document reviewing the potential compensation incurred in the reinstatement of pensions for pre-1985 widows who lost spouses in workplace accidents.

Ms. Weir gave Notice of Motion 139 that on Tuesday, May 9, 2000, she would move the following resolution, seconded by Mr. Richard:

That an address be presented to Her Honour the Lieutenant-Governor, praying that she cause to be laid upon the table of the House copies of any and all correspondence, memos, reports, or electronic mail in the possession of the Department of Employment and Training, the Workplace Health, Safety and Compensation Commission, the Department of Finance, and the Premier's Office, related to the reinstatement of pension benefits for widows who lost spouses as a result of a workplace accident and subsequently remarried prior to 1985.

Ms. Weir gave Notice of Motion 140 that on Tuesday, May 9, 2000, she would move the following resolution, seconded by Mr. Richard:

That an address be presented to Her Honour the Lieutenant-Governor, praying that she cause to be laid upon the table of the House copies of any and all studies, reviews, reports, assessments, or any other kind of data gathering to determine the number of remarried widows eligible for the reinstatement of pension benefits by the Workplace Health, Safety and Compensation Commission.

It was agreed by unanimous consent to proceed first with the consideration of Motion 125, followed by Motion 135.

Pursuant to Notice of Motion 126, Mr. C. Thériault, seconded by Mr. Blanchard, moved:

WHEREAS there is a national obligation on the part of CBC to provide an acceptable level of broadcasting services to the entire country;

AND WHEREAS there are reports that the CBC is considering cuts in delivery of television and radio services now provided by CBC operations in New Brunswick;

AND WHEREAS there are reports of coming cuts in local CBC broadcasts in a number of areas, including local news coverage and public affairs broadcasting;

AND WHEREAS these services with a New Brunswick flavour may be in jeopardy;

AND WHEREAS moving delivery of these services out of the province would result in a serious deficiency and less opportunity for debate of public issues on programs such as NB Now;

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that this House urge the President of CBC not to make any cuts in delivery and production of services now being provided in New Brunswick;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this House urge the CRTC to examine in detail the need to maintain the CBC presence in New Brunswick and production and delivery of local services.

And the question being put, a debate ensued.

And after some time, due to the unavoidable absence of Mr. Speaker, Mr. Ashfield, the Deputy Speaker, took the Chair as Acting Speaker.

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

Debate resumed on Motion 35, moved by Mr. Allaby, as follows:

WHEREAS the government has expressed a goal of strong economic growth for New Brunswick;

WHEREAS a comprehensive transportation infrastructure and services are vital for solid economic growth;

WHEREAS the Minister of Transportation has publicly noted the vital dependence of the economy on good transportation;

BE IT RESOLVED that this Legislature urge the government to establish as a priority objective the continued development and improvement of this province's transportation infrastructure and services to help sustain New Brunswick's strong economic growth.

And after some time, Hon. Mrs. Blaney, seconded by Hon. Mr. Green, moved in amendment.

AMENDMENT

THAT Motion 35 be amended:

By striking all words in the resolution clause after the word "government" and replacing them with:

"to continue to work cooperatively with the road builders to maintain and improve the province's transportation infrastructure."

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 advised that the time allotted for Private Members' Motions had expired.

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

And after some time, Mr. Ashfield took the chair.

And after some further time, the Chairman declared it to be 6 o'clock p.m., and left the chair, to resume again at 7 o'clock p.m.

7 o'clock p.m.

The Committee resumed with Mr. Ashfield in the chair.

And after some time, Mr. Jordan took the chair as Acting Chairman.

And after some further time, Mr. Ashfield resumed the chair.

And after some further time spent in Committee of Supply, proceedings were interrupted and Mr. Speaker resumed the chair.

Pursuant to Standing Rule 34(1) Hon. Mr. Green, the Government House Leader, moved the following resolution:

THAT the House continue to sit past the ordinary hour of adjournment for the purpose of continuing consideration of the estimates of the Department of Finance in Committee of Supply.

Mr. Speaker put the question on the motion and it was resolved in the affirmative.

The House resolved into a Committee of Supply with Mr. Ashfield in the chair.

And after some time, Mr. C. Thériault rose on a Point of Order and submitted that due to the unprecedented lateness of the hour, the cafeteria should be open and available to Members and staff.

Mr. Chairman advised that the normal refreshments would continue to be made available and that the necessary arrangements would be made by the Clerk in consultation with the Speaker.

12 o'clock midnight.

And after some further time spent in Committee of Supply, Hon. Mr. E. Robichaud rose on a Point of Order and noted that the remarks of the Member for Saint John Harbour were not relevant to the estimates under consideration.

Several Members spoke on the point of order.

At 1.14 o'clock a.m., Mr. Ashfield, the Chairman, stated he would take the matter under consideration and declared a brief recess.

1.36 o'clock a.m.

Mr. Ashfield resumed the chair and delivered the following ruling with respect to the Point of Order raised by Hon. Mr. E. Robichaud:

STATEMENT BY CHAIRMAN

Honourable Members,

I have listened to all the points that have been made. Members have cited a number of authorities on the Point of Order.

Although the principles referred to in the Parliamentary authorities have been helpful, it should be noted that the *Standing Rules* are the primary authority for the transaction of the business of the House.

There is a provision of our Rules which is applicable, I feel, in this situation. It is Standing Rule 79 which states:

79 The Standing Rules of the House shall be observed in the Committees of the Whole House insofar as they are applicable, except the rules as to seconding of motions and limiting the number of times of speaking, and the length of speeches. Speeches in Committees of the Whole House must be strictly relevant to the item or clause under consideration.

I feel the Chair has been lenient. A lot of leeway has been given. However; we need to abide by our Standing Rules.

If the Member is quoting from sources, the Member has to show how this information relates strictly to the items under consideration. I feel that this has not been the case.

I will be listening intently and will call Members to order if necessary.

At 2.40 o'clock a.m., the Chairman declared a brief recess and left the chair.

2.53 o'clock a.m.

The Committee resumed with Mr. Ashfield in the chair.

At 3.54 o'clock a.m., the Chairman declared a brief recess and left the chair.

4.08 o'clock a.m.

The Committee resumed.

After some time, Mr. S. Graham read a certain letter into the record and, at the request of the Chair, a copy was provided to the Committee.

Hon. Mr. Betts rose on a Point of Order, and noted that the letter was unsigned.

Mrs. Fowlie rose on the point of order, referred to paragraph 487 of *Beauchesne's Parliamentary Rules & Forms, 6th Edition*; which states that an unsigned letter should not be read in the House.

Mr. Chairman ruled that it was within the Minister's discretion whether he wished to comment further on the letter.

And after some time, Mr. C. Thériault rose on a Point of Order and submitted that Hon. Mr. Betts was not following the recognized process in answering questions during estimates by referring Members to the Hansard transcript.

Several Members spoke on the point of order.

Mr. Chairman ruled that the Chair must respect the Minister's discretion to answer questions as he deems appropriate.

And after some time, Mr. Jordan took the chair.

After some time, Mr. Ashfield resumed the chair.

At 5.33 o'clock a.m., the chairman declared a recess and left the chair.

5.48 o'clock a.m.

The Committee resumed.

And after some time, Mr. Holder took the chair.

And after some time, Mr. Ashfield took the chair.

And after some further time, Mr. Speaker resumed the chair, and Mr. Ashfield, the Chairman, after requesting that Mr. Speaker revert to Presentations of Committee Reports, reported that the Committee had had under consideration the matters referred to them, had made some progress therein and asked leave to sit again.

And then, 9.47 o'clock a.m., the House adjourned.

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

Documents requested in Notice of Motion 123 - April 28, 2000