

Daily sitting 35

Thursday, February 20, 2014

1 o'clock p.m.

Prayers.

Mr. Macdonald welcomed to the House the Honourable Peter MacKay, Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and Member of Parliament for Central Nova; and Mr. Robert Goguen, Member of Parliament for Moncton-Riverview-Dieppe.

The following Bill was introduced and read a first time:

By Hon. Mr. Fitch,

Bill 39, An Act to Amend the Small Business Investor Tax Credit Act.

Mr. Fraser gave Notice of Motion 39 that on Thursday, February 27, 2014, he would move the following resolution, seconded by Mr. Kenny:

WHEREAS CN Rail has announced it will abandon a 70 kilometer stretch of track between Miramichi and Bathurst; and

WHEREAS this rail line is used to provide passenger service by VIA Rail; and

WHEREAS if the line is abandoned, rail passenger service east of Quebec to the Maritimes will be in jeopardy and may cease to exist; and

WHEREAS this passenger service is an important transportation link as access to rail passenger service supports economic growth, particularly in rural areas of the province; and

WHEREAS this service connects communities and provides greater social and economic benefits for New Brunswickers; and

WHEREAS jurisdiction for inter-provincial transportation rests with the federal government; and

WHEREAS the federal government is abandoning its responsibility to ensure the people of New Brunswick have access to a crucial national transportation link;

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly urge the provincial government to call upon the Harper government to preserve passenger rail service in New Brunswick.

Mr. Doucet gave Notice of Motion 40 that on Thursday, February 27, 2014, he would move the following resolution, seconded by Mr. Boudreau:

THAT an address be presented to His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor, praying that he cause to be laid upon the table of the House all documentation including correspondence, however recorded, stored or archived, by electronic means or otherwise, including mobile to mobile device communication, PINs, SMS text messages, between the Department of Public Safety, the NB 911 Bureau, the Emergency Measures Organization, the Department of Finance and other third parties in relation to the monies collected by all telecommunications providers as a 911 fee since November 2010 to present, including the total amount collected, and a detailed breakdown of how these funds were expended.

Mr. Doucet gave Notice of Motion 41 that on Thursday, February 27, 2014, he would move the following resolution, seconded by Mr. Melanson:

WHEREAS the Premier had promised after the floods of 2010 a two-year project to develop a Comprehensive Emergency Measures plan “to build a robust emergency program for the region”; and

WHEREAS this plan has failed its objective; and

WHEREAS this plan was to provide training for responders and exercises to validate the emergency plans; and

WHEREAS this plan failed this objective; and

WHEREAS local citizens involved in the discussions were told at a planning meeting in August 2012, that this planning was no longer needed; and

WHEREAS southwestern New Brunswick was hit with a serious ice storm that left thousands of New Brunswick citizens without power in freezing weather for up to 13 days; and

WHEREAS representatives from the Emergency Measures Organization arrived on the scene well after the fact and certainly added to the confusion without communicating a plan with anyone; and

WHEREAS representatives of the Emergency Measures Organization left rural New Brunswick people to fend for themselves, telling people to call their local fire department; and

WHEREAS people in rural Charlotte County were given no directions from the Emergency Measures Organization on what to do or where to go; and

WHEREAS the Emergency Measures Organization and government did not provide communications updates nor advisories to the public until well after the event; and

WHEREAS the Emergency Measures Organization and government excuses as to why there was a breakdown in communications, demonstrate the Emergency Measures Organization failure since these were issues that their planning was supposed to address; and

WHEREAS the Emergency Measures Organization and the government would not allow localized states of emergency to be called when subsection 10(2) of the *Emergency Measures Act* clearly allows this community responsibility; and

WHEREAS the role of the Emergency Measures Organization in the emergency demonstrated that no “robust” plan appeared to be in place to deal with the emergency; and

WHEREAS the document provided to the Standing Committee on Public Accounts on request to the Department of Public Safety on October 29, 2013, and tabled on December 16, 2013, indicated in the Executive Summary that no “robust” plan was in place;

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of New Brunswick ask the Auditor General to examine the Department of Public Safety and in particular the Emergency Measures Organization to determine if a comprehensive plan is in place for the next emergency and if staff are qualified and properly trained to protect the people of New Brunswick in this role and whether paying for these positions from the NB911 Service Fund is an appropriate use of the Fund; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Emergency Measures Organization be brought to the Standing Committee on Public Accounts within 120 days for detailed questioning by the Committee; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Emergency Measures Organization be scheduled to appear at the Standing Committee on Public Accounts every year thereafter.

Hon. Mr. Fitch gave notice that on Friday, February 21, 2014, Bill 39 would be called for second reading.

Debate resumed on the adjourned debate on the motion that Bill 14, *An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly Act*, be now read a second time.

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

And the debate being ended, and the question being put that Bill 14 be now read a second time, it was resolved in the affirmative.

Accordingly, Bill 14, *An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly Act*, was read a second time and ordered referred to the Committee of the Whole House.

Debate resumed on Motion 21, moved by Mr. Melanson, seconded by Mr. Albert, as follows:

WHEREAS, during the 2010 election campaign, Premier Alward promised to establish a catastrophic drug plan before the fall of 2011;

WHEREAS, during the 2010 election campaign, Premier Alward promised to permanently freeze property tax assessments for all homeowners aged 65 and over;

WHEREAS, during the 2010 election campaign, Premier Alward promised not to raise taxes that affect ordinary New Brunswickers;

WHEREAS, during the 2010 election campaign, Premier Alward promised to stabilize our public finances without raising taxes or reducing services;

WHEREAS, during the 2010 election campaign, Premier Alward promised to ensure that the annual budget of the Department of Health would increase by a minimum of 3% each and every year of his four-year mandate;

WHEREAS, during the 2010 election campaign, Premier Alward promised to reduce the small business tax rate by 50%;

WHEREAS, during the 2010 election campaign, Premier Alward made several other promises that have not been kept;

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly urge the Premier to admit to the people of New Brunswick that he has not kept these promises.

And the debate being ended, and the question being put, Motion 21 was resolved in the negative.

Pursuant to Notice of Motion 16, Mr. Arseneault moved, seconded by Mr. Collins:

WHEREAS the health budget represents approximately 40% of the total provincial budget; and

WHEREAS according to the report *Modelling New Brunswick's Future Health Care Expenses and Resource Needs*, conducted by the Canadian Institute of Actuaries in conjunction with the New Brunswick Health Council, the health budget will increase by \$1 billion by year 2020; and

WHEREAS according to the aforementioned, smoking represents one of the three main and biggest factors influencing health care costs; and

WHEREAS Canadian Institute for Health Information statistics indicate that New Brunswick exceeds the Canadian average in smoking rates; and

WHEREAS New Brunswick's Wellness Strategy Action Plan only references smoking once, and only in relation to the workplace; and

WHEREAS smoking reduction with a focus on youth, should be a priority for every government;

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of New Brunswick urge the provincial government to immediately develop a strategy and action plan aimed at reducing youth smoking in New Brunswick.

And the question being put, a debate ensued.

And after some time, Hon. Ms. Shephard, seconded by Mr. Riordon, moved in amendment:

AMENDMENT

That Motion 16 be amended:

In the fifth WHEREAS clause, by replacing all the words following “Wellness Strategy Action Plan” with “addresses support for anti-smoking initiatives including the Smoker’s Helpline, the New Brunswick Anti-Tobacco Coalition and tobacco-free workplaces; and”

In the resolution clause, by replacing all the words following “Legislative Assembly of New Brunswick” with “recognise the valuable work currently underway under the Alward Government and urges the provincial government to build on these initiatives and further develop its strategy and action plan aimed at reducing youth smoking in New Brunswick”.

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

And after some time, Mr. Speaker resumed the chair.

And the debate being ended, and the question being put, the amendment was adopted.

Mr. Speaker put the question on Motion 16 as amended as follows:

WHEREAS the health budget represents approximately 40% of the total provincial budget; and

WHEREAS according to the report *Modelling New Brunswick’s Future Health Care Expenses and Resource Needs*, conducted by the Canadian Institute of Actuaries in conjunction with the New Brunswick Health Council, the health budget will increase by \$1 billion by year 2020; and

WHEREAS according to the aforementioned, smoking represents one of the three main and biggest factors influencing health care costs; and

WHEREAS Canadian Institute for Health Information statistics indicate that New Brunswick exceeds the Canadian average in smoking rates; and

WHEREAS New Brunswick's Wellness Strategy Action Plan addresses support for anti-smoking initiatives including the Smoker's Helpline, the New Brunswick Anti-Tobacco Coalition and tobacco-free workplaces; and

WHEREAS smoking reduction with a focus on youth, should be a priority for every government;

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of New Brunswick recognise the valuable work currently underway under the Alward Government and urges the provincial government to build on these initiatives and further develop its strategy and action plan aimed at reducing youth smoking in New Brunswick.

And the question being put, Motion 16 as amended was resolved in the affirmative.

The Order being read for second reading of Bill 12, *An Act to Amend the Members' Conflict of Interest Act*, a debate arose thereon.

And after some time, Mr. Speaker interrupted proceedings and announced that the hour of daily adjournment had arrived.

And then, 6 o'clock p.m., the House adjourned.