
Daily sitting 26

Wednesday, March 22, 2023

10 o'clock a.m.

Prayers.

The Honourable the Premier delivered to Mr. Speaker a Message from Her Honour the Lieutenant-Governor, and the said Message was read by Mr. Speaker, all the Members standing, and is as follows:

Fredericton, New Brunswick.
February 23, 2023.

Mr. Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly:

I thank you for your Address and beg to assure you that I entertain the fullest confidence that in all your deliberations you will be guided by a most earnest desire to promote the happiness and prosperity of the people of this province.

(Sgd. :) Brenda L. Murphy.
Lieutenant-Governor.

Hon. Mr. R. Savoie offered condolences to the family of the late Viola Léger, former Liberal Senator for New Brunswick (2001-2005) and awarded and honoured Acadian actress and ambassador best known for her portrayal of La Sagouine, in the play by Acadian author Antonine Maillet. Mr. Gauvin joined in this regard.

It was agreed by unanimous consent to extend the time allotted for Oral Questions by fifteen minutes.

Mr. Arseneau rose on a point of order and submitted that the paper copies of the Statements by Ministers were not provided to the Opposition parties. Mr. Arseneault spoke on the point of order. Hon. Mr. G. Savoie advised the House that the matter would be remedied. Mr. Speaker ruled that the current practice of providing the paper copies was a courtesy and not a requirement, but that it did help with the efficiency of the proceedings of the House and encouraged the practice to continue.

Mr. LeBlanc, Member for Shediac-Beaubassin-Cap-Pelé, laid upon the table of the House a petition urging the Electoral Boundaries and Representation Commission to reverse the decision to remove certain communities from his riding. (Petition 10)

Mr. Arseneau, Member for Kent North, laid upon the table of the House a petition urging government to keep the NB Liquor agency store in the Rogersville Co-op. (Petition 11)

The following Bills were introduced and read a first time:

By Hon. Mr. Steeves,
Bill 29, *Financial Advisors and Financial Planners Title Protection Act.*

By Hon. Mr. Austin,
Bill 30, *An Act to Amend the Coroners Act.*

By Hon. Ms. Shephard,
Bill 31, *An Act to Amend the Nursing Homes Act.*

By Hon. Mr. Holland,
Bill 32, *An Act Respecting Transferring Powers to the Energy and Utilities Board.*

With leave of the House, Hon. Ms. Dunn moved, seconded by Mr. Coon: (Motion 27)

WHEREAS in December 2013, the UN General Assembly adopted a Resolution proclaiming 2015 – 2024 the International Decade for People of African Descent, with the theme “People of African descent: recognition, justice and development”;

WHEREAS on January 30th, 2018, the Government of Canada announced that it would officially recognize the International Decade for People of African Descent and committed to learning more about issues affecting Black Canadians;

WHEREAS in proclaiming this Decade, the international community recognized people of African descent, for the first time, as a distinct group whose human rights must be promoted and protected, and also recognized the extent of anti-Black racism in Canadian society;

WHEREAS the Government of New Brunswick hired Canada’s first Commissioner on Systemic Racism to conduct a public consultation to gather views and information about the nature and impact of systemic racism in the Province of New Brunswick and to engage with government institutions, including health, social development and justice;

WHEREAS the Government of New Brunswick mandated the province's Commissioner on Systemic Racism to conduct a comprehensive review about the extent and scope of systemic racism in New Brunswick, including the government's role in eliminating systemic racism both within provincial institutions and agencies and in the province generally;

WHEREAS the Government of New Brunswick tasked the Commissioner on Systemic Racism with providing quantitative and qualitative evidence about the nature and impacts of systemic racism and recommendations for government on the development of a provincial strategy and action plan to address systemic racism in the Province of New Brunswick;

WHEREAS in June 2022, the Legislative Assembly of New Brunswick declared August 1 of every year as Emancipation Day in New Brunswick;

WHEREAS recognizing the International Decade for People of African Descent in New Brunswick will strengthen opportunities for government to interact with civil society, citizens, and the media and through the combined efforts of all, build a more diverse and prosperous New Brunswick;

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of New Brunswick declare 2015 to 2024 "The International Decade for People of African Descent in New Brunswick".

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

Ms. Mitton requested leave of the House to move the following resolution, seconded by Mr. Coon: (Motion 28)

WHEREAS human-caused climate breakdown is accelerating the toll of extreme weather across the planet;

WHEREAS people across Canada and around the world are losing their lives and livelihoods due to more deadly and more frequent heatwaves, floods, wildfires, and droughts triggered by the climate crisis;

WHEREAS global heating is warming the oceans and carbon pollution is acidifying ocean waters with catastrophic consequences for marine ecosystems and commercial fisheries;

WHEREAS more frequent and intense storm surges, combined with rising sea levels, are eroding our coastlines, undermining homes, roads, and other infrastructure;

WHEREAS a climate emergency declaration carries with it significant meaning, signaling to the public the province's acknowledgment of the seriousness of the climate crisis and the urgent need to implement policies, regulations, and funded programs to rapidly reduce greenhouse gas emissions;

WHEREAS, for the purpose of this declaration, the use of the word "emergency" is to reinforce the critical seriousness of acting to avoid climate breakdown, and therefore does not imply or trigger a "state of emergency," which has its own legal definition;

WHEREAS the Province of New Brunswick is in the midst of implementing its third climate change action plan, forming a critical foundation for action to respond to the climate crisis;

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly declare a climate emergency.

Leave to dispense with notice of Motion 28 was denied. Accordingly, notice was given for Thursday, March 30, 2023.

Mr. Coon gave Notice of Motion 29 that on Thursday, March 30, 2023, he would move the following resolution, seconded by Mr. Arseneau:

WHEREAS the New Brunswick Commissioner on Systemic Racism identified that there is ample evidence that systemic and overt racism are problems in New Brunswick;

WHEREAS the New Brunswick Commissioner on Systemic Racism also found that 54% of New Brunswick residents feel that the provincial government is not doing enough to address racism in the province;

WHEREAS New Brunswick is among the three provinces that currently do not have a permanent provincial body empowered to oversee the dismantling of systemic racism;

WHEREAS many New Brunswick residents and organizations fighting systemic and overt racism actively support a permanent provincial body to advocate for the fight against racism;

WHEREAS the New Brunswick Human Rights Commission plays a significant role in promoting equity and anti-discrimination, but the current institutional arrangement that embeds it within the Department of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour undermines its independence and ability to meet its objectives;

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly urge the government to create a permanent provincial body and lead person, at a commissioner or deputy minister level, to oversee the dismantling of systemic racism;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly urge the government to establish the New Brunswick Human Rights Commission as a stand-alone body reporting to the Legislative Assembly.

Hon. Mr. G. Savoie gave notice that on Friday, March 24, 2023, Bills 29, 30, 31 and 32 would be called for second reading.

And then, 11.59 a.m., the House adjourned.