

Daily sitting 28

Friday, March 24, 2023

9 o'clock a.m.

Prayers.

Mr. K. Chiasson gave Notice of Motion 30 that on Thursday, March 30, 2023, he would move the following resolution, seconded by Mr. Gauvin:

WHEREAS NB Power will be raising electricity rates this year and will likely request significant increases in coming years;

WHEREAS those increases in rates will also increase tax revenue at a time when the government is declaring historic surpluses;

WHEREAS the tax applied to electricity rates disproportionately impacts low-income individuals and families who spend a larger percentage of their income on basic necessities of life;

WHEREAS the rising cost of living for necessities including rent, fuel, and groceries is forcing people to make difficult choices;

WHEREAS home heating is a basic necessity of life in New Brunswick and 45% of New Brunswickers rely on electricity as their primary source for home heating;

BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly urge the government to remove the provincial portion of the HST from residential electricity bills.

Mr. Bourque gave Notice of Motion 31 that on Thursday, March 30, 2023, he would move the following resolution, seconded by Mr. Gauvin:

WHEREAS New Brunswickers are facing many challenges related to rapidly rising rents and housing affordability;

WHEREAS the government lifted the rent cap without putting a comprehensive housing plan in place;

WHEREAS there may be a perceived or real inequality of power that favours the landlord over a tenant in a rent increase dispute where the onus is on the tenant to prove that the rent increase is unreasonable;

WHEREAS the definition of unreasonable is vague and arbitrary in New Brunswick;

WHEREAS there is a backlog of reviews at the Residential Tenancies Tribunal, causing undue hardship for New Brunswickers;

BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly urge the government to prepare guidelines to better define reasonable increases and possible reasons for permitting increases in excess of the guidelines;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly urge the government to amend *The Residential Tenancies Act* to require that the burden of proof be placed on any landlord applying for an increase in excess of the established guidelines;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly urge the government to provide a mechanism and support whereby the rent increase applications may be adjudicated on a regional basis.

Mr. Arseneau requested leave of the House to move the following resolution, seconded by Mr. Legacy: (Motion 32)

WHEREAS the Standing Committee on Estimates and Fiscal Policy has the responsibility to review expenditure plans of provincial departments and agencies;

WHEREAS the Main Estimates for 2023-24 tabled in the Legislature do not contain the detailed expenditure plans for each provincial department and agency;

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly urge the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board to table detailed expenditure plans for each provincial department and agency for 2023-24.

Leave to dispense with notice of Motion 32 was denied. Accordingly, notice was given for Thursday, March 30, 2023.

Hon. Mr. G. Savoie, Government House Leader, announced that it was the intention of government that the House resume the adjourned debate on the Budget.

The Order of the Day for resuming the adjourned debate on the motion (Motion 23),

That this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government, having been read,

The debate was resumed.

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

And then, 2 p.m., the House adjourned.

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

Business Plan 2023-2024, Auditor General of
New Brunswick

March 23, 2023