
Daily sitting 30

Friday, March 22, 2024

9 o'clock a.m.

Prayers.

Mr. M. LeBlanc rose on a point of order and submitted that the Minister's Statement by Hon. Mr. Holland was argumentative, contrary to the Standing Rules. Mr. Speaker ruled the point well taken.

Mr. McKee, Member for Moncton Centre, laid upon the table of the House a petition urging government to manage the overcrowding in schools. (Petition 13)

Mr. McKee gave Notice of Motion 43 that on Thursday, March 28, 2024, he would move the following resolution, seconded by Ms. Holt:

WHEREAS the integration of digital transformation and healthcare innovation can lead to improved patient outcomes, increased accessibility and enhanced operational efficiency within the healthcare system;

WHEREAS the adoption of standardized digital records management systems is essential for the seamless exchange of patient information and coordination of care across healthcare providers, regions, and health authorities;

WHEREAS investment in medical technology for the intake, monitoring and wellness of patients is paramount for lowering healthcare access wait-times, lowering overall healthcare costs and improving services to a higher standard of care;

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly urge the government of New Brunswick to establish a comprehensive technology vision for healthcare delivery that outlines the government's strategic direction for digital transformation and innovation and integrating technological advancements into healthcare delivery;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly urge the government to allocate resources towards the implementation of a standardized digital records management system that facilitates the seamless and secure exchange of patient information among healthcare providers, regions, and health authorities.

Mr. McKee gave Notice of Motion 44 that on Thursday, March 28, 2024, he would move the following resolution, seconded by Mr. Losier:

WHEREAS healthcare professionals across the province agree that a change in the way we manage healthcare human resource planning is needed;

WHEREAS strategic long-term and sustainable investments are needed in our healthcare system;

WHEREAS addressing the urgent need for a robust recruitment and retention strategy is essential to ensuring the sustainability and effectiveness of New Brunswick's healthcare system;

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly urge the government of New Brunswick to take an integrated model approach to healthcare human resource planning in order to address current and future healthcare needs in the province based on clear data, projections, and targets;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly urge the government of New Brunswick to develop a comprehensive and multiyear health human resource (HHR) strategy that prioritizes recruitment and retention of healthcare professionals.

Mr. McKee gave Notice of Motion 45 that on Thursday, March 28, 2024, he would move the following resolution, seconded by Mr. D'Amours:

WHEREAS invasive Group A streptococcal infections (strep A) present a serious danger to younger and older New Brunswickers that is on the rise in the province and across the country with New Brunswick at double the national fatality rate;

WHEREAS early testing is key to treating strep A;

WHEREAS 90,000 people in New Brunswick are finding themselves without a permanent primary care provider and unable to rely on virtual consultations for strep A infections and the six pharmacies able to provide testing are fully booked regularly;

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly urge the government of New Brunswick to amend the terms of its Pharmacist Care Clinic pilot expanding the program to more pharmacies across the province and providing pharmacies with the training and equipment necessary to offer the tests.

Mr. Arseneau gave Notice of Motion 46 that on Thursday, March 28, 2024, he would move the following resolution, seconded by Ms. Mitton:

WHEREAS the right to repair is the fundamental principle that individuals and businesses should have the ability to access repair manuals, diagnostic tools, and information necessary to repair their own equipment and consumer products;

WHEREAS manufacturers use obsolescence tactics to deliberately make repair difficult by using special tools, parts, or scant repair information and instructions;

WHEREAS implementing right to repair legislation would empower forestry, agriculture, heavy equipment operators, and consumers alike to repair their equipment and devices, thereby reducing the cost of living and increasing access to affordable repair services;

WHEREAS the right to repair promotes environmental sustainability by reducing electronic waste, conserving resources, and minimizing the carbon footprint associated with manufacturing and disposal;

WHEREAS right to repair legislation recognizes the importance of rural repair shops, garages, and skilled technicians in providing repair services to communities across New Brunswick and would benefit residents living in rural New Brunswick who often struggle to find authorized repair shops;

WHEREAS Prince Edward Island, Manitoba, and Quebec have introduced right to repair laws, providing a framework for New Brunswick to follow;

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly urge the government of New Brunswick to institute comprehensive right to repair legislation, ensuring that consumers have access to necessary tools, parts, and information to repair their products, and fostering a more sustainable and consumer-friendly marketplace.

Mr. K. Chiasson gave Notice of Motion 47 that on Thursday, March 28, 2024, he would move the following resolution, seconded by Mr. J. LeBlanc:

WHEREAS property taxes continue to be a concern especially since the taxable value of houses has jumped for the third year in a row across the province with increases of 50% or more being reported and with economists still projecting a steeper increase in home values over the coming years;

WHEREAS property tax increases are putting additional pressures on New Brunswickers who are already struggling with the current cost of living;

WHEREAS the cost of assessments is a fee set in legislation at \$19.40 per \$100,000 that a property is assessed to be worth, which is expected to raise a record \$15.8 million from property owners (\$1.5 million more than last year, mostly from residential properties) and has remained so despite property values soaring;

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly urge the government of New Brunswick to amend the Act affecting property tax assessment costs, pausing the property assessment fee pending a comprehensive review of the property tax system.

Mr. Losier gave Notice of Motion 48 that on Thursday, March 28, 2024, he would move the following resolution, seconded by Mr. Legacy:

WHEREAS housing is a human right that the majority of New Brunswickers fear will be taken from them due to unaffordability;

WHEREAS building affordable housing is harder than ever before for developers because of the rising cost of building materials and property taxes;

WHEREAS construction of rental developments is almost at a standstill in rural areas with an alarming vacancy rate of less than 2% across the province;

WHEREAS the federal government announced in September 2023 it would remove the Goods and Services Tax (GST) from the construction of purpose-built rental housing;

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly urge the government of New Brunswick to establish a Harmonized Sales Tax (HST) rebate program for new affordable rental builds to help create more housing, ensuring that the province remains competitive with neighbouring provinces as it addresses the growing demand for affordable rental housing.

Mr. M. LeBlanc gave Notice of Motion 49 that on Thursday, March 28, 2024, he would move the following resolution, seconded by Mr. Legacy:

WHEREAS the efficient and judicious use of taxpayer funds is paramount to responsible governance;

WHEREAS fostering positive and constructive relationships between different levels of government is essential for effective governance and public service delivery;

WHEREAS diverting public funds towards advertising campaigns that target and attack other levels of government undermines the spirit of collaboration and cooperation necessary for addressing societal challenges;

WHEREAS such advertising expenditures can be perceived as partisan and divisive, eroding public trust in the political process and government institutions;

WHEREAS the public interest is best served when government communications focus on informing citizens about policies, services, and initiatives rather than engaging in adversarial messaging against other levels of government;

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that this Legislative Assembly urge the government of New Brunswick to refrain from spending any public funds on advertising campaigns that are directed at other levels of government.

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

The following Bill was read a third time:

Bill 16, *Consumer Protection Act*.

Ordered that the said Bill does pass.

The Order of the Day for resuming the adjourned debate on the motion (Motion 33),

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

The debate was resumed.

And after some time, Ms. Anderson-Mason, the Deputy Speaker, took the chair as Acting Speaker.

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

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