

Daily sitting 18

Wednesday, March 26, 2025

10 o'clock a.m.

Prayers.

Ms. Wilcott, from the Standing Committee on Procedure, Privileges and Legislative Officers, presented the Second Report of the Committee for the session which was read and is as follows:

March 26, 2025

To The Honourable
The Legislative Assembly of
The Province of New Brunswick

Madam Speaker:

I have the pleasure to present herewith the Second Report of the Standing Committee on Procedure, Privileges and Legislative Officers for the First Session of the 61st Legislature.

Your Committee was directed to examine the definition of “recognized party” and your Committee’s Report contains the resulting recommendations for amendments to the Standing Rules.

And your Committee begs leave to make a further report.

(Sgd. :) Kate Wilcott, M.L.A.
Chair

The full report of the Committee as presented follows:

On November 20, 2024, the Legislative Assembly adopted Motion 2, which directed your Committee to examine the definition of “recognized party” in the Standing Rules.

Your Committee met on March 18 and 25, 2025, and examined the relevant practices and procedures in New Brunswick and other jurisdictions.

Following deliberations, your Committee agreed to recommend amendments to the Standing Rules concerning the definition of, and rights conferred by, recognized party status.

Amendments to the Standing Rules

Your Committee therefore recommends for adoption the following amendments to the Standing Rules:

1 *Standing Rule 1 is amended by repealing the definition “recognized party” and substituting the following:*

“recognized party” means any registered party that

(a) elects two Members or receives twenty percent of the vote at a general election; and

(b) has officially nominated candidates in seventy-five percent of the electoral districts;

2 *Standing Rule 40.1 is amended by repealing subrule (3) and substituting the following:*

40.1(3) Members shall be recognized as follows: the Official Opposition first, followed by other recognized parties in order of the size of their membership in the House and finally the Government and then in rotation, ensuring that the frequency of recognition is proportional to each recognized party’s total number of Private Members, until the time provided in subrule (2) has expired.

3 *Standing Rule 104 is amended by repealing paragraphs (1)(e) and (f) and substituting the following:*

(e) two members from the party forming the Official Opposition, nominated by that caucus;

(f) one member from each recognized party, not already represented on the Committee, nominated by each respective caucus.

Ordered that the report be received, and leave granted.

Ms. Bockus gave Notice of Motion 21 that on Thursday, May 8, 2025, she would move the following resolution, seconded by Ms. S. Wilson:

WHEREAS the sale of beer, wine, and spirits is currently regulated in a manner that limits consumer choice and convenience, resulting in unnecessary barriers to access for responsible adults in our province;

WHEREAS other provinces, including Ontario and British Columbia, have successfully allowed the sale of beer, wine, and spirits in grocery and convenience stores, leading to an increase in consumer convenience, reduced government oversight, and competitive market conditions, without compromising public safety;

WHEREAS the revenue generated from expanded sales of alcohol in grocery and convenience stores would provide a valuable opportunity to enhance government revenue and support public health initiatives, while maintaining a strong regulatory framework to ensure responsible sales and consumption;

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly urge the government to take immediate steps to allow the sale of beer, wine, and spirits in grocery and convenience stores, ensuring appropriate safeguards are in place for responsible distribution, safety, and health regulations.

Mr. Hogan gave Notice of Motion 22 that on Thursday, May 8, 2025, he would move the following resolution, seconded by Mr. Ames:

WHEREAS the pharmacy engagement pilot project was designed to integrate pharmacists more effectively into the healthcare system by expanding their roles in patient care, including medication management, chronic disease monitoring, and minor ailment prescribing;

WHEREAS this initiative demonstrated tangible benefits, including improved patient outcomes, reduced wait times in emergency departments, and enhanced efficiency within the healthcare system;

WHEREAS pharmacists, as highly trained and accessible healthcare professionals, play a crucial role in alleviating pressure on primary care providers and emergency services, particularly during a time of healthcare workforce shortages in New Brunswick;

WHEREAS discontinuing this pilot project would result in decreased access to essential healthcare services, increased strain on physicians and emergency departments, and potential negative impacts on patient health outcomes;

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of New Brunswick urge the government to strongly advocate for the immediate reinstatement and expansion of the pharmacy engagement pilot project;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly urge the government of New Brunswick to allocate the necessary funding and resources to support pharmacists in delivering essential healthcare services as part of a sustainable and integrated healthcare system.

Ms. Bockus gave Notice of Motion 23 that on Thursday, May 8, 2025, she would move the following resolution, seconded by Ms. M. Wilson:

WHEREAS the SEED (Student Employment and Experience Development) grants in New Brunswick have proven to be an effective way for MLAs to support projects that address specific community needs, but the current allocation limits do not provide sufficient flexibility for MLAs to meet the growing demands of their constituents;

WHEREAS other provinces, such as Alberta, have implemented systems that allow for a higher number of funded positions or grants per riding, resulting in more inclusive community support, better outcomes for local initiatives, and enhanced relationships between elected officials and the communities they serve;

WHEREAS increasing the number of SEED grants available in each riding will enable MLAs to provide greater support to local initiatives, foster stronger connections with constituents, and ensure that community-driven projects can thrive across New Brunswick, contributing to social and economic development at the grassroots level;

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly urge the government of New Brunswick to increase the funding for SEED grants to enable MLAs to award 30 positions in each riding, empowering them to better address local needs and contribute to the ongoing development of their communities.

Ms. M. Johnson, Opposition House Leader, gave notice that on Thursday, March 27, 2025, Opposition Members' Business would be considered in the following order: Motion 15 and 16.

With leave of the House, Mr. M. LeBlanc moved, seconded by Ms. Wilcott: (Motion 24)

THAT the recommendations contained in the Second Report of the Standing Committee on Procedure, Privileges and Legislative Officers be concurred in by the House.

And the question being put, a debate ensued.

And the debate being ended, and the question being put, Motion 24 was resolved in the affirmative.

Mr. M. LeBlanc, Government House Leader, announced that it was the intention of government that Bills 12, 13, 14, 15, 16 and 17 be called for second reading until 3 p.m.; at which time the House would resume the adjourned debate on the Budget.

At the request of Mr. Austin, it was agreed by unanimous consent to revert to Notices of Motions.

Mr. Austin gave Notice of Motion 25 that on Thursday, April 3, 2025, he would move the following resolution, seconded by Ms. Scott-Wallace:

WHEREAS New Brunswick is endowed with vast natural resources, including untapped reserves of natural gas, which present a significant opportunity to contribute to the province's economic development, job creation, and energy security;

WHEREAS a jurisdictional scan of other Canadian provinces demonstrates the economic impact of natural gas exploration, seeing billions in economic benefits from its natural gas sector;

WHEREAS New Brunswick, with its unique geological formations, has the potential to explore and develop its natural gas resources, ensuring that the economic benefits of this resource can be realized in a way that protects the province's natural environment for future generations;

WHEREAS the development of natural resources in New Brunswick will strengthen the province's economy;

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly urge the government of New Brunswick to initiate comprehensive research and a consultative process to explore the responsible development of its natural resources in order to unlock new economic opportunities and contribute to the long-term prosperity of the province.

Mr. Austin gave Notice of Motion 26 that on Thursday, April 3, 2025, he would move the following resolution, seconded by Ms. Conroy:

WHEREAS security threats and incidents targeting public and private institutions, including places of worship and non-profit organizations, have become an increasing concern across Canada, with religious and community organizations often being vulnerable to acts of vandalism, theft, and other forms of violence;

WHEREAS the recent vandalism of the Fredericton Synagogue, an act that undermines the principles of tolerance, respect, and inclusion, highlights the critical need for greater community support and collaboration, and religious organizations, through their longstanding commitment to fostering understanding, unity, and social responsibility, are essential partners in promoting healing, reconciliation, and a stronger, more inclusive New Brunswick society, making their inclusion in the New Brunswick Community Investment Fund vital for the betterment of all communities;

WHEREAS religious organizations in New Brunswick have a long history of providing essential community services, including food programs, mental health support, youth mentorship, and senior care, which contribute to the overall well-being and resilience of local communities, particularly in underserved and vulnerable populations;

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly urge the government to expand the CIF eligibility requirements to include security apparatus and equipment for religious and non-profit organizations, ensuring that these essential institutions are equipped to protect their staff, members, and facilities from emerging threats.

The Order being read for second reading of Bill 12, *An Act to Repeal the Pension Plan Sustainability and Transfer Act*, a debate arose thereon.

At 12 p.m. the House recessed. At 1.10 p.m. the House resumed with Mr. Bourque, the Deputy Speaker, in the chair.

And after some time, Mr. Hogan, seconded by Mr. Ames, moved in amendment:

AMENDMENT

THAT the motion for second reading be amended by deleting all the words after the word “that” and substituting the following:

“Bill 12, *An Act to Repeal the Pension Plan Sustainability and Transfer Act*, be not now read a second time but that the order for second reading be discharged and the subject matter of the Bill referred to the Standing Committee on Law Amendments.”

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

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

And after some further time, Mr. Deputy Speaker interrupted proceedings and announced that the time allotted for second reading had expired.

The Order of the Day for resuming the adjourned debate on the motion (Motion 13),

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

The debate was resumed.

And after some time, Madam Speaker resumed the chair.

And the debate continuing, after some time it was on motion of Mr. J. LeBlanc, on behalf of the Honourable the Premier, adjourned over.

And then, 6 p.m., the House adjourned.