

Daily sitting 42

Thursday, April 23, 2015

10 o'clock a.m.

Prayers.

Mr. Oliver, Member for Kings Centre, laid upon the table of the House a petition in opposition to the closure of Norton Elementary School. (Petition 73)

Mr. Coon, Member for Fredericton South, laid upon the table of the House a petition urging the Legislative Assembly to modernize forest legislation, return supply to woodlot owners, abandon the 2014 forest plan, and support Bill 13. (Petition 74)

Mr. Albert, Government House Leader, announced that following a recess, Opposition Members' Business would be considered.

At 11.10 a.m., Mr. Speaker declared a recess and left the chair.

2.32 p.m.

Mr. Speaker resumed the chair.

Pursuant to Notice of Motion 32, Ms. Dubé moved, on behalf of Mr. Steeves:

WHEREAS seniors helped build our province;

WHEREAS New Brunswick has an aging population and seniors are living longer due to the dramatic improvements in the detection and treatment of disease;

WHEREAS the marked increase in longevity of individuals does not necessarily mean that seniors maintain the same quality of life;

WHEREAS New Brunswick should support seniors living at home for as long as possible;

WHEREAS seniors need to be confident that they will have access to high quality long-term care when they are no longer able to live alone;

WHEREAS the United Nations' Principles for Older Persons identifies and divides the rights of seniors into five categories, namely independence, participation, care, self-fulfillment and dignity;

WHEREAS this government:

- (a) has removed the limit on the cost of nursing home care, making it more expensive for seniors who need specialized care to live out their lives in dignity;
- (b) will assess seniors' ability to pay for nursing home care based on their liquid assets, allowing the hard earned savings of seniors to be attacked again;
- (c) is increasing premiums for the Seniors Prescription Drug Program, making the cost of living healthy lives even higher for seniors;
- (d) is reinstating ambulance fees, forcing seniors to choose between life-saving care and paying their bills; and
- (e) is increasing gas taxes, reducing the mobility of seniors and their quality of life;

WHEREAS these actions implement or increase taxes and other indirect taxes and fees, and doing so is a very regressive way of getting new revenue from New Brunswickers and hurts our seniors;

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly condemn this government for its failure to protect, promote and defend the interests of seniors;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly urge the government to acknowledge its errors, reverse its course of action to erode the health, safety and security of our seniors, and commit to providing better support and assistance to our seniors.

And the question being put, a debate ensued.

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

And after some further time, Hon. Ms. Rogers, seconded by Mr. Albert, moved in amendment:

AMENDMENT

That Motion 32 be amended:

In the fourth “whereas” clause, delete “should support” and insert “supports”;

By deleting the last two “whereas” clauses entirely and substituting the following:

“WHEREAS currently, there are 55,335 seniors aged 75 years and over in New Brunswick and by 2025, the number of seniors will rise to 89,000 which is an increase of 33,665;

WHEREAS the sustainability of long term care is at risk if changes are not made to the way in which supports and services are provided;

WHEREAS currently wealthy seniors are subsidized by government just as lower income seniors are;

WHEREAS a progressive approach suggests that those who can readily afford to pay for their own care could be asked to contribute more toward the cost of their care;

WHEREAS the government wishes to involve seniors and stakeholders in determining how this could be implemented;”

By deleting both resolution clauses and substituting the following:

“BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that the Legislature urge the government to commit to providing better support to our seniors by engaging seniors and stakeholders for their input on the changes to long term care policy before the policy changes are introduced.”

Madam 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 32 as amended as follows:

WHEREAS seniors helped build our province;

WHEREAS New Brunswick has an aging population and seniors are living longer due to the dramatic improvements in the detection and treatment of disease;

WHEREAS the marked increase in longevity of individuals does not necessarily mean that seniors maintain the same quality of life;

WHEREAS New Brunswick supports seniors living at home for as long as possible;

WHEREAS seniors need to be confident that they will have access to high quality long-term care when they are no longer able to live alone;

WHEREAS the United Nations' Principles for Older Persons identifies and divides the rights of seniors into five categories, namely independence, participation, care, self-fulfillment and dignity;

WHEREAS currently, there are 55,335 seniors aged 75 years and over in New Brunswick and by 2025, the number of seniors will rise to 89,000 which is an increase of 33,665;

WHEREAS the sustainability of long term care is at risk if changes are not made to the way in which supports and services are provided;

WHEREAS currently wealthy seniors are subsidized by government just as lower income seniors are;

WHEREAS a progressive approach suggests that those who can readily afford to pay for their own care could be asked to contribute more toward the cost of their care;

WHEREAS the government wishes to involve seniors and stakeholders in determining how this could be implemented;

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that the Legislature urge the government to commit to providing better support to our seniors by engaging seniors and stakeholders for their input on the changes to long term care policy before the policy changes are introduced.

And the question being put, Motion 32 as amended was resolved in the affirmative.

The Order being read for second reading of Bill 11, *Local Food Security Act*, a debate arose thereon.

And after some time, Ms. Harris resumed the chair.

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

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

And then, 6.10 p.m., the House adjourned.

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

Response to Petitions 55, 59

April 22, 2015