
Daily sitting 15

Friday, February 12, 2021

9 o'clock a.m.

Prayers.

Following Statements by Members, Hon. Mr. Savoie rose on a point of order and submitted that the statement by Ms. Harris was a personal attack on the character of Hon. Mr. Holder. Mr. Speaker took the matter under advisement.

Hon. Mr. Fitch laid upon the table of the House a document entitled *Overcoming Poverty Together, The New Brunswick Economic and Social Inclusion Plan 2014 – 2019, Final Report, Fall 2020*.

Ms. Mitton, Member for Memramcook-Tantramar, laid upon the table of the House a petition urging government to repeal the Social Development Household Income Policy 6.1 for those living with disabilities. (Petition 4)

Mr. Carr, from the Standing Committee on Economic Policy, presented the Sixth Report of the Committee for the session which was read and is as follows:

February 12, 2021

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

Mr. Speaker:

Your Standing Committee on Economic Policy begs leave to submit this, their sixth report.

Your Committee met on February 2 and 3 and had under consideration:

Bill 19, *An Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act*;
Bill 20, *An Act to Amend the Workplace Health, Safety and Compensation Commission and Workers' Compensation Appeals Tribunal Act*;

and have agreed to the same.

Your Committee also had under consideration:

Bill 3, *An Act to Amend the Early Childhood Services Act*;
Bill 15, *An Act to Amend the Notaries Public Act*;

and have agreed to the same with certain amendments.

And your Committee begs leave to make a further report.

(Sgd. :) Greg Turner, M.L.A.
Chair

Pursuant to Standing Rule 78.1, Mr. Speaker put the question on the motion deemed to be before the House, that the report be concurred in, and it was resolved in the affirmative.

Mr. Cullins, from the Standing Committee on Private Bills, presented the Second Report of the Committee for the session which was read and is as follows:

February 12, 2021

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

Mr. Speaker:

Your Standing Committee on Private Bills begs leave to submit this, their Second Report of the session.

Your Committee met on February 5, 2021, in the Legislative Assembly Chamber and had under consideration the following Bill:

Bill 27, *An Act to Amend the Saint John Transit Commission Act*;

which it recommends to the favourable consideration of the House with certain amendments.

And your Committee begs leave to make a further report.

I move, seconded by the Member for Carleton-York, that the report be concurred in by the House.

(Sgd. :) Ryan Cullins, M.L.A.
Chair

Mr. Speaker put the question on the motion of concurrence in the report of the Committee, and it was resolved in the affirmative.

Hon. Mr. Steeves gave Notice of Motion 28 that on Tuesday, March 16, 2021, he would move the following resolution, seconded by the Honourable the Premier:

THAT this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.

Mr. Melanson gave Notice of Motion 29 that on Thursday, February 18, 2021, he would move the following resolution, seconded by Mr. LePage:

WHEREAS the COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant negative impact on New Brunswick businesses and the economy;

WHEREAS a new report by the Canadian Federation of Independent Business indicates that one in four small and medium-sized businesses in New Brunswick is at risk of closing;

WHEREAS the report further indicates that the findings in New Brunswick were among the worst in the country;

WHEREAS, in response to concerns about the state of businesses, Fredericton Chamber of Commerce CEO Krista Ross, expressing the need for business support and concern about austerity, wrote in an op-ed on January 28, 2021, that the first order of business must be “*supporting the businesses that are here now, that have been hanging on by an increasingly fraying thread this past year*”;

WHEREAS economist Richard Saillant wrote in an article January 15, 2021, entitled “Higgs deficit obsession threatens New Brunswick’s recovery”: “*New Brunswick, meanwhile is doing much less to support its people, businesses and communities*” and “*Yet there is little to suggest that Higgs has a credible plan to ensure a successful recovery*”;

WHEREAS economist Herb Emery, in an article featured in *Huddle* on May 10, 2020, warned that “*For New Brunswick, a province that was struggling before the pandemic, the outbreak is exacerbating existing economic issues*”;

WHEREAS a recent opinion piece in *L’Acadie Nouvelle* on June 3, 2020, recognized that New Brunswick will need to rely more on its resources in the years to come and there must be a focus on economic growth;

WHEREAS economists like Donald Savoie have indicated publicly that we need to invest in growth areas like the food industry to transform our economy;

WHEREAS, in a *L'Acadie Nouvelle* article dated January 15, 2021, economist Pierre-Marcel Desjardins, comparing the significant investments being made by other provinces, echoed the concerns of OECD economist Laurence Boone about the dangers of fiscal rigour at this time and the need for stimulus investments;

WHEREAS an increasing number of business leaders and economists are echoing a concern about the lack of business support and investment in New Brunswick, the lack of a plan for economic growth, and a preoccupation by the Premier with cuts and budget tightening;

WHEREAS the Premier has gutted ONB, which played a key role in job creation;

WHEREAS the Higgs government ranks dead last in provincial support for the private sector;

WHEREAS, unlike other provinces, New Brunswick is not taking advantage of significant cost-shared infrastructure and program funding being offered by the federal government;

WHEREAS the provincial government has not brought forward an economic recovery plan with a focus on business support and economic growth;

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly urge the government to introduce, as soon as possible, an economic recovery plan that builds on the innovative products, services, and business practices born of necessity and of New Brunswick ingenuity to boost our economic growth potential;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly urge the government to focus the plan on bold ideas focused on exports and domestic opportunities, tourism and hospitality, addressing our labour shortage through training and population growth, housing, supply chain management, food security, green economy, advanced manufacturing, transportation, infrastructure, information technology, cybersecurity, and research and development, supported by strategic investments in partnership with government and the private sector;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly urge the government to make New Brunswick's economic recovery plan inclusive of women, newcomers, and Indigenous communities.

Mr. Arseneault gave Notice of Motion 30 that on Thursday, February 18, 2021, he would move the following resolution, seconded by Mr. Melanson:

WHEREAS the legislative branch of government is independent from the executive branch of government;

WHEREAS, despite this independence, it is the Executive Council that ultimately nominates Legislative Officers when a vacancy occurs or an office is created;

WHEREAS there is a growing chorus of voices that suggest that in order to avoid conflicts of interest, the appointment process for Legislative Officers should be independent of the Executive Council;

WHEREAS Brent White, an Associate Professor at Mount Allison University and former auditor with the provincial Auditor General, recently released a dissertation calling for changes to the selection process for the next Auditor General to foster public confidence in the appointment process;

WHEREAS, in 2010, Queen's University Business Professor Steven Salterio raised similar concerns;

WHEREAS the Premier has moved to consolidate power in the Executive Council Office, raising even greater concerns about the need for independence in the selection process;

WHEREAS there is a need to maintain public confidence in the selection process for Legislative Officers;

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly urge the government to review the selection process for Legislative Officers and bring forward a revised selection process that is independent of the Executive Council.

Mr. Arseneault gave Notice of Motion 31 that on Thursday, February 18, 2021, he would move the following resolution, seconded by Mr. Melanson:

THAT an address be presented to Her Honour the Lieutenant-Governor, praying that she cause to be laid upon the table of the House all documentation related to the expenses for all members of the Premier's Office staff since June 2020.

Mr. Arseneault gave Notice of Motion 32 that on Thursday, February 18, 2021, he would move the following resolution, seconded by Mr. Melanson:

THAT an address be presented to Her Honour the Lieutenant-Governor, praying that she cause to be laid upon the table of the House all documentation, information, notes, memos, records, correspondence, however stored, electronically or otherwise, including but not limited to, e-mails, mobile to mobile device communication, PINs, and SMS text messages regarding discussions between staff of the Premier's Office and Jeannot Volpé for the period November 1, 2020, to January 8, 2021.

Mr. Arseneault gave Notice of Motion 33 that on Thursday, February 18, 2021, he would move the following resolution, seconded by Mr. Melanson:

THAT an address be presented to Her Honour the Lieutenant-Governor, praying that she cause to be laid upon the table of the House all documentation related to meetings held between members of the Executive Council and interest groups, community groups, and communities.

Mr. Guitard gave Notice of Motion 34 that on Thursday, February 18, 2021, he would move the following resolution, seconded by Mr. Legacy:

THAT an address be presented to Her Honour the Lieutenant-Governor, praying that she cause to be laid upon the table of the House all documentation related to the number of persons hired by government, by department, including full-time employees, casual and term employees, and personal services contracts, since November 2018, and the names of the persons hired.

Mr. Guitard gave Notice of Motion 35 that on Thursday, February 18, 2021, he would move the following resolution, seconded by Mr. Legacy:

THAT an address be presented to Her Honour the Lieutenant-Governor, praying that she cause to be laid upon the table of the House the names of all full-time employees terminated by government since December 1, 2018.

Ms. Harris gave Notice of Motion 36 that on Thursday, February 18, 2021, she would move the following resolution, seconded by Mr. Bourque:

THAT an address be presented to Her Honour the Lieutenant-Governor, praying that she cause to be laid upon the table of the House all documentation related to information provided to the public and stakeholders on the health reform process including the consultation process and all information related to advertising and informing the public.

Mr. K. Chiasson gave Notice of Motion 37 that on Thursday, February 18, 2021, he would move the following resolution, seconded by Mr. Mallet:

THAT an address be presented to Her Honour the Lieutenant-Governor, praying that she cause to be laid upon the table of the House all documentation related to all persons hired by government, by department, as political staff under the hiring competition exemption provided under Section 18 of the *Civil Service Act*, since November 15, 2018.

Mr. K. Chiasson gave Notice of Motion 38 that on Thursday, February 18, 2021, he would move the following resolution, seconded by Mr. Mallet:

THAT an address be presented to Her Honour the Lieutenant-Governor, praying that she cause to be laid upon the table of the House all calendars and meeting schedules of the Premier and Members of the Executive Council since November 2018.

Mr. Gauvin gave Notice of Motion 39 that on Thursday, February 18, 2021, he would move the following resolution, seconded by Mr. LeBlanc:

THAT an address be presented to Her Honour the Lieutenant-Governor, praying that she cause to be laid upon the table of the House all documentation related to amounts paid for any cost of living and/or accommodation allowance for members of the staff of the Premier of New Brunswick, Executive Council staff, deputy ministers and senior staff in Part 1 of the public service, and all persons hired under a Personal Services Contract, since November 2018.

Mr. Mallet gave Notice of Motion 40 that on Thursday, February 18, 2021, he would move the following resolution, seconded by Mr. K. Chiasson:

THAT an address be presented to Her Honour the Lieutenant-Governor, praying that she cause to be laid upon the table of the House all documentation related to virtual and/or Zoom meetings between the Premier and third parties.

Mr. Mallet gave Notice of Motion 41 that on Thursday, February 18, 2021, he would move the following resolution, seconded by Mr. K. Chiasson:

THAT an address be presented to Her Honour the Lieutenant-Governor, praying that she cause to be laid upon the table of the House all documentation related to deputy heads, members of the Executive Council, their staff, and the staff of the Premier's Office who applied for and received a rebate under the Explore NB Travel Incentive program.

Ms. Thériault gave Notice of Motion 42 that on Thursday, February 18, 2021, she would move the following resolution, seconded by Mr. K. Chiasson:

THAT an address be presented to Her Honour the Lieutenant-Governor, praying that she cause to be laid upon the table of the House all documentation, information, notes, memos, records, correspondence, however stored, electronically or otherwise, including but not limited to, e-mails, mobile to mobile device communication, PINs, and SMS text messages between the Minister of Health and the Health Authorities related to the proposed health reform process.

Mr. McKee gave Notice of Motion 43 that on Thursday, February 18, 2021, he would move the following resolution, seconded by Mr. Bourque:

THAT an address be presented to Her Honour the Lieutenant-Governor, praying that she cause to be laid upon the table of the House all documentation, information, notes, memos, records, correspondence, however stored, electronically or otherwise, including but not limited to, e-mails, mobile to mobile device communication, PINs, and SMS text messages regarding all meetings and/or representations by persons registered under the *Lobbyists' Registration Act* and all members of the Executive Council.

Mr. Legacy gave Notice of Motion 44 that on Thursday, February 18, 2021, he would move the following resolution, seconded by Mr. Guitard:

THAT an address be presented to Her Honour the Lieutenant-Governor, praying that she cause to be laid upon the table of the House all documentation, information, notes, memos, records, correspondence, however stored, electronically or otherwise, including but not limited to, e-mails, mobile to mobile device communication, PINs, and SMS text messages regarding the decision to have the Minister of Natural Resources and Energy Development write to the Energy and Utilities Board with respect to the application by Irving Oil for an increase in fuel margins, including but not limited to all discussions between the Premier's Office and third parties.

Mr. Bourque gave Notice of Motion 45 that on Thursday, February 18, 2021, he would move the following resolution, seconded by Mr. Legacy:

THAT an address be presented to Her Honour the Lieutenant-Governor, praying that she cause to be laid upon the table of the House all documentation, information, notes, memos, records, correspondence, however stored, electronically or otherwise, including but not limited to, e-mails, mobile to mobile device communication, PINs, and SMS text messages regarding the review of the *Official Languages Act*, including but not limited to the consultation process.

Mr. LePage gave Notice of Motion 46 that on Thursday, February 18, 2021, he would move the following resolution, seconded by Mr. Guitard:

THAT an address be presented to Her Honour the Lieutenant-Governor, praying that she cause to be laid upon the table of the House all documentation related to contracts entered into and purchases made since March 15, 2020, for which exemptions under the *Procurement Act* were utilized.

Mr. Austin gave Notice of Motion 47 that on Thursday, February 18, 2021, he would move the following resolution, seconded by Ms. Conroy:

WHEREAS there are approximately 26,000 small businesses in New Brunswick;

WHEREAS the small business tax rate in New Brunswick is 2.5% and the general rate is 14%;

WHEREAS New Brunswick is one of Canada's most open provinces, with CFIB indicating that 67% of small businesses in the province are fully open and 24% of those have normal sales;

WHEREAS dozens of Chambers of Commerce agree that a reduced tax would be of great benefit to small businesses and would assist them through the difficulties they are facing and would allow them to continue operating;

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly urge the government to eliminate the Corporate Income Tax on small business during the state of emergency.

Ms. Conroy gave Notice of Motion 48 that on Thursday, February 18, 2021, she would move the following resolution, seconded by Mr. Austin:

WHEREAS in New Brunswick there is an urgent need to reduce healthcare wait times;

WHEREAS optometrists have indicated a willingness to take an expanded role to ease the backlog and to improve wait times;

WHEREAS these organizations have stated that billing for these services will remain with third party insurance companies and/or direct patient billing;

WHEREAS this will not place an added financial burden on the provincial Medicare system;

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly urge the Minister of Health and the Government of New Brunswick to take immediate action to expand the scope of optometry to include treatment of glaucoma and oral medications for eye conditions.

Hon. Mr. Savoie moved, seconded by the Honourable the Premier:

THAT when the Assembly adjourns at the end of this sitting day, it stand adjourned until Tuesday, March 16, 2021, provided always that if it appears to the satisfaction of Mr. Speaker, after consultation with the Government, that the public interest requires that the House should meet at an earlier time during the adjournment or that the adjournment should continue beyond Tuesday, March 16, 2021, Mr. Speaker may give notice that he is

so satisfied and in such notice may state a time at which the House shall meet, and thereupon the House shall meet at the time so stated and shall transact its business as if it has been duly adjourned to that time, or in such notice may state that the adjournment shall continue until further notice is given by the Speaker, and

THAT in the event of Mr. Speaker being unable to act owing to illness or other cause, either of the Deputy Speakers shall act in his stead for the purpose of this order.

And the question being put, a debate ensued.

And the debate being ended, and the question being put on the motion, it was resolved in the affirmative.

Hon. Mr. Savoie, Government House Leader, announced that, with leave, it was the intention of government that Bills 3, 15, 19 and 20 be ordered for third reading; following which, with leave, Private Bill 27 would be called for second and third reading.

Hon. Mr. Savoie requested the unanimous consent of the House to proceed to third reading of Bills 3, 15, 19 and 20, and unanimous consent was denied.

Hon. Mr. Savoie requested the unanimous consent of the House to proceed to second and third reading of Private Bill 27, and unanimous consent was denied.

And then, 12.50 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:

Annual Reports

2019-2020 Department of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour	December 18, 2020
2019-2020 Department of Natural Resources and Energy Development	December 23, 2020
2019-2020 Department of Transportation and Infrastructure	December 23, 2020
2019-2020 Department of Environment and Local Government	December 23, 2020
2019-2020 New Brunswick Human Rights Commission	January 18, 2021

2019-2020 Extra-Mural/Ambulance New Brunswick	January 29, 2021
2018-2019 Regional Development Corporation Fees 2021, Department of Finance and Treasury Board	January 29, 2021 February 1, 2021
2019-2020 Department of Tourism, Heritage and Culture	February 11, 2021

Others

Air Quality Monitoring Result, 2018, Department of Environment and Local Government	December 18, 2020
Pursuant to the <i>Private Occupational Training Act</i> , the audited financial statements of the Training Completions Fund for the 2019-2020 fiscal year	December 21, 2020
Public Accounts for the fiscal year ended March 31, 2020, Volume 2, Supplementary Information	December 22, 2020
Unaudited Supplementary Employee Lists, Payments to Medical Practitioners List, and Supplier Lists, 2019-2020	December 22, 2020
Under the provisions of the <i>Fees Act</i> , information regarding fee changes for bundling of licences under the <i>Hunting Regulation, Fish and Wildlife Act</i>	January 22, 2021
Post-Election Recommendations for Legislative Change, September 14, 2020, Elections New Brunswick	January 27, 2021
Pursuant to the <i>Climate Change Act</i> , the Climate Change Fund Report for the fiscal years 2018-2019 and 2019-2020	February 3, 2021

Petitions

Response to Petition 3	December 22, 2020
Response to Petition 2	February 9, 2021
Response to Petition 1	February 10, 2021