
Daily sitting 21

Wednesday, March 24, 2021

10 o'clock a.m.

Prayers.

Hon. Mr. Crossman, Member for Hampton, laid upon the table of the House a petition urging the Legislative Assembly to attract new doctors and nurse practitioners to the riding. (Petition 7)

Mr. C. Chiasson, Member for Victoria-La Vallée, laid upon the table of the House a petition urging the Premier to relieve the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development from his duties as a member of the Executive Council. (Petition 8)

Mr. Arseneault, Opposition House Leader, gave notice that on Thursday, March 25, 2021, Opposition Members' Business would be considered in the following order: Motion 52 and 49.

Hon. Mr. Steeves, Minister of Finance and Treasury Board, delivered to Mr. Speaker a Message from Her Honour the Lieutenant-Governor, and the said Message was read by Mr. Speaker, all the Members standing, and is as follows:

Fredericton, New Brunswick.
March 24, 2021.

Her Honour the Lieutenant-Governor transmits the *Supplementary Estimates 2019-2020, Volume I*, of the sums required for the services of the Province, not otherwise provided for, for the year ending March 31, 2020, and in accordance with the provisions of the *Constitution Act, 1867*, recommends these estimates to the House.

(Sgd. :) Brenda Murphy.
Lieutenant-Governor.

Hon. Mr. Savoie, Government House Leader, announced that it was the intention of government that Bills 38, 40, 41, 42, 43 and 33 be called for second reading until no later than 3 p.m.; at which time the House would resume the adjourned debate on the Budget until 5 p.m.

The Order being read for second reading of Bill 38, *An Act to Amend the Service New Brunswick Act*, a debate arose thereon.

And the debate being ended, and the question being put that Bill 38 be now read a second time, it was resolved in the affirmative.

Accordingly, Bill 38, *An Act to Amend the Service New Brunswick Act*, was read a second time and ordered referred to the Standing Committee on Economic Policy, as designated by the Government House Leader.

The Order being read for second reading of Bill 40, *An Act to Amend the Opportunities New Brunswick Act*, a debate arose thereon.

And the debate being ended, and the question being put that Bill 40 be now read a second time, it was resolved in the affirmative.

Accordingly, Bill 40, *An Act to Amend the Opportunities New Brunswick Act*, was read a second time and ordered referred to the Standing Committee on Economic Policy, as designated by the Government House Leader.

The Order being read for second reading of Bill 41, *An Act to Amend the Combat Sport Act*, a debate arose thereon.

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

And the debate being ended, and the question being put that Bill 41 be now read a second time, it was resolved in the affirmative.

Accordingly, Bill 41, *An Act to Amend the Combat Sport Act*, was read a second time and ordered referred to the Standing Committee on Economic Policy, as designated by the Government House Leader.

The Order being read for second reading of Bill 42, *Miscellaneous Statutes Amendment Act*, a debate arose thereon.

And after some time, Mr. Arseneau, seconded by Mr. Coon, 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 42, *Miscellaneous Statutes Amendment 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.”

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

Mr. Arseneault rose on a point of order and requested clarification on which committees could call on witnesses from the public to appear concerning Bills.

At 11.58 a.m. the House recessed. At 1 p.m. the House resumed with Mr. Speaker in the chair.

Mr. Speaker delivered the following ruling:

STATEMENT BY SPEAKER

Members,

The Opposition House Leader raised a question concerning the calling of witnesses in committees. I will now reiterate a ruling from December 17, 2020, by the Chair of the Standing Committee on Economic Policy.

To determine the mandate of the Economic Policy Committee, we are guided by the Standing Rules, and the amendments found in the First Report of the Standing Committee on Procedure dated December 10, 2014.

Standing Rule 42.1(4) provides that those Bills which receive second reading, shall be referred to the Committee of the Whole House, or such other Committee designated by the Government House Leader. It was determined that the intent of this Rule is to allow a Standing Committee to replace the operations of the Committee of the Whole House.

Standing Rule 89.2 provides that when a Bill is referred to the Standing Committee on Economic Policy, the Chair shall inquire whether any comments questions or amendments are to be offered and to which sections. This is the exact wording of Standing Rule 87, which governs the operations of the Committee of the Whole House.

As such, again it is demonstrated that the Economic Policy Committee is intended to operate in the same manner as the Committee of the Whole House, where Ministers, accompanied by staff, defend their Bills by answering questions from Members. The House has mandated this Committee to decide whether to recommend a Bill to the House, or not, with or without amendments.

It has never been the practice of this House to allow witnesses from the public to appear before the Committee of the Whole House, and based on a review of the Standing Rules, this practice is intended to apply to the Economic Policy Committee as well. Our practice has always been that if public consultation is specifically required, the Bill in question would be referred by the House to our Standing Committee on Law Amendments, or such other committee designated to solicit public input.

Finally, this interpretation is supported by the First Report of the Standing Committee on Procedure, dated December 10, 2014, which stated that the standing committees created to consider Government Bills “would function in the same manner as the Committee of the Whole House and all meetings would be held in public and televised. As is the current practice, if the House found it necessary to consult the public on a proposed Bill prior to second reading, the subject matter of the Bill would be referred to the existing Standing Committee on Law Amendments.”

Debate resumed.

And the debate being ended, and the question being put, the amendment was defeated.

And the question being put that Bill 42 be now read a second time, it was resolved in the affirmative.

Accordingly, Bill 42, *Miscellaneous Statutes Amendment Act*, was read a second time and ordered referred to the Standing Committee on Economic Policy, as designated by the Government House Leader.

The Order being read for second reading of Bill 43, *An Act Respecting the Executive Council Act and the Legislative Assembly Act*, a debate arose thereon.

And after some time, Ms. Anderson-Mason resumed the chair.

And the debate being ended, and the question being put that Bill 43 be now read a second time, it was resolved in the affirmative.

Accordingly, Bill 43, *An Act Respecting the Executive Council Act and the Legislative Assembly Act*, was read a second time and ordered referred to the Standing Committee on Economic Policy, as designated by the Government House Leader.

The Order being read for second reading of Bill 33, *An Act to Amend the Insurance Act*, a debate arose thereon.

And the debate being ended, and the question being put that Bill 33 be now read a second time, it was resolved in the affirmative.

Accordingly, Bill 33, *An Act to Amend the Insurance Act*, was read a second time and ordered referred to the Standing Committee on Economic Policy, as designated by the Government House Leader.

The Order of the Day for resuming the adjourned debate on the motion (Motion 28),

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 resumed the chair.

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

And then, 5 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:

Annual Report 2019-2020

Centre Communautaire Sainte-Anne

March 23, 2021