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Journals

(Unrevised)

Legislative Assembly

Province of New Brunswick

Hon. Herménégilde Chiasson
Lieutenant-Governor

Speaker: Hon. Roy Boudreau

Thursday, March 26, 2009

**Third Session of the 56th Legislative Assembly
Fredericton, New Brunswick**

Thursday, March 26, 2009.

1 o'clock p.m.

Prayers.

Mr. Jody Carr welcomed to the House former Cabinet Minister Vaughn Blaney, Liberal MLA for Queens South (1987-1995) and Oromocto-Gagetown (1995-1999).

Mr. McGinley, the Member for Grand Lake-Gagetown, laid upon the table of the House a petition on behalf of citizens of the Gagetown, Hampstead and Belleisle areas who are opposed to the removal of ferry service across the Saint John River in these three areas. (Petition 29)

Mr. Northrup, the Member for Kings-East, laid upon the table of the House a petition on behalf of citizens of Miramichi urging the government to expedite the sale and re-opening of the Weyerhaeuser Mill at Morrison Cove. (Petition 30)

Hon. Mr. Albert, the Member for Caraquet, laid upon the table of the House a petition on behalf of citizens of the Caraquet area, requesting that the Hôpital de l'Enfant-Jésus, Religious Hospitallers of St. Joseph, be reopened, with 40 beds and the restoration of all services lost three years ago, including 24-hour emergency services and ambulance access, without any loss of services now provided. (Petition 31)

Mr. Fitch gave Notice of Motion 46, that on Thursday, April 2, 2009, he would move the following resolution, seconded by Mr. Alward:

WHEREAS property tax bills that have been recently received by New Brunswick residents are determined by both property tax rates and property assessments; and

WHEREAS the significant swell in property value assessments in recent years has drastically increased property tax bills and is generating undue financial strain on individuals and families; and

WHEREAS the downturn in global markets, restriction to credit and a national recession have made paying increased property tax bills increasingly difficult for all New Brunswickers; and

WHEREAS the New Brunswick government and the municipalities must be held accountable for additional revenues that may be generated by increased property assessments and because no property owner should have to pay higher property taxes without explanation and proof that the market value of their property has increased; and

WHEREAS both provincial and municipal governments have a responsibility to be open, fair and transparent with regard to taxation;

BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly urge the government to pass legislation to cap property tax assessments to protect individuals and business against drastic increases in tax bills;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Legislative Assembly urge this government to work with all stakeholders across the province in order to promote home ownership and to create a positive business environment so that New Brunswick may prosper and so that the issue of property taxes is not transferred to municipalities.

Pursuant to Notice of Motion 39, Mr. Alward moved, seconded by Mr. Fitch:

WHEREAS New Brunswick's economy has seen a significant decreases in recent months due to the down-turn in global economic markets; and

WHEREAS New Brunswick has made a guarantee to the taxpayers of the province to be fully self-sufficient by 2026 by eliminating the need for Federal Transfer payments; and

WHEREAS New Brunswick's current net debt has increased significantly during the last two fiscal years and is on track to reach \$9 billion by 2011 according to the Provinces Auditor General; and

WHEREAS it is essential for the province of New Brunswick to effectively and responsibly manage its finances so that future generations will not be saddled with the debt of poor financial management by this generation; and

WHEREAS the Auditor General has called upon the Government on two separate occasions to provide New Brunswick's taxpayers with detailed financial benchmarks outlining the progress towards self-sufficiency; and

WHEREAS the provincial net debt and deficit must be decreased in coming years to ensure that cost of that debt does not impede the delivery of programs and services that New Brunswickers have deemed essential;

BE IT RESOLVED that this Legislative Assembly urge the government to provide detailed financial benchmarks outlining the provinces progress towards self-sufficiency and provide a detailed, long term plan for debt and deficit reduction, including

dates and fiscal benchmarks to be met as was recommended by the Auditor General.

And the question being put, a debate ensued.

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

Mr. Fitch rose on a point of order and submitted that the comments of the Minister of Finance were not related to the principles of Motion 39. Hon. Mr. Lamrock spoke on the point. Mr. Deputy Speaker ruled the point well taken.

And after some time, Hon. Mr. Lamrock, seconded by Hon. V. Boudreau, moved in amendment:

AMENDMENT

That Motion 39 be amended by:

Replacing the first WHEREAS clause with:

“WHEREAS New Brunswick’s economy is facing significant challenges due to the downturn in the global economy; and”;

Replacing the second WHEREAS clause with:

“WHEREAS New Brunswick has embarked on a journey to be self-sufficient by 2026; and”,

Replacing the fifth WHEREAS clause with:

“WHEREAS Auditors General have over the years called on governments to provide the people of New Brunswick with detailed benchmarks outlining progress toward respective prosperity goals; and”,

Adding a seventh WHEREAS clause:

“WHEREAS the Finance Minister has tabled a bold and sensible five-point plan to provide leadership for a stronger economy;”,

Replace the resolution clause with:

“BE IT RESOLVED THAT this Legislative Assembly urge the government to provide detailed benchmarks outlining the province’s progress toward self-sufficiency and provide a detailed update each year on progress on all parts of the government’s five-point plan, including progress toward returning to balanced budgets.”

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

And after some time, Ms. Robichaud, the Deputy Speaker, took the chair as Acting Speaker.

And after some time, Mr. Fraser resumed the chair.

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

Mr. Deputy Speaker put the question on Motion 39 as amended as follows:

WHEREAS New Brunswick's economy is facing significant challenges due to the downturn in the global economy; and

WHEREAS New Brunswick has embarked on a journey to be self-sufficient by 2026; and

WHEREAS New Brunswick's current net debt has increased significantly during the last two fiscal years and is on track to reach \$9 billion by 2011 according to the Provinces Auditor General; and

WHEREAS it is essential for the province of New Brunswick to effectively and responsibly manage its finances so that future generations will not be saddled with the debt of poor financial management by this generation; and

WHEREAS Auditors General have over the years called on governments to provide the people of New Brunswick with detailed benchmarks outlining progress toward respective prosperity goals; and

WHEREAS the provincial net debt and deficit must be decreased in coming years to ensure that cost of that debt does not impede the delivery of programs and services that New Brunswickers have deemed essential;

WHEREAS the Finance Minister has tabled a bold and sensible five-point plan to provide leadership for a stronger economy;

BE IT RESOLVED THAT this Legislative Assembly urge the government to provide detailed benchmarks outlining the province's progress toward self-sufficiency and provide a detailed update each year on progress on all parts of the government's five-point plan, including progress toward returning to balanced budgets.

And the question being put, Motion 39 as amended was resolved in the affirmative.

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

And after some time, Ms. Robichaud, the Deputy Speaker, took the chair as Acting Speaker.

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

Ms. Dubé rose on a point of order and requested that Hon. Mr. Albert withdraw certain remarks. Mr. Speaker took the matter under advisement.

And the debate continuing, after some further time, Mr. Speaker interrupted proceedings and advised that the hour of daily adjournment had arrived.

And then, 6 o'clock 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:

Route 1 Gateway Project - Executive Summary of the
Request for Qualifications for the Design, Construction,
Financing, Operation, Maintenance and
Rehabilitation of a Four-Lane Highway

Between St. Stephen and River Glade
Annual Report 2007, Vital Statistics

March 23, 2009

March 24, 2009