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Daily sitting 28

Tuesday, May 18, 2021

*1 o'clock p.m.*

Prayers.

Pursuant to Motion 60, certain Members participated in House proceedings by virtual means. Mr. Speaker reminded those Members to unmute their microphones and have their video functioning when they wished to speak.

At 1.08 p.m., Mr. Speaker declared a recess and left the chair due to technical difficulties with the sound and interpretation system. At 1.19 p.m. the House resumed.

Following Oral Questions, Hon. Mr. Savoie rose on a point of order and submitted that Mr. Melanson referred to Hon. Mr. Cardy by name and made reference to the presence or absence of the Minister from the Chamber. Mr. Melanson withdrew the first remark. Mr. Speaker ruled the second point not well taken as the reference regarded virtual participation.

Mr. Carr requested leave of the House to move the following resolution, seconded by Mr. Hogan: (Motion 70)

THAT in addition to the existing sitting hours prescribed in Standing Rule 29(1) and by Special Order of the House adopted November 18, 2020, the House may sit on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday evenings from 7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.

THAT this Special Order shall come into effect on Tuesday, May 18, 2021, and shall remain in effect for the remainder of the First Session of the 60<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly.

Leave to dispense with notice of Motion 70 was denied. Accordingly, notice was given for Friday, May 21, 2021.

Mr. Coon gave Notice of Motion 71 that on Thursday, May 27, 2021, he would move the following resolution, seconded by Ms. Mitton:

WHEREAS the mental health care system in New Brunswick is failing to meet people's needs due to long waitlists, access issues, and underfunding;

WHEREAS the COVID-19 pandemic has intensified feelings of stress and anxiety, causing alarming levels of despair, suicidal thought, and hopelessness in New Brunswick's population;

WHEREAS there are challenges to access mental health services in New Brunswick, where wait times can last from 6 to 18 months for service;

WHEREAS suicide remains the second leading cause of death in Canada among young people aged 15 to 24, and New Brunswick has the highest suicide rate per capita in Canada;

WHEREAS the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate recognized that New Brunswick is lacking an effective provincial strategy for youth suicide prevention;

WHEREAS the Canadian Mental Health Association of New Brunswick estimates that the percentage of the provincial population having suicidal or self-harm thoughts has increased from about 2% to 10% in the last year;

WHEREAS the Canadian Mental Health Association recommends increasing mental health spending to 9% of the total health budget, yet the provincial government has allotted in its 2021-2022 budget only 5.5% of the total health budget;

WHEREAS the Legislative Assembly urged the government for the creation of the Mental Health Advocate in 2019, and yet this position has not been created;

WHEREAS there is a chronic shortage of registered school psychologists, with 23 of 38 funded positions in the Anglophone sector vacant and 14 of 38 funded positions in the Francophone sector vacant;

WHEREAS ongoing staff shortages forced the four-bed Inpatient Youth and Wellness Unit at the Moncton Hospital to merge with the Provincial Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Unit, bringing the total number of beds for youth in crisis from 10 down to 6;

WHEREAS a central system of governance for the Integrated Service Delivery (ISD) program would ensure that the sharing of information and financial resources among the ISD partners flow in a timely manner to properly address a child's need;

WHEREAS the death of 16-year-old Lexi Daken, who committed suicide after waiting in an emergency room for over 8 hours to see a psychiatrist and never saw one, has sparked calls for the New Brunswick government to transform the mental health care system, specifically on how it is being delivered to young people;

WHEREAS, as a response to the mental health and addiction crisis in New Brunswick, the provincial government has launched a 5-year Inter-Departmental Mental Health and Addiction Action Plan, which will establish 14 mental health clinics across the province;

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly urge the government to add 24-hour emergency mental health services to the mental health walk-in clinics being established around the province;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly urge the government to commit to increase the proportion of health spending devoted to mental health to 9%;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly urge the government to create a new government department responsible for child and youth services, with a legislative mandate to ensure the integration of services to children and youth across all government departments and agencies.

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Hon. Mr. Savoie, Government House Leader, announced that it was the intention of government that the House consider Motion 61; following which Bills 36, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58 and 35 would be called for second reading.

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Pursuant to Notice of Motion 61, Hon. Mr. Savoie moved, seconded by the Honourable the Premier:

THAT, pursuant to subsection 39(1) of the *Legislative Assembly Act*, the Legislative Assembly direct the Legislative Administration Committee to establish a committee to review the salary and benefits of members under the *Legislative Assembly Act* and the salaries and benefits of members who have responsibilities under the *Executive Council Act*.

And the question being put, a debate ensued.

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Mr. Arseneau rose on a point of order and submitted that Mr. Carr used unparliamentary language when he used the term “misleading New Brunswickers” in reference to Mr. Arseneau. Mr. Carr withdrew the remark.

And the debate being ended, and the question being put, Motion 61 was resolved in the affirmative.

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The Order being read for second reading of Bill 36, *An Act to Amend the Highway Act*, a debate arose thereon.

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

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.

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