Daily sitting 45 Wednesday, November 10, 2021
10 o'clock a.m.

Prayers.

Pursuant to Standing Rule 45, Mr. Arseneau rose to request an emergency debate concerning the ongoing labour issues between public service workers and the government of New Brunswick. Mr. Speaker took the matter under advisement.

Hon. Mr. Savoie requested leave of the House to move Motion 82 on Friday, November 12, 2021, and leave was denied. Accordingly, as Thursday would be Remembrance Day, Mr. Speaker corrected notice for Motion 82 to Tuesday, November 16, 2021.

The Speaker delivered the following ruling with respect to the request for an emergency debate:

STATEMENT BY SPEAKER

I now wish to decide on the request by the Member for Kent North for an emergency debate. Motion 82 was presented yesterday by the Honorable the Premier.

Motion 82 relates to the same subject matter as the topic wished to be discussed in the emergency debate. The government requested that the House allow for Motion 82 to be debated this coming Friday. The House declined, indicating to me that this matter does not require urgent consideration.

Accordingly, given the House's decision not to allow debate on Motion 82 this Friday, I find that the matter does not satisfy the requirement that it relate to a "genuine emergency calling for immediate and urgent consideration".

As well, I believe the matter of an emergency debate on the current labour issue has now been resolved. Thank you.

The following Bills were introduced and read a first time:

By Hon. Mr. Steeves,
Bill 76, *An Act to Amend the Right to Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.
By Hon. Mr. Holland,
Bill 77, *An Act to Amend the Electricity Act*.

Mr. McKee gave Notice of Motion 83 that on Thursday, November 18, 2021, he would move the following resolution, seconded by Mr. LePage:

WHEREAS the COVID-19 pandemic has been the cause of deaths and serious illness in New Brunswick, as it has in other provinces;

WHEREAS the COVID-19 pandemic has also had a devastating impact on many businesses;

WHEREAS the federal government has stepped up to provide significant financial assistance to provinces to help them keep citizens safe, reduce the potential for the spread of the virus, and support businesses struggling to cope with the realities of dealing with COVID-19;

WHEREAS many provinces were grateful for this financial support provided by the federal government and made sure that it was utilized for the purposes for which it was intended;

WHEREAS it has come to light that the Higgs government diverted much of the federal COVID-19 financial assistance to general revenues for political purposes;

WHEREAS, had this money been used for the purpose for which it was intended, it may have allowed our province to dedicate more resources to the fight against COVID-19 and the goal of keeping New Brunswickers safe;

WHEREAS there is public outrage that the Premier would pocket much-needed monies provided for addressing our serious pandemic needs to try to create the illusion that he is a good fiscal manager;

WHEREAS public funds designed to aid the province in dealing with a public health crisis should never be used to support a government's political agenda;

BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly urge the government to adopt a policy that would prevent federal funds directed to address a pandemic or other serious public health crisis from being used for any other purpose;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly urge the government to provide a full public accounting for all federal funding provided to New Brunswick in support of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mr. McKee gave Notice of Motion 84 that on Thursday, November 18, 2021, he would move the following resolution, seconded by Mr. K. Chiasson:

WHEREAS property tax assessments on residential properties have been increasing year over year across the province;

WHEREAS a demand for housing in New Brunswick has driven up the market value of residential property throughout the province;

WHEREAS many people on fixed incomes are finding it difficult to afford a significant rise in their property tax due to increased assessments;

WHEREAS, even though there is a cap limiting the rise of assessments to 10 percent in a given year, homeowners may still face significant assessment increases year after year, resulting in a cumulative unjustifiable tax hike;

WHEREAS this latest assessment increase will provide a significant revenue windfall for municipalities and the province;

WHEREAS there is no direct correlation between the rise of assessments and the costs to municipalities and the province to provide services like water and sewerage, garbage pickup, or other services;

WHEREAS there is no obligation on municipalities or the province to reduce their tax rates to help offset the financial impact of rising assessments;

WHEREAS the province should put the interests of homeowners before its own interests and ensure that residential taxpayers are not facing undue hardship;

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly urge the government to establish a mechanism whereby tax rates are adjusted downward if real property assessments increase beyond a certain threshold each year.

Hon. Mr. Savoie gave notice that on Friday, November 12, 2021, Bills 76 and 77 would be called for second reading.

And then, 11.28 a.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:

Members' Public Disclosure Statements 2019 November 8, 2021