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Daily sitting 31

Thursday, March 30, 2023

*10 o'clock a.m.*

Prayers.

Following Oral Questions, Mr. Arseneault rose on a point of order and submitted that Hon. Mr. Allain used unparliamentary language when he used the term “crazy” in reference to Mr. Bourque. Hon. Mr. G. Savoie and Mr. Arseneau spoke on the point of order. Mr. Speaker took the matter under advisement.

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Mr. Arseneau gave Notice of Motion 39 that on Thursday, April 6, 2023, he would move the following resolution, seconded by Mr. Coon:

WHEREAS the purpose of New Brunswick’s Local Food and Beverages Strategy is to strengthen New Brunswick’s food system and improve food self-sufficiency;

WHEREAS New Brunswick’s Local Food and Beverages Strategy was supposed to identify opportunities for government institutions to increase their purchase of New Brunswick local food and beverages in 2021;

WHEREAS New Brunswick’s Local Food and Beverages Strategy did not set any targets for New Brunswick’s public institutions;

WHEREAS, in 2020, about 45% of food purchased by Quebec’s public institutions was produced in Quebec, with the goal to increase it to 60% by 2025;

WHEREAS Quebec’s strategy for the purchase of Quebec food in institutions also sets local food supply targets, requiring 85% of public institutions in Quebec to set local supply targets by 2023 and 100% of them by 2025;

WHEREAS setting targets for New Brunswick institutions will not only help schools, hospitals, and long-term care facilities, among others, serve healthier, local, and environmentally responsible food, but will also increase the capacity of producers to be resilient;

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly urge the government to set targets for New Brunswick public institutions;

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BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly urge the government to expand the support and resources in its Local Food and Beverages Strategy to guarantee its success.

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Hon. Mr. G. Savoie, Government House Leader, announced that it was the intention of government that the House resume the adjourned debate on the Budget until 1 p.m., at which time Royal Assent would take place; following which the House would resume the adjourned debate on the Budget; following which Opposition Members' Business would be considered.

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The Order of the Day for resuming the adjourned debate on the motion (Motion 23),

That this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government, having been read,

The debate was resumed.

Hon. Mr. Allain rose and withdrew the unparliamentary language used during Oral Questions.

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At 12 p.m. the House recessed. At 1 p.m. the House resumed.

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Her Honour, the Lieutenant-Governor, was announced, and having been bidden to enter, took her seat in the chair upon the Throne.

Mr. Speaker addressed Her Honour as follows:

May It Please Your Honour:

The Legislative Assembly of the Province of New Brunswick has passed a Bill at the present sittings of the Legislature to which, in the name and on behalf of the said Legislative Assembly, I respectfully request Your Honour's assent.

The Clerk Assistant then read the title of the Bill as follows:

Bill 36, *An Act Respecting the Proposed Electoral District of Tantramar.*

Her Honour signified Her Assent as follows:

*It is the King's wish. Le roi le veut.*

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To this Bill, Her Honour's assent was announced by the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly in the following words:

In His Majesty's name, Her Honour the Lieutenant-Governor assents to this Bill, enacting the same and ordering it to be enrolled.

Her Honour then retired and Mr. Speaker resumed the chair.

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Debate resumed on Motion 23.

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

And the debate continuing, after some time it was on motion of Hon. Mr. G. Savoie, on behalf of the Honourable the Premier, adjourned over.

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Pursuant to Notice of Motion 30, Mr. K. Chiasson moved, seconded by Mr. Gauvin:

WHEREAS NB Power will be raising electricity rates this year and will likely request significant increases in coming years;

WHEREAS those increases in rates will also increase tax revenue at a time when the government is declaring historic surpluses;

WHEREAS the tax applied to electricity rates disproportionately impacts low-income individuals and families who spend a larger percentage of their income on basic necessities of life;

WHEREAS the rising cost of living for necessities including rent, fuel, and groceries is forcing people to make difficult choices;

WHEREAS home heating is a basic necessity of life in New Brunswick and 45% of New Brunswickers rely on electricity as their primary source for home heating;

BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly urge the government to remove the provincial portion of the HST from residential electricity bills.

And the question being put, a debate ensued.

And after some time, Hon. Mr. Steeves, seconded by Mr. Turner, moved in amendment:

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AMENDMENT

That Motion 30 be amended in the resolution clause by deleting “remove” and substituting “study the possibility of removing”.

At 3.10 p.m. the House recessed. At 3.18 p.m. the House resumed.

Madam Deputy Speaker put the question on the proposed amendment and it was adopted.

And the debate being ended, Madam Deputy Speaker put the question on Motion 30 as amended as follows:

WHEREAS NB Power will be raising electricity rates this year and will likely request significant increases in coming years;

WHEREAS those increases in rates will also increase tax revenue at a time when the government is declaring historic surpluses;

WHEREAS the tax applied to electricity rates disproportionately impacts low-income individuals and families who spend a larger percentage of their income on basic necessities of life;

WHEREAS the rising cost of living for necessities including rent, fuel, and groceries is forcing people to make difficult choices;

WHEREAS home heating is a basic necessity of life in New Brunswick and 45% of New Brunswickers rely on electricity as their primary source for home heating;

BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly urge the government to study the possibility of removing the provincial portion of the HST from residential electricity bills.

And the question being put, Motion 30 as amended was resolved in the affirmative.

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Pursuant to Notice of Motion 6, Mr. K. Chiasson moved, seconded by Mr. LePage:

WHEREAS the government cancelled the Free Tuition Program and the Tuition Relief for the Middle Class program that provided many students with the opportunity to enroll in a post-secondary institution;

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WHEREAS the province decided to cancel the NB-EI Connect Program that helped students pay for their food and lodging as they pursued their studies;

WHEREAS the program brought forward by the government for interest relief on the provincial portion of student loans does not support access to post-secondary education;

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly urge the government to bring forward a comprehensive assistance program to support access to post-secondary education.

And the question being put, a debate ensued.

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

And after some further 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.